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CUPRINS

17. Evelina Balaş,*The influence of the thematic study on the communication abilities and on the learning results of pupils that are part of the step by step educational alternative*
18. Maria Salloum, *The social representation of teachers between reality and aspiration*
19. Dana Balas Timar, Mustafa Aslan, *The dynamic relationship between perceived employment self-confidence and perceived employment challenges - a positive youth development approach to youth career counselling,*
20. Roxana Eleonora Cinci,*Contemporary approach to music content at the preschool and primary school level*
21. Henriette Torkos, *A different kind of education*
22. Adela Redeş, *The development of students key competences and transversal skills throught practice teaching activities*

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: KEY COMPETENCES IN TEACHER EDUCATION

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Abstract: *Teacher education is a complex field and requires high levels of specialization in diverse fields of knowledge. The formal preparation of early childhood teachers involve education in general aspects of teacher education, but requires a focus on specific components for a teaching that has its own specificity. Work with young children entail high levels of commitment, knowledge, skills and attitudes that should be developed in pre-service teacher education. The literature in early childhood teacher education highlights a number of key components including: general educational, professional foundations, formal knowledge and practice, and curriculum development. This paper aims to analyze the key components of early childhood teacher education programs and discuss their role on the preparation of competent and efficient teachers for a demanding 21st century society.*

Keywords: *teacher education, early childhood education, teachers' role.*

Introduction

The importance of early childhood education has been recognized for its own right, and because research has shown that when children are exposed to high quality practices from 0 to 6 years they perform better on academic tasks such as reading, writing, math, as well as, they become more capable on social interactions with other children and adults. The impact of high-quality practices in early childhood education has effects at short and long term as shown in several studies (Schweinhart & Weikart 1997; Schweinhart, Montie, Xiang, Barnett, Belfield & Nores, 2005; Kirp, 2007).

Research shows that teachers with more preparation for teaching are more confident and successful with students than those who have little training (Darling-Hammond, 2004).The literature pinpoints a connection between the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the staff employed in early childhood education and classroom outcomes (Whitebook, Howes, &

Phillips 1989; Arnett 1989; Lino, 2005; Colker 2008; Sylva et al. 2010; Sahin & Adiguzel 2012). The cause-effect relationship between teachers' education and student's success requires to know and analyse the key components of high quality programmes for early childhood teacher education.

Early childhood teacher education

The formal preparation of early childhood teachers require training in general aspects of teacher training, but requires a focus on particular aspects for a teaching that has its own specificities (Anderson, 2013). Work with young children requires high levels of commitment, knowledge, skills and attitudes that should be developed in pre-service teacher education (Spodek & Saracho, 1993). According to Saracho (1993) preschool teacher education programmes are organized around research, theory and practice.

Spodek and Saracho (2003), present a set of key components that should be addressed in early childhood education pres-service education in order to prepare these professionals with knowledge and competences to develop high quality practices in early childhood education. The authors present six components, namely: **recruitment and selection**; **general education and culture**; **professional foundation**; **instruction knowledge, practice and program modification**.

As regards the **recruitment and selection** of future early childhood teachers, Spodek and Saracho (2003) argue that it should be made a pre-selection of candidates to be accepted to a pre-service early childhood programme based on a set of personal characteristics and attributes evidenced by the candidates, and not based on ratings obtained through examinations, tests, or average of the previous level of education. This assumption is sustained by several studies that stress the relevance of personality traits, attitudes, values and beliefs which predict future success in the profession of early childhood teaching (Colker 2008; Erickson, Hyndman, & Wirtz 2005; Sahin & Adiguzel 2012; Serdyukov & Tatman-Ferguson 2011; Walker 2008).

The attributes of the candidates for early childhood teachers include personal characteristics such as: tenderness, enthusiasm and a businesslike attitude (Ryans, 1960, cited by Spodek & Saracho, 2003); patience, maturity, energy, encouragement for individual responsibilities; flexibility, and the ability to have fun and encourage children (Katz, 1969, cited by Spodek & Saracho, 2003); ability to plan and reflect, tolerate ambiguity and be able to make and correct inferences about children, and teaching techniques (Clark, 1988 cited by Spodek & Saracho, 2003). Despite the relevance of these attributes to the performance of early childhood teaching profession they are

hardly ever used in the selection of candidates for childhood teacher education programmes.

Another component considered crucial by Spodek and Saracho (2003) for early childhood teacher education programmes is the **general education and culture** of future educators. General education required for future educators includes a variety of knowledge areas and arts that are critical to the performance of the profession. The areas of knowledge are part of the human sciences, health, physical and biological sciences, history, social sciences, mathematics, etc. Within the arts, it is essential that prospective teachers have broad knowledge in the areas of music, literature and plastic, in order to identify the important sources to work with young children. Another crucial area for future educators is ICT, as these area is central to education in today's society. The general scope of knowledge is fundamental in teaching with comprehensive features such as teaching in early childhood education. In fact, to support the interests and curiosities of children about the physical and social world around them it is critical that early childhood teachers have a body of knowledge in various areas of scientific knowledge and the arts, in order to integrate this knowledge in the curriculum proposals that they organize for children they work with. It is also important that prospective early childhood teachers have a thorough knowledge of their own culture, the culture of the community where they work, and the culture of the children and their families in order to organize educational contexts that reflect the diversity of cultures of the educational protagonists: the children, the families, the teachers, and other professionals working in early childhood settings.

Through the **professional foundations** prospective early childhood teachers learn and organize their beliefs about children, school and education to work with young children. Professional foundations are developed within various disciplines, such as history, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, psychology, etc., and allow the prospective teachers, building knowledge to explore and recognize the goals, ideas, values, influences and assumptions of an educational system, and also become more sensitive to cultural differences of the children, which should be integrated into teaching practices (Skinner, 1968, quoted by Spodek & Saracho, 2003). The child's development is a essential component of early childhood education. Prospective teachers need to know the developmental characteristics of children in order to select appropriate materials and developmentally experiences to address children's needs, interests and rights, and create provocative learning environments that challenge the children and promote their learning and development. Although if the knowledge of children's developmental characteristics is essential to the organization of high quality educational contexts, it is also needed to understand individual differences

and being sensitive to the heterogeneity and diversity of children's development patterns. Therefore, to organize educational contexts early childhood teachers should be based on knowledge of the developmental characteristics of the group and the individual child in order to respond properly to their needs, interests, and rights.

Instructional knowledge is one of the essential components of early childhood teacher education programmes highlighted by Spodek and Saracho (2003). This type of knowledge requires that teachers master the theories of teaching and learning, pedagogical methodologies, and curriculum models. Instruction knowledge integrates curricular knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge. The curricular knowledge refers to knowledge of the structure and program content. The pedagogical content knowledge requires a "practical wisdom" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) to apply and contextualize the knowledge constructed within the various disciplines to create developmental and culture appropriated practices for young children. In the construction of the "practical wisdom" it is crucial that the prospective educators develop a reflective thought (Dewey, 1929; Shön, 1983; Zeichner, 1993; Khortagen, 2001). Reflection supports the liaison theory and practice, and allows teachers to make appropriate choices to work in diverse educational contexts, incorporating the theory and the characteristics and needs of all children and adults which attend these contexts. Thus the practical training is developed in continuous interaction between theoretical knowledge and practice, and is mediated by the reflective process. Reflection is therefore a central dimension in the construction of the practice, allowing the development of effective pedagogical knowledge (Loughran, 2002), and sustaining the professional development of early childhood teachers.

Dimensions of early childhood education teacher's role

Teaching in early childhood education is a truly demanding profession, differentin many aspects from teaching in general (Mahmood 2013; Oliveira-Formosinho, 2000; Katz, 1993).

Oliveira-Formosinho (2000), highlights three specific dimensions of the profession that are also identified by other national and international researchers, namely: 1) the characteristics of the young child; 2) the characteristics of the early childhood contexts and their missions; 3) the nature of the tasks carried out by early childhood teachers. Another author who emphasizes the specificities of childhood teaching profession is Lilian Katz. The author enounces eight principles that characterize the profession, and examines them in the context of teaching in early childhood education. The principles identified by Katz (1993) are: 1) social need; 2) altruism; 3) autonomy; 4) ethical code; 5) away from the client; 6) practice standards; 7) extended training; 8) expertise.

The young child (0 to 6) has specific developmental characteristics that somehow make her vulnerable and therefore dependent on the family and adults who interact with, and in particular the early childhood teacher.

Childhood development takes place holistically, that is, emotional, social, cognitive, and motor development occur integrated and globally. This global dimension has implications for the role of the teachers, and especially for the interactions that he or she establishes with the children. Another feature of the young child is its physical, social and emotional vulnerability. In fact, the child from 0 to 6 years is strongly dependent on the adult to perform their routine of care, and needs a special attention to the emotional and socio-emotional aspects which are the foundation for growth in the various areas of development. However, the competence of the young child cannot be ignored (Malaguzzi, 1998). As shown by various studies, from birth young children are extremely competent in several areas. It is the duality of vulnerability and competence in different areas, which moves the teacher's role, recognizing the needs and capacities that the child manifests from an early age.

A second dimension with specific characteristics of early childhood profession relates to the work contexts and their missions. The scope of the educational role and the absence of a national curriculum in many countries, contribute to the emergence of a variety of educational ideologies and contexts with different missions. These two factors derives from the greater freedom in the organization of contexts resulting in a diversity of practice in early childhood education. The early childhood educational contexts for children from 0 to 6 years should be organized around education and care, integrating these two dimensions in their educational project. Although there are contexts just focused on care and with a custodial mission, and other focused on care and education. The custodial contexts, have a mission focused on care, and are designed to ensure the safety, nutrition and health of children, and provide a place for children to stay while parents are at work. The services in these contexts focuses around leisure activities and socialization. The pedagogical contexts have an educational intentionality, explicitly assumed that sets up an educational mission of the institution. This diversity of services naturally has implications for working conditions of teachers, which translate into asymmetries of styles of interaction with the children, practices of parental involvement, and the establishment of relationships and interactions with the community.

A third dimension of specificity in early childhood profession highlighted by Oliveira-Formosinho (2000) relates to the scope of the teacher's role. This dimension results from the developmental characteristics of the young child and/or the diversity of contexts. In fact, early childhood teachers are assigned a variety of tasks that cover both care (hygiene, safety

and welfare), and education (developmental aspects), that confer to this profession very specific characteristic. Under the tasks of the early childhood education teacher, the interactions have a vital role. In fact, the adult-child interaction is consider in the literature the core of early childhood education (Hohmann & Weikart, 1997, Lino, 2005).

The adult-child interaction is a central pedagogical dimension in early childhood education that is rooted on a constructivist or social-constructivist perspective. A strong body of literature stresses the importance of high-quality interactions for children's learning and development (Dewey, 1929, Freinet, 1973, Piaget, 1973; Vygotsky, 1970). The High Scope curriculum model maintains that "the creation of an interpersonal support climate is essential for active learning, because this is basically an interactive social process" (Hohmann & Weikart, 1997, p.63). Malaguzzi (1998), the founder of the Reggio Emilia Approach argues that interactions and relationships between the three protagonists of the educational process - children, teachers and parents - are the basis of education and learning. In this sense, it is important that the teacher supports the development of interactions and relationships between these three actors of the educational process and thus create the conditions for the construction and co-construction of knowledge and learning.

Involving parents and the community in children's learning and development, and the design of the educational project is another important task of early childhood teacher's role. Indeed, to establish and maintain consistent, respectful and secure relationships with families and the broad community requires to understand that children's education is a demanding and serious task that needs the collaboration of school, family and the community. It also requires that early childhood teachers acknowledge children's and families diversity (social, cultural, ethnic, religious, etc.), and be able to integrate these differences into curriculum development. To develop an inclusive curriculum, that is to create culturally responsive learning environments provides opportunities for children to become aware of similarities and differences between themselves and others, assist them to experience and value diversity, and foster children's development and a sense of identity within their own cultural group, which promotes critical thinking and countering stereotypes and biases.

To create a developmental and culturally appropriated learning environment requires teachers to use observation, documentation and assessment to support planning decisions. The information that emerged from observation and documentation is used to organize a daily routine that provides rich educational experiences and positive interactions, giving voice to children and teachers, allowing a sharing of control between children and adults.

Conclusions

The early childhood profession is revealed as an important contribution to society to the extent that, the higher the level of quality of the professional performance of most teachers the benefits for children and their families, which is reflected in more value to society. The scope of the early childhood teachers' role requires a altruistic attitude to the profession (Katz, 1993). In fact the commitment of early childhood teachers focuses on the quality of care provided to children, families and the community emphasizes the social purposes of its function. The autonomy of this profession is revealed in the choice of opportunities to adopt pedagogical methodologies, which requires scientific knowledge and skills of analysis and reflection to decide what best suits the different educational contexts and communities they work with. Knowing that only high-quality practices have an impact on the present and future life of children, the standards of practice that are sought are those who fall in quality standards for early childhood education, widely cited in the literature, in order to ensure better care to children and their families. The requirement of the early childhood teachers' role requires a selective and demanding pre-service education that prepare them for a skilful performance of their profession.

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EDUCATIONAL POLICIES ON INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING
FOR PRESCHOOL AND PRIMARY EDUCATION

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Abstract:*Educational policies on teacher education are in a continuous changing and have different forms for schooling levels. Are the routes of teachers' initial training for preschool and primary education still oscillating: medium level and/or higher level? Neither the National Education Act (2011) and any documents of the two agencies concerned and teacher training (ARACIP and ARACIS) do not clarify the relationship between the two routes to professionalize teaching. The initial teacher training for these education segments is only one aspect of the complex issues that the teaching profession is dealing with: role and status, selection and recruitment, evaluation and control inputs and outputs of the system, supply and demand, differentiated funding and remuneration, expectations and teachers' motivation etc.This article attempts to summarize the pros and cons of the two routes in the professional existence and their effects on teaching training skills. The teacher, especially the preschool and primary education teacher, ensures the start for all other professions.*

Key words: educational policies, teacher training, initial training, teaching competence

The relationship between political - politics - public policy and educational policy is a complex relationship that allows the mechanisms that occur in classrooms to be understood. Educational policies are the subject of multiple quantitative and qualitative analyses. The vector validating politics is its viability on the field. Therefore, „the pulse" of an education policy, in the teacher's work, can be the best taken during classes. The authenticity of an education policy for initial teacher training is reflected in the report that this one has it with the entire political sphere. From this report between

policy and educational policy the degree of politicization of the education system can be derived.

1. Conceptual Clarifications

The political is social space in which the people act conscious to promote the diversity of interests (individual, general, group social, national, international, economic, spiritual, political etc.). In this constellation of interests are found the aims and necessities of the holders of power that perform political activities.

Politics, like other concepts from the social sciences, does not have an universally accepted definition. This thing allows a conceptual analysis about politics from several perspectives: institutional, procedural, of content etc.

As an institutional dimension, the politics represent all the organizations/institutions, in which actions are taken to achieve political goals. As a procedural dimension, the politics include decision-making, conflicts, objectives and interests, mechanisms of conflict situations regulating etc. The content of policy refers to issues resolving and the execution of tasks through political and administrative system that makes all required decisions. This latter dimension of politics is reflected in the phrase: *public policy* and represents the actions realised by the authorities (central or local) in response to problems that come from society.

The best known definitions for the phrase *public policy* are:

- „A set of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or a group of political actors with regards to a series of goals and means to achieve them in a given situation". (Jenkins, W.,1978)
- „Public policies mediate between parties, parliaments, ministerial responsibility, on one hand considering and deciding priorities, giving resources and outlining directions of development and administrator, and on the other hand implementing and evaluating policies". (Thoenig, J.-Cl., 1985)
- „A course of action followed by an actor or more political actors, having a purpose in trying to solve a problem". (Anderson J.,1996)
- „Everything that a government decides to do or not to do". (Dye, Th., 1998)

- „Public policy is a network of interrelated decisions concerning the choice of objectives, means and resources used to achieve their specific situations". (Miroiu, A., 2001)
- „Public policies are usually decisions already taken, and not intentions or promises". (Young, E. & Quinn, L., 2002)
- „The public policy is the answer that the government gives to those needs of society, considered to be of a general interest and of a greater importance as they are satisfied with public money". (Popescu, L.-G., 2014)

In short, public policies are government actions in response to the real needs or issues of the world, developed with purpose, and include decision taken by an actor or a group of social actors.

By Government Decision no. 870/2006 the public policies are defined as „all activities of the specialized central public administration in order to resolve the problems identified and to ensure the needed developments in a particular field".

Among public policies we also identify those from education area. The phrase *educational policy* allows multiple approaches, on different directions. The vectors that permit of the relationship between politics and education to express, have different depths. Some problems of educational policy may be theoretical, sometimes rhetorical, intellectual analysis, others are oriented on pragmatic structures, administrative, operational.

The interface between politics and education can reveal information about the management of the school, on reforms and innovations in school-type organization; relationship between employers and unions; about curriculum and teaching skills; about the relationship between technology and education, political philosophy and philosophy of education; about initial and continuous training of teachers; about teachers' salaries; gender policies in education or the policy on preventing and combating violence in schools; about the relationship between politics and student assessment system; dynamics of political doctrines and education systems etc.

In this entire themed carousel, the contemporary issues of educational policies are determined by social choices on the form and content of education. They also relate to ensure non-discriminatory nature of teaching and learning throughout the development lifecycle.

In the series of terminology clarification, an important aspect is the phenomenon of education politicization. We can see two aspects of this phenomenon: (1) the use of education as a subject in the political agendas of

the parties and (2) impregnating some educational decisions (administrative, managerial) with political decisions.

In Romania there is a multiparty system with two major parties and several smaller parties. The struggle for political power makes it impossible to maintain a majority government. There are frequent changes of government and every change brings a new minister at the Ministry of Education. In over 26 years since the change of the regime they have succeeded over 20 ministers of education. Only in the year of 2012 the Ministry had six ministers! The strong politicization, in the debate between parties, reflected negatively, on educational policies. First Law of Education after 1989 has undergone more than 60 amendments during the period 1995-2010. The current Law on Education, since 2011, has already been massive amended, by three emergency ordinances!

Romania has a Pact for Education (2008) at a high level, which received the support of all political parties, unions, teachers and other education interest groups. There are also numerous national strategies that address a variety of issues of educational policy. Since 2015 appeared The Coalition for Education. This is a federation of NGOs interested in improving the education system, which „must start from teachers and from how they are formed initially and how their training continues throughout life". Although there are policies regulating the educational area, in the system of education in our country are large and very large problems. As long as there will not exist harmonization between educational expertise and long-term political engagement, things will not sit on a favorable track neither for teachers, nor for our main beneficiaries: children and students.

Educational policies on teacher training

Romanian educational policies on teacher training are few, being deficitary on the early education and primary education segments and also outdated. So, the educational practices for implementing these (few) educational policies, are minimal. The national context (educational, social, economic and demographic) does not differ much from the international contexts in terms of discrepancies between policy makers and the practitioners in schools. There are worldwide decisions on numerous educational policy studies and reports, but the situation of millions of teachers around the world remains problematic.

It's a commonplace to say that schools are changing very hard and difficult. The causes are many and the explanations are on measure. David Labaree, professor of history at Stanford University, interested in the history of reforms in American education, sustained in the work *Someone Has to Fail*

(2010) that education systems are „elastic, perpetually expanding, perpetually unequal, constantly reformed and essentially never change too much". If we relate to policy makers on teacher training, Labaree believes it should take into account the following differences: „Teachers focus on what is special in their classrooms, and reformers on what is universal in all classrooms. Teachers operate in a framework dominated by personal relationships; reformers operate within a framework dominated by abstract political and social objectives. Teachers based on teaching experience, reformers based on social scientific theory. Teachers embrace the ambiguity in the class process, while reformers seek clarity tables and graphs ... Teachers focus on professional adaptability, reformers focus on standardizing their practices and school results".

Another professor from the same famous university, Larry Cuban, while analyzing way the educational policies transform during classes, states that the „factors of policy decisions and the teachers, live in different worlds". The quoted author shows that policymakers make a confusion between the quality of the teachers and quality of teaching, between the personal traits of teachers - flexible, open, meticulous, thoughtful, active, curious or rather the opposite - and the classroom organization or the institutions of education; confusion between the teacher's personality and specific situations in which he teaches, namely: age students, their number, educogen family environment, workplace conditions, the resources available to them in everyday activities.

In Europe and also in our country, the situation of the occupational category of the teachers is not different from that of American teachers.

In a report of the Court of Auditors from 2015 it is states that „the Romanian students in PISA tests obtained continuously poor results, indicating the reduced performance of primary and secondary education." According to statistics, 42% of the children aged 15, are in the position of being functionally illiterate (followed in education, can reproduce text, but do not understand its ideas). These results reflect, in fact, how students were educated by their teachers and we understand how those teachers were trained!

The initial teacher training is the cornerstone of any education system. The quality of the human resource entering the educational system has fundamental impact on what is happening in education, in every stage, and on each series of graduates. Some graduates return to the education system, as teachers. The more these graduates are better prepared and more willing to stay in the education system, the more it will increase the value of education. A performant higher education can only be "build" over the performances

from the pre-university system. The negative effects of a policy geared mainly towards higher education have already begun to show. Without a solid foundation in secondary education, higher education quality is likely to fail.

Initial training of teachers in Romania was influenced, since period before the accession to the European Union, various European documents on education and training. Bologna Declaration (1999) and subsequently the European Common Principles for Training Skills and Qualification of Teachers (2005) have brought significant changes in terms of organization of Romanian university education. Thus, by Law no. 288/2004 on the organization of university, higher education is organized on three levels: bachelor, master and doctorate. Under the same law, beginning with the 2005-2006 academic year, the application to the European System of Transferable Credits (ECTS) is mandatory, and the Diploma Supplement is issued, according to European standards.

The majority of EU Member States adapted their education systems to the recommendations of the Bologna Declaration. However, in an analysis carried at nearly 10 years since the Bologna process' „the reforms of initial training of teachers remain problematic in terms of visibility, readability and comparability structures of teacher training and qualifications." (Dimitropoulos, A., 2008).

Today, teacher training involves changes at all levels: cognitive, attitudinal and behavioral, requiring adaptability proactive, effective in completely new situations, unknown and difficult to approach. In this regard, as professor Romiţă Iucu suggests, there are required differentiated curriculum routes for teacher training. The today's society defines, beyond current educational arena, new roles for the teaching profession: teamwork, mentoring, advising students, professional training, action research, participation in the organization and administration of the school (Iucu, R., 2010, p .62).

Teacher training policies calls for teachers, in a widely accepted definition, the following capabilities: taking an active and constructive-critic attitude towards education; an innovative involvement in the educational activity; a continuous self-evaluation and self-teaching in their educational activity.

Teacher Training Policies for Preschool and Primary Education

It is extremely difficult to build a clear picture of the initial training of teachers in this time of transition. We will attempt a description that contains both elements of the practices of the past and others that will occur in the near future. Professional routes for initial training to the human resource for preschool and primary segments are different from country to country.

The mode to organize the courses and practical experiences for teacher preparation is continuously changing due to new roles a teacher meets during classroom. It is therefore necessary a reformation of teacher training. To have high qualified teachers is it needed a high quality of training. But this means to consider the cost-effectiveness of training teachers, so as to increase the education system.

In our tradition there were training teachers for preschool and primary school in normal schools/ pedagogical high school until the early 2000s. After the Bologna Declaration were created the transient structures of non-university level, called colleagues, lasting 3 years, offering graduation diploma. The colleges offer students, future teachers, the training for preschool and primary segments, as well as a qualification in a field of study: arts (music or drawing), physical education, religion or a foreign language (English in most cases). The colleges functioned within the former pedagogical high school, with the human resources for the training offered by them in order to be trained, but were coordinated of universities.

In terms of the imminent entry of Romania in EU (2007), starting with the 2005-2006 academic year, teacher training for preschool and primary education is achieved within universities. On this path of teacher training, Romania was able to close Chapter 18 - Education and training - from the *Acquis communautaire*. Pedagogical high schools have gone through many changes, negative sense, in the last ten years.Although pedagogical high schools are yet a teaching route of teacher training for primary and preschool, but they do not represent, as before, an elite school of Romanian education.Pedagogical high schools are in a crisis of quality teacher-formators for early childhood education and primary education teachers, by the disappearance of pedagogy teachers and the teacher-mentors (ANCLP, 2016).

There are currently two parallel routes teacher training for preschool and primary education - a high school level and a university level, which creates a series of problems:

a) institutional level:

Comment [RbD1]:

- pedagogical high school has a duration of 4 years, comprising young people aged 14-18; it is included in university education and is rated by institutional ARACIP; requires test for admission (diction, motor coordination, skills and musical aptitude plastic); the graduation diploma;
- PIPP university specialization lasts for 3 years, 180 ECTS credits and diploma supplement; it includes only graduates with a baccalaureate

diploma; not all universities require proof of proficiency for admission; authorized / accredited by ARACIS; bachelor's degree.

b) curriculum level:

- there are any major curricular differences, although high school and university are on different levels of education and, theoretically, cannot be equated;
- there is no didactical textbooks for pedagogical high schools;
- number of practice teaching hours is substantially different, on behalf the pedagogical high schools; are different forms of teaching practice in pedagogical high school (weekly/individual/massed), while practice at the university there is only one form of teaching (2-5 hours / week during the 6 semesters).

c) at the financial level there are important salary differences, for those with higher education.

Similar problems, even more complicated than in our country, are in most European countries that have agreed to Bologna Process.In the report of the working group The European Network on Teacher Education Policies (ENTEP), signed by Apostolis Dimitropoulos (2008), there is a set of conclusions on the subject.In what follows we refer only at the peculiarities of teacher training for preschool and primary education.

„Pre-primary school teacher education:

- Over half of countries introduced reforms in initial pre-primary teacher education after the initiation of the Bologna Process (1999).
- In most cases those reforms were, in some way, connected to the national implementation of the Bologna Process.
- In over two-thirds of the countries a degree at higher education level is required for pre-primary schoolteachers. Mostly this is a BA level degree. A few countries are introducing a master's degree.
- In almost two-thirds of countries there are no alternative pathways to pre-primary teacher status. In a few countries primary schoolteachers are also qualified for pre-primary school.
- About three-quarters of countries apply the concurrent model (generally combining educational sciences with teacher education). A few countries offer both concurrent and consecutive models or combine them in different ways.
- The duration of initial pre-primary teacher education varies across countries, ranging from 3-4 years of study.

- In just over half of countries, pre-primary schoolteachers are educated at universities. In all other cases there is great variety, ranging from upper secondary level to non-university higher education institutions.
- A few countries have implemented ECTS in pre-primary teacher education.
- There is a clearly visible and longer-term trend for countries to move initial education for pre-primary schoolteachers into the university sector and to increase the number of years of study.
- There is also a somewhat weaker trend to introduce a master's level degree as a requirement for qualification as a pre-primary schoolteacher". (Iucu, R., 2010, pp 69-70)

„Primary schoolteacher education

- Almost all countries introduced reforms in initial primary teacher education after the initiation of the Bologna Process (1999).
- In most cases those reforms were, in some way, connected to the national implementation of the Bologna Process.
- In all countries a degree at higher education level is required for qualification as a primary schoolteacher. In most cases this is a BA level degree.
- In very few countries alternative pathways exist to qualification as a primary schoolteacher (and this is mainly for holders of higher education degrees, other than primary school teaching qualifications).
- Most countries apply the concurrent model (generally combining educational sciences with teacher education). A few countries offer both concurrent and consecutive models or combine them in different ways.
- The duration of initial primary schoolteacher education varies across countries, ranging from 3-5 years.
- In over three-quarters of countries, primary schoolteachers are educated only in universities. In a few countries primary schoolteachers are also educated in non-university higher education institutions.
- About half of countries have introduced ECTS in initial primary schoolteacher education.
- There is a clearly visible and longer-term trend for countries to move initial education for primary schoolteachers into the university sector and to increase the number of years of study.
- There is also a trend, although somewhat weaker, to introduce a masters level degree as a requirement for qualification as a primary schoolteacher." (Iucu, R., 2010, pp 70-71).

For that, the initial training of teachers to join the Bologna Process objectives, says Otmar Gassner (2010), the efforts should be intensified as the content and skills in teacher training programs to be compatible.Only then teacher training program in Romania will really be comparable throughout Europe, and only then our program will constitute a solid basis for the employability of Romanian teachers in UE.

Regarding the grid of achievement of initial training in the near future, as it transpires from the previous statement, it needs to be introduced a master level degree.The issue about the master degree arises for initial teacher training for secondary and high school levels.It's a controversial idea, because the concept of master cannot be associated with the initial level, beginner or novice.Master signifies a level of mastery of the knowledge and skills deepening of previously acquired, in initial training.

Instead of conclusions

Teachers are the axis of all education systems. In all political programs it states that education is a national priority, but not all governments understand to invest in teachers and in their education. Teacher training must be of high quality, because of the quality of teacher education depends on student achievement.

A good preparing of children and students from pre-school and primary education provides a good start for secondary and later for high school and university studies. All innovating approaches for these two segments of education are welcome as long as it provides a fundamental training teachers on:

a) understanding that each teacher working in a national framework, has a national identity as a basis for transnational awareness in European society; without a balance between national and European dimension, educational policies are not viable;
b) every teacher must assimilate the national curriculum, but must see beyond - with the roots in the national traditions and with an European perspective; diversity in unity means national identity and transnational awareness, an open mind towards the world, in general;
c) a teacher for primary / preschool must have knowledge about other educational systems and educational policies at EU level; only then will be able to assess their own system of education and history of this

system, and to relate to other educational systems, past and contemporary;

d) initial training of teachers it makes today in multicultural contexts, which implies respect for their own culture and other cultures; self-esteem involves respect for others, openness, acceptance of differences, non-discrimination;
e) initial teacher training involves the mobility of students, future teachers; this means that they could speak or teach different subjects in the language community where mobility applies;
f) even during initial training a student must have knowledge about the finalities of curricular programs and educational content, about teaching-learning methodologies and assessment strategies from other European countries;
g) the educational practices should not be restricted to national boundaries but must be exploited effectively by integrating new technologies.

It is obvious that there are several points of view. Educational policies should take into account multiple perspectives; they are not a fixed product. Any educational policy must be seen as a process that involves negotiation, challenge, fighting between various interest groups that may be located outside official policy mechanisms. Borrowing ideas from outside the national framework, validated by research "on the ground" means the risk of unsuccessful implementation or inadequacy of policy for initial training of teachers. The realities of each system of initial teacher training are varied and there are large differences in how different individuals shape reality (Smit, B., 2003). Also, „the filters" from rhetoric to policy operationalization by teachers in the classroom are many and extremely varied, depending on the knowledge and attitudes that they have.

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SELF-EDUCATION AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY

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Abstract: *Preoccupied almost exclusively and permanently by the (current) problems of education, it seems that we forgot about the existence, significance and value of self-education in shaping human beings. Some even tend to exclude it, either identifying it with personal development, or with (professional) training. The study focuses on another subject, almost overlooked by specialists, self-sufficiency (understood as the general tendency towards complacency of the great majority of people), on the one side, and the ratio between self-sufficiency and self-education, on the other side. Also, the study aims to prove that: a. without self-education we are condemned to self-sufficiency; b. Self-education is the antidote of self-sufficiency, it is what gives us (or by which we regain) our inner life, our spiritual noblesse, the access to the deep issues of humanity, through which we grow from the inside, organically and authentically.*

Keywords: *self-education, self-sufficiency, doubt, self-interrogation*

1. Introduction

Whether we like it or not, whether we accept it, are aware of it, are preoccupied by it or not, a very common reality among us, human beings, is self-sufficiency. In education and research such a subject (and the state it designates) does not get treated (and less so analysed). And perhaps we might not even have a (critical, reflexive) connection with it, we might as well not approach it if we had not approached the concept of self-education (and the state it designates) more closely, deeply and with a special interest.

2. Self-sufficiency – possible approach

Besides the interesting and still unstudied relations of self-education with personal development, with the capacity of observation and self-observation, with improvement and self-improvement, self-education can be studied and compared against self-sufficiency.

In Aristocles's footsteps (who went to war as Aristocles and came back as Plato) - in dialogue with Socrates - R. Riemen (2008) noted that self-sufficiency designates the state of *complacency* most of us live in and indulge in for the most part of our lives (if not even the entire life). Complacency lies in the power of what is considered normal, that is what we *believe* should be and/ or should happen/ take place. It pertains to the "seductive ease with which people become accustomed at all times to mannerisms, opinions and predetermined order; it is related to the firm belief that everything is as it should be. Cultivating the desire to lead a life free of thoughts – goes on the founder and president of the Nexus Institute – makes the amazement about everything there is and all critical questions to be considered not only bizarre but downright undesirable" (ibid, p. 130).

Most people live within given conceptual frameworks and axiological references, they pursue their impulses and follow the course of their life according to the general social-axiological state, considering that nothing and nobody can deny or (even) question the existing habitual and mental status quo shared by those part of the social network to which – directly or indirectly – they have access. They build their life so impeccable out of certainties and self-explanatory things; they let themselves be so badly taken and seduced by ephemeral passions and desires (see *Fight against passions*, 2015) that they are willing "to believe anything, preferring to do this instead of thinking with their own minds" (Riemen, 2008, p. 130)

Self-sufficiency refers to that mental and attitudinal state of *believing* that what we know, understand and perceive (in this world) at a given time (in our personal life) is what stands out as necessary, clear, but also sufficient to be known, understood and perceived. It consists in *believing* that what we know, understand and perceive is enough-needed for our prosperity and purpose in life. In other words, in the state of self-sufficiency we are convinced that what we know, understand and perceive is all that is to know, understand and perceive.

Self-sufficiency gives us (and entices us with) the *impression* – upon which we approach and spend our lives – that we are the owners of the sole (and the safest) way of knowing, understanding and perceiving the things, events and challenges of (our) existence, on the one hand, and – equally – that we are the owners of the ultimate and exclusive truth that we really, in terms of the knowledge, understanding and representation of its essence, on the other hand.

Of what we discerned so far, we can deduce that the way self-sufficiency insinuates and merges with our mental states and/ or attitude is that of the certainty and confidence in what we know, understand, perceive and do. In these (possible but also reliable/ credible) circumstances, we live with such belief, without us asking ourselves about them, without intending to detach

ourselves from them, to look at them and evaluate them critically. We understand, therefore, that – usually – self-sufficiency does not allow itself to be contested compromised, thrown away (much easily). It does not let itself be undermined by questions, searches, doubts.

Self-sufficiency is strongly interwoven with the cognitive, perceptual and comprehensive satiety; it exists in the anatomy and physiognomy of our soul. We can say – by way of hypothesis – that self-sufficiency is a mental and/ or attitudinal (malignant) tumour, by which – perhaps potentially – we are all afflicted. If we agree with this view, it means that to cure our self-sufficiency, we need to administer a long, careful, persevering and desired treatment for the mind and soul. Self-sufficiency is a lethal threat to the existence of our knowledge, understanding and perceptions, taken as individual and individualizing items, but also to the opportunity of completing, correcting and enhancing them.

In short, the lives of most of us are only "a docile adaptation to the prevailing mores and habits" (*ibid*, p. 131), validated by the given ideological context.

In this stage of the research we can identify several (possible) forms of self-sufficiency:

From the point of view of relating to others and to ourselves, we distinguish:

- Self-sufficiency by relating to others: it is the state in which we do not doubt others' way of being, thinking, acting, choosing, believing, coping and adapting, their way of seeing life and live it/ survive;
- Self-sufficiency by relating to ourselves: it is the state in which we do not doubt our way of being (which we consider to be the best, the most efficient, the most valid, opportune and accomplished), of acting, thinking, deciding, believing, accumulating life experience, coping with the problems and trials of personal existence; in short, we believe that what we are, think and do is what we are supposed to/ must be, think and do.

By virtue of this (first) criterion, our *trust* in the way others and/ or ourselves (following in their footsteps) think, appreciate, act, believe, cope and adapt is, if not absolute/ exclusive then overwhelming in relation to *doubt* about all this.

In terms of awareness, we distinguish*:*

- An arrogant self-sufficiency, displayed, all-knowing and all-encompassing; one that is part of the manifestation of our personalities and of our usual, constant relation with others;
- A non-displayed self-sufficiency, given as such, one about (unconsciously, tacitly) accepting the clichés and the (predominant, extended) habits existing in society, stemming from (mental) convenience

and kept alive by daily routine; it is a naive self-sufficiency, of self-safeguarding and self-protection.

Challenged by Socrates, Plato (in the interpretation of R. Riemen, 2008) realizes "how hollow any form of self-sufficiency is"; moreover, he realizes that we can be erudite, but still ignorant (*ibid*, p. 131). In this surprising context, in his defence, the great Athenian philosopher shows that it is wiser to know what we do not know than to pretend to know something, and eventually prove that we did not.

Formulating the right questions helps us better understand human beings than uncritically repeating the answers others give us (*ibid*, p. 134). In such a context and in such a way of looking at things, and interpreting them, a life without reflection, (deep) doubt, permanent and honest interrogation "is not only stupid, but also bad, and the knowledge that teaches us *how* to live is by far the most important knowledge" (*ibid*, etc.).

Always referring to itself and convinced by itself, (our) self-sufficiency does not (and cannot) decline its status; it does not enter the self-doubting process, does not second guesses itself. Self-sufficiency – always full and confident – is always in itself grounds for and landmark of understanding and confronting life's problems. It involves two moments:

- First and foremost, it is an act of (self) negligence. We live on, overlooking our fundamental purpose, our deep selves, our peers (in their background, complexity and individualities), our thoughts, sensitivity, tensions, deep and boundless humanity;
- Then, eventually, it is a suicidal act: we lose our fundamental purpose, we kill our thoughts, (essential) searches, spiritual vitality and noblesse; we exit only as physical beings, as a number in a crowd, and not as *human* beings, caught in self-construction and/ or spiritual-cultural self-reconstruction.
- No matter how paradoxical or unimaginable it may seem at first sight, we can state (as a possible research hypothesis) that education – by its most important imperative, that of integrating new generations into society, adapting them to the existent economic requirements and conditions, to the common convictions shared in social life and the ideology of the time – participate substantially to the shaping and internalization of self-sufficiency.
- As an institution, we do not accept the vitality and originality of new generations unless within the limits of this imposed and legitimated adaptation, in the name of finding a job, finding an income source (as safe and as substantial as possible), achieving material and financial prosperity.

Also, within the school atmosphere, and given its norms, it appears that – largely – the presentation of self along with a teaching style that is confident and self-sufficient, authoritarian and not exposed to possible comments (or to any interrogations) from students, as we undoubtedly encounter in most of

the teachers, create the prerequisites of training disciples in how to be self-sufficient and relate to their life's experiences/ events in the same manner, manifesting the same inertia and habits encountered everywhere.

3. Self-sufficiency and self-education in the manifestation of the individual

Self-education is the process of ongoing searches and clarifications, (fundamental) constant questions either about the outer, or about the inner world. They are all ways to discover (again and again) life, its meaning, the soul and its struggles. In fact, as Riemen R. (2008) noted, culture is "the sum of the many ways that people can follow to seek the truth about themselves and about human existence" (p. 138).

Through self-education:

- We doubt and question what is considered to be '*normal*'; the beliefs and behaviours of the majority do not legitimate or validate this concept;
- We always get to search and clarify our social and individual existence, we get to penetrate the appearances/ the veneers/ the waves of our existence;
- We are always about to test our own safety nets, our own certitudes, meanings, ideological constructs;
- We give ourselves the chance to come out of our self-sufficiency; in this way, we realize how restrictive it is for a mind and a soul that are *alive,* eager to clarify what is *apparently* safe and 'normal', to find out what is *apparently* clear and distinct.

In short, we cannot be – at once – involved in self-education and self-sufficient. Self-education wards off self-sufficiency as self-sufficiency prevents self-education (and for many of us, it can even eliminate it); the moment it sets in, exclusively and completely, self-sufficiency doesn't give self-education almost any chance.

4. Possible conclusions

From what was presented above and from the way things were presented, we can extract the following (possible, but plausible) conclusions:

a. Self-sufficiency is that (general human) state that clouds the mind and conscience (without us realizing that actually we live with diffuse, precarious minds and conscience); it blunts our cognitive, investigative and dubitative acuity, it cancels the feverishness of our spiritual life;

b. Without a need for self-education and in the absence of the self-formative approach, our vast majority – *believing* in the importance and the value of our unique way of being, thinking, acting, believing, adapting – live self-sufficiently. We exist, merely, only by reference to the present and to current problems, by accepting the ideas, beliefs, stereotypes and behaviours of others, of the great majority (indulging in complacency, as well).

Self-education is the perfect antidote for self-sufficiency; due to it we have the possibility to become aware and free ourselves from our own self-sufficiency. Self-education awards us (or helps us regain access to) spiritual life, noblesse of the soul, and the deepest issues of existence (humanity).

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COACHING MODELS APPLIED IN STUDENTS' TEACHING PRACTICE PLACEMENTS

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Abstract:*This paper presents the theoretical and methodological framework for the application of the most popular models of coaching in education, specifically in the practical training of future teachers, within the teaching practice placements, which could be much improved if the principles and strategies of coaching for performance were capitalised.For an optimizing approach to education based on coaching,one does not need just conceptual clarification, but also new practice models to support the personal and professional training of students in their academic career. The purpose of the research was to experiment with established models of coaching which, applied in teaching practice placements, generated analyses, reflections, resizing of the process of initial training for future teachers and ultimately led to best practices and positive changes at the behavioural, attitudinal and value level. The methodology is of the qualitative type. The conclusions of the work emphasize the value of coaching models, the specific nature of the process based on the evidence of the research into the practical training of future teachers.*

Key words:*coaching models, teaching practice, initial teachers'training.*

1. Introduction

The current interrogations and reflections on the recalibration of initial teachers' training system fromthe Romanian pre-tertiaryeducation in accordance with the National Education Law No.1/2011, updated, but also with the European strategies and practices in the field, bring forward new principles of reconstruction and resizing of future teachers' initial training based on a modern referenceframe that enables diversified routes for teachers' training.[2]

Since practical training represents the most important component of initial formation for the teaching career, teaching practice is the key element that requires resizing actions in terms of extending the number of hours allocated,

of consistence and of diversification of the contexts of professional behaviours practice.Professor E. Păun (2013) points out that "*reflective practice must become an essential training component for the teaching career*." [8] At the teaching practicelevel, the major role that mentors and practice coordinators play has often been stressed as "*their model, their teaching styles, attitudes and values they convey, manifested teaching skills are sources of inspiration for future teachers*". (Tudor L.S., 2015). The issue of these teachers' continuous training as specialists in coaching is of high topicality. Schon D. argues that true professionals, regardless of their field of activity, are reflective practitioners and all their efficient performances are reflective practices because they think while acting and act on what they think.[9] Later extended by J.P. Killion and G.R. Todnem, Schon's model brings under the spotlight both reflection in action, reflection on action and reflection for action. [6]

2. Coaching versus mentoring in teaching practice

Coaching has proved its efficiency over time as a process and strategy of motivation, performance improvement, change and personal and/or organizational development in areas such as sports, business, psychology, adult education, leadership, industry.According to Whitmore J. (2014, p.33), "*coaching is even a way to lead, to treat people, a mind-set, a way of being*".[12]

Used for the first time in the UK (1830), the term *coaching*(the verb"*to coach*") has, by definition, according to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, the primary significance of"***to meditate***" and then to "*train, make suggestions about, to work with facts*."[12] In teaching practice, from the perspective of the student practitioner, meditation in the sense of introspection, self-analysis is essential in gaining active and deep knowledge about our own actions, moods, emotions, inner experiences, motivations, as compared to the practical exercise at the teacher's desk and future profession in general. It's about personal reflection on one's own professional behaviour in training. Through coaching, one can develop strategies in teaching practice that lead to reflective introspection and to questioning on some unique teaching moments experienced bythe students, which help them develop a critical and self-critical spirit, as well as a cognitive and educational autonomy.The student who enters a coaching process will be aware, first of all, of the level of his/her own preparation for the teaching profession, will conceive this moment as being the starting point in his/her professional development. This necessarily involves awareness and responsibility, ownership and commitment. The student will set clear and realistic objectives in his/her effort of professional growth, knowing precisely what is his/her starting point and what are the necessary steps that

will have to be undertaken in order to gain even more self-confidence, more excitement and more teaching experience. (S)He will learn how to be proactive, open and flexible, constructive and organized. Being accompanied throughout the process by a mentor specialist in coaching, the student will follow his/her own program of training and development, will gain self-confidence, will gain knowledge and new skills and will practise his/her less developed capabilities and skills.According toWhitmore J. (2014, p.32), "*the fundamental and ubiquitous purpose of any coaching-type interaction is to build the self-confidence of others, regardless of the nature of the task or issue in question"*. Among the multiple benefits of coaching, Whitmore J. (2014, p.233-236) mentions the following: "*improved performance and productivity, personal development, improved learning, improved relationships, improved life quality, creativity, better use of resources, greater flexibility and adaptability to change, culture change, existential skills et alia"*.All these facts will motivate the student in his/her professional development. Unlike mentoring, which involves a support relationship offered by a long-term experienced mentor to his disciples, coaching "*does not depend on an older and more experienced mentor who transmits his knowledge to someone*", but on the coach's skills that help students learn " *...on their own rather than be taught by others*. [12]. Both processes (mentoring and coaching) are valuable because they facilitate the exploration of needs, motivations, desires, skills and thought processes and assist students in making a real and lasting change in their way of professional assertion. The literature of specialty emphasizes both the differences between the two processes and the similarities between them. While mentoring involves long-term support and guidance in order to prepare students for their future professional roles, coaching is a short-duration process covering several areas of development/specific aspects (Jarvis J., 2004).

An optimizing approach to the practical preparation of future teachers needs not only conceptual clarification, but rather new practice models to personally and professionally support students in their training for a teaching career. In order to explore the applicability potential of coaching models in teaching practice, models that are popular in the literature of specialty [1], [4] due to their practically-proved effectiveness in various fields, a focus group was conducted in May 2016 with 6 people directly involved in the teaching practice placements of students from the following specialisations: Letters, Economics and Law (three teaching practice mentors from 3 application schools in Pitesti and three tutors/practice coordinators from the university). The objectives of the focus group aimed at, among others, designing the procedural framework necessary to the experiencing of certain coaching models in teaching practice placements and advancing proposals for the operationalization of new pedagogical tools for teaching practice

placements. The focus group was organized and moderated by the researcher, who collected the data based on the interview guide. The pre-session of the discussion focused involved the familiarization of the participants with each other, but also with the meeting space, and there was an introduction on the meaning of a coaching model, i.e. a set of guidelines that offer coaches practical ongoing support in students' practical training. Moreover, the moderator explained that, in teaching practice, a coaching model could be a logistical plan for working with teacher-to-be students who brings together a set of specific strategies for the designing, understanding of and reflection on the act of teaching and for increasing the students' teaching performance. The moderator pointed out that in specialised literature there are several coaching models and invited the focus group participants to analyse 3 of them: the GROW Model, the GROWTH Model and the FUEL Model. The selection of these models was based on the following main criteria: assessments of several specialists in the field [7] in what concerns their popularity, applicability and effectiveness demonstrated in various professional fields, the roles set out for the coach and the coachee, the coaching strategies that lead to professional success, reflective analysis, individual and together with the coach, on experiential learning situations and on "inside knowledge" of the profession by practising it.

The GROW Model (J.Whitmore, 2003) involves going through 4 stages,just like planning a trip desired:

- Goal/setting the goal - *Where do you want to go? What's your goal?*
- Reality/examining current reality - *What's the reality? Where are you right now?*
- Options/exploring options -*What are your options to bridge the gap between your goal and reality?*
- Will/setting the way/the path to be taken- *What will you do to plan your next steps?*

Coaching in teaching practice is a model of student support based on the following key elements:"*building awareness of the facts, of their own potential, of responsibility and of self-confidence"*. (J.Whitmore,2014).An expanded version of the previous model is the GROWTH Model (Gollwitzer, 1999), which involves 8 training steps:

- Goals–*What do you need to achieve?*
- Reality–*What is happening now?*
- Options–*What could you do?*
- Will–*What will you do?*
- Tactics–*How and when will you do it?*
- Habits–*How will you sustain success?*

The FUEL Model (Zenger, Stinnett, 2010) involves the existence of 4 stages:

1. The frame/context of the conversation is agreed by both coach and coachee, the purpose and the desired outcomes are set;
2. Understanding the current state by the coachee, through his/her awareness of the current reality;
3. Exploring the desired state through multiple alternative paths before prioritizing methods of achieving success;
4. Laying out a success plan involves identifying the specific action steps to be taken in order to achieve the desired results in time and determine the follow-up of the process.

In teaching practice, coaching is focused on the mentor/tutor-student professional dialogue, oriented towards helping students in the process of initial training in terms of awareness and responsibility in exercising increasingly better teaching roles and behaviours by appealing to their own potential and to the internal resources waiting to be brought to light. The issues addressed in coaching meetings are selected by the student himself/herself and the coaching process provides opportunities for individual reflection, but also for reflection with the coach on understanding the specific issues of the teaching profession.

3. Steps in implementing coaching models in teaching practice

The initial stage is based on J.Whitmore's belief about coaching, which, to be practised successfully, "*requires expertise in coaching*"[12]. This step aims to prepare teaching practice mentors and tutors as specialists in coaching through a training program specially designed in accordance with the existing occupational standard (COR code 242412) to ensure their possession of the skill set necessary to the capitalization of coaching strategies in teaching practice placements. The training program in coaching can be designed in modules (table 1), totalling a number of 360 hours, distributed as recommended in the standard.

Table 1.Designing the modular training program for specialists in coaching

Crt. no.	Modular training program for specialists in coaching		No of hours allotted/module
	Module I	Fundamentals of the coaching process	78 hours
	Module II	Coaching techniques	156 hours
	Module III	Organization of coaching	66 hours
4.	Module IV	Practical coaching sessions	60 hours
	Total No of hours		360 hours

In order to diversify the experiential learning situations in whichstudents will be involved in teaching practice placements and tobroaden their practical training, decisions can be made at the level of management of teaching practice activities and at the level of the continuous training provider in view of establishing a network of specialists in educational coaching, which will bring together *resource persons* trained as specialists in coaching and working in alternative education units (Step by Step,Montessori, Freinet, etc.) or in non-formal education, student clubs and palaces, in NGOs with learning/recreational/cultural purpose etc.

In the proper stage of individual/group coaching sessions, students start their self-reflective analyses and the coach puts a functionalityimprinton a coaching model, mainly by following the main stages:

— Identification of the current situation, as perceived by the student *(Where am I?);*

— Selection and specification of the condition desired/outcome to be reached by the student*(Where do I want to get?);*

— Finding/building a strategy to achieve the desired condition *(How do I get there?);*

— Choice of techniques meant to activate theinner resources needed to achieve the desired condition *(What are the best techniques for activating the resources to achieve the desired state?);*

— Training and continuous support to the student all the way from the current condition to the desired condition by specific coaching methods*(How am I supported on my way to teaching performance?).*

The duration of a coaching session can vary from 30 minutes to 1-3 hours. One can opt for practical coaching sessions organised in groups. Coaching works at the level of thinking and attitude, strategy and behaviour, skills and management of emotions. During the coaching session, the coach can fulfil several roles. In the case of the teaching practice, training is twofold: on the one hand, the role of the mentor from the application schools as a specialist in coaching and, on the other hand, the role of the practice coordinator/tutor from the university as a specialist in coaching. Both coaches support students on their way to professional success by acting as facilitators and trusted partners that provide security and support. The coaching models adopted differ, as well as the context in which the coaching process takes place. The specific nature of these support actions in the coaching process consists of:

- setting the goals related to performance and setting the final goals;
- using specific questions, well placed in order to generate new insights into understanding or addressing a practical situation;

– using different coaching strategies that will allow students to access their inner resources, to better understand themselves, to motivate themselves, to make decisions responsibly, to develop new strategies for action, to refine their behaviours, attitudes or personal working strategies;

– selecting the best solution after examining several options for solving a situation/practical problem in accordance with the student's own will;

– interest in perceptions, values, belief system of the student, in his/her way of thinking, emotional structure, potential and limitations;

– constructive and generative feedback for new understandings of the matter addressed.

4. Discussion and perspectives

The analysis of the 3 coaching models has allowed the focus group participants to highlight several useful things from the viewpoint of their applicability in teaching practice placements. The Grow model allows the identification by the student of the behaviour whose change is desired, the goal of the coaching process being represented by the structuring of this change with the coach's help.Students will be taught how to distinguish between the final goals and the performance goals that are under the control of each of them and which provide an adequate way of measuring individual progress. There follows the examination phase of current reality, when the student is helped by the coach to accurately and honestly describe the original state or the starting point of his professional developmentthrough open questions (*what, when, where, who and how much*). An exploration of the options will enable the student to weigh each actionfrom a wide range of alternatives in terms of advantages and limitations so that, at a later moment,the students willmake the right decision or adopt that behaviour which could lead to the right solutionbased on their own will. The GROWTH model brings as added value the introduction of the *tacticsstage* and of the *habits stage*that will lead the student to reinforcing and adopting an efficientwork strategy in a determined time, but also to reflectingover concrete ways to assist their professional success.The FUEL Model converges with the previous models when setting up a plan for success, articulating specific action steps to achieve the desired results in time. The coach sets time limits for specific actions and for feedback. (S)He also offers creative ways to support the coachee.

The optimization of teaching practice placements by capitalizing coaching strategies points to several interrelated actions which contribute to the increased quality of the future teachers' practical training:

– creation of innovative tools for carrying out the coaching process and practice sessions;

- widening the range/scope of the teaching practice, creating the context for capitalization of the complex learning situation (Soare E., 2015) by diversifying the situations of students' skills exercising,it happening in other educational settings than the application schools (e.g. students practice in spaces of non-formal education);
- formalization of internships under the supervision of practice mentors and tutors and setting upa mechanism for recruiting teacher-to-be students ever since college years;
- setting up a system of coordination of volunteer students who engage in voluntary work at the level ofcertain school units, public or private institutions with educational and/or cultural/communitypurposes and its correlation with teaching practice;
- facilitating the exchange of best practices among teacher-to-be students, among mentors and tutors from other universities/other countries in projects, summer camps, round tables, conferences, workshops etc.

5. Conclusions

Coaching in teaching practice is a dynamic process focused on a professional dialogue designed and implemented in the student's benefitin order to help him/her out in the process of formation/development of his/her professionaland transversal competences.The coaching relationship is built on trust, open communication and confidentiality, it having a well-established duration and entailing the existence of informal or scheduled meetings focused on achievement of the specific and immediate goals.Coaching is a process that aims to improve student performance immediately.The art of coaching lies in creating an environment that is favourable to learning/exercising professional behaviours and of discovery by the student of his/her internal resources, most often elicited by a coach's ability and used effectively in the practical exercise at the teacher's desk. The coaching process will guide the student in surveying the personal development potential and will activate those latent qualities, skills and resources he/she needs in order to become increasingly better in the successful practising of the teaching profession. The coaching models help us understand the coaching intervention from a systemic perspective on improving the practitioner students'teaching performance.Out of the variety of coaching models, coaching specialists can opt for those models that best facilitate the conversation underpinning the coaching relationship with a view to change, development and achievement of the desired performance.As coaches in teaching practice, mentors and tutors will use open questions to help students reflect on their own didactic actions, reactions and behaviours, decisions, revise certain unconformitiesunder way

and acquire that procedural knowledge and those practical skills necessary to a successful performance of the teaching profession.

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THE TEACHER'S PERSONALITY. STUDENTS` EPRESENTATIONS

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Abstract: *The professionalization for teaching career is generally analyzed in terms of a process of initial and continuous training of teachers, on the basis of national and international professional standards/skills. We note, however, that preparing for a teaching career does not guarantee anybody that they will become a good teacher, a more careful approach to other factors which take part in an eventual success being necessary. From this perspective, in the present study, we propose to identify the representations of students related to: motivation considered for a teaching career, self-perception regarding career suitability, personality characteristics of successful teachers, aspects of self-evaluation of their personality.*

Key words: *professionalization, standards, skills, teacher personality.*

Introduction

Education reform projects after 1989 have included drafting approaches for didactic profession standards, developed through the actions organized by the National Council for Teacher Preparation (since 2001) that attempted to capitalize on the ideas contained in the main normative documents pertaining to the work of teaching staff from Romania.

In this regard, we emphasize the concern of the National Council for the preparation of teachers *to create a system of professional standards for teaching, which aim to ensure the future teacher the right of access to the best training, in specialized institutions, and to the practitioner teacher the possibility to be continually supported with training programs updated and forward-looking for the needs of the Romanian citizen of tomorrow. The teacher needs to know what is expected of them and must have the professional competence to act responsibly. Professional standards create a fundamental marker from which all these derive*(Gliga, L., 2002).

The National Council for Teacher Preparation prepares a system of standards for the teaching profession, formulated as *a set of expectations and demands,*

explicitly formulated, relating to knowledge, skills and attitudes that a teacher is required to prove in his work with students, so that it can be considered that he fulfills his professional duties at a level acceptable to the society. Subsequent contributions will demonstrate both the need for detailing the skills/standards of the teaching profession and of other factors (including personality traits) of successful teachers.

Theoretical Justification

Professional standards of teaching *represent statements on the expected qualitative level of professional activities of teachers, differentiated by functions, capacities and levels of expertise.* (Potolea, D., Toma, S., 2013, p. 11)

Currently, the system of skills on which are based the professional standards of evolution in the academic career, it picks up and adapts to the specific nature of the teaching profession and the demands of Romanian pre-university classes and skill levels with which they operate in the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), the European Qualifications Framework in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the National Framework of Qualifications in Higher Education of Romania (NFQHER).

"The professional development of teaching staff, management, guidance and control staff and professional requalification are based on professional standards for the teaching profession." (LEN. art. 244, para. 5).

A new model of definition and description of professional skills/standards targets: "the professionalization of the teaching career; placing the training system in the context of continuous professional development/lifelong learning and training and orientation of the training system towards mobility and career evolution and professional development" (Continuous Training Methodology, art. 90); Initial preparation and continuous training for teachers "is based on the model of the approaching by skills and on the concept of cumulative development of the level of competence of the teaching staff" (Continuous Training Methodology, art. 6.)

The system of definitory skills for evolution in the teaching career is made up of three categories of skills: *specialty skills* (defined according to the NFQHER Methodology and are made public by the website www.rncis.ro); *professional skills* (these are: designing of teaching, management and monitoring the learning process; the assessment of educational activities; using digital technologies; knowledge, counseling and differencial treatment of pupils; management of the class of students); *transversal skills* (such as: institutional development of the school and of the school-community partnership; career management and personal development; applied educational research).

However, beyond the analysis of the standards and skills that define the evolution in the teaching profession and, in general, the large amount of preparation for the formation of a teaching career, doesn't guarantee anyone that they will become a good teacher.

Taking these considerations, in this study we aimed to identify aspects of self-assessment in relation to the teaching career, characteristics of their own personalities and identify the characteristics of successful teachers. Complementary to these elements, specialty literature also identifies factors such as: social support in the long term, by a group or an individual, for the chosen career; the feeling of autonomy in order to feel „in the right place" in the profession; identification with the profession of teacher, reached when the person feels that they have acquired the skills needed to practise at a good quality standard (Thompson, J. G. 2002, pp. 278-279).

The ideal characteristics of successful teachers' personality would be: sociable, empathetic and altruistic; modest and fair play; open, curious and optimistic; patient and persevering; moral and progressive; analytical, with a sense of humour (Stronge, J. H., 2007; Goodlad, J.I., McMannon, T. J., 2004).

These personality traits are expressed in various attitudes and actions, such as: care towards the student, sympathetic listening to pupils (Feldhusen, Hansen (1994; Lee Corbin & Denicolo, 1998; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2002; Vaille & Quigley, 2002); granting respect to the pupil (Collinson et al., 1999, apud. Stronge, J. H. (2007), p. 25) trusting him (including on his desire to learn); concern in relation to the school and off-school situation of the student; creating a supportive climate in the classroom, preferring to work with students, while maintaining the structure of the teacher-student relationship; allowing students to participate in decision making; understanding of cultural differences; exhibiting enthusiasm and mobilizing the students; willing to take chances and capable of self-criticism; investing in their own training (Wenglinsky, H. 2000. Apud. Stronge, J. H. 2007).

Methods

Objectives targeted:

- Identifying the characteristics of a successful teacher in conjunction with professional and personality factors;
- Identification of significant differences of averages from the criterion of the experience and the of the subjects of the study.

Sample

108 people were tested, aged between 18-50 years old. The variable *age (2gr)* was achieved by separating the main group into two subgroups, the first comprising persons aged up to 25 years (inclusive) and the second

comprising persons aged over 25 years. The *experience* variable has identified wether or not people have experience in teaching. The *seniority* variable refers to the length of service (years) gained by people active in the teaching career. This variable had values between 1 year and 32 years. The *degree* variable identified four categories (0-None 1-final degree 2-2nd degree 2, 3-1st degree).

Table of mean and SD for the variables: age, experience and seniority

	age	experience	Seniority
Mean	25,88	0,49	3,59
SD	8,132	0,502	7,054

Table of frequencies for the variables: age 2gr, experience and degree

Age(2gr)	experience	Degree
Group1 (0-25) N = 63	Group1 (none) N = 55	0- none N = 83
Group2 (26-50) N = 45	Group2 (with) N = 52	1- final degree N =11
		2- 2nd degree N = 4
		3- 1st degree N = 9

Instruments

The study was based on data collected through a questionnaire. The questionnaire applied has watched several types of information:

- demographic and professional achievements (age, experience, seniority, degree)
- teaching career motivation (intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, the age at which it was decided to follow a teaching career)
- self-assessment in relation to the teaching career (feeling in tune with the teaching career, wanting to practise in the field, the desire to move forward, satisfaction toward completed studies, the desire to finish the started studies, expectancies relating to career success)
- identifying the characteristics of some successful teachers. A list of 13 features identified in the literature, was made up, to which were added other 13 features common to teachers but not confirmed as helping to practice successfully. A separate question assessed the subjects' opinion regarding the weighting of the practice/theory for achieving the formation of successful teachers.
- self-description of their own personality characteristics. There were questions concerning: the general orientation of the person (cautious, realistic or idealistic, denoted by-1, 0 and 1), tolerance of others, empathy, distributive capacity (problem solving), the level of satisfaction towards their own person, the level of assumption of their own success.
- assessment of the perception regarding the necessity of the discipline in class.

Statistical analyses

For the processing of the data collected was used the SPSS 15 software.

Lack of data in some questionnaires has not been replaced.

Starting from the data collected additional variables were created to be used in processing statistics:

-age2gr (described above).

-theor./pract. processes 2gr (group 1 with <50% theory and group 2 ≥ 50% theory). In group1 N = 53, in group2 N = 54, a person did not respond to this item).

-rapport (the ratio between the number of verified features/number of random characteristics was calculated)

The statistic methods used were: descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency), correlations, mean comparisons.

Results

Distribution of results

The subjects of the study have selected an average of seven verified characteristics (M = 7.01, SD = 2,840) to only about three random characteristics (M = 3.41, SD = 1.976). As frequency, the study participants have identified between 1-13 features checked and selected between 0-10 random features.

Correlations

Two analyses were made using the method of correlation, the first included all persons in the group while the second was done separately for each age group (age2gr). All variables have presented multiple significant statistical correlations, but still only the most relevant of these shall be listed:

-the variable estimating the ability to recognize the characteristics of a successful teacher correlated statistically significant, per group, with the variable age (r = 0284, n = 107, p = 0.003), intrinsic motivation variable (r = 0210, n = 107, p = 0.030). There was also a statistical significant inverse correlation with variable relating to the ratio of the need for theoretical/practical knowledge to become a good teacher (r =-0212, n = 106, p = 0.029). In the subgroup aged up to 25 years there has also been a significant inverse statistic correlation with the variable estimating the need for discipline imposed on students (r = 0262, n = 62, p = 0.039).

The method of partial correlation was used to check the influence of some associated variables (age, experience, degree) on the correlation between age and identifying verified characteristics. None of these associated variables influenced significantly the initial correlation (r = 0266, n = 98, p = 0.008).

The coefficient of correlation between the age variable and the ratio variable (r = 0313, n = 103, p = 0.001) was also calculated.

-the variable of random characteristics attributed to teachers, per group, presented a marginal correlation but statistically significant with tolerance variable (r = 0196, n = 105, p = 0.045). In the sub-group aged over 25 years, also there was a correlation with the variable estimating the distributive capacity of the person (r = 0429, n = 40, p = 0.006).

Semnificative differences between means

a) Comparing the means using the experience variable does not indicate semnificative differences.

b) Comparing averages based on age2gr (sub-group1 N = 63, sub-group2 N = 45) indicates semnificative differences in the associated variables (experience, seniority, degree) but also in other variables:

- intention to teach, p = 0.047 (M = 0.87, SD = 0.340 fata de M= 0.98, SD = 0.149)
- identifying verified characteristics, p = 0.016 (M = 6.45, SD = 2.678 to M= 7.78 SD = 2.907)
- emotional influence, p = 0.047 (M = 8.55, SD = 1.511 to M= 7.89 SD = 1.886)
- ratio of verified features/random characteristics, p = 0.005 (M = 2.11, SD = 1.162 fata de M= 3.11 SD = 2.323)

Discussions

Inthis study it was found that if you analyze the ratio of about 2/1 between identification of characteristics specific for successful teachers and the selection of random features, it is evident that the subjects have identified more correct than incorrect features. Most often were selected 8 correct features and 3 incorrect features. All subjects selected at least one correct option and there were subjects that didn't select any incorrect option.

This ability to discern the characteristics of success was associated primarily with the subjects' age. The more advanced was the age the more increased was the number of features identified. In the sample examined, this association was not significantly statistically influenced by the experience, length of service or degree of the subjects.

Also, analyzing the correlation coefficient obtained between the age variable and the ratio variable it is found that a more advanced age is associated with a more favorable ratio, meaning older ones have selected several characteristics checked and fewer random features.

Although in the sample examined the relationship between age and identification of the characteristics of successful teachers is statistically significant and it does not seem to be influenced by other variables measured (experience, seniority, degree) however, in the absence of a control group (preferably a sample without training in the pedagogical field) cannot be

stated with certainty that the association identified was not influenced by specific knowledge or practice in school of which benefit those within preparation for the teaching career.This hypothesis of the influence of specialty knowledge or school practice is partially supported by the correlation identified between the identification of checked characteristics and the variable estimating the share of practice/theory that subjects believed to be optimal in the formation of a successful teacher. In our sample, those who considered that there is a need for more practical (and less theoretical) knowledge to form a successful teacher were the ones that have identified more verified characteristics of a successful teacher.

Also, in this sense, an additional argument about the complexity of the relationship between age and identification of the verified characteristics is provided by the inverse correlation identified in the age group over 25 years. In this subgroup the persons who have identified several verified characteristics have been those who considered that the need for discipline in class may have lower levels than the maximum ones (in our study, this item's maximum was 10pc.).

Related to selecting random features, in this study there were two variables with which showed statistically significant direct correlations: the level of tolerance and the ability of the distributive capacity. These results indicate that there is an association between choosing the wrong features and tolerance but also, with self-assessed ability to execute simultaneous tasks.

Although some authors have highlighted the importance of teachers' expertise in their process of improvement however, in this study comparing means obtained from the various variables after the level of experience does not indicate significant differences. On the other hand, in the present study age was shaped like a variable that appears in multiple significant statistical relationships.

Limits

- the relative small number of persons in the sample (per group/subgroups).
- there was no control group (without training in the didactical/pedagogical field)
- collecting data only from those enrolled in the university
- collecting only data resulted from self-assessment

Conclusions

According to the results of this study, in terms of identifying the characteristics of a successful teacher, life experience, maturation appear to be a more relevant variable than experience gained through teaching in school. The difference between age groups found out can have multiple sources but the relatively small size of the sample and the absence of a control group makes it difficult to identify them accurately.

Recommendations

Additional studies are necessary for the verification and deepening of the found results.

Once confirmed certain results must be applied in the process of teacher training for its improvement.

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HELPING STUDENTS ENHANCE THEIR GRIT AND GROWTH MINDSETS

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Abstract: *In this essay we will discuss the notions of Grit (Duckworth, 2013) and Growth Mindset (Dweck, 2006). It is apparent to many people that their ideas make sense, students who are resilient and who work hard tend to do better than students who are not resilient and who give up easily. Both authors tell us that this kind of perseverance seems to be more important than are natural abilities and intelligence. Analysts of brain research (e.g. Caine & Caine, 2011; Sousa, 2011; Johnson, Johnson & Holubec, 2008) now believe that intelligence is not a static commodity. The more we learn, the more we can learn (Sousa, 2011). Those who end up being the best or the smartest are not always those who start out that way (Duckworth, 2013). Johnson and Johnson (2013) tell us that students who work together in positive and promotive ways persevere longer, work harder, and learn more in general than do students who work alone or who compete against their peers. Dweck (2006) believes that students can be taught the skills to persevere, to believe that their efforts and attitudes make a difference. Hattie (2009) has described teacher initiatives that make a difference for students. In this essay we will discuss ways that teachers can and do make a positive difference for their students.*

Keywords:*grit, growth vs. fixed mindsets, cooperative learning*

Introduction

For many years now there have been ongoing debates about the importance and definitions of intelligence. Some people argue that there is a general intelligence made up of different categories that can be defined and measured by an IQ test (Kaufman, 2009). Other people believe that IQ can be viewed more broadly and that there are different ways to be intelligent (Gardner, 2000; Sternberg, 1977; Sternberg, Torff, & Grigorenko. 1998; Goleman, 1995). Brain research now indicates that the brain is not static but rather a dynamic organism that changes over time (Sousa, 2011; Caine

&Caine, 2011). Sousa (2011) tells us that, according to research on the brain, the more we learn the more we are able to learn. This is an important discovery because it points to the notion that we can indeed affect our intelligence in a positive way. This research is also indicating that the brain functions in the context of the environment in which its owner inhabits and that people have the ability to adapt to their surroundings and to in effect change the brain. In other words intelligences can grow. These revelations have led people to study what else helps people to be successful (Duckworth, 2013; Dweck, 2006). Research indicates that there is more to success than just intelligence and/or talent. Duckworth (2013) tells us that success depends on more than just cognitive ability. These abilities, in her view, are at least just as important as intelligence or talent in determining how successful people become. Duckworth (2013) believes there is more to predicting the future of our students than test scores. Those who succeed tend to be those people who have what she calls Grit, the ability to persevere and have passion for their goals. Dweck (2006) has found in her research that people who believe that they can affect their intelligence and talent work harder and persevere through difficult situations better than people who believe that intelligence and talent are set in their genes and cannot be changed much. People who display what she calls a Growth Mindset see obstacles as challenges to be met. Not only do people with high Growth Mindset scores persevere they enjoy the challenge of growing their skills and abilities.

Flynn (2016) has explained how scores on IQ have risen dramatically over the years. If we had not changed the standards on IQ tests the average IQ score today would be about 130 using older standards. In other words what was average has now changed. The fact that we have to re-norm IQ test standards to maintain the bell curve appears to point to the notion that there is more to IQ than some kind of set standard. Intelligence then is obviously affected by things like social progress, better education, the number of people educated, and the living environment of all of us. Flynn relates that today more than 30% of the population now works in cognitively demanding professions as compared to about 3% years ago. In addition he tells us that almost every job and life activities today are more cognitively demanding. In other words, as we have used our brains differently our brains have changed, we have gotten more intelligent. This notion opens up the possibility that we all can more directly increase our intelligences (Gardner, 2000). Both Duckworth (2013) and Dweck (2006) agree with that notion and they believe that we can grow our Grit and our Growth Mindsets. They believe that we all can get more intelligent and become more skilled or talented. Their research efforts indicate that people can and do change, adapt, and improve if they are dedicated to and persevere do so. Those people who end up being the most

talented or the most successful are not necessarily the people who started out being smarter or more talented at the beginning of the process (Dweck, 2006). Usually those people who work the hardest and longest, and who are dedicated to improve, end up being the best and most successful.

Johnson and Johnson (2013) have developed their ideas about cooperative learning and its effects on student achievement, attitudes, dedication, social skills, and emotional strength. Their research indicates then when students work positively in cooperative groups they learn more, remember it longer, gain positive social skills and attitudes, and are stronger emotionally and psychologically. They agree with Vygotsky (1978) that a large part of learning is a social endeavor. They agree with Glasser (2006) and Fitzgerald and Laurian (2013) that relationship building is an important aspect of the educational process. The personal and academic support provided to students in cooperative learning work assists students in meeting their emotional needs and enhances their abilities to grow in their passion for and perseverance in learning (Johnson & Johnson, 2013). The Johnsons believe that students grow by working and struggling together to overcome challenges. In the process students are learning how to develop positive work habits and they are also learning the social skills necessary to work in teams. This process gives students the authority and responsibility they need to control their own learning. Gordon and Preble (2011) refer to this kind of as respectful teaching. Caine and Caine (2011) believe that this tier 3 kind of teaching and learning process should be the goal for all teachers.

In this essay we are proposing that in school we can address the important areas of growth in students and that wherever students are when they begin a year with us we can help them to grow. Since we know that personal qualities of students (Grit, Growth Mindset, self-discipline, dedication to task, etc.) are more predictive of success (than SAT or other standard test scores) in university or college in terms of GPA and graduation (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, Kelly, 2007), we argue that schools should also attend in important ways to these non-cognitive skills. We will discuss Grit (Duckworth, 2013), Growth Mindset (Dweck, 2006), and Cooperative Learning (Johnson & Johnson, 2013) principles and how we believe they can help teachers assist our students to reach their true potentials.

Grit

Angela Duckworth (2013) has been working for many years to understand the non-cognitive attributes that people possess that make them successful. Grit can be defined as the amount of passion and perseverance people have as they work toward long-term goals when they face problems or hurdles that impede their progress. In other words, having a high Grit attribute means that a person does not let anything stand in the way of reaching her/his goal (Duckworth, 2013). Duckworth describes how people

who are Gritty believe it is important to continue after a failure, have a drive to continually improve, never believe they have become good enough, are satisfied with being unsatisfied, maintain passion even in difficult times, and know what they want and go after it unceasingly. Gritty people, according to Duckworth, are "paragons of perseverance" who refuse to give up or give in.

Duckworth (2013) has studied Grit in many different situations. She developed a Grit inventory in which half of the questions related to passion and half the questions related to perseverance. At West Point she studied how to predict which students have the best chances of succeeding and making it through the grueling program. West Point used a Whole Candidate Score for its students. This score consisted of items like high school grades, their IQ scores, SAT or ACT standardized test scores, Physical Fitness scores, and a leadership score; all of the typical scores used by many institutions to predict success in their institutions. Duckworth found that that the Whole Candidate score was a poor predictor of student success at West Point and that the Grit scores were a much better predictor of success. She also found that there was almost no relationship between Grit score and the Whole Candidate Score, and she found no relationship between talent scores and Grit scores. Duckworth has also tested these results with businesspeople, high school students, Ivy League students, undergraduate college students (2 year and 4 year degrees), graduate students, the Green Berets, and National Spelling Bee contestants. In every case the best predictor of success was the Grit scores of the people involved in every study.

Duckworth (2013) studied novice teachers and found Grit to be the best predictor of both beginning teacher quality and ability of these young teachers to remain in teaching. This is an incredibly important finding since we know that 40% to 50% of young teachers drop out of teaching within their first five years. Duckworth's studies indicate that Gritty are more effective and they remain in the profession. This could/should have ramifications for how we train, recruit, induct, and develop our pre-service and in-service teachers.

Success in schools and in many other areas of life depends on more than talent and intelligence. Having talent and intelligence is obviously important but just as important (or maybe even more important) is a person's ability to stick with a job up it has been completed. Duckworth (2013) tells us that Darwin believed that there was little difference in raw intellect among people, but he believed there were huge differences in the amount of zeal and hard work exhibited by people. She also described how William James believed that most people live "far within" their talent and intellectual limits. These ideas mean that in most cases the perceived differences in talent and intellect seen by most people are not significant because the true potential of people is much higher than most peoples' visible talents and intellect.

Although Grit is affected by genes, it is also affected by experience, thus, most of us can raise our intellect and talent if we can learn to apply ourselves in different and probably more intense ways; in other words become Grittier. The good news, according to Duckworth (2013) is that we can grow in our Grit.

Duckworth (2013) has created a formula for achievement:

Talent x Effort = Skill ⇒ Skill x Effort = Achievement

In her formula you can see that effort appears twice; once in each part of the equation. Talent only appears in the equation once. In order to reach potential effort has to be visible. Whatever level of talent one has it can be developed and then once developed it can be used to achieve. We all know people who have a great deal of natural talent who never do anything with it. There are also very talented and productive people in the world who did not start out being very talented. Consistency of effort over the long run is what makes achievement happen: effort in developing talent and then effort in using the developed talent to do something worthwhile are what prove to be the differences in the most successful people and everyone else..

Duckworth (2013) gives of some ideas for organizing our work to help students grow their Grit:

1. Create a great and abiding interest
2. Create an appetite for practice, constantly challenging oneself
3. Create a sense of purpose in what you do
4. Maintain hope; a confidence in your ability to keep going

Duckworth tells us that most very successful people love what they are doing. Most people, about 87% according to Duckworth, say they are not engaged in their work. They do not find it interesting and many do not find it to be important work. When people are interested in their work they become more engaged, they do better work, and they enjoy their work more. They are also more helpful to their peers. Students in university or college whose interests and majors match earn higher grades and are much less likely to drop out of school. People are also more interested in their work if they believe what they are doing is helpful to society. People who love what they are doing are also happier about their quality of life (Duckworth, 2015).

There is only one way to create great and long-lasting talent – through consistent and focused practice. Will Smith (2013) tells us that his success has little to do with innate talent it is his “sick” work ethic that has allowed him to gain fortune and fame. The famous potter Warren Mac Kenzie (in Duckworth, 2013) has said that the first 10,000 pots he made were difficult; then they became a little easier. John Irving, the prolific author, has said that what he does best is rewriting because he feels as if his wiring takes so much work to make it worth reading (in Duckworth, 2013).

People who stay with their efforts have a purpose for their efforts. They tend to have enduring goals on which they remain focused over a long period of time (Duckworth, 2013). In addition to our goals being important to our selves, there is power in believing that what one does has purpose in the well being of other people (Duckworth, 2013). Duckworth tells us that the more unified, aligned, and coordinated our efforts in relation to our important goals the more likely we are to stick with them. Sousa (2011) has stated that for the brain to learn we need one of two things (and if we have both it is better): sense and meaning. Meaningfulness is a very important and powerful aspect of what we do and who we are (Fitzgerald and Laurian, 2013). Since information tends to go through the limbic system of the brain first emotions play a huge role in our learning (Sousa, 2011). Meaningfulness is a huge part of what makes us work hard to reach our goals.

Duckworth (2013) explains that people with the highest Grit scores have an unwavering belief in their abilities to face problems and overcome them. No being able to solve a problem right away is not a valid reason, in their eyes to give up. Rather, Gritty people believe that they will learn more and become stronger people by overcoming their challenges with steady and passionate effort. There is, in their eyes, almost never a reason to give up.

It seems to us that as we face challenges and learn new things, as we develop more skills, and as we begin to create our passions we become Grittier. In those classrooms in which students are asked to solve problems on a regular basis, work in concert with their peers, learn from their failures, and who are encouraged to develop and then follow their passions, students learn how to develop their Grit. In classrooms in which students are told to be individualistic or competitive and who are forced to comply with the wills of their teachers Grit has to be developed somewhere other than in school. We believe that the evidence is clear so educators should create environments in which students are asked to think critically, work cooperatively, and search for their interests so that they are more likely to find their passions.

Growth Mindset

Dweck (2006) has developed the concept of Growth Mindset. In her research Dweck has found students of all ages who are excited about facing challenges in school. These students see hurdles in their learning as challenges that they appreciate and look forward to solving. These students see not knowing something as exciting because they believe they are on their way to more learning. Their mentality is that they do not know it yet, but through effort and practice they will learn new concepts and gain new skills. Other students see these same challenges as indications of limitations on

their intellect and talents. Dweck labels these kinds of thinking as being a Growth Mindset or a Fixed Mindset. People in a fixed Mindset do not search out challenges, rather they try to avoid most challenges and try very hard to remain in the comfort zone.

Intelligence

For years people have been debating about the meaning of intelligence. In Dweck's (2006) terms there is the Growth Mindset and the Growth Mindset camp. People who maintain a Growth Mindset perspective believe that things like IQ, personality, and talent are set genetically. We can develop those things we have been given but we cannot change them much. For example, we are either talented artists or we are not. In this Growth Mindset view if we are not talented artists we will never change that. We can work hard and get better but we will never become talented unless we have the genetic tendency to do so. In this perspective the same is true about intelligence and personality. We are basically what and who we are and that does not change much. People with a Growth Mindset believe the opposite to be true. These people, like Dweck, believe that intelligence, talent, and personality can be developed and changed. Growth Mindset people believe that with strategic hard work we can achieve much more than other people believe.

Multiple Kinds of Intelligences

People like Caine & Caine (2011), Caine, R. N., Caine, G., McClintic, C. & Klimek, K.J. (2011), Gardner (2000), Goleman (1995), and Sousa (2011) argue for looking at intelligence in multiple ways instead of one general intelligence. Gardner (2000) describes 8 or 9 intelligences (language, mathematical and logical, musical, visual and spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, kinesthetic, naturalistic, and existential) that he believes all people possess in different degress. Goleman (1995) writes about Emotional Intelligence. Caine & Caine (2011) and Sousa (2011) discuss the impact of different aspects of the brain on learning and memory. All learning engages the physiology. Caine and Caine (2011) have developed what they call the 12 Brain/mind Principles from their review of research on the brain. They argue that these principles indicate that we should apply varied approaches to teaching and learning that are student-centered and based on the uniqueness of each student. Their 12 principles include: 1. All learning engages the physiology. 2. The brain/mind is social. 3. The search for meaning is innate. 4. The search for meaning occurs through patterning. 5. Emotions are critical to patterning. 6. The brain/mind processes parts and wholes simultaneously. 7. Learning involves both focused attention and

peripheral perception. 8. Learning is both conscious and unconscious. 9. There are at least two approaches to memory. 10. Learning is developmental. 11. Complex learning is enhanced by challenge and inhibited by threat associated with helplessness and/or fatigue. 12. Each brain is uniquely organized. The Caines argue that students need to be challenged appropriately, supported continuously, engaged in complex activities, and given as much control of and responsibility for their own learning as possible. Students process information an their learning differently and they should learn, according to the Caines, in accordance with their interests and/or passions.

Sternberg (1977), who developed the Triarchic Theory of Intelligence, believes that one's talent and intelligence is not set but rather are parts of humans that can be developed over time. Dweck (2006) tells us that the most talented people in the world often did not start out being the most talented. She relates how Michael Jordan (one of the greatest basketball players in the history of the game) did not make his varsity basketball team on his first tryout. He became one of the best players in history because he did quit after that first failure. Instead he used that as a learning experience and he dedicated himself to becoming the best player in the world. He spent hours upon hours of dedicated practice to hone his skills to become great. We all have heard similar stories about actors, writers, singers, and friends and neighbors. People all over the world have made themselves into what they wanted to become by great dedication to their goals.

Challenges

One of the biggest issues with a Fixed Mindset is that people tend to shy away from challenges that they see as too difficult to overcome (Dweck, 2006). People with a Growth Mindset feel like they have to prove how intelligent or talented they are compared to other people because they believe talent and intelligence are fixed assets. Failure in their minds is an indication of less talent or intelligence than they want to have, so they try to avoid failure (Dweck, 2006). People with Growth Mindsets do not assess themselves accurately because they try to hide their deficits rather than try to improve them. Instead of embracing new challenges that they may not be good at in the beginning of the process, Growth Mindset people try to do activities that they know they will do well. When people avoid new and challenging activities they miss opportunities to grow and improve. In the long run it means that people who started out being the most talented end up not being as talented as people who believed that they could improve and who worked to improve.

Dweck (2006) believes that people with a Growth Mindset not only seek out challenges, but they thrive on these challenges. They want to be

challenged because the process becomes exciting. The challenge itself appears to be motivating to Growth Mindset people. In sports the competition is exciting, as exciting as the outcome. Mia Hamm, one of the greatest female soccer players in the world discusses how she loved to "play up" in her entire career. That is, she tried to play with and against people whom she thought were better that she was. On the other hand people with a Growth Mindset want to remain in their comfort zone. They want to compete in activities in which they are pretty sure that they will win (Dweck, 2006).

Finding your Mindset

Dweck (2006) gives us four questions to ponder in relation to our thinking about our intellect and four questions to think about our talents. She tells us that our intelligence mindset comes into play in situations that involve mental ability and our personality mindset comes into play in situations that require our personal qualities to resolve issues. Her questions are as follows:

Intelligence Questions

1. Your intelligence is something very basic about you that you can't change very much.
2. You can learn new things, but you can't really change how intelligent you are.
3. No matter how much intelligence you have, you can always change it quite a bit.
4. You can always substantially change how intelligent you are.

Personality Questions

1. You are a certain kind of person, and there is not much that can be done to really change that.
2. No matter what kind of person you are, you can always change substantially.
3. You can do things differently, but the important parts of who you are can't really be changed.
4. You can always change basic things about the kind of person you are. (Dweck, p. 12-13)

The good news according to Dweck is that once you understand your mindset, then you can change it in those areas of your life that you really want to make changes. We all can learn new ways to live our lives. We all can take more control over many parts of our lives if we choose to do so (Fitzgerald & Laurian, 2013). Dweck (2006) believes that if we do choose to change what we do and how we think then we can and will change our lives for the better. This relates to everyone in all parts of our lives, not just for students in our schools.

Setting the Environment

If we are going to assist our students in developing Grit and a Growth Mindset then it seems like we should be somewhat strategic in our efforts. We believe that this is a two-stage process. The first stage is to set up an environment in school and in class that will encourage and support students in their efforts to grow their Grit and Growth Mindset. That may sound like just common sense but our experiences in schools tell us that it is not as common as it should be. The second stage of this process in to help our students find their interests and to develop their passions. Many students tell us that they have no idea what they are passionate about in their lives. When we ask these students to tell us what they have done in school to develop a passion, they usually either give us a blank stare or they give us an example of what they have done in a co-curricular activity (e.g. band, chorus, drama, sports, Future Teachers of America, 4H, etc.). Third, we have to give our students opportunities to develop their skills (e.g. rehearsal, practice, feedback, chances to fail, chances to try again, support, guidance, etc.).

In terms of setting a positive and supportive environment we know from research that bullying and other negative interactions occur in school on too much of a regular basis (Gordon & Preble, 2011). Gordon and Preble also tell us that in many schools many adults interact with each other and their students in negative ways. The climate of the classroom and the school has to be supportive and cooperative (Fitzgerald and Laurian, 2012; Johnson & Johnson, 2013). As one of our colleagues likes to say, "Common sense is not very common." A good deal of the negative atmosphere in schools is caused by political educational policies (Zhao, 2012). Teachers are telling us, on a regular basis, iterations of, "I would love to do the things you are talking about because it would be better for my students. But, I am afraid that I will lose my job if I do." In spite of the large amount and growing evidence to the contrary policies continue to focus on standardized tests results to assess schools, principals, and teachers (Zhao, 2012). In a word, that has to change. We have to, as Sir Ken Robinson (2010) has said, disenthrall ourselves from the idea that standardized tests are what really measure the most important skills and talents of our students. Study after study tell us that things like Grit – passion and perseverance (Duckworth, 2013), Growth Mindset – believing that I can change how much I know and how much talent I have (Dweck, 2006), critical thinking – the ability to problem solve (Zhao, 2012), the ability to work with peers – Cooperative Learning (Johnson & Johnson, 2013), and the ability to create and maintain supportive relationships in the classroom (Johnson & Fitzgerald, 2013) are what really matter. We have to disenthrall ourselves from the idea that intelligence and talent are set in us at birth.

Step One

Step one is to create an environment that Caine and Caine (2011) call Relaxed Alertness. Relaxed Alertness basically means that the teacher sets a classroom environment in which the students feel safe physically and emotionally. It is also an environment in which every student is challenged appropriately, what Mia Hamm called playing up. In this environment students are challenged and supported, and the challenges are developed to be appropriate fro every student. Students have to work hard to achieve, and if they do work hard, the teachers sets up the process so that students will succeed in the end.

Such a classroom is based on the respectful attitudes behind the Caring Habits (Fitzgerald & Laurian, 2013). These habits which we learned from William Glasser (2006) are as follows: listening, supporting, encouraging, respecting, trusting, accepting, and negotiating differences. None of these Caring Habits should be a surprise to any of us. We have all been taught that as educators these are the kinds of ways we should interact with our students and our colleagues. In real life though things occur and we forget about the caring habits and use Deadly Habits instead (Fitzgerald and Laurian, 2013). These habits are fairly easy to follow when things are going well for us. It is easy to be supportive when people are following the rules, studying hard, and being enthusiastic in class. It is a different story when students are not working hard, are being disrespectful, hate school, and hate our subject. How do we get students in these kinds of circumstances to be motivated, cooperative, and successful? We believe that we help students to understand that they are intelligent, that they are worthwhile, and they are important to the future of our society. In other words, even when students are acting disrespectfully or are uncooperative, we treat them with respect and care and with an open heart to help them to understand that they are important to us, and that we want them to succeed.

We start by modeling the respect that we want to see in our students. An important part of that respect is to teach in ways that every student can learn. One of the most disrespectful things a teacher can do is to create a lesson in which we know a number of students will fail to learn. Respectful teaching includes teacher actions like: presenting material in multiple ways, having students work with the curriculum in multiple ways, assisting students in identifying their passions, helping students to work with their passions, and giving the students the kind of feedback that they need to move forward in the process. Respectful teaching is a vital aspect of differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 2014). We respect our students when we treat them well, even in difficult times. When we have to help students learn different behaviors we should still exhibit the seven caring habits with them. Students should also understand the concept that respect is something we give freely.

All human beings deserve to be respected. We also respect our students when we ensure they are in an emotionally and physically safe environment. The feeling should be that in our classroom we treat each other well all of the time. When there are conflicts we deal with them in positive and productive ways.

Some people believe that we should avoid conflicts at all costs. We believe that any time you have more than one person interacting in close quarters on a regular basis then conflicts are inevitable. Of course if we are respecting each other and supporting each other on a regular basis there will be many fewer conflicts. When a conflict does occur if we deal with it positively then two things happen: 1. The people in the conflict will grow socially and emotionally; 2. People who handle conflicts in positive ways gain conflict resolution skills (Johnson & Johnson, 2013). The Johnsons recommend that we begin to resolve conflicts using a win-win mentality. That is, we try to see if we can develop a solution in which both parties are happy with the results. If people involved cannot find a win-win solution, then both sides can compromise to get the best result possible. One which both people agree is a good solution, if not a perfect one. The mentality of trying to understand each other and working together cooperatively helps people to maintain and even grow their relationships (Johnson & Johnson, 1995). In classroom conflicts there are always two goals – resolve the issue and maintain the relationships. If we remember both goals then we help to develop a cooperative climate in the classroom, one in which students feel emotionally and physically safe and students feel supported by the teacher and their peers.

Step Two

Step two in setting the environment, in addition to creating a climate of Relaxed Alertness (Caine & Caine, 2011), is to develop pedagogical techniques that are student-centered. If the goal is to have the students learn as much as possible then the students should be actively engaged in the process (Caine & Caine, 2011). Brooks and Brooks (1993) make the case for a constructivist approach to teaching in which the student is at the center of the action. In line with the ideas of Vygotsky (1978), Bruner (1966), and Piaget (1957), they discuss how to help students create their learning through active student engagement. What becomes most important in a constructivist classroom is student progress in terms of personal development. Other important ingredients (e.g. curriculum, teacher decisions, standardized testing, etc.) become vehicles to assist in the student and the teacher in their educational work. Brooks and Brooks (1993, 1999) advise teachers to think about the following:

1. Find out about student values and thinking – student point of view.

2. Once we know what students value and think, then challenge their suppositions. In terms of Piaget, cause some disequilibrium that causes students to learn to move to equilibrium.
3. Help students to attach meaning and relevance to their learning.
4. Have students work with big ideas.
5. Employ formative assessment strategies within the context of classroom learning.

Caine and Caine (2011) also advise us to give as much control and responsibility as possible over to the students. As we move from teacher or curriculum centered learning to student centered learning the goal is to encourage students to take over responsibility for their own learning. This process changes the role of the teacher from a distributor of knowledge to a facilitator of learning (Caine & Caine, 2011; Hattie, 2009). Direct teaching is still an important part of this process (Hattie, 2009) but it is developed in relation to the direct needs of the students. Curriculum is still important but it becomes a vehicle to develop knowledge and the skills necessary for future success (e.g. Grit and Growth Mindset skills, critical thinking, communication skills, creativity, and collaboration skills). Wagner (2008) has developed what he calls educational survival skills for the future:

1. critical thinking and problem solving
2. collaboration across networks and leading by influence
3. agility and adaptability
4. initiative and entrepreneurship
5. effective oral and written communication
6. accessing and analyzing information
7. curiosity and imagination.

These Grit and Growth Mindset kinds of skills cannot be learned and practiced in isolation or by sitting still listening to someone else lecture to them. These kinds of skills are learned by actively engaging in real life like kinds of problem solving, work with their peers collaboratively on important projects, and struggling to develop new ideas and skills (Framework for 21st Century Learning, 2011). Students have to be allowed to experiment and fail, develop new ideas, and experiment again. Failure, of course, has to be seen as an integral piece of the learning process (not something to avoid). Techniques like Project Based Learning (PBL, 2016) become more utilized in this kind of process. It can be messy and seem somewhat chaotic but that is how real growth in the important Grit and Growth Mindset skills happens. The more real life these kinds of activities can be the better. In this process the normal curriculums become vehicles for the students to learn the transdisciplinary curriculum they need for their future success. Every class has to teach critical thinking, problem solving, communication skills,

cooperative skills, creativity, and all of the other skills listed above. If we are serious about the future success of our students then this has to become a priority in every classroom.

Conclusion

Grit and Growth mindset skills are at least as important as are curriculum skills. If we are serious about the future success of our students no matter where they go after they leave our skills, we will work hard to help them achieve the knowledge and skills of Grit and Growth Mindset. Our students live in a real world where they will face problems and have to make important life decisions. The stronger they are in what they know and in how they see themselves the more likely it will be that they will persevere with hope and passion in their lives. As the world continues to struggle with the issues of today and the issues that will develop in the future, it will be important for us to make sure our students have the where-with-all to thrive in their lives. We may have to change how we think, how we teach, and what we teach our students. Maybe we educators need to learn as much about Grit and Growth mindset for ourselves as do out students in their lives.

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THE EFFECT OF TEACHING COOPERATIVE LEARNING SKILLS ON DEVELOPING YOUNG STUDENTS' GROWTH MINDSET

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Abstract: *Some people see difficult issues as setbacks, as problems, as setbacks that will stop them from reaching their goals. Other people see the same kinds of issues as natural challenges of life and approach these problems as opportunities to grow. People like Dweck (2006), Duckworth (2013), and Johnson and Johnson (2013) believe that students can be taught to approach hurdles in life with positive and productive attitudes. They believe that students can learn how to approach issues in their academic in different ways. Student intelligence, talents, abilities, and potential are not written in stone at birth and through strategic effort and perseverance students can change their attitudes and perspectives on difficult issues. In this study we utilized cooperative learning techniques (Johnson & Johnson, 2013) to observe and analyze student data to determine whether or not young students were willing to contemplate their perspectives in relation to working through complex academic challenges. The results indicate that young students are willing and able to change their mindsets from a fixed to growth perspective. The results also indicated that those students who began the process with a positive mindset maintained their positive outlook and approaches to academic challenges. These results engender promise for our ability as instructors to help students learn to be strong willed and approach issues with a mindset to strategically work as hard as they have to learn and become successful.*

Keywords:*cooperative learning techniques and skills, growth mindset, primary students*

Introduction

Every day we see another story in the news related to how people do not understand the important of working together to solve problems. With all of the technological advances we have seen in the world we still appear to

not know how we should treat each other in respectful ways. Our understanding of human interaction has not been able to keep up with our knowledge of technological understanding (Fitzgerald & Laurian, 2013; Glasser, 2006; Johnson & Johnson, 2013). In our quest to be the best test takers in the world we have forgotten about teaching students how to be good people (Wagner, 2008; Zhao, 2012). Instead of viewing our world as a place to beat out everyone else, maybe it is time to look at the world as a place to cooperate (Johnson & Johnson, 2013). In order to help us to move in that direction this study was created to work with young people (first graders) to begin the process as early as possible. Some people do not believe that young people can learn the complex social skills to work in cooperative groups successfully. We believe they can and our observations of some teachers and their young students indicate that young students can and should begin to learn about cooperation, perseverance, a positive work ethic, and how to treat people in positive ways (Roman, 2008, Popa, 2010).

Literature Review

Introduction

With the understanding that our students will need more high level understandings about how to work in teams and how to solve problems using critical thinking skills in creative ways (Wagner, 2008) we are seeing that cooperative learning has once again become a more relevant techniques in our schools (Johnson & Johnson, 2013). Wagner has interviewed CEOs from around the world and they have told him that creative problem solvers, who are dedicated, and resilient, who understand how to work and communicate with other people are the kinds of people who will succeed in the careers of the future. Caine and Caine (2011) tell us that we should be giving students more responsibility and authority over their own learning if we are serious about students learning those kinds of skills. Sousa (2011) agrees and tells us that the latest research on the brain supports these practices as valid because they assist in the development of the brains of our students. Brain research indicates that in the learning process that the brain changes and grows (Caine & Caine, 2011). Johnson and Johnson (2013) have found that students who work together cooperatively learn more, remember it longer, and also gain more effective social skills and psychological strength than do students who work alone or competitively. Lev Vygotsky (1978) tells us that learning is a social process. In his Zone of Proximal Learning he tells us that students can learn some things on their own. But to learn more they need what he calls a More Knowing Other to help the learning process. This more knowing other can be a friend, a parent, a teacher, a peer, a computer, etc. His point is that

we learn more when we have other people around us who know more than we do.

Cooperative Learning

Since so many people believe collaboration to be a vital skill set for the future success of our students (Wagner, 2008, Johnson & Johnson, 2013), it makes sense that we should be assisting our students by working with them in cooperative groups. Hattie (2009) has developed effect sizes for of at least 150 educational strategies and their effects on student learning. He has determined effect sizes of .59 and .54 for the use of cooperative learning as compared to individualistic and competitive learning. Johnson and Johnson (2013) have found even higher effect sizes (.71 and .90) in their work. In other words, cooperative learning is significantly more effective than either individualistic or competitive learning in relation to student learning. Cooperative learning also incorporates other techniques that Hattie has found to be effective for student achievement: self-reported grades/student expectations (1.44), Piagetian techniques (1.28), providing formative evaluation (.90), microteaching (.88), classroom discussion (.82), feedback (.75), reciprocal teaching (.74), student-teacher relationships (.72), meta cognitive strategies (.69), and problem solving teaching (.61). Each of these strategies encourages active engagement in students and supports our students in learning the collaborative skills students will need in the future careers and in their personal lives.

Johnson and Johnson (2013) have developed the five basic elements of cooperative learning. Interacting with peers and the curriculum in complex ways successfully does not occur by accident. We have to strategically structure the class so that students learn the social skills to be effective team members. The five basic elements give teachers a structure to use as they develop cooperative lessons. The elements of cooperative learning are as follow:

1. Positive Interdependence – We are all in this together and need each other
2. Individual Accountability – Everyone does her/his part and learns all of the material
3. Promotive Interaction – We all support and promote each other academically and personally
4. Interpersonal and Small Group Skills – We all learn the social skills to help build relationships and resolve conflicts in positive ways
5. Group Processing – We each assess ourselves and each other in order to get better

Positive Interdependence is at the heart of cooperative learning. It is the attitude that we are a team and we need each other to be successful. We

work together for each other because we believe that together we are greater than the sum of our parts. Together we can accomplish more than we can each do alone. Teachers can help create this kind of attitude by structuring the learning so students really do need each other (e.g. give separate jobs, assign a group task, limit the materials so students have to share, develop activities in which the students need to discuss and develop better responses, give bonus points for great group work, have students teach each other, etc.). In every formal cooperative group (a group with an assigned task) there should always be three goals: 1. Learn the material so each student can apply the knowledge and skills, 2. Accomplish a group task (e.g. report, presentation, essay, etc.), and 3. Learn the group social skills assigned (e.g. taking turns, encouraging each team member, checking for understanding, synthesizing ideas, developing consensus, negotiating different ideas, debating ideas, developing common ground, etc.).

The second basic element is individual accountability. When we talk about individual accountability we really mean two things: 1. Individual accountability to the group and 2. Individual accountability for one's learning. Each person has a job to accomplish and in order for the group to be successful everyone has to do her/his job. Each individual should be graded individually on her/his efforts for the group (not graded as a group). Additionally, each individual is responsible for knowing the content being learned. For example, if the group is learning how to create a five paragraph essay, each individual will have to be able to demonstrate her/his writing ability individually. This is true for the group task, individual learning, and applying the social skills being addressed in the activities. One of the goals of cooperative learning is to have students help each other to learn, rehearse, and practice so that each individual can demonstrate competence.

The third basic element is promotive interaction. When students are applying promotive interactions they work together in ways that they all promote or support each other. They support each other academically and they support each other personally. Students should be working closely with each other, sharing materials and ideas, and encouraging and helping each student's efforts. This means that every student in the class has other students to care about and help her/him. This kind of empathetic cooperation helps students to learn great social skills and it helps every student to understand the curriculum in a real world way.

The fourth basic element is teaching students the interpersonal and small group skills they need in order to be or become great teammates. In addition to the important curriculum goals students should learn the skills necessary for working out group goals, negotiating conflicts positively, communicating effectively, and maintaining strong relationships in school. Students also should be learning leadership skills in their work in the

classroom. The important idea here is to strategically teach social skills to students, and not leave it to chance that the students will gain those skills.

The fifth basic element is group processing. Caine and Caine (2011) explain that Active Processing is critical to deep understanding of both academic ideas and social growth. Group processing occurs when students review and discuss their efforts and their learning with each other. When students plan and publicly commit to learn more or re-learn as necessary they are more likely to follow-through with their plans. In processing students assess what they did well or know or can do proficiently and they discuss areas in need of improvement. This process allows students to make continuous progress and it also demonstrates to them that their efforts to learn matter a great deal.

Whenever a teacher develops a cooperative learning lesson the implementation of these five basic elements into the process is vital for success. If something in the lesson does not work as well as the teacher thought it should, we can usually find what needs to be improved by reviewing the basic elements. Since this is such a complex process it takes time for the teacher and the students to think cooperatively in an intuitive fashion. Thus, it is usually a good idea to begin the process with a small first step. Then as the teacher and students learn more, the teacher can add to the procedures and processes. Once the students gain the basic ideas and skills of cooperative learning the teacher will observe the learning curve taking a much higher path in terms of academic growth and social and interpersonal growth. In the end students will learn more content more deeply and they will have also gained the vital social skills necessary for working in teams (Johnson & Johnson, 2013).

Growth Mindset

Carol Dweck (2006, 2014) has spent many years studying why some children relish a challenge and why other students run from a challenge. She has developed the concepts of Fixed and Growth Mindsets to explain this phenomenon. A person with a Fixed mindset believes that there intelligence and talent is set. They believe they are either smart of not, or talented or not. Thus, they see a difficult challenge as something that will show that they are not as smart or talented as they hoped they were. Students who have a Growth Mindset look as a challenge as an exciting opportunity to learn more. Their mentality is that they do not yet know something, not that they will not learn something. They do not see a challenge as a negative affront to their intelligence they see the challenge as an opportunity to become more intelligent. When asked what they would do if they failed a test students with a Fixed Mindset indicated that they would probably cheat on the next test or find someone who did worse than they did so they would feel better. On the

other hand students with a Growth Mindset offered that they would find out what they needed to work and get better, and they indicated that they would study harder for the next test (Dweck 2006, 2014).

People with a Fixed Mindset few their intelligence, talent, and personality as being fixed assets that cannot be changed. They believe that they can improve in those areas in which they are already intelligent and talented but not in other areas. Those with a Growth Mindset disagree. They believe they can improve their intelligence and talent through hard work and strategic efforts. So, when engaging in an activity people with a Growth Mindset seek out negative feedback because in order to grow they want to know what they should be working on to improve. Fixed Mindset people seek out confirming feedback so they can verify that they are intelligent or talented. When asked to self-assess this causes students with Fixed Mindsets to give themselves more inaccurate information and scores, while those with Growth Mindsets give themselves more accurate information and scores, especially when it comes to the information they need to help them grow (Dweck, 2006).

Dweck (2006) gives us eight questions that we can use to identify our Mindsets. Once we know what are our Mindsets are in specific situations then we can work to change them. Our Mindsets are not set in stone. We can change them. That means that we can teach our students how to change their Mindsets when they need to do so. Dweck tells us that our intelligence Mindset comes into play for any challenge that involves mental abilities and our personality mindsets come into play whenever a challenge requires our personal qualities to resolve the issue at hand. Dweck's (2006) questions include:

Intelligence Questions

5. Your intelligence is something very basic about you that you can't change very much.
6. You can learn new things, but you can't really change how intelligent you are.
7. No matter how much intelligence you have, you can always change it quite a bit.
8. You can always substantially change how intelligent you are.

Personality Questions

5. You are a certain kind of person, and there is not much that can be done to really change that.
6. No matter what kind of person you are, you can always change substantially.

7. You can do things differently, but the important parts of who you are can't really be changed.
8. You can always change basic things about the kind of person you are.

(Dweck, p. 12-13)

The good news, according to Dweck, 2006, 2014) is that we can change our Mindsets if we want to do so. We do not have to remain stuck in a Fixed Mindset mode unless we choose to do so. Deck's research (2006, 2014) has shown that students can be taught about Mindsets and how to change them.

Methodology

Introduction

For this study we worked in a first grade classroom and taught students using cooperative groups in order to find evidence of the effects of cooperative learning on students' Fixed or Growth Mindsets. We taught the students three social skills to use in their group work: 1. Taking turns, encouragement, and working voice levels. Two university students taught the students the definitions of each skills and held class discussions to determine why each skill is important. Students practiced each skill and received feedback from each other and from the instructors. After students had gained a basic level of knowledge and skill using each skill the two instructors introduced a project to the students. Their task was to create a story to be placed in a Big Book. Students were grouped by the topics they chose for their stories. Students were placed in groups of four or five students. Each student wrote one page for their group's story based on their chosen topic. After completing their stories the students each wrote their page of the story into their Big Book. Students then created a Title page and illustrated their stories with pictures that they either found on the internet or that the students drew.

Setting and Participants

The study was set in a first grade in a city in Romania that has a population of approximately 200,000 people. There is a diverse population of students in this school both in terms of ethnicity (Romanian, Turkish, Hungarian, Iranian) and in socioeconomic status. This school has a good reputation in the city and this is one of the elementary schools sought out by many parents who want their students to be prepared for one the best high schools in the city.

There were 30 students involved in the study, 19 girls and 11 boys. The classroom teacher functioned as one the observers in the study, as she allowed the two pre-service students to conduct the lessons and activities for

the study. The university professor who was conducting the study also functioned as an observer and assisted the pre-service students when necessary.

Research Questions

For this study we worked to answer the following research questions: This study was based on two research questions:

1. To what extent will cooperative learning affect the social skill achievement of first grade students?
2. To what extent will cooperative learning affect the mindsets of first grade students?

The research questions were based upon our two hypotheses:

1. If we taught students social skills when they worked in their groups they would improve on those skills.
2. As students become more skillful in their group efforts they would maintain or increase their levels of Growth Mindset.

Study Design

In this study we employed a mixed methods design, using both quantitative (surveys) and qualitative (observations and teacher interview) data. Students took a pre and post study survey in relation to Cooperative Learning and their Mindsets. Students were also observed by the two pre-service students and the professor prior to and at the completion of the study. The two pre-service students observed the three social skills used on the study (taking turns, encouragement, and working voice levels). The university professor observed the students in terms of their Mindsets. During the course of the study the pre-service students and the professor kept a researcher journal to maintain daily and weekly observations. At the completion of the study the classroom teacher was also interviewed to gather her observations.

Phases of Inquiry

The study employed the following phases of inquiry:

1. Pre study observation
2. Pre Surveys
3. Introduce social skills
4. Practice social skills
5. Teach basics of story telling
6. Introduce Small Group Big Book Project
7. Groups complete project
8. Post study observation
9. Post surveys

10. Teacher Interview
11. Data analysis
12. Formulate conclusions and recommendations

Instruments

The cooperative learning survey had three sections that each consisted of five questions: 1. personal support in learning from peers, 2. personal support in learning from the teacher, 3. cooperation. Each statement was scored on a Likert scale from 1 – 5 Always False to Always True). The statements for each section were as follow (Popa, 2005, 2010):

Personal support in learning from my peers:

1. In this class my peers like to help me to learn.
2. My peers want me to learn well.
3. In this class the other students care how much I learn.
4. In this class my peers like me the way I am.
5. In this class every colleague is my friend.

Personal support in learning from my teacher:

1. My teacher really cares about me.
2. My teacher cares how much I learn.
3. My teacher likes to see the results of my work.
4. My teacher likes to help me to learn.
5. My teacher cares about how I feel.

Cooperation:

1. In this class I like to cooperate with other colleagues.
2. In this class we help each other.
3. In this class we learn more when we work together.
4. In this class learning in cooperative groups is better than learning alone.
5. In this class it is a good that we have students help each other in their learning.

The Mindset survey consisted of 20 questions. There were ten statements for fixed mindset and ten statements for Growth Mindset. Students scored each statement on a Likert scale from 1 – 4 (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree). The statements for the survey follow:

Fixed Mindset:

1. Your intelligence is something very basic about you that you can't change very much.
2. Truly smart people do not need to try hard.
3. You can learn new things, but you can't really change how intelligent you are.
4. Only a few people will be truly good at sports – you have to be "born with it."

5. You are a certain kind of person, and there is not much that can be done to really change that.
6. You can do things differently, but the important parts of who you are can't really be changed.
7. Some people are good and kind, and some are not – it's not often that people change.
8. Trying new things is stressful for me and I avoid it.
9. I often get angry when I get feedback about my performance.
10. Math is much easier to learn if you are a male or maybe come from a culture that values math.

Growth Mindset:

1. No matter how much intelligence you have, you can always change it quite a bit.
2. You can always substantially change how intelligent you are.
3. Music talent can be learned by anyone.
4. The harder you work at something, the better you will be at it.
5. I appreciate when parents, coaches, teachers give me feedback about my performance.
6. An important reason why I do my school work is that I like to learn new things.
7. All human beings without a brain injury or birth defect are capable of the same amount of learning.
8. You can always change basic things about the kind of person you are.
9. Human beings are basically good, but sometimes make terrible decisions.
10. No matter what kind of person you are, you can always change substantially.

Results

Cooperative Learning

The students in this classroom believed that they were cooperative and they believed that their teacher and peers supported them in their learning. The students had higher scores in teacher support and cooperation in general in the pre survey (4.8 and 4.6 respectively) and a lower score for cooperation (3.9). At the end of the study the students maintained high, but slightly lower scores, in teacher and peer support (4.5 and 4.3repsecitvely). Their score for cooperation rose slightly to 4.1. In all three areas the students scored above four for their feelings of being supported by their teacher, supported by their peers, and cooperation in their class.

Table 1 displays the results of the pre and post observations in relation to the social skill of encouragement. In general the students displayed a growth in helpful social behaviors. The students displayed 86

helpful behaviors in the pre observation and 124 helpful behaviors during the post observation (a 44% increase). Students also displayed fewer non-helpful behaviors in the post observation period. Students displayed 35 non-helpful social skill behaviors in the pre observation and 32 negative behaviors in the post observation. It should be noted that in the pre observation students were working in groups of 2 and in the post observation the students were working in groups of 4 or 5. It takes more social skill ability to work in larger groups than in smaller groups. Thus, the rise in helpful behaviors actually displays a higher level of social ability than the raw scores seem to indicate.

Table 1
Ability to Enourage

Observed Catgory	Smiles		Nods		Sayssomething positive		Other	
Stage	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Helpful Actions	**35**	**50**	**4**	**10**	**1**	**5**	**46**	**59**
Non-helpful Actions	**18**	**12**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**16**	**19**

Table 2 displays the results for the pre and post observations for taking turns. The results show that students raised their level of helpful behaviors and slightly lowered their levels of unhelpful behaviors from the pre to post observations. The results show that students had 149 observable helpful behaviors in taking turns in the pre observation and 197 observed helpful behaviors in the post observation (a 32% increase in helpful behaviors). Students displayed 45 non-helpful behaviors in the pre observation and 36 non-helpful behaviors in the post observations (a 20% decrease).

Table 2
Taking Turns

Observed Category	Wait for person to finsh		Looks at the speaker		Makes a sign (e.g. raises hand)		Other	
Etapa	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Helpful actions	**19**	**24**	**29**	**39**	**33**	**43**	**68**	**91**
Non-helpful	**12**	**9**	**16**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**17**	**27**

actions

From the notes of the two pre-service students and the professor people noted the positive attitude displayed by the students in learning about cooperation. Students developed their own items to place in T charts to demonstrate what taking turns and encouraging other students looks like and sounds like. For the voice level skill the instructors noticed at the beginning of the process that the noise level in the room would rise as students became more engaged with their groups. So, they decided to teach the students about work level voices. As the instructors were walking around to observe each group the students would verbalize what they needed to do in order to keep voices at a work level (the mechanical stage of skill development). The instructors also indicated that they were intervening less and less as the process continued, indicating to them a growth in student skills and efforts.

Growth Mindset

In the pre-study Mindset Survey there were 20 students (69%) who scored in the Fixed Mindset with some tendencies toward Growth Mindset thinking. There were 9 students (31%) who scored in the Growth Mindset with some tendencies toward Fixed Mindset thinking. In the post survey there were 11 students (39%) who scored in the Fixed Mindset with some tendencies toward Growth Mindset thinking. There were 16 students who scored in the Growth Mindset with some tendencies toward Fixed Mindset thinking. One student scored in the Growth Mindset range (61% of the students scored in the Growth mindset areas). In other words there was a 30% decrease in Fixed Mindset thinking that was transferred to Growth Mindset thinking during the course of the study.

Table 4 displays the data from the pre and post observations for the Mindset actions of the students. In the pre observations there were 58 observable Growth Mindset actions. During the post observations there were 88 observable Growth Mindset actions (an increase of 52%). In the pre observations there were 18 observable Fixed Mindset actions, and in the post observations there were 5 observations of observable Fixed Mindset actions (a72% decrease).

Table 3
Growth Mindset Observations

Observed Category	Perseverance		Hard work		Ask for help		Help other		Other	
Stage	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Growth Actions	**26**	**31**	**18**	**24**	**9**	**14**	**4**	**6**	**1**	**13**

Fixed Actions	**1**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**8**	**2**	**7**	**3**

The notes from the instructors aligned with these results. They saw students were on task for longer periods of time when working on a task, and they noticed that students were asking for and accepting help from each other more often (instead of seeking out the instructor right away when a problem arose). Instructors also noticed that they were hearing more positive self talk when students were working on a challenging task ("I can do this". "What should I try next." "This is fun.").

Teacher Interview

The classroom teacher observed the lessons and activities developed by the in-service students. During the process she made observations and gave suggestions. She also used some cooperative learning activities with her students during the times that the class was not directly working on the project. At the completion of the project the teacher was interviewed about her observations. The teacher noted that, *At the beginning they did not use their social skills well, but as time went on they became more proficient. Now they accept and respect each other in their groups.* The teacher also noticed that, "*…those students who tended to not participate now are more engaged even in the traditional lessons.* She also indicated that her students had new friendships within the class during the study. Finally, she said, *Slowly but surely I am seeing that the students are learning how to persevere longer in class.*

Discussion

We had two main objectives in this study: 1. To find out how first grade students would respond to formal cooperative learning concepts, specifically learning small group social skills in their work. 2. To find the affects that this work would have on the Mindsets of the students. The results indicate to us that young students do indeed want to learn important social skills. Given support, practice, and feedback the students in this study were for the most excited and proud of their progress. This is a complex process and it takes longer than eight weeks to develop such complex skills but the progress we saw was very encouraging. It was also fascinating to see the growth in the Mindsets of the students in a short period of time. This is just the beginning of the process for these young students. We are more convinced now that if we begin while the students are young they will learn the pro social skills necessary to be good teammates in and out of school. We are also very convinced that Growth Mindset principles and skills can be

successfully taught to students of all ages. Young students can begin to master the social skills and Mindset skills to prepare them for life, and we believe that we should begin as early as possible to give students these important concepts and skills. We agree that these skills are going to be even more essential for our students in the coming years (Wagner, 2008, Pink, 2006, Caine and Caine, 2011). We also agree with Dweck (2006) and Duckworth (2013) that students can and should learn how to persevere and work hard throughout their lives if they want to be successful. People who are going to get the best jobs in the future are going to be those who understand how to work together positively, who know how to problem solve, who can think critically and creatively, and how know how to treat other people (Wagner, 2008; Pink, 2006; Zhao, 2012). Johnson and Johnson (2013) tell us that learning how to work together in positive ways is important to the future success of our students. As we look at what is going on around the world today, we believe it probably is important to the peace of our world. Learning how to cooperate may just be the right way for us to begin to change our world.

Limitations

This was small study and the data was very interesting and useful for us, but the results cannot be generalized beyond our study. We also intruded into a classroom in which the students were not familiar with us or we with them. That obviously caused some disruption in their regular work as we got used to each other. The teacher and the students were very gracious and they quickly gained trust if our interactions with them. But since this was a relatively short study (8 weeks) this was a limitation for the study. The use of the two pre-service education students was very useful in most aspects of the study, but their relative lack of experience in the observation process took time and practice to get them to become proficient. We should have used practice observations to do this training prior to the beginning of the study. Lastly, we had three people in the classroom plus the teacher observing the process. Classrooms in general do not have that luxury of practice. So, results may have been different if we had used just one person in this process.

Recommendations for Further Study

We have three basic recommendations based on the result of our study. The first recommendation is that because we are convinced that young people can learn well the concepts of Cooperative Learning and Growth Mindset that further studies should be implemented to gather more data of how to work with young people. Second, we believe that studies need to be implemented with larger groups and over longer periods of time in order to

create data that can be generalized. Finally, we recommend that more research be accomplished with the goal of finding more developmentally appropriate ways to help young students work on their Growth Mindset skills, especially when working in cooperative groups.

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FEW NEW PERSPECTIVES ON TEACHING

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Abstract: *Teachers, for many years, have used a wide variety of teaching approaches but in particular, the way was „learning by listening". Now we need to examine which are the new perspectives of teaching, appropriate in today's society. Could be "Interactive lectures, seminars, and tutorials: learning by talking"? or "Apprenticeship: learning by doing"? or "Experiential learning: learning by acting"? or "The nurturing and social reform models of teaching: learning by feeling"? We will see into the present paper some ideas about each of them.*

Key words: *Learning by listening, learning by talking, learning by doing, learning by acting, learning by feeling.*

Argument

Along time, teachers in their learning activities had mixed and matched different teaching methods, depending on the needs of both the subject matter and the needs of their students at a particular time, which, we can recognize that happen also in nowadays.

In the mean time we are convinced that no single method is likely to meet all the requirements of the teachers in this global and digital era. Some forms of teaching fit better with the development of the skills needed now and probably in the near future. Because the combination of conceptual, practical, personal and social skills in highly complex situations is a requirement for the future employees, influences the teachers to combine a variety of teaching methods for realizing this.

Knowing that the new information and communication technologies are nearly of all teaching methods which they can be used in classrooms or online, what matters, from the learning perspective, is not so much the choice of technology as the efficacy and expertise in appropriately choosing but on using it and integrating it in the teaching methods.

New technologies offer new possibilities for teaching, including offering more practice or time on task, reaching out to new target groups, and increasing the productivity of both teachers and the system as a whole.
These were a few reasons for that we stopped to do some comparisons and to point out some conclusions from a comparative review of different approaches to teaching who induces *learning by listening*, *learning by talking*, *learning by doing*, *learning by acting* and *learning by feeling* as Tony Bates [1] noted.

Learning by listening

We can agree that one of the most traditional forms of classroom teaching is the lecture, a transmissivity way of learning. For be clear in this approach we can take in consideration lectures' Bligh definition: „lectures are more or less continuous expositions by a speaker who wants the audience to learn something." [2] That is important as it excludes contexts where a lecture is deliberately designed to be interrupted by questions or discussion between teachers and students (interactive lecturing).
Lectures themselves belong to a longer oral tradition of learning, where knowledge is passed on by word of mouth from one generation to the next. In such contexts, accuracy and authority (or power in controlling access to knowledge) are critical for „accepted" knowledge to be successfully transmitted. Thus accurate memory, repetition and a reference to authoritative sources become exceedingly important in terms of validating the information transmitted. What is striking is how similar the whole context is to lectures today, with students taking notes, some talking at the back, and one clearly asleep.
What is remarkable is that even after the invention of the printing press, radio, television, and the Internet, the transmissive lecture, characterised by the authoritative teacher talking to a group of students, still remains the dominant methodology for teaching in many institutions, even in a digital age, where information is available at a click of a button. It could be argued that anything that has lasted this long must have something going for it. On the other hand, we need to question whether the transmissive lecture is still the most appropriate means of teaching, given all the changes that have taken place in recent years, and in particular given the kinds of knowledge and skills needed in a digital age.
The most authoritative analysis of the research on the effectiveness of lectures remains Bligh's (2000). He summarized a wide range of meta-analyses and studies of the effectiveness of lectures compared with other teaching methods and found consistent results:

- the lecture is as effective as other methods for transmitting information (the corollary of course is that other methods – such as video,

reading, independent study, or Wikipedia – are just as effective as lecturing for transmitting information);

- most lectures are not as effective as discussion for promoting thought;
- lectures are generally ineffective for changing attitudes or values or for inspiring interest in a subject;
- lectures are relatively ineffective for teaching behavioural skills.

Bligh also examined research on student attention, on memorizing, and on motivation, and concluded (p.56): „*We see evidence… once again to suppose that lectures should not be longer than twenty to thirty minutes – at least without techniques to vary stimulation.*" These research studies have shown that in order to understand, analyze, apply, and commit information to long-term memory, the learner must actively engage with the material. In order for a lecture to be effective, it must include activities that compel the student to mentally manipulate the information. Many lecturers of course do this, by stopping and asking for comments or questions throughout the lecture – but many do not. Teaching in many educational institutions is still organized around a standard 50 minute lecture session or longer, with, if students are lucky, a few minutes at the end for questions or discussion.

There are two important conclusions from the research:

- ✓ even for the sole purpose for which lectures may be effective – the transmission of information – the 50 minute lecture needs to be well organized, with frequent opportunities for student questions and discussion;
- ✓ for all other important learning activities, such as developing critical thinking, deep understanding, and application of knowledge – the kind of skills needed in a digital age – lectures are ineffective. Other forms of teaching and learning – such as opportunities for discussion and student activities – are necessary.

Lectures though still have their uses. McKeachie and Svinicki [3] believe that lecturing is best used for:

- providing up-to-date material that can't be found in one source;
- summarizing material found in a variety of sources;
- adapting material to the interests of a particular group;
- initially helping students discover key concepts, principles or ideas;
- modelling expert thinking. (2000, p. 58)

The last point is important. Faculty often argue that the real value of a lecture is to provide a model for students of how the faculty member, as an expert, approaches a topic or problem. Thus the important point of the lecture is not the transmission of content (facts, principles, ideas), which the students could get from just reading, but an expert way of thinking about the topic.

There are a few occasions when lectures work very well. But in a digital age they should not be the default model for regular teaching. Lectures will

provide a chance for teachers to make themselves known, to impart their interests and enthusiasm, and to motivate learners, but this will be just one, relatively small, but important component of a much broader learning experience for students.

Learning by talking

Socrates used dialogue and questioning „to help others recognize on their own what is real, true, and good." (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). This, we can translate now, an example of good practice in learning by talking. In nowdays learning by talking means somewhat interactive courses, seminars, tutorials, general speaking, interactive learning activities, in the approach face-to-face (physically or virtually).

This type of learning suggests the need for frequent interaction between students, and between teacher and students, for the kinds of learning needed in a digital age. This interaction usually takes the form of semi-structured discussion and can be done into the seminars or tutorials activities. They are probably best used when students have done individual work before the seminar. Seminars are flexible enough to be offered in class or online, depending on the needs of the students. Need they a deep learning or a surface learning?

Researchers like Marton and Saljö [4], who have conducted a number of studies that examined how university students actually go about their learning, make the distinction between deep and surface approaches to learning. Students who adopt a deep approach to learning tend to have a prior intrinsic interest in the subject. Their motivation is to learn because they want to know more about a topic. Students with a surface approach to learning are more instrumental. Their interest is primarily driven by the need to get a pass grade or qualification.

From Laurillard [5] and Harasim [6] surface approaches to learning are more commonly found when there is a focus on:

- information transmission,
- tests that rely mainly on memory,
- a lack of interaction and discussion.

and deeperapproaches to learning are found when there is a focus on:

- analytical or critical thinking or problem-solving,
- in-class discussion,
- assessment based on analysis, synthesis, comparison and evaluation.

Academic knowledge requires students to move constantly from the concrete to the abstract and back again, and to build or construct knowledge based on academic criteria such as logic, evidence and argument. This in turn requires a strong teacher presence within a dialectical environment, in which argument and discussion within the rules and criteria of the subject discipline are encouraged and developed by the professor.

Constructivists believe that knowledge is mainly acquired through social processes which are necessary to move students beyond surface learning to deeper levels of understanding. Thus it can be seen that seminars and tutorials reflect a strongly constructivist approach to learning and teaching.
Connectivist approaches to learning also place heavy emphasis on networking learners, with all participants learning through interaction and discussion between each other, driven both by their individual interests and the extent to which these interests connect to the interests of other participants. The very large numbers participating means that there is a high probability of converging interests for all participants, although those interests may vary considerably over the whole group.
The combination of theory and research here suggests the need for frequent interaction between students, and between teacher and students, for the kinds of learning (constructivist or/and connectivist) needed in a digital age and for sure, of upmost importanceis the ability of teachers to teach successfully in this manner, which requires different skills from transmissive lecturing.

Learning by doing

Learning by doing is particularly common in teaching motor skills, such as learning to ride a bike or play a sport, but examples can also be found in higher education, such as teaching practice, medical internships, and laboratory studies. Learning by doing is one of Pratt's five teaching approaches. Bloom and his colleagues designated psycho-motor skills as the third domain of learning back in 1956.
In fact, there are several different approaches or terms within this broad heading, such as experiential learning, cooperative learning, adventure learning and apprenticeship.
Apprenticeship is a particular way of enabling students to learn by doing. However, apprenticeship is the most common method used to train post-secondary education teachers in teaching (at least implicitly), so there is a wide range of applications for an apprenticeship approach to teaching. Therefore a form of apprenticeship is often implicit, default model also for university teaching, and in particular for pre-service training of university teachers.
Schön (1983) argues that apprenticeship operates in „*situations of practice that…are frequently ill-defined and problematic, and characterized by vagueness, uncertainty and disorder*" [7]. Learning in apprenticeship is not just about learning to do (active learning), but also requires an understanding of the contexts in which the learning will be applied. In addition there is a social and cultural element to the learning, understanding and embedding the accepted practices, customs and values of experts in the field.
An intellectual or cognitiveapprenticeship model is somewhat different because this form of learning is less easily observable than learning motor or

manual skills. Pratt and Johnson [8] argue that in this context, teacher and learner must say what they are thinking during applications of knowledge and skills, and must make explicit the context in which the knowledge is being developed, because context is so critical to the way knowledge is developed and applied. They argue that for cognitive apprenticeship it is important to create a forum or set of opportunities for: *„articulate discussion and authentic participation in the realities of practice from within the practice, not from just one single point of view. Only from such active involvement, and layered and cumulative experience does the novice move towards mastery."*

The main challenge of the apprenticeship model in a university setting is that it is not usually applied in a systematic matter. The hope that young or new university teachers will have automatically learned how to teach just by observing their own professors teach leaves far too much to chance.

The apprenticeship model of teaching can work in both face-to-face and online contexts, but if there is an online component, it usually works best in a hybrid format. One reason why some institutions are moving more material online in apprenticeship programs is because the cognitive learning element in many trades and professions has rapidly increased, as trades have required more academic learning, such as increased ability in mathematics, electronics, etc. This „academic" component of apprenticeship can usually be handled just as well online, and enables apprentices to study this component when they are not working, thus saving employers' time as well.

The main advantages of an apprenticeship model of teaching can be summarised as follows:

- ✓ teaching and learning are deeply embedded within complex and highly variable contexts, allowing rapid adaptation to real-world conditions;
- ✓ it makes efficient use of the time of experts, who can integrate teaching within their regular work routine;
- ✓ it provides learners with clear models or goals to aspire to;
- ✓ it acculturates learners to the values and norms of the trade or profession.

But there are some serious limitations with an apprenticeship approach, particularly in preparing for university teaching:

- much of a master's knowledge is tacit, partly because their expertise is built slowly through a very wide range of activities;
- experts often have difficulty in expressing consciously or verbally the schema and „deep" knowledge that they have built up and taken almost for granted, leaving the learner often to have to guess or approximate what is required of them to become experts themselves;
- experts often rely solely on modelling with the hope that learners will pick up the knowledge and skills from just watching the expert in action, and

don't follow through on the other stages that make an apprenticeship model more likely to succeed;

- there is clearly a limited number of learners that one expert can manage, given that the experts themselves are fully engaged in applying their expertise in often demanding work conditions which may leave little time for paying attention to the needs of novice learners in the trade or profession;
- in trades or occupations undergoing rapid change in the workplace, the apprenticeship model can slow adaptation or change in working methods, because of the prevalence of traditional values and norms being passed down by the „master" that may no longer be as relevant in the new conditions facing workers. This limitation of the apprenticeship model can be clearly seen in the post-secondary education sector, where traditional values and norms around teaching are increasingly in conflict with external forces such as new technology and the massification of higher education.

Nevertheless, the apprenticeship model, when applied thoroughly and systematically, is a very useful model for teaching in highly complex, real-world contexts.

Learning by acting

This kind of learning in fact is another learning by doing but, we can say from experiential learning point of view and we can use the term „experiential learning" as a broad umbrella term to cover all the variety of approaches to learning by doing.

Experiential learning is "*the strategic, active engagement of students in opportunities to learn through doing, and reflection on those activities,which empowers them to apply their theoretical knowledge to practical endeavours in a multitude of settings inside and outside of the classroom.*" („Simon Fraser" University – Canada)

Experiential learning focuses on learners reflecting on their experience of doing something, so as to gain conceptual insight as well as practical expertise. Kolb's experiential learning model [9] suggest four stages in this process:

- active experimentation;
- concrete experience;
- reflective observation;
- abstract conceptualization.

For accomplish these there are a wide range of design models that aim to embed learning within real world contexts, including:

- *laboratory, workshop or studio work;*

An important pedagogical value of laboratory classes is that they enable students to move from the concrete (observing phenomena) to the abstract

(understanding the principles or theories that are derived from the observation of phenomena). Another is that the laboratory introduces students to a critical cultural aspect of science and engineering, that all ideas need to be tested in a rigorous and particular manner for them to be considered „true". Labs, workshops and studios serve a number of important functions or goals, which include:

- to give students hands-on experience in choosing and using common scientific, engineering or trades equipment appropriately;
- to develop motor skills in using scientific, engineering or industrial tools or creative media;
- to give students an understanding of the advantages and limitations of laboratory experiments;
- to enable students to see science, engineering or trade work „in action";
- to enable students to test hypotheses or to see how well concepts, theories, procedures actually work when tested under laboratory conditions;
- to teach students how to design and/or conduct experiments;
- to enable students to design and create objects or equipment in different physical media.

Today, laboratory classes are an essential part of teaching science and engineering. Workshops and studios are considered critical for many forms of trades training, teacher training or the development of creative arts

- *problem-based learning (PBL);*

Usually PBL follows a strongly systematised approach to solving problems, although the detailed steps and sequence tend to vary to some extent, depending on the subject domain. The following is a typical example: traditionally, the first five steps would be done in a small face-to-face class tutorial of 20-25 students, with the sixth step requiring either individual or small group (four or five students) private study, with a the seventh step being accomplished in a full group meeting with the tutor. However, this approach also lends itself to blended learning in particular, where the research solution is done mainly online, although some teachers have managed the whole process online, using a combination of synchronous web conferencing and asynchronous online discussion. The steps of PBL [10] can be shown as follow: 1. Clarify concepts; 2. Define problem; 3. Discuss/analyse problem; 4. Identify possible explanations/solutions; 5. Set task/learning objectives; 6. Research solution; 7. Synthesise solutions/results/reflect. However researchers [11] has found that problem-based learning is better for long-term retention of material and developing „replicable" skills, as well as for improving students' attitudes towards learning.

- *case-based learning;*

Case-based learning is considered a variation of PBL, while others see it as a design model in its own right. With case-based teaching, students develop skills in analytical thinking and reflective judgment by reading and discussing complex, real-life scenarios. Herreid [12] provides eleven basic rules for case-based learning: 1. Tells a story. 2. Focuses on an interest-arousing issue. 3. Set in the past five years. 4. Creates empathy with the central characters. 5. Includes direct quotations from the characters. 6. Relevant to the reader. 7. Must have pedagogic utility. 8. Conflict provoking. 9. Decision forcing. 10. Has generality. 11. Is short. Case-based learning can be particularly valuable for dealing with complex, interdisciplinary topics or issues which have no obvious 'right or wrong' solutions, or where learners need to evaluate and decide on competing, alternative explanations. Case-based learning can also work well in both blended and fully online environments.

- *project-based learning;*

Project-based learning is similar to case-based learning, but tends to be longer and broader in scope, and with even more student autonomy/responsibility in the sense of choosing sub-topics, organising their work, and deciding on what methods to use to conduct the project. Projects are usually based around real world problems, which give students a sense of responsibility and ownership in their learning activities. Larmer and Mergendoller [13] argue that every good project should meet two criteria: a) students must perceive the work as personally meaningful, as a task that matters and that they want to do well; b) a meaningful project fulfills an educational purpose.

- *inquiry-based learning;*

In inquiry-based learning, the learner explores a theme and chooses a topic for research, develops a plan of research and comes to conclusions, although a teacher is usually available to provide help and guidance when needed.

Banchi and Bell [14] suggest that there are different levels of inquiry, and students need to begin at the first level and work through the other levels to get to „true" or „open" inquiry as follows: 1. Confirmation inquiry – re-inforce prior knowledge; 2. Structured inquiry -students follows set process; 3. Guided inquiry – research question only provided; 4. Open/true inquiry – students does everything

There is evidence that experiential learning, when properly designed, is highly engaging for students and leads to better long-term memory. Proponents also claim that it leads to deeper

understanding, and develops skills for a digital age such as problem-solving, critical thinking, improved communications skills, and knowledge management. In particular, it enables learners to manage better highly

complex situations that cross disciplinary boundaries, and subject domains where the boundaries of knowledge are difficult to manage. Critics though such as Kirschner, Sweller and Clark [15] argue that instruction in experiential learning is often „unguided", and pointed to several „meta-analyses" of the effectiveness of problem-based learning that indicated no difference in problem-solving abilities, lower basic science exam scores, longer study hours for PBL students, and that PBL is more costly. In conclusion the use of experiential learning for developing the knowledge and skills needed in a digital age, but as always, it needs to be done well, following best practices associated with the design models.

Learning by feeling

Learning by feeling is the result of the nurturing and social reform models of teaching. A nurturing perspective on teaching can best be understood in terms of the role of a parent. „*We expect „successful" parents to understand and empathize with their child; and that they will provide kind, compassionate, and loving guidance through content areas of utmost difficulty….The nurturing educator works with other issues…in different contexts and different age groups, but the underlying attributes and concerns remain the same. Learners' efficacy and self-esteem issues become the ultimate criteria against which learning success is measured, rather than performance-related mastery of a content body.*" (Pratt, 1998).

By the other hand, there is a strong emphasis on the teacher focusing on the interests of the learner, on empathizing with how the learner approaches learning, of listening carefully to what the learner is saying and thinking when learning, and providing appropriate, supportive responses in the form of „*consensual validation of experience"*. This perspective is driven partly by the observation that people learn autonomously from a very early age, so the trick is to create an environment for the learner that encourages rather than inhibits their 'natural' tendency to learn, and directs it into appropriate learning tasks, decided by an analysis of the learner's needs.

„*Teachers holding a social reform perspective are most interested in creating a better society and view their teaching as contributing to that end. Their perspective is unique in that it is based upon an explicitly stated ideal or set of principles linked to a vision of a better social order. Social reformers do not teach in one single way, nor do they hold distinctive views about knowledge in general…these factors all depend on the particular ideal that inspires their actions*." Pratt (1998, p. 173)

This then in some ways is less a theory of teaching as an epistemological position, that society needs change, and the social reformer knows how to bring about this change.

The two perspectives on teaching nurturing and social reform have a long history, with echoes of:

- Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762): „*education should be carried out, so far as possible, in harmony with the development of the child's natural capacities by a process of apparently autonomous discovery*" (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)
- Ivan Illich (1971): „*The current search for new educational* funnels *must be reversed into the search for their institutional inverse: educational* webs *which heighten the opportunity for each one to transform each moment of his living into one of learning, sharing, and caring*."[16]
- Malcolm Knowles (1984): „*As a person matures his self concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward one of being a self-directed human being."* [17]
- Paulo Freire (2004): „*education makes sense because women and men learn that through learning they can make and remake themselves, because women and men are able to take responsibility for themselves as beings capable of knowing - of knowing that they know and knowing that they don't*." [18,19]

The reason why the nurturing and social reform perspectives on teaching are important is because they reflect many of the assumptions or beliefs around connectivism. Indeed, Illich made this remarkable statement for the use of advanced technology to support "learning webs": „*The operation of a peer-matching network would be simple. The user would identify himself by name and address and describe the activity for which he sought a peer. A computer would send him back the names and addresses of all those who had inserted the same description. It is amazing that such a simple utility has never been used on a broad scale for publicly valued activity*." [16]

Well, those conditions certainly exist today. Learners do not necessarily need to go through institutional gateways to access information or knowledge, which is increasing available and accessible through the Internet. MOOCs help to identify those common interests and connectivist MOOCs in particular aim to provide the networks of common interests and the environment for self-directed learning. The digital age provides the technology infrastructure and support needed for this kind of learning.

There are aspects of both perspectives – nurturing and social reform – that have significance for a digital age:

- both nurturing and social reform perspectives seems to work well for many adults in particular, and the nurturing approach also works well for younger children;

- nurturing is an approach that has been adopted as much in advanced corporate training in companies (such as Google) as in informal adult education;
- connectivist MOOCs strongly reflect both the nurturing approach and the ability to create webs of connections that enable the development of self-efficacy and attempts at social reform;
- both perspectives seem to be effective when learners are already fairly well educated and already have good prior knowledge and conceptual development;
- perspectives that focus on the needs of individuals rather than institutions or state bureaucracies can liberate thinking and learning and thus make the difference between „good" and „excellent" in creative thinking, problem-solving, and application of knowledge in complex and variable contexts.

and, we can say, that belongs to the learning by feeling

Conclusions

Going through all these five types of learning- *learning by listening, learning by talking, learning by doing, learning by acting, learning by feeling* - we realized the importance of the theme for any educator, that's why we made this foray.

In our presentation we have tried to summarize what is now revealed to the type of learning, described in brief. Obviously there are plenty of other resources able to coagulate views on these types of learning but we thought it was a good start.

If we managed to awaken the interest is better for personal and professional development of every reader.

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HOWSTUDENTS DEVELOP THEIR COMPETENCES THROUGH ERASMUS MOBILITY: ERASMUS CASE IN HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: *The Erasmus Program is an European Union (EU) student exchange programme established in 1987. Erasmus+ is the new program combining all the EU's education, training, youth and sport programs, which was started in January 2014.The program built on the 1981–1986 pilot student exchanges, it was formally start of the academic year 1987-1988, 3,244 students to participate in Erasmus in its first year. In 2006, over 150,000 students participate to the Program. In the past twenty years, over two million students have benefited from Erasmus grants. Hacettepe University is one of the important and leading players in Erasmus+ Program in Turkey. Hacettepe is well aware of benefits of work experience for the students such as: Future employability with better conditions and gain improved competences.*

With this research, 456 Erasmus students of Hacettepe University benefiting the Erasmus Mobility asked to evaluate how they developed their soft competences during their Erasmus period abroad such as; Team work, ability to organize their work, problem solving skills and analytical skills. When we look at the some of the findings;

- They feel that they developed their analytical skills,
- They believe they feel more competent about foreign language after the program
- They think they are more interested in world issues.
- They believe they are more sensitive to the other cultures.
- They developed their adaptation ability to the new environments.

The results of this study showed that international student mobility in Hacettepe had a positive impact on the developing their competences.

This research, may be important in two aspects: The students and their families may benefit from the outcomes of the study to when they are questioning to the participating the Erasmus Program or any other international exchange. And, It is thought that the findings of the research may be beneficial for both university and Program stake

holders by leading to the development of the program and the preparation of the students for the international exchanges.

Depending on the research results it can be recommended that a similar research can be administered in the different universities at both national and international sample

Key words:*Erasmus Program, Student Mobility, Competences, Higher Education.*

INTRODUCTION

The Erasmus Program is an European Union (EU) student exchange programme established in 1987. The program built on the 1981–1986 pilot student exchanges, it was formally start of the academic year 1987-1988, 3,244 students to participate in Erasmus in its first year. In 2006, over 150,000 students participate to the Program. In the past twenty years, over two million students have benefited from Erasmus grantsThe Erasmus programme was introduced in 1987.

Its name not only reminded of the Dutch humanist and theologian Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus (1466-1536), but also served as an acronym for European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students. Erasmus aimed to increase the
quantity of European higher education activities including broaden their scope. It
rapidly became the most visible of the various newly emerging European educational
programs. Erasmus is established as the largest student mobility program (Bracht et al., 2009).

Program was integrated as a sub- program first under Socrates and then Lifelong Learning and now Erasmus+. Erasmus+ is the new program combining all the EU's education, training, youth and sport programs, which was started in January 2014.With the help of the program many European higher education institutions put great emphasis on international mobility and internationalization activities.

Erasmus was started to increase the number of student mobility between European States, to have pool of graduates who are experienced in intra-community cooperation. Besides, it was helpful to strengthen the cooperation between European higher education institutions. Erasmus supports both student and staff mobility, which also helps to improve the quality of the higher education institutions and their European dimension (Maiworm,

2001).

Erasmus mobility includes two dimensions of student mobility; academic and placement.
The Commission regards "mobility as the core element in research development", and considers it either at transnational (movement between countries) or interregional or intersectorial levels (movement between academia and industry), "essential in order to take a maximum advantage of available resources. Mobility is not an end in itself, but an instrument by which research results can be optimized" (EC, 2001).

Many students prefer to join the program to improve their both personal and professional competences, which leads better employment. The "push" to make a move is the need to acquire new skills and techniques to secure a position in science. Paradoxically in some cases access to research grants abroad seems to be working better than schemes to get internal funding at home. In other cases, scientists exercise their mobility to advance their postgraduate education, which lacks a structured scheme in their home country (Morano - Foadi, 2005).

The effects of the international mobility activities changes considerably for individual students of both universities, ranging from clearly positive effectsin terms of progress in competencies and personal growth to considerable negative or adverse effects indicating that the experience had hardly been beneficial for the student. (Stronkhorst, 2005). Student mobility is the key to increase the highly educated graduates. Student mobility across countries exposes students directly to the different European cultures and supports them to develop their multi-cultural skills. These skills are seen as indispensable in a European Union that strives for full economic integration while preserving the diversity of its cultures. Besides, increasing student mobility is hoped to kindle a competition between countries to attract the most able students. Since university education in Europe is mostly publicly funded, the dimension in which such competition takes place is quality. Hence, it is hoped that higher mobility raises university quality. This would increase the productivity of graduates further (Mechtenberg and Strausz, 2008).

Erasmus Program plays a vital role for Turkish Universities as well. From the beginning of its implementation in Turkey there is an increase in number of incoming and outgoing students and university staff. The program is administered by the national state and Turkish National Agency was founded in 2002 to implement the program to disseminate the program and to

increase the participation. According to Turkish National Agency (2015) there are more than 74,000 students participated the program since 2004.

Hacettepe University participated Erasmus in 2004, and more than 4,600 student joined the mobility to go abroad. Hacettepe University is one of the important and leading players in Erasmus+ Program in Turkey. It is well aware of benefits of work experience for the students such as: Future employability with better conditions and gain improved competences.

King and Ruiz-Gelices (2003) stated that the experience of living and studying abroad can have important effects on an individual's identity formation in the post-national context of European integration, and sponsored mobility such as Erasmus at an early adulthood age have a long lasting influence on those individuals' future especially in Europe. The Erasmus experience allows students to become immersed in another culture, make new friends, and acquire a working knowledge of another language and to develop skills to contribute employability (UKSEC, 1998). According to Harzing (2004) the most important work goals of the students are interesting work, good pay and good interpersonal skills in many European countries.

Although organisations (including universities) have a role to play in supporting employability, both employees and employers now see primary responsibility for employability resting with the individual (Van Buren III 2003; McQuaid and Lindsay 2005). When we look at the other side of the coin, employers are becoming more demanding for hiring new graduates as the competition in the global business world increases day by day. This also led universities to have an international perspective by embedding international elements into their systems such as international curricula, mobility programs, and international teachers. These applications may result to have graduate outcomes with knowledge and understanding of cultural issues, as well as the capacity to manage international relationships and a culturally diverse workforce (Crossman and Clarke, 2009).

METHODOLOGY

The population of the study is all Hacettepe University Erasmus outgoing students in the academic year 2012-2013. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher himself. In order to develop the scale, the researcher conducted a literature review and gets the expert opinion for the questions. For construct validity, a pilot study was conducted and an exploratory factor analysis was used.

456 from 481 Erasmus outgoing students have attended the survey from Hacettepe University. They participated in the program in the 2012-2013 academic year. 382 students have benefited from the study mobility and 72 were part of placement mobility program under Erasmus. In the first part of the survey students were asked some demographic questions and their experience about Erasmus. In the second part of the survey they questioned about their perceptions on personal and social gains at their Erasmus experience. 5-item Likert scale was used for these quantitative questions. : (a) 1,00-1,80: strongly disagree, (b) 1,81-2,60: disagree, (c) 2,61-3,40: partially agree, (d) 3,41-4,20: agree and (e) 4,21-5,00: strongly agree. The arithmetic means, standard deviations and the other values computed from the data were used to analyse the answers.

FINDINGS

The 456 Erasmus outgoing students from different departments have participated in the survey. The results of the demographic questions revealed that 132 of the participants were male and 324 of the participants were female. It shows us that the number of female students is higher than the male ones.

The four most popular countries among Hacettepe students to go abroad are; Germany, Poland, Italy and France. 58% of the students stated that it was their first time traveling abroad. Top five motivation to participate the program of the students are; Meeting new people, learning a new language, living abroad, travelling and, better career opportunities.

When we look at the second part of the survey students were asked about their perceptions on social and personal gains from their Erasmus experiences.
25% of the participants were strongly agreed and 45% participants agree that they developed their analytical skills. Only 4% and 1% of the participants agreed that either they developed very little or none when they are abroad.

67% of the students strongly agreed and of them 28% of them agree that they have learnt about respecting to the different cultures. Only 2% of them was not agreed on developing this competence. Similarly, 66% of the students strongly agreed and 28% of them agreed on that they improved independently thinking skills. Only 2% of them agreed on developing this competence.

When we questioned about being more innovative and open minded, 71% of the participants believed in that they developed this competence at their Erasmus period. Only 1% of them agreed that they developed that competence very little. 50% of the students stated that they improved their foreign language very good level, 40% of them said that they developed in good level. 1% of the students said that they did not develop their foreign language in the foreign country.

50% and 36% of the students stated that they are more interested in world issues now. Only 1% of them said that their interest is the same about the world issues, as before the experience. When we look at the adaptation ability to the new environments, 74% of the students stated that they developed that competence in very high end. Less than 1% stated that they did not develop this competence when they were living abroad.

When we questioned about project management skills, 27% of the students agreed that they developed this skill ''very much'', 41% of them developed at ''much'' level. 2% of the students stated that they did not develop this skill at all. When we asked them about the main problems at the hosting country, top three answers were; financial, culinary and meteorological issues.

CONCLUSION

The aim of the Erasmus program is develop the quality of higher education and strengthen European dimension. This might be a topic for another research but the results of this study showed that Erasmus student mobility in Hacettepe University had a positive impact on the developing their competences. One may say that, female students are more interested in to participate international mobility than male students. For most of the students Erasmus program is an important opportunity to go abroad. This may be because of the financial support of the program. Students stated in the survey that they developed their analytical skills, feeling more competent about foreign language, more interested in world issues, more sensitive to the other cultures and developed their adaptation ability to the new environments. As Stronkhost (2005) states at his research from their period abroad, the majority of the students indicated that they were satisfied with their international experience after returning home. This also supports the outcomes of this research.

Another important discussion revealed from this study is the difficulties that they encountered abroad.These are financial issues, culinary and meteorological adaptation. Sending institution may apply some pre departure

trainings to prepare their students to the new experience. This research, may be important in two aspects: The students and their families may benefit from the outcomes of the study to when they are questioning to the participating the Erasmus Program or any other international exchange. And, It is thought that the findings of the research may be beneficial for both university and program stake holders by leading to the development of the program and the preparation of the students for the international exchanges.

Depending on the research results it can be recommended that a similar research can be administered in the different universities at both national and international samples**.**

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PROBLEM SOLVING FACTOR IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOGICAL THINKING IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Abstract: *Thought process is, first, the process of solving problems that are raising from the life and from the theoretical or practical work of man. This resolution is performed through the intercession of knowledge gained using the generalized experience of the past. The author presents the results of his research conducted on two groups of children in preparatory class with which we worked with differentiated stockings to improve math performance and thus to develop the logical thinking in small schoolchildren.*

Keywords:*small schoolchildren, logical thinking, problem solvin*

Introduction

Our century and future centuries thinking required to be increasingly creative and present and future man becomes easily adaptable to changes and inventive. Mathematical thinking - thinking modeling, heuristic, extend increasingly becoming the characteristic thought of human in general.

What characterizes the man is thinking, a process which deciphers the mysteries of nature and society and provides for their future development. Growing thinking is the most precious thing. Therefore, along with the issue of improving his own way of thinking it remains for the man an open question (E. Rusu, 1969).

Everything that is right thinking - says the academician Miron Nicolescu – is or mathematics, or likely to be mathematized. What will help you think faster than it does and especially without the risk of error in the decision? The answer is known for a long time. These are all methods, rules, concepts, facts, called mathematics" (Nicolescu, 1972, p.307).

Theoretical frame

The centrality of thinking is not only the fact that it involves all the other availabilities and functions (to go beyond appearances in essence, beyond form to content, beyond the particular to the general), but also in the fact that by setting up as a "main star" of the system, guides, leads, takes

advantage of other processes and functions (perception becomes observation, verbal communication that acquires meaning, subordinating to the logic rules, the will that specifies its goals based on prediction and it devises plans based on judgments etc.).

The processuality thinking goes, from one sequence to another, to certain products: ideas, findings, concluded cognitive systems. They re-entered the circuit and serve as the basis for new approaches and ways of thinking that never ceases to activate and adjust to new content and new tasks (Golu P., 1993).

"The thinking of small children becomes operative, it is reversible and setted by default logic, using true inductive reasoning; it becomes causal for simpler relations "(Schwartz, 2009, p.124).

Thought process is, first, the process of solving problems which are posed by the theoretical or practical life and work of man. This resolution is performed through the intercession of gained knowledge and by using the generalized experience of the past. In search of an answer, the man makes various assumptions, usually in inside language on the mental plane, then the solution found is tested in practice, which is controlling the veracity of hypothesis, its confirmation or rejection. The human experience is richer, how their knowledge are more numerous, more precise and deeper, the thought process will be more effective.

In thinking process the man does not use isolated concepts, but the whole chain of concepts.

The links between concepts that reflect the connections and relationships between the objects and phenomena of the real world are called judgements. To form a judgment means to assert or deny anything about a thing. The judgements, in turn, bind to each other, forming reasonings. Based on the reasoning by confronting data and setting judgments of them, new judgments are obtained. Reasonings are inductive, deductive and by analogy (Iacob, 1999).

Between psychological processes and learning there are relationships of independence. On the one hand learning activity involves all the mental processes and functions such as the observative perception, the images of representation, and overall imagination, especially the thinking and the memory, motivation and affectivity, and especially language, will and attention. On the other hand, learning, especially in its intensive forms, contributes to shaping, structuring, even setting up mental processes because not only enriches the content but also requires the construction of new operator means, of restructuring or special organizing within the whole system of human psyche. Therefore, it is considered that learning is in various degrees generative or formative and constructive.

Cognitive learning contributes and supports the development of analysis and synthesis, abstraction and generalization of the comparison and classification of algorithms and heuristics, of the systematization and logical organization of thought.

In the center of cognitive learning process is the informational content cognitively assimilated. Cognitive learning is integral to full and thorough understanding of the studied material and proposes cultivating intelligence. The most active and fruitful strategy of the cognitive learning is questioning (presentation of the materials as problems) and, generally, problem-solving activity.

Especially, by resorting to heuristics can lead to creative performances. Because cognitive learning is not limited to the correct assimilation of scientific knowledge but tends toward their consistent development and their applied recovery.

In the mental development of the human being, individual characteristics, particularities of the various psychic phenomena print a specific note development, its own rhythm of growth and transformation, differing from one individual to another, with the personal touch that is rooted in its biopsyhic potential as well as in the environment conditions in which he lives (Lievegoed, 2011).

The process of acquiring knowledge, skills and training skills during small school period, becomes a special form of activity of the child, distinguished from all other forms of his activity. This complex form of activity - learning - can not be fulfilled without the direct contribution of thought – a psychological process specific to human function.

In the learning context takes place the preparation of development phenomena: developing is prepared and accumulates its data. The development is explained by learning and learning finds its significance extending in development.

To learn something means to acquire, to transfer that thing in an internal quality, a tool that you can use to easily solve problems arising. But it also means development because the main indicator is the achievement of internal benefits - acts of understanding, flowcharts memory, creative thinking strategies in approaching the tasks, internal motivation for work etc.

Important progress throughout schooling are achieved by the thinking process, consisting mainly in the development and retrofitting of logic-mediated constructions which are reversible - that replace empirical, intuitive, naive processes of the previous stages. The logic constructions take the form of judgments and reasoning that allow the child that beyond his immediate sensorial experience, to foresee certain permanence, certain invariants, such as, for example, the amount of material, weight, volume, time, speed, space (Piscoi, Bonchis, 1991).

Small schoolchild stands in a considerable increase in intellectual potential. This is the natural consequence of direct and orderly knowledge development, realized through lessons and through the inferred, additional, latent learning, involved in the scientific knowledge as a whole. Following the imposition of the adult system of thought, according to a definition or a rule, a plan, a model, a diagram, a principle which organizes rules, rules of operation will have an active role in the development of thinking of the small school children.

Organizing the intellectual plan can be approached from three directions: the subordination of knowledge in the domain of a specific plan in which knowledge is expressed through concepts subordinate and superordinate (logically) to reflect the reality; subordination of mental operations to some rules that contain given sequences of analytical steps involved to solve problems in a particular field; finding the operations to follow for solving a problem, subordinating any ideas formulation to the rules of formulation (Cheta, Binchiciu, 2009).

The notion of problem is not encountered only in mathematics. As stated G. Polya (1971, p.141), "to have (or to put) a problem is to seek consciously an appropriate action to achieve a clearly designed purpose, but not immediately accessible. Solving a problem means finding such an action".

Radu I. - shows that problem solving alternates, usually, systematic strategies - sometimes algorithmic - and heuristic strategies. In the frame of systematic strategies search of the solution, which often correspond algorithms, we are dealing with processes (plans) including schemes of work fixed in precise prescriptions, which can be learned and applied to various kinds of problems and gives the certainity of the result (1983).

Methodology

Hypothesis

Hypothesis: Solving and creating mathematical problems using various methods and team work in mathematics lesson helps to improve significantly the school performance and positively affects the percentage of students who achieve better ratings to final evaluation.

Null hypothesis: Solving and creating mathematical problems using team work consistently maintain the same percentage of students who obtain the same qualifications both at initial assessment and final assessment.

Objectives

- to know the level of intellectual training of students;
- to measure and to assess the progress;
- to detect gaps and identify concepts that are learned with difficulty;

- to highlight the role that solving and creating mathematical problems have in logical development of tinking, in fostering creativity of primary school students.

Samples

The two classes that were involved in this pedagogic research project were two preparatory classes whose level proved to be worth close.

Used methods

To the experimental sample (ES) we applied as an intervention method solving simple problems, game problems, agility problems using cooperative learning, group work and the didactic game.

Results

In the pre-test (February 2016) we applied to both classes, experimental and control, an identical assessment test, which focused on the contents studied during the first semester (see table 1 and figure 1).

TABLE 1

Initial evaluation results in the two classes involved in the experiment

Sample	Number of schoolchildren	Realised (R)	ı progress (P)	Non-realised (N)
ES			4	3
CS			4	2

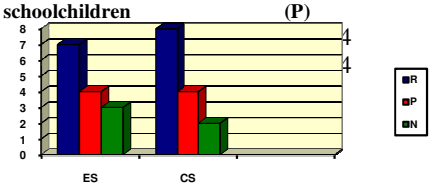

Figure 1. Initial evaluation results in the two classes involved in the experiment

Statistical analysis of the data shows that the number of students who have achieved the tasks is higher for the control sample - CS; the number of students under construction (in progress -P) is equal, and the number of students who did not realised the tasks is higher in the experimental sample - ES.

For the *experimental intervention stage* (February 16-April 30) – we act only on the experimental sample.

The concept in which has been constructed the new math curriculum aims to:

Changes in contents approach

- that means the replacement of theoretical content with a variety of problematic contexts to develop students' mathematical abilities;

Changes in what is expected of the student:

- mechanical application of the algorithms will be replaced by the use of strategies in problem solving;

Changes in learning:

- shifting of the emphasis from memorization and repetition activities in exploration and investigation;
- fostering cooperative attitude;

Changes in teaching:

- changing the role of the teacher from,,transmitter of information" to an organizer of various learning activities for all children regardless of their own level and pace of development of each.

At the end of the experimental intervention stage were compared all the results of schoolchildren from the two classes (the experimental sample ES) - the one over which we intervened with new ways of teaching by using solving teamwork of problems and the control class (CS) - the one on which we do not intervened, continuing teaching in traditional version.

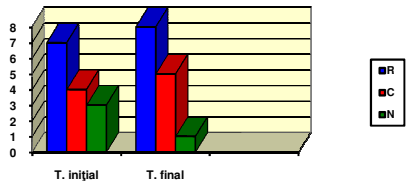

Fig. 2 - Comparison between the results of the initial and final test for the childrenschool of the experimental sample (ES)

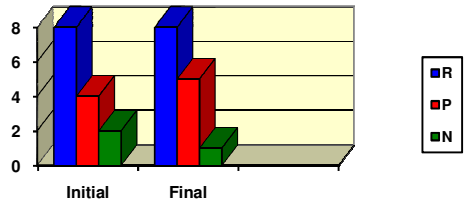

Fig. 3 - Comparison between the results of the initial and final test for the childrenschool of the control sample (CS)

The comparative analysis of the results highlights the following issues:

- In the experimental group the number of students who have completed the tasks (R) has increased;

- The number of students who obtained performance (P) increased both in the control group and the experimental group.

Based on these concrete observations we can say that *the hypothesis* stated at the onset of experimental research, namely that solving problems contributes to significant improvement in school performance *is confirmed* and the null hypothesis, that problem solving keeps constant the percentage of students who achieve the same grades, to the initial assessment and final assessment, is refuted.

Analyzing the results we have seen the progress of each student. In addition, based on direct observations, we noticed that the atmosphere in the classroom was one of elation, students solved problems with pleasure without fatigue or worse, boredom.

According to statistics it is observed that if we know our resources (work done by the initial assessment), if we design the teaching knowing all its aspects, if we use methods that stimulate all students, the success is guaranteed.

Conclusions

A flexible and fluid thinking is that by which can be driven all the other mental processes, and the student manages because his thinking to adapt to the changed conditions he faces in school and beyond.

Starting from this idea we have demonstrated in this paper that solving problems is difficult for students, but made methodically, merged, where possible, with the game and held within the frontal individual work, but also in teams work, has as a result the development of logical thinking to schoolchildren and the forming of creative behavior and the performances give to the students the satisfaction in activity.

In the experiment we organized and conducted, we suggested as objective that frequent use of the activity of solving and creating various problems lead to acquire knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts. The paper highlighted the idea that confirms the hypothesis from which we started namely that solving problems increases the efficiency of acquiring mathematical concepts and thereby is useful to children's school progress.

The results obtained by the application of knowledge tests led to the following findings:

- The problems are within those motivational situations having efficiency in that that it mobilizes the child;

- children’s results at tests are superior;

- the teamwork trained also the children with poor results, eliminating the fear of mistake, shyness, discouragement;

- children are developing team spirit, are forming habits of civilized behavior and a creative and tolerant conduct.

The children managed through arithmetic and perspicacity problem solving, to make progress in learning activities, facilitating assimilation of mathematical concepts, which fully confirms the hypothesis proposed.

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DETERMINING THE INFLUENCE OF ATTITUDE TOWARD TEACHER'S ACCENTS ON LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract:*The current study examined the influence of a teacher's accent on language learning. Students often make judgments about a teacher based on the teacher's accent. These judgments either motivate or demotivate a student from learning language. This study seeks to determine how attitudes held by students towards accents employed by teacher's influence language learning. To achieve this aim, the Matched-Guise methodology was used with a questionnaire. The following conclusions were drawn: (a) there is a relationship between accented speech and learners attitudes; (b) learners form a definite opinion about a teacher based on their accent; and (c) learners prefer to be taught by people who have certain accents based on their notion of a Standard English language accent. The spontaneous attitudes reflected by the participants do reveal that students generally hold some level of prejudice against speakers who have a strong accent in their speech.*

Key words: *language learning, aim,learner's attitudes, attributions*

1. INTRODUCTION

Quillian (2006) argued that previous research has shown that people generally form a positive or negative attitude towards speakers with different accents and that these attributions are dependent on a listener's attitude towards the speaker's region or country of origin, racial or ethnic group (as cited in Fishman & Gracia, 2010, p.9). Immediately one starts developing certain judgements about this person, based on what is seen and heard directly from them. In what ways people do this, and how much importance is attached to those opinions, is defined by both consciously and subconsciously held attitudes. The perception a person gets from someone, as described above, is not a passive process. Regardless of whether an

individual is aware of this process, everyone develops certain "implicit personality theories", which allow a person to develop opinions about other people based on the information available about them. One of the first things that come into play, besides appearance, facial expression, and body language, is a person's individual speech style (Giles & Powesland, 1975: 1). Accents also form an important cue when making judgements and evaluations of people. This provides the distinction between native and non-native accents. Accents, found in both native and foreign language speakers, elicit reactions in listeners that transfer over to judgements about the speakers' personalities. Based on people's accents, other people make judgements about their intelligence, personality and other traits (Hochel & Wilson, 2007, p.114). Many accounts of discriminations have been addressed by Matsuda (1991) and Triandis, Loh, and Levin (1966) .

Particularly interesting in the field of language teaching, students' attitudes towards non-native English teachers are often influenced if the instructor has an accent in their speech. Research in this area has made investigations and discovered that students do have the ability to detect accents in the varieties of English language pronunciations and how this directly or indirectly influences their attitude towards learning from the teacher with a certain accent (Kelch & Santana-Williamson, 2002).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Previous studies that explore the attitude of students towards the accents of teachers of non-native English speakers in Asia were hard to find for a detailed review. The gap is in studies that explore influence of attitude towards teachers' accents on language learning.

1.2 Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study is to determine how students view non-native English teachers with accents. This study examined how attitude towards a teacher's accent can influence the student's judgment about a teacher and influence the student's motivation to be taught by that teacher.

The research also looked into what students considered to be the Standard English accent and the importance of accents on learning, according to the students.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the attitudes of students towards a non-native English teacher with a strong accent?

2. What is the effect of the accent of a teacher on student's motivation to learn English language?

3. What is the effect of the attitude towards a non-native English teacher with a strong accent on student learning?

4. What is Standard English accent according to the learners?

1.4 Hypotheses

i) Students are likely to make judgments on the teacher's personalities based simply on their teachers' accents.

ii) Based on the demographics of the high school students participating in this study, the attitude of the respondents towards the teacher can have a negative impact and demotivate them from learning English.

iii) Attitudes of the students toward teacher's accent in general affect language learning.

iv) Out of the English language varieties, American English, British English and Australian English are considered as standard forms of English language.

1.5 Importance of the Study

This study is important to the teachers to interpret how student's perception of accent could have an influence on their language learning. Teachers can also have a better understanding of why some students may resist learning English from teachers who are non-native English speakers. In addition, teachers may also incorporate varieties of accented listening material in lessons to expose the students to varieties of Standard English language to help students recognize different forms of accents in English. Finally, teachers can monitor student's reaction to varieties of accents in English language and limit the chosen materials to obtain a general accepted level of the students.

1.6 Definition of Terms

With the wide selection of English accents and its speakers, sometimes the difference between an American English accent and a British English accent can sometimes become confusing. In this study the American accent and British accent have been used while maintaining the view that both the American accent and British Accent are general accents that most people can identify with.

Abbreviations like NESTs for 'Native English Speaking Teachers' and NNESTs for 'Non-native English Speaking Teachers' have been used respectively while making the relevant references.

Native speaker: Someone who has spoken a particular language since they were a baby, rather than having learned it as a child or adult.

Non-native speaker: Someone who has learneda particular language as a childor adult rather than as a baby.

Accent: The way in which people in a particular area, country, or social group pronounce words.

Linguistics: The scientific study of the structure and development of language in general or of particular languages.

Pronunciation: The way in which a word is pronounced, in a very distinct and noticeable manner.

Attitude: A feeling or opinion about something or someone, or a way of behaving that is caused by this.

Perception: A belief or opinion, often held by many people and based on how things seem to be.

Judgment: The ability to form valuable opinions and make good decisions.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This research focused on the attitude towards accented speech and its influence on language learning for students. There are several collateral variables that must be analyzed before investigating the significance of attitude towards accented speech on second language speakers of English language. The first of these variables is the definition of the term 'accent.' The second variable explores whether learners have any kind of reaction or attitude towards accented speech. The third variable is the relationship between the attitude and motivation in second language learning. The final variable is the nature of English as a global language.

Accent

The oxford dictionary (2016) defines accent as a distinctive way of pronouncing a language, especially one associated with a particular country, area, or social class. The answer to the critical question as to what is an accent has shown some significant difference in the opinion of what constitutes a specific accent. Sociobiological scholars including Thomas Scovel (as cited in Brown, 2007) were of the opinion that an accent is

something that is developed at puberty age and that enables humans to bond socially in order to form an identity as one assumes various roles in life. Scovel further stated that human accents help to attract people of one's own kind as people strive to maintain their own community.

Deviating from the sociobiological view, Bauer, Holmes and Warren (2006) defined the understanding of accent as just the way one enunciates or utters words. According to their research, it is simply the manner in which English speakers pronounce vowel sounds. They do support Scovel's theory that if a student is not drilled in certain vowel sound distinction during teenage years, the chances are he or she may not be certain about how to pronounce certain words. Therefore, people may have different accents depending on different vowel pronunciation in their local community. Their definition seems to focus mainly on a regional background, based solely on one's individual pronunciation.

Further, there are scholars who see accent in the context of the language it is used in. Green (1997) understands accent as an ambiguous term used in relation to a language. Such scholars are of the view that one of the potential problems that may arise due to a difference in accent is a rather negative social evaluation, coming from the majority accent group. This is often manifested when minority accents are held to be signs of crudeness and lack of refinement. Research also holds the media outlets as being responsible for promoting such stereotypes of 'perfect English' of the educated and regional working class accents.

Attitude towards accented speech

Stereotypes or prejudice on the part of the listener may lead to perceiving an individual negatively solely based on their speech. Such a negative attitude with a foreign accent may be perceived negatively because of the attitude it can evoke in a listener. Such negative viewpoint can have a detrimental influence on how speakers are evaluated in the community (Matsuda 1991; Lippi-Green 1997).

Sometimes a local accent becomes just one of the excuses like skin color, mannerisms, and social status to discriminate against people, due to prejudice, which is when a person will pre-judge another, based on their appearance, which relates to the stereotypes that are held by the given community involved.

An individual may react negatively to an accent for a number of reasons. The number one reason could be the prejudice one holds against a certain group of people which may be triggered when one hears speech patterns affiliated with that group as noted by Brennan & Brennan (as cited

in Munro, Derwing and Sato, 2006). Such kind of behaviour leads to stereotyping – a phenomenon, which this researcher will refer to as *accent stereotyping* – and this may also lead to discriminatory behavior towards particular groups or towards foreigners in general. Stereotyping on the basis of language occurs in a wide variety of contexts, ranging from individual classrooms to educational proposals that underline the curriculum for an entire country. In the case of the latter, the concern is often with issues of international communication. It is legitimate to be concerned about the mutual intelligibility of English speakers around the world; in fact, many writers have commented on the complex issues related to this problem (Kachru 1976; Nelson 1982; Kachru 1982; Crystal 1997; Jenkins 2000). Nevertheless, it is important to research the question of intelligibility in a systematic way, rather than to resort to stereotyping or to make unwarranted assumptions.

Van der Walt (as cited in Munro et al., 2006) recounts that many scholars have argued that British English should be the Standard English in the South African educational system because they are of the opinion that other South African English variations could be incomprehensible to an international listener. Van der Walt's explanation is very true for people who rely on stereotypes and can result in adverse consequences.

Role of attitude and motivation in second language learning

Attitude and motivation play a significant role in second language learning. Brown (2007) assessed studies conducted by Gardner and Lambert who examined the effect that attitude has toward language learning. The scholars concluded that motivation constitutes many certain types of attitude. The most important is the kind of attitude the learners have towards the community whose language they are learning. In this light, when one examines the case of second language learners holding stereotypical negative attitudes toward speakers with accents, it is clearly evident that negative attitude may lead to a definite decrease in motivation.

R.C. Gardner and his associates carried out many Attitude and Motivation Battery tests (as cited in Masgoret and Gardner, 2002). They came up with the concept of integrative motivation. According to Masgoret and Gardner a student with integrative motivation is the one who is motivated to learn the second language, has openness identification with other language communities, and has favorable attitude towards the entire language learning situation.

Brown (2000) is of the view that in second language learning, negative attitude often leads to a decrease in motivation. Reddington (n.d.), based on the findings of language attitude research, affirms that there is very

much a negative attitude toward non native speakers of English. Giles and Billings (as cited in Reddington, n.d.) are of the opinion that speakers of so-called non-Standard English are disregarded.

Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs) and Non-Native English Speaking Teachers (NNESTs)

In addition to the critique on the judgment made by learners on the accent of the teacher, another debate arises as to who makes a better teacher of English language: the NESTs of NNESTs?

Christen (as cited in Llurda, 2006,) defined a native speaker as a user of English language who has learned English since childhood as his or her first language. That means "it is impossible for non-native speakers to ever become a native speaker without going back to their childhood; nothing learned in later life could qualify you as a native speaker" (as cited in Llurda, 2006, p. 49)

On the other hand, Christen defined a non-native speaker as is a person who has learned the language as a second or a third language and has his or her own separate native language.

Peter Medgyes (2001) is of the opinion that native speakers have "acquired English in comparison with non-native speakers who are still acquiring" (p.12).

Studies conducted at some American universities have shown that teachers with foreign accents are perceived by parents and students to be less intelligent compared with teachers without hints of, or strong foreign accents (Nelson, 1991; Solomon, 1991).

Most importantly, native and non-native teachers' accents seem to have a strong influence on the students. Han (2008) discussed a study conducted by Amin (1997) which indicated that students considered the white-skinned speakers of English from countries like Britain, the United States, and Canada as having superior status than speakers of countries like India, Singapore, and Kenya who have different accents.

However, the analysis of a more recent research undertaken by Mahboob in 2003 (as cited by Llurda, 2006) showed that both NESTs and NNESTs received positive and negative feedback from students. The NESTs received negative comments on areas such as grammar, their ability to answer questions and the methodology used. Nonetheless, NNESTs received negative comments with regard to their oral skills and their culture.

Relationship between teacher's accented speech and motivation to learn the language.

Over the years, many studies have shown the importance of motivation in language learning. Lenon (as cited by Graham, 1997) reinforces the relationship between attitude and motivation as "the most important single factor influencing continuing development in oral proficiency" (p. 96).

Further, Moussu's Study (2006) confirmed that there is a difference of perception between native and non-native speakers based on their accents. The results of the survey of 1,040 students showed that students generally preferred NESTs (Native English Speaking Teachers) to NNESTs (Non-Native English Speaking Teachers). However, positive attitude towards NNESTs developed with time and extended exposure.

According to Tang (2012), students often have misconceptions about NNES teachers based on their judgments of the teacher's accents. Some common misconception given by Tang based on the research survey which included 100 participants per region in Hong Kong, mainland China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, were that students believed that there is a good and an accurate accent. There was also the misconception that a teacher's accent affects student's learning. Students also believed that listening to a NEST improves one's listening, whereas listening to a NNEST does not. Someone with an accent cannot help students improve their pronunciation. Misconceptions such as having an accent are the same as having bad or unclear pronunciation was also prevalent among students. Some students believed that being exposed to a non-native accent may cause irreversible damage to the learner's accent. Finally, there was also a misconception that a teacher's accent is an indication of his/her proficiency in English and their quality level of teaching (Tang, 2012).

Nature of English as a global language

After discussing the impact of native English and non-native English speaking teachers, the issue of what the Standard English language level that the students should be taught arises. In Foley's (2007) view the global English is often associated with Standard British and American English language, under the supposition that these are both truly native English language.

The idea can be paralleled to Phillipson's discussion on the "native speaker's fallacy" (p.1) that the 'perfect teacher' will always be a native speaker.

This is obviously a form of discrimination between native English language teachers and non-native English language teachers. This discrimination is seen as a controversy by Medgyes (2001) where using the term native English language teachers and non-native English language teachers is politically incorrect. One possible explanation for such discrimination may be perhaps due to the ignorance of the learners about the vast varieties of the English language. As noted by Schneider (as cited by Palusci, 2010): "If language is similar to growing a plant, English is a plant that is constantly re-locating and re-rooting in a new territory" (p. 8).

Clearly, there has not been enough evidence to show learners the diversity of English language today. Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008), for example, argue that, "Not for the first time in its history there is an excitement about the diversity of English, the vast number of territories into which it is spreading, and the prospects of a global means of communication" (p.222). Furthermore, they claim that there are many kinds of "New Englishes" and "World Englishes" (p. 3) to show that English today is no longer confined to one domain but has become an immensely diverse language.

It becomes vitally important to investigate the attitude of the second language learner towards the nature of English language speaking. Kachru (1992) is of the opinion that English in modern times is acquiring various national identities and acquiring multiple ownerships.

3 METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this research project involved both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analyses. The study can be defined as having been quasi-experimental, since the subjects were selected on the basis of the independent variable groups which included two levels, native and non-native speakers of English language.

3.1 Study Design

The primary objective of this research project was to how students view non-native English teachers with accents. It also aimed to determine whether students were motivated to learn English with teachers with non-native accents. In addition, the research also probed into what students considered to be Standard English.

3.2 Target Population

The target population for this research had to be high school students between the age group of 14 to 17 years old. The target population was controlled to strictly be students who were enrolled in the English Language

Development classes so that they could listen to the recordings and answer the questionnaire independently.

3.3 Research Sample

The sample used consisted of 61 high school students from KPIS Keerapat International School, Bangkok, Thailand. The participants were aged between 14 to 17 years old. There were 28 male and 33 female students involved. The ethnic compositions of the participants were of the following nationalities and cultural backgrounds:

- Thai
- Dutch/Thai
- Chinese
- British/Thai
- Korean
- Filipino
- Burmese

The participants were both native and non-native English speakers.

3.4 Sampling Technique

The samples were chosen using the purposeful sampling method to have equal representation of age group that had been targeted in the study. The chosen sample would have been appropriate for the study.

3.5 Data Collection Instrument

The main instruments used in the data collection were as follows:

i) Matched-Guise Method of Audio Recordings

Data in this study was collected using the matched-guise method. One of the main advantages of using this technique is that it is an indirect method to get an evaluation of people's attitude and impression formation about language variations (Garrett, 2010). The students' attitude towards various accents were elicited through audio recordings which reflected the speech of five English speakers (two male and three female) of the five accents of interest, i.e. North American, Australian, Indian, South American, and South African. Two speakers were from the native English speaking countries and regions of North America and Australia. The other three speakers were from non-native English speaking countries and regions of India, South America, and South Africa. The two native English speakers (one male and one female) were deliberately chosen as a deliberate distracter stimuli in order to keep the participants blind to the real interest of the study.

All the speakers were recorded separately and were instructed to read a short passage about "somtam," a popular form of Thai salad. The speakers were given time to read the short text to ensure a relaxed, clear, and uninterrupted delivery of the reading. The speakers were not told that the recording would assess their accent, which was done in order to make sure the speakers sounded completely natural in the recordings, and so they would approach the reading as being almost something relaxing and *en passant*. When recording the voices, some important variables were controlled in view of the validity of the instrument, including the speaker's level of proficiency, their nationality and their level of education.

ii) Survey Questionnaire

The data for the research was collected through a survey which included three sections. Section one aimed to elicit general biographical information about the participants, including their gender, age, and nationality.

Section two aimed to elicit participants' general opinion on the English language. The participants were given six language options to choose for every question (Refer to Appendix 2). Example 1 illustrates the format of the question in section two.

Example 1: 1.What do you consider to be the Standard English Accent?

a. American English accent.

b. Australian English accent.

c. Indian English accent.

d. Thai English accent.

e. South American English accent.

f. South African English accent

Section three aimed to elicit the participants' attitude towards the speakers they heard on five different recordings. The participants had to form impressions about the voice by indicating their response by answering questions about the speaker they heard in each recording. A four point rating scale was used following the Likert scale (0 = not at all, up to 4 = very) for measuring attitudes where the participants indicated the level of agreement given by the researcher regarding the attitude, opinion, and discriminations they hold (Thomas, 2009). The scale ranged from 0-4. The higher the number, the more positive the attitude and the lower the number, the less positive the attitude.

Example 2 illustrates the format of the question in section three.

Table 1: Determining attitudes towards accents

In your opinion to what extent is this person:

	Not at all	Not very	Average	Rather	Very
Intelligent	0	1	2	3	4
Educated	0	1	2	3	4
Responsible	0	1	2	3	4
Trustworthy	0	1	2	3	4
Is this person's pronunciation clear?	0	1	2	3	4
Is their English understandable?	0	1	2	3	4

There were two other questions followed by the questions as shown in example 2. One of the questions was an open ended question. It elicited the participant's perceptions on who they would prefer to learn English with and why. The last question was asked to elicit the participant's opinion on the nationality of the speaker. The nationality option for this question followed the same as example 1.

Section three was divided into five different parts, each labeled as: 1) person one; 2) person two; 3) person three; 4) person four; and 5) person five. Each recording included all the questions given in examples 1 and example 2 followed by the two additional questions.

The fourth section of the survey aimed to elicit the opinion of the participant on which of the five speakers from the recordings would make the best English language teacher in their personal perspective.

3.6 Process of Data Collection

The speech samples were recorded on different occasions, then organized in a random order and copied onto an audio CD. The text was about "somtam", a common Thai salad which every participant could relate to. The text was chosen to avoid any culturally sensitive or controversial topics that could affect the respondents. (Refer to Appendix 1 for the instrument)

The survey was administered in a school classroom. Overall, it took about 25 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The survey was conducted with four different grades at four separate classes. Prior to conducting the survey, the participants were informed that they were a part of a graduate research study. They were also briefly instructed on how the recordings would be played and how they were to answer the questionnaire.

The participants first completed the biographical information in section one followed by answering general questions on their impressions on the English language in section two. In section three, the participants listened to five different recordings and expressed their opinion in the attitudinal survey questions in section three. The participants expressed their opinion through using the Likert scale ranging from 0-4. The higher the number, the more positive the attitude and the lower the number, the less positive the attitude. The scales measured, for each participant, his of her estimation of the speaker's intelligence, education, responsibility, trustworthiness, pronunciation, and also the preference of studying English with the speaker. In the same section, participants indicated their best guess on the nationality of the speaker in the recording and also expressed their opinion on why they would or would not study English with the particular speaker played on the recording.

Finally, in section four, the participants indicated their opinion of which of the five speakers played in the recordings would make a better English teacher. Each class followed the same procedure and completed the survey during class time.

3.7 Ethical Concerns

Considering the fact that this study made reference to nationalities of the speakers rather than language typology, it was considered important to include the nationalities of the speakers for the participants to guess. A distracter nationality of "Thai" was used since the study mainly involved Thai students and it was conducted in Thailand.

Although participants were not given extensive insights into the nature of the research, one of the high school classes had been studying about stereotyping based on speech in one of their psychology lessons.

4 DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS AND RESULTS

This section presents the results of the data analysis based on the research question in section 2 of the survey questionnaire.

Research question one was formulated as: "Can the accent of a teacher influence the student's judgment about a teacher's personality?" The overall attitudinal score was derived from six items, each measured on a scale of 0-4. The higher the number, the more positive the attitude towards the accented speech. There were five individualized accents involved in the study. The attitudes towards accent speech of the five individuals have been summarized in Tables 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 respectively. The speakers on the tapes belonged to the respective nationalities and they spoke with their natural accents:

Speaker on tape 1 – Australian

Speaker on tape 2 – North American
Speaker on tape 3 – South American
Speaker on tape 4 – Indian
Speaker on tape 5 – South African

The overall judgments of the teachers' personality based on the speakers on the five tapes have been summarized in Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Table 2: Comparison of participants' perception of accent and imputed intelligence of the speaker

	Accent	Not at all Intelligent	Not very Intelligent	Average Intelligence or Above	Total
Speaker on Tape 1	Australian	0	1	59	60
Speaker on Tape 2	North American	0	2	59	61
Speaker on Tape 3	South American (female)	0	1	58	**59**
Speaker on Tape 4	Indian	0	2	56	**58**
Speaker on Tape 5	South African (male)	0	4	55	59

It is apparent from the results in Table 2 that the speakers on tape 1and tape 2 were considered more intelligent than the three other speakers. The participants were oblivious to the fact that the speakers in tape 1 and tape 2 were native speakers of English language from Australia and North America. It can be argued that their perception was based solely on listening to the accent which seems to prove that listeners do unconsciously make judgments on the intelligence of a person. This can be compared to "unconscious association" (p.318) defined by Frumkin (2007) where listeners unconsciously hold a prejudice against accented speech to non-accented speech.

	Accent	Not at all Educated	Not very Educated	Average Educated	Rather Educated	Total
Speaker on Tape 1	Australian		1	16	45	**62**

Speaker on Tape 2	North American		2	25	33	60
Speaker on Tape 3	South American		3	24	33	60
Speaker on Tape 4	Indian	1	2	39	18	60
Speaker on Tape 5	South African		5	30	24	59

Table 3: Comparison of participants' perception of accent and imputed education of the speaker

Table 3 shows the comparison of the participants towards accented speech and imputed education of the speaker. Once again, the speaker on tape 1, who is an Australian, has been considered to be the most educated compared to the other speakers. The participants have once again done instant social analysis by judging the way the speakers have spoken on tape. This confirms to the understanding that people often make judgements even before completely interpreting the meaning of what is spoken (Roeper, as cited in Diaz-Campos, 2011). However, an unexpected result was the fact that the North American speaker on tape 2 was not considered to be very educated when compared to the Australian counterpart. From the results of the this data analysis, it seems quite apparent that the participants assumed that since the speaker on tape 1 was intelligent, he would be more educated than the other speakers.

Table 4: Comparison of participants' perception of accent and imputed responsibility of the speaker

	Accent	Not at all responsible	Not very responsible	Average responsible	Rather responsible	Total
Speaker on Tape 1	Australian	0	1	28	31	60
Speaker on Tape 2	North American		1	29	31	61
Speaker on Tape 3	South American	2	1	24	35	**62**
Speaker on Tape 4	Indian		2	33	26	61

Speaker on Tape 5	South African		6	30	23	59

Interestingly enough, a significant difference was found in the perception of the participants towards the accent and imputed responsibility of the speaker on tape 1 and tape 2 who had scored the highest in both the areas of intelligence and education. The rest of the speakers scored lower than the speaker on tape 3. It seems possible that participants tried to assume that the speaker on tape 4 and tape 5 seemed less responsible regardless of what country he or she came from. However, on the contrary, the speaker on tape 3 was a native speaker of English from South Africa. Therefore, the speaker's accent had no significant effect on the participant's perception on imputed responsibility of the speaker.

Table 5: Comparison of participants' perception of accent and imputed trustworthiness of the speaker

	Accent	Not at all trustworthy	Not very trustworthy	Average trustworthy	Rather trustworthy	Total
Speaker on Tape 1	Australian		5	31	26	**62**
Speaker on Tape 2	North American		5	27	29	61
Speaker on Tape 3	South American		3	26	31	60
Speaker on Tape 4	Indian	1	3	38	18	60
Speaker on Tape 5	South African		7	30	22	59

The result on participants' perception of accent and imputed trustworthiness of the speaker as revealed in Table 5 shows that speaker on tape **1** has been favored as being more trustworthy than other speakers. Speaker on tape 3, who was rated the highest in terms of responsibility, has been rated as being trustworthy compared to other speakers. However, speaker on tape 1, who was considered intelligent and educated, was rated lower than speaker on tape 2.

Research question two aimed at finding out if negative attitude towards an accent would demotivate students from learning English with the teacher who had a distinctively accented speech. Table 6 shows the results of the comparison of participants' desire to learn English language from the speaker of different accents.

Table 6: Comparison of participants' desire to learn English from the speaker

	Accent	Would not learn English from Speaker	Would learn English from Speaker	Total
Speaker on Tape 1	Australian	19	36	55
Speaker on Tape 2	North American	16	33	49
Speaker on Tape 3	South American	18	32	50
Speaker on Tape 4	Indian	39	8	47
Speaker on Tape 5	South Africa	40	10	50

Table 6 once again shows the bias towards the speaker on tape 1. The speaker on tape 1 seems to be most favorable accent and voice type because the participants have already rated the voice as being the highest in tables 3 and 5. The accent of the speaker on tape 1 seems to have influenced the student's judgment about the speaker's personality.

Research question three aimed at finding out what effect the judgment of students and their motivation have on language learning. The overall attitudinal results from Tables 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8 are more homogenous, giving preference to speakers who were of American and Australian origin. Based on the judgments made by the participants in Table 7, it is revealed that the participants' estimation as to the characteristics that go towards making a good teacher of English language influence their decisions.

Table 7: Participants' estimate as to which speaker would make the best teacher and the reason why they make that estimation

		Why would this person make the better Teacher?					
		Accent must be understandable	Accent must be clear and slow	Accent must sound friendly, kind, gentle	Notes age, helpfulness and thinks they speak well	Preference: Native Speaker; Australian	Total
Taped Person would make a	Person: Tape 1	7	4	4	1	4	**20**
	Person: Tape 2	10	3	1	0	1	**15**

better Teacher	Person: Tape 3	4	4	0	0	2	**10**
	Person: Tape 4	0	0	1	0	0	**1**
	Person: Tape 5	0	1	0	0	0	**1**
							47

This table indicates that the speakers on tapes 1 and tape 2 were the preferred teachers of English language and the predominant reason was that the accent was clear and delivered at a slow pace. The least positively rated person were the speakers on tape 4 and tape 5 who happened to be of South African and Indian origin. Overall, the native speakers of English, which were the speakers in tapes 1 and 2, were preferred as teachers of English language predominantly for their accents which were identified as being clearer and slower than the rest of the speakers.

The fourth question investigated by this research project related to the participants' perception of the Standard English accent. The results reported in Table 8 shows the preferred English accents of the participants. The table also shows the accents easily understood by the participants and the accents that the participants had previously been exposed to during their education. These three factors seem to have a direct impact on what the participants considered to be the Standard English accent.

Table 8: Preferred accent in relation to Education

	Considered Standard English Accent	Accent Easily Understood	Preferred English Accent	Accent Exposed to during Education
American English	56	40	47	57
Australian English	2	0	5	13
Indian English	0	0	0	33
Thai English	3	11	1	40
South American English	0	0	0	1

South African English	0	0	0	8
Total	61	51	53	**152**

The results reveal that since most of the students were exposed to the American accent, an overwhelming majority favored the North American accent. When one compares the results from Table 8 to the attitudinal survey questions in Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4, it does reveal that even though the participants favored the Australian speaker on tape 1 without knowing his nationality, they still chose American English accent as being what they understand to be the Standard English accent. These differences of responses will be further elaborated in the discussion section.

4.1 Discussion

This section presents a discussion on the results of this investigative study and identifies important factors regarding the accents of the teachers, which may have implications to future English language learning. The discussion of the results follows the order of the research questions. The conclusion is drawn out by being based on the overall results of the study. Some pedagogical implications are made based on the conclusion. The limitations of the study are outlined along with recommendations for further research that could be undertaken, in order to extend the theme of this research project.

The first research question asked whether the accent of a teacher influences the student's judgment about the teacher's personality. The results showed that the participants did make judgments about the speakers from listening to them speak on the tapes, without even knowing the speaker personally, but made decisions based only on their accents they heard. The students rated positively all the speakers who were native speakers of English (like speakers on tape 1 and 2 who were Australian and North American). This preference finds validity with the results of the English accents of the participants. This could be the result of both a conscious and unconscious attitude held by individuals towards speakers of different accents, which has been mentioned by Quillian (2006) in the literature review. Since this study involved participants who were non-native speakers of English language, it was expected that they would be more favorable towards the speakers who sounded native-like.

Therefore, this result certainly does confirm the perspective that some students do judge their teachers based on their accents. The findings from the study also proves that specific attributes of personalities, including intelligence, trustworthiness, level of education, and responsibility of a teacher are mainly being judged based on the accent of the teacher.

The second research question probed into whether negative attitude towards an accent demotivated students from learning English language with the teacher who had a notably accented speech. Here a link can be made to what Lambert and Gardner revealed in their study (Brown 2007) that holding stereotypical negative attitude towards speakers with accents may lead to a decrease in a student's motivation. The preference of the participants was far more favorable towards the native speakers on tapes 1 and 2. This result certainly supports the view of the participants on the judgment of the personalities of the speakers.

The third research question asked whether the judgment made by the students and their motivation had any effect on their actual language learning. It has been discussed in the literature review that attitude and motivation play a significant role in language learning. The results revealed that the participants eagerly wanted to learn English language with the native speaking teachers on tapes 1 and 2. Their preference was justified by the fact that these speakers seem to speak more clearly and their English pronunciation was more easily understandable than that of the other speakers. There was no contradiction in their choice of preferring teachers who were native speakers, because the participants were entirely favorable towards them, rating them higher in personality preference and showing motivation to learn with native speakers of English language.

The fourth question inquired as to what was considered the Standard English accent by the participants. More specifically, the question was stated as: "What do you consider to be the Standard English accent?" The results showed that the participants seemed to consider the North American accent as being the Standard English accent that was acceptable to them. The reason for the preference seemed to arise from the fact that the majority of the participants had mainly been exposed to the North American accent in their previous education experience. To make the preference valid, they seemed to rate the North American accent as being the most easily understood. However, the participants did not choose the Australian accent, which was the accent they had rated as being the highest in all the survey questions. This contradiction brought an insight into the seemingly spontaneous and logical attitude towards accepting or rejecting an accented speech.

4.2 Conclusion

In compiling the results of this study, three conclusions can be drawn.

First, there is a relationship between an accented speech and the English language learner's attitude. These factors may also affect the motivation for a person to learn English. Factors like familiarity with the language can also influence an individual's judgment on teaches who speak with an accented speech. That is, accents that are linguistically familiar are more positively perceived than accents that may be regionally unfamiliar. In the case of this, the majority of the students were unfamiliar with accents other than native accents coming from North America and Australia. Therefore, it can be speculated that factors of social unfamiliarity may lead to negative evaluation by the student of their teacher, or how one person views another from a different country.

Secondly, irrespective of the credentials and personality traits of the teachers, students do want to be taught by people speaking certain accents. The spontaneous attitudes reflected by the participants do reveal that students generally hold some level of prejudice against speakers who have a strong accent in their speech. Maybe if the participants were given the opportunity to think and reflect, they would be more tolerant and acceptance English language being taught by fluent but non-native English language teachers.

Thirdly, the notion of a Standard English accent held by the students can also influence their overall attitude. From this study, it became apparent that most of the student participants considered the North American English accent as the benchmark for the 'normal' English accent. The reason for their choice was related to the fact that the majority of the students had been exposed to the North American accent during their previous education experience. Their notion of varieties of English language pronunciation was limited to, quite literally, just what they had been previously exposed to. They seemed to be oblivious of the diversity of English as a language. Therefore, it can be speculated that through a more mature and open-minded attitude and exposure to different accents in education, such negative attitudes can gradually be changed.

4.3Pedagogical Implications

Based on the conclusions that have been drawn from this research project, one main recommendation would be very useful and beneficial for a pedagogical purpose within second language teaching.

It is recommended that students should be educated on the diversity of English as an international language. This would help the students have an open-minded attitude concerning the varieties of English that is used as a global language. The psychological barrier built by prejudice and negative

attitudes toward a non-native accent should not hinder the students from learning from a non-native teacher who holds a definite accent in their speech. As mentioned by Hiep (2001), English professors and teachers must make sure that English becomes a truly international language which can be used by people universally around the globe and within many different cultures and local traditions. For English to acquire and establish such a status, then any prejudice towards accented speech should not be encouraged and, therefore, learning with any accented, but fluent, English speaking teacher should not be discouraged.

4.4 Recommendation for future research

This study was conducted with a rather small sample target of students from KPIS International School, Bangkok, Thailand. During the process of the data analysis, some observations were clearly made that could inform further researchers about areas that need further investigation. They are outlined as listed below:

a. The stimulus providers in this study were two native speakers of English. The sequence in which the recordings were placed also seems to have affected the response of some, if not all, of the participants. It is recommended that in further research a larger sample of non-native English speakers should be included. There should also be more distracters used in order to obtain a more generalized opinion and avoid any bias.

b. The demographic variables were not analyzed during the final result analysis. Such analysis would certainly yield more insight to the study. Further to this, two groups of sample students were employed in this specific research study. This could be another interesting area of study for future researchers, if they expand the age groups of the target sample of the English language students they focus on. For example, adult learners who take language evening classes after work, may well be found to have far more motivation to learn English language from any accented teacher, when compared to the approach of teenage school children.

c. The design of this study involved both qualitative and quantitative methodologies of data collection. However, in order to obtain a more profound result, the data could be subjected to more statistical analysis.

4.5 Limitations of the Study

This research project only focused on examining the attitude of the participants towards various accented speech based on a questionnaire. The ranges of choice of answers were therefore strictly limited. If the participants would have had their choice of writing their own answers to certain choices given, the results would have been rather different. For example, in section

two in the questions 1, 2, 3, and 4, the choices of languages provided were fixed to what the research designer had laid out due to given limits.

For example, the options of the accents that were on offer where limited to only six: a) American English accent; b) Australian English accent; c) Indian English accent; d) Thai English accent; e) South American English accent; f) South African English accent. Those listed included almost every country or location in the world that uses English language, but did not include England, or Great Britain. As the English language originates there and has travelled to other locations around the world through British colonization and other factors, hence developing local accents, then other research projects could also include the UK or British accent to meet the criteria for a student's understanding of the acceptable "Standard English Accent."

Some of the students in the KPIS International School target group were listed as being British/Thai and Dutch/Thai, so they would not have chosen American or Australian accents or any other country or region in the list, as being their understanding of "Standard English Accent." Their previous education and home environment would mainly have been the British English accent. Also, as the Burmese students are also listed, and as Burma or Myanmar was colonized by the British for almost one hundred years, one could argue that their own legacy would be a British English accent rather than American, or even Australian, let alone Thai-English. However, future research project could also aim to include within the generic term 'British English' the local accents of Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish accents when speaking English language, as they are each distinctly strong accents in themselves.

The sequence in which the recordings were played could also have been organized in such a way as to distract the listener, rather than have them almost instantly figure out the native from the non-native speaker.

4.6 Contributions of the Study

This study was the first of its kind to be conducted in both a multi-cultural and multi-lingual setting like that of KPIS International School, Bangkok, Thailand. It has provided new insights into interpreting attitudes towards accented speech of English language teachers and speakers in general. Positively, this study has helped the area of linguistics understand why students generally hold the attitudes they do towards teachers of different accents and what relationship these attitudes and motivations have in second language learning.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Somtam is a spicy salad consisting of shredded fresh papaya, with tomatoes, chili, garlic, lime juice and fish sauce. Thais love this spicy dish.

Appendix 2

Section one: General Biographical Information.
Kindly fill out your biographical information.

1. Gender: male female
2. Age:
3. Nationality:

Section two: General Questions on English Language.
Circle one alternative for each of the following questions.

1. What do you consider to be the Standard English Accent?

a. American English accent.
b. Australian English accent.
c. Indian English accent.
d. Thai English accent.
e. South American English accent.
f. South African English accent.

2. Which of the following accents do you easily understand?
a. American English accent.
b. Australian English accent.
c. Indian English accent.
d. Thai English accent.
e. South American English accent.
f. South African English accent.
3. Which of the following accents would you prefer as your teacher of English Language?
a. American English accent.
b. Australian English accent.
c. Indian English accent.
d. Thai English accent.
e. South American English accent
f. South African English accent.

4. In your education which of the following accents have you been exposed to?
(You may circle more than one alternative in this question)
a. American English accent.
b. Australian English accent.
c. Indian English accent.
d. Thai English accent.
e. South American English accent.
f. South African English accent.

Section Three: Recordings
You will hear a tape recording of a text read by 5 people. The text will be read in English.
As you form your impressions about the voice kindly indicate your responses by filling out the form.

Person One: In your opinion to what extent is this person:

		not at all		**// not very**	**// average**	**// rather**	**// very**
5.	Intelligent	0	1	2	3	4	
6.	Educated	0	1	2	3	4	
7.	Responsible	0	1	2	3	4	
8.	Trustworthy	0	1	2	3	4	
9.	Is this person's pronunciation clear?		0	1	2		3 4
10.	Is their English understandable?	0	1	2	3	4	

11. Would you learn English with this person? Why?

12. What is the nationality of this person?
A. American B. Australian C. Indian D. Thai E. South American F. South African

Person Two: In your opinion to what extent is this person:

		not at all		**// not very**		**// average**		**// rather**		**// very**
1.	Intelligent	0	1		2		3	4		
2.	Educated	0	1		2		3	4		
3.	Responsible	0	1		2		3	4		
4.	Trustworthy	0	1		2		3	4		
5.	Is this person's pronunciation clear?		0	1		2			3	4
6.	Is their English understandable?	0	1		2		3	4		

7. Would you learn English with this person? Why?

8. What is the nationality of this person?
   A. American B. Australian C. Indian D. Thai E. South American F. South African

Person Three: In your opinion to what extent is this person:

		not at all		**// not very**		**// average**		**// rather**		**// very**
1.	Intelligent	0	1		2		3	4		
2.	Educated	0	1		2		3	4		
3.	Responsible	0	1		2		3	4		
4.	Trustworthy	0	1		2		3	4		
5.	Is this person's pronunciation clear?		0	1		2			3	4
6.	Is their English understandable?	0	1		2		3	4		

7. Would you learn English with this person? Why?
8. What is the nationality of this person?
   A. American B. Australian C. Indian D. Thai E. South American F. South African

Person Four: In your opinion to what extent is this person:

		not at all		**// not very**		**// average**		**// rather**		**// very**
1.	Intelligent	0	1		2		3	4		
2.	Educated	0	1		2		3	4		
3.	Responsible	0	1		2		3	4		
4.	Trustworthy	0	1		2		3	4		
5.	Is this person's pronunciation clear?		0	1		2			3	4
6.	Is their English understandable?	0	1		2		3	4		

7. Would you learn English with this person? Why?

8. What is the nationality of this person?
   A. American B. Australian C. Indian D. Thai E. South American F. South African

Person Five: In your opinion to what extent is this person:

		not at all		// not very	// average	// rather	// very
1.	Intelligent	0	1	2	3	4	
2.	Educated	0	1	2	3	4	
3.	Responsible	0	1	2	3	4	
4.	Trustworthy	0	1	2	3	4	
5.	Is this person's pronunciation clear?		0	1	2		3 4
6.	Is their English understandable?	0	1	2	3	4	

7. Would you learn English with this person? Why?

8. What is the nationality of this person?
   A. American B. Australian C. Indian D. Thai E. South American F. South African

Section Four: Comparing the speakers

Which person would make a better teacher of English Language?
A. Person One B. Person Two C. Person Three D. Person Four E. Person Five
In your opinion why would this person make a better teacher of English Language?

THE CHALLENGE OF HUMAN BEINGS` EDUCATION IN THE NEW MILLENIUM

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Abstract:*The paper represents the result of lengthy research and reflections on the thorny and controversial curriculum issues. The necessity of considering the idea of curricular reforms as a core issue of the educational policy in an era of changes is the first assertion of the paper. This should be based on the acceptance of the specific challenges posed by the contemporary world nowadays, when a new society requires a different kind of man than that of the previous millennium. Then, key aspects of curriculum theory are summarized continuing the issues already approached in previous publications. Curriculum and its analysis plans, curriculum hypostases, twin concepts in curriculum can be specified. The distinction between curricular design and implementation of curriculum, the different products of each sequences of this continuum process are highlighted. The involvement and the hypostases of evaluation in various points in the process of planning, implementing, and curriculum development are also analyzed. Terminological inaccuracies and controversy are presented. The paper tries to give arguments for idea of inconsistency of these controversies.The final of the paper presents considerations about the need for a unified, logic, consistent and coherent curriculum reform everywhere in the world in order to answer the challenges of the new millennium for the educational field.The whole paper intends to be a challenge to reflection on curriculum issues, a field still unknown in its deep meanings and under an incredible dynamic but probably too much involved into endless and sterile debates. All these aspects are fundamentals for the idea of the new challenge of human's education.*

Key words:*curriculum, learning situation, learning opportunity, learning activity, learning experiences, curriculum reform, contradictions in curriculum theory.*

1. A new world asking a new human being and a reconsidered educational reform

The just started third millennium has brought to mankind a new world, a world of technology that advances with dizzying speed, a world of communication without almost no barrier, a world of movement from one meridian to another, a parallel to another without difficulty and the same great rapidity.

This world in motion asks that the man himself to fit it, to be able for a self adaptation to a unprecedented dynamics. The new world is a constant challenge; the Man, as a central element of this world, becomes a real challenge and to develop the human being's construction through education becomes a perpetual challenge, as well.

This is, no doubt, the main reason of the ongoing educational reforms that are observed all over the world. A significant number of diversified elements are to be found in these reforms. They are determined by the local cultural, geographical, social and political specificities. However, within this outstanding diversity of educational reforms, common elements can be found. The particular concern for developing national curricula is obvious; it is consistent both with the meanings of the theoretical aspects of international debates, unfortunately only partially shared, and with the national specificities.

2. Curriculumtheorya perpetualchallenge

An accepted definition of curriculum is necessary for carrying on further the analysis. An in depth study has been done, conducted over several years, focused on all four plans mentioned above, and making reference to several meridians of the world. It has led us to the conclusion that, in fact, profoundly, there is a unity of views on defining curriculum as essence. This happens despite the different perspectives of analysis, of how a wide variety of terms is found.

A metaphor built with the students helps to understand this essentially unity within diversity.

A huge diversity of fruits can be found on Earth; all have seeds even if they appear in so varied forms: single or multiple, tiny or huge, visible or hidden. But always the seeds are there.

In the same manner, all approaches of curriculum as concept refer essentially at the idea of the ***learning situation****. It is designed as such, based on a certain conceptual approach,(here being one of the involved differences).* ***The learning situation*** *is implemented as* ***learning activity****(in*

formal or non-formal education), and it is lived or not as a ***learning opportunity*** *by learners (depending on their effort and degree of awareness); the learning situation can simply exist, as incidental learning, in informal education. But, in any of these situations, the result is always a* ***unique learning experience*** *to each learner.*

It is true that these ideas are explicitly or implicitly presented but they exist, even if sometime the formulation is not very clear or the terms are used with different meanings.(Fig.2. Essentials of curriculum concept)

I intend to try a reiteration of defining curriculum, as I have suggested in previous publications.

The starting point is the idea that the learning situation is the key concept of curriculum, no matter if curriculum is seen as structure or from the perspective of its development and assessment.

Thus, the curriculum can be understood as *a set of more or less extensive learning situations designed specifically for formal and non-formal education and naturally existing in day to day life, that can be aware and voluntarily lived by those involved in the act of learning, becoming learning opportunities for them.* Whether they are turned into learning opportunities to learners or remain simple learning situations involving superficial participants, their products are represented by unique learning experiences of each learner.

A specific implementation process is the next step of a learning situation design. The implementation is done within learning activities where active or passive learners use them or not entirely, as learning opportunities. These learning activities mean not only the core structure of a learning situation put in practice, but they gather other aspects of the educational context: eg. didactic means, specific human relations, all focused on the necessity to resolve learning tasks.

Our pyramid approach of the cellular structure of curriculum - learning situation – can be considered as belonging to models that are concerned with a structural approach of curriculum.

A special concerned with curriculum development strategy may be found in our theoretical and practical activity. Twin concepts should be highlighted in curriculum analysis. Fig. 1 presents the relation between learning situation (a design plan for formal and nonformal education and incidental aspects in informal education) learning activities where learners involves themselves in their own manner, and the results of all these at students' level.

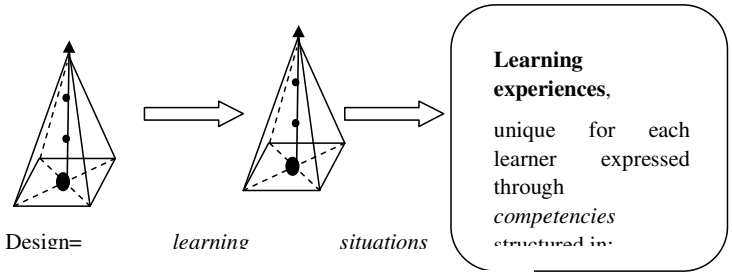

Fig. 1 Essentials of curriculum concept

Curriculum Theory speaks strongly about the structure, development and evaluation of curriculum, even if these issues are presented on a diversity of voices. Concepts have been defined, more or less differently, philosophies have developed, controversies were born, various models were built and have been criticized, all focused on curriculum complex issues. But, along all this time, generations of people were educated; they were involved in learning activities connected to diversified curricula based on different philosophies.

Ungureanu D. (1999: 16) points out the existence of four plans as benchmarks of the dynamics involved during construction, implementation and evaluation of curriculum. Going further with this interpretation we complete our previous approach (Niculescu R.M. 2010) with new considerations according to recent studies and reflections.

The four plans described by the quoted author are the following (Ungureanu D., 1999: 16): the first plan is *the basic theoretical philosophy* (*curriculum representation*) involving curriculum concept, structure, field, interpretations; the second plan refers to the *representation of action*; it represents the approach of curriculum design, when national (state or provincial curricula, as appropriate) curricula are developed; the third plan is the "*action itself, the implementation* of educational curricula in the field of each area of reference; the last plan, an opener to a new spiral of evolution, is that of the *assessment of the products* of curriculum representation, of representation of the action, and of the results of curriculum implementation ; the objects of assessment are the specific products of each plan. Thus evaluation reveals itself as a basis for the further development of the three planes, previously presented. *(*Fig. 2: Curriculum and its analysis plans).

Ungureanu D (1999) provides a definition of the curriculum, placing it in the intersection of the first three plans. The author graphically depicts all

intersections between plans, explaining each intersection area and highlighting its role in the overall functioning of the curriculum

Thus, the first zone of intersection between representation curriculum (theoretical stance) and curriculum action (practical stance) comprises that part of the theoretical approach that has practical purpose is "to be done, feasible" (Ungureanu D., 1999: 16). One finds here, in essence, the theoretical foundations of the educational process as it runs.

The second zone shows the theoretical foundations of the curriculum design. National curriculum, syllabi, textbooks, other support materials are not drawn at random, but based on a certain theoretical conception.

The third zone is one that provides the conjugation in harmony of design with the implementation. The educational process takes place in the context of a concrete reality. The process run is "loaded" by the influences of this reality, but not carried out at random; still it has as fundamentals a rigorous, responsible design. This design took into account the realities, at least at the level of probability.

The fourth zone is, as the author says, a "crossroad intersection"; here the theoretical foundation, meets representation of action and the action itself in an interesting inter-determination. In this area the author places the profound meaning of the concept of curriculum, understood as a "trinity: conceptual, prescriptive and active, all three being undissociated" (Ungureanu D., 1999: 17).

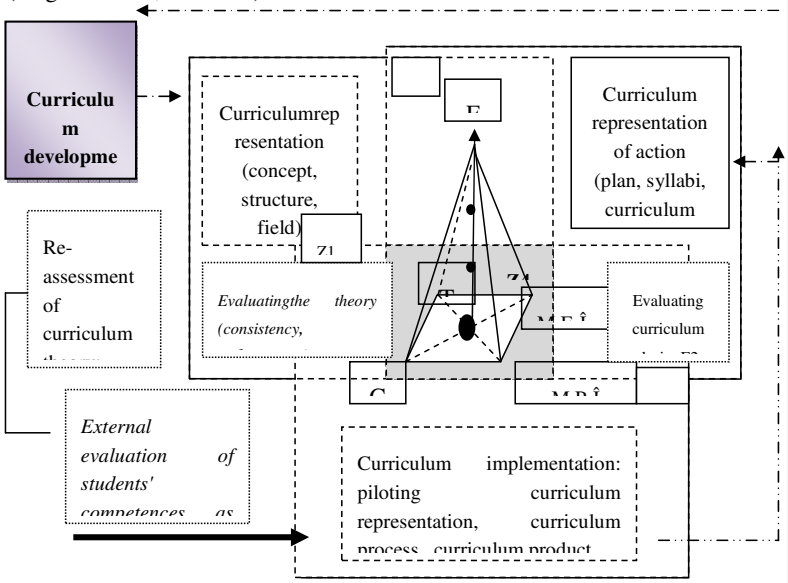

Fig. 2: Curriculum and its analysis plans

Considering the area of intersection, an area about what Ungureanu D. (1999) says it is the place of manifestation of the curriculum, involves, of course, explicit reference to formal curriculum and, possibly, to non-formal education. But the Man of the future is the product of all three types of education, alike. The possible negative effects of informal education, unfortunately too often encountered, can be limited only if the learning experiences as results of the learning activities implemented in formal or non-formal forms are represented by real and effective competencies of the learners. They must contain well-structured knowledge, efficient capacities, and positive attitudes, able to filter through their sieve the influences coming from informal channels.

It is important to emphasize that the secret of the curriculum effectiveness consists in the in the internal harmony of this intersection area. The semantic unity of the concepts defined by curriculum theory is an imperative; this unity must be a frame, the fundamentals of curriculum design (as representation of action), and the foundation of perceived curriculum by the leading actors of implementing curriculum – the educators. Without this harmony, the curriculum perceived by practitioners will be distorted, no matter how good the curriculum design is, and the effects of this distortion will be the most unexpected.

The possibility of taking the analysis further than Ungureanu did, towards a fifth plan is released from even the quoted author's presentation. This fifth plane is actually relative to all the other four: it is the plan of curriculum development with deep roots, firstly, in the evaluation plan, and secondly in all the previous ones.

The evaluation moments are important and the following presentation keeps the logical order of their occurrence

The first evaluative moment (E1) should be related to the coherence and consistency of curriculum theory, of the fundamentals that will underpin the curriculum design. This assessment will be reflected in a document called in Romania as frame of reference. Consistency, coherence and conceptual unity must be the fundamental characteristics of this document. It should reflect a curricular reform strategy with an unequivocal clarity, a strategy built on defined milestones, well drawn and distributed to serve later as valuable tactical benchmarks. It is essential that these attributes to be assessed by both the national curriculum designers and by practitioners, because each category requires a theoretical unequivocally foundation.

The second evaluative moment (E2) relates to products of curriculum design: National Curriculum, expressed by the general frame, syllabi, textbooks, and other support materials. Evaluation is done in the first instance by those who

make the decision on acceptance of documents at the official level. They should establish if: *the design had clarity, it took account of a complex and dynamic reality, took into account possible factors favorable and disruptive*, etc. But, those who are to implement the design documents do their evaluation, as well. Thus, the practice, action, implementation are what validate the National Curriculum as a whole and its components, understood as products of curricular design. Evaluation process goes further on the spiral of curriculum development.

An internal evaluation (E3) is carried out during and at the end of each sequence of curriculum implementation. It is related to the representation of action: How and with what quality was achieved the intended results? What were the factors that contributed successfully? What caused the failure? And so on.

Each school cycle will evaluate (somehow external) the previous one; finally the socio-professional life will evaluate the finished products of implementing a curricular design in a generation. The graduates' competences will be validated by the life itself (E3).

Evaluation in this last plan implicitly leads to the reconsideration and a re-evaluating process of the theoretical foundations (E4). Reconsidering the theoretical foundations will cause a new cycle of assessment and will influence the next stage of curricular design, and, thereby, of educational practice.

Literature and various debates at international conferences have involved much energy to elucidate the contradictions between the different models of curriculum, between various approaches focus either on competencies, either on objectives, student, or on activity and problem solving.

Emphasizing one or another of these perspectives caused different interpretations, different models. Our activity with students revealed an interesting and suggestive analogy. It expresses the source of the mentioned contradictions. Thus, the students revealed contradictions about a flower, if this item is analyzed from the perspective of a horticulturalist, a painter, a gardener, and a florist, a man who buys a flower as a gift or that of a person who receives the flower. The essence is the flower itself, which is unique, but seen through so different eyes as windows of different minds, appears probably in contradictory hypostases.

The literature shows a variety of models that address the issues of curriculum; they have appeared over a long period of time from the beginning of the last century until nowadays. Thus, one can mention an evolution from traditional models focused on content/ subjects towards student-centered models (J. Dewey, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel), built under the auspices of various philosophies, or models focused on students'

learning activities, as problem solving can be; it is about life problem (eg Herbert Spencer), community problems, issues of human activities, moral or philosophical issues etc.

Models focused on curriculum development have been also built . They are based on different theory of teaching and learning. Inductive models (H. Taba is the beginning of XIX century) and deductive (Saylor, Alexander and Ralph Lewis W. Taylor) are distinguished in literature.

Models concerned with evaluating curriculum are developed, as well. They are based on different paradigms (behavioral – eficientiste, humanistic, holistic, quantitative, qualitative, and mixed), and they try to detail and argue the role of assessment of products of curricular design and implementation.

Different perspectives of analyses of the same reality are obvious; this unique essential reality is represented by learning situations designed in the formal and non-formal education, and existing incidentally in life (with an informal educational influence).

The designed *learning situations* are implemented as learning activities within the context of institutionalized education (formal and informal). They have preliminary presumed results formulated as objectives, in terms of students' competencies, which can be achieved only through an active, conscious, and voluntary involvement of the learners. The quality of the expected competencies is determined by a significant number of factors and the context is one of them..

Not essential contradictions exist among these models. I have approach this idea in a previous paper (Niculescu R.M. 2015b). Only one issue is to be highlighted here. Curriculum as set of learning situations, must be concerned about the development of requested students' competencies for a specific historical moment. These competencies are encapsulated in students' learning experiences as results of lived learning situations. The quality of the accomplished competencies depends on the degree of awareness and willingness of students' involvement. In other words the degree of using a learning situation as a learning opportunity no matter in what educational context (formal, non-formal or informal) and the capacity of learners to put together harmoniously all their learning experiences are conditions of the quality of education, expressed by the curriculum products: students' competencies. It depends on their active involvement. Consequently curriculum focused on competencies needs the accomplishment of objectives, for a each specific content unit, requests activism and willingness, it happens in praxis and it represents an ongoing process. Thus, different models of interpretation are put together by the complexity of educational process.

3. Curriculum reform as consistent, coherent and effective approach

Questions and answers were highlighted in our previous publications about how curricular reform should go according to a clear and stabile strategy, through some defined steps. A special attention has been accorded to the effective human resource management in the context. (Niculescu R.M, Norel, M. 2013). A personal opinion on the need for a genuine unit of curriculum management reform has been stressed.

The reasoning may go further, being focused, this time, on the product of curriculum design, the National Curriculum as official document. Our opinion is based on an in depth study of a consistent number of products of curriculum design worldwide. Only one issue is intended to be put into the context of this paper, as an essential request. Our study leads us to conclude that one of the fundamental requirements is that the official curricular document must be a unit well defined, like a block built on a strong foundation represented by early education and the preschool level (Fig.3). All the following floors representing the key-stages of studies must be built based on logic, harmony, and continuity. A horizontal harmony in each floor should be considered connected to the vertical continuity and fluency from one floor to another. Each curricular area, discipline or other content structures are to be designed so that a vertical cut have to retrieve these attributes: fluency, consistency, and internal logic. Also a horizontal cut must reveal harmony between curricular areas, mutual support, logic, all providing a real possibilities for the mutual support in teaching, assessing, and, obviously, learning process.

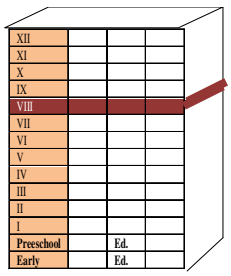

Fig. 3 Curriculum design a harmony block

There are enough good examples worldwide of consistent, coherent curricula, sometimes well enough implemented in order to become effective too.

These examples should be studied, rationally considered and analyzed in their own context, and used as good practices to inspire a new approach somewhere abroad, but always taking into account the context, the culture, the psycho-social and economic specific of the place where the model is to be source of inspiration. To adapt should be the core idea not to adopt a model. This is one of the core conditions of an effective curriculum reform lucidly designed, implemented and evaluated within a peculiar educational system.

The only hope to have a Human able to contribute effectively to the Earth development is to respect by understanding these conditions.

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PUTTING THEORY INTO METAPHORS – A WAY TO FREELY EXPRESS AND ARGUE THORNY THEORETICAL ISSUES

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Abstract: *The paper presents several reflections about the methodology of teaching in the domain of Sciences of Education, particularly in Curriculum Theory field. The role and the importance of metaphor as teaching method are shortly presented. The metaphor of the tree and the metaphor of the four essential elements in nature are presented in correlation with the five structural elements of a learning situation.At the final of the paper a pleading for the re-consideration of the specialized professional in sciences of education as a peculiar case of a professional of education is presented. This pleading is based on the recognition of the huge role of the education for society.*

Key words: *curriculum, metaphor, professional of education*

1. Two metaphors expressing the structure of a learning situation as core aspect of curriculum

More than twenty years of methodological research, while teaching the theory within the sciences of education fields showed, with significant results, that metaphor is a way of an in depth analyze and understanding for the most difficult concepts.

Metaphor in didactical field involves important cognitive approaches. It was used in teaching and assessing areas, as well. It starts with the engagement of imagination to find something to be put in analogy with the considered theoretical issue. Then, a detailed analysis process of both sides of analogy is done. Connections among each structural element are found and arguments are produced. There not exist wrong metaphors. Only the analogies can be wrong or wrongly conducted and presented. A SWOT

analysis of the expression of a theoretical issue by using metaphor is necessary in the end, in order to avoid the forced reasoning that can disturb the correct understanding of the theoretical aspects. The benefits in the formative plan have been revealed by a long term research with partially published results along the years.

1.1. The metaphor of the tree

The metaphor of the tree has been chosen by a group of students in order to express the structure and the functionality of a learning situation.

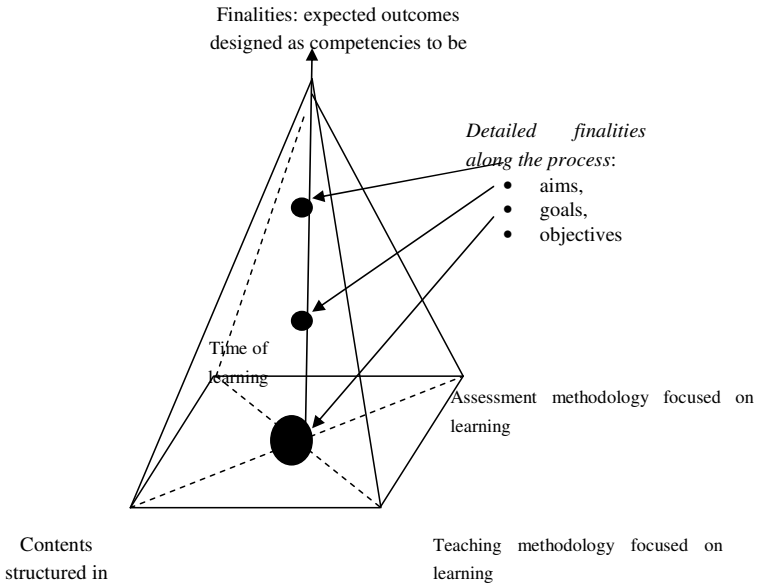

Fig. 1 Pyramidal structure of curriculum

The real results of the tree mission have been considered as being the fruit of the tree, while the expected outcomes have been put in analogy with the buds of the tree. Both of them can vary according to the type of the tree and the specific geographical conditions. Thus, the level of designing these results was considered as being expressed by the buds of the tree that contain all the core characteristics of the final fruit. They appear in spring time, a

season imagined and argued as a strategic level. The final results (students' competencies) are represented by the fruit in autumn, the moment of the final evaluation inside an educational cycle. Even if fruit belong to the same variety of tree they can reveal different qualitative standards, depending on all what it is happening along the year (the four seasons as the expression of the *time* in pyramidal structure). Nature provides different varieties of fruit as education provide different types of competencies with specified qualitative levels, each having its own importance and utility.

The summer time represents the body of the educational process, the specific time of growth, with continuing assessments of each level of development, involving necessary corrections accompanying the care process (analogy with the didactic/ educational process).

Autumn is not only the time of collecting fruit but also the moment of seeds' quality evaluation. They are *the essence* of the progress, as the transversal and flexible specific competencies are the sign of an optimal adaptability of human being for change and progress.

The winter time was considered as the time of individual learning, of reflection as a resource for a new spring, a new season of life seen as a new cycle of learning.

But for this entire dynamic, the contents are necessary. The contents are designed to answer to the question WHAT is to be learnt? The analogy, shown by students, of contents in the life of a tree was the sap that circulates through the roots, trunk, branches and leaves and nourish the buds, flowers and fruits in their growth. This sap is extracted by roots from the ground as the contents of curriculum are extracted from the culture, technology, sciences, and art. The selection of minerals in nature and of contents in education is done according to the specific necessity of each age of the tree/ learner, of each level of the growing/ education moment, and of each need for fruit and for educated people within different (socio-economical and professional) contexts with peculiar needs.

In nature it is not so important what kind of fruit is obtained. All varieties are necessary. But their quality is to be considered and the potential of fruit's seeds is essential. Fruit quality largely depends on the process of development of the fruit, strongly determined both by the individual data of the plant, and the growing conditions.

In education it should not be important only to obtain a diploma or a certificate, as documents. This has a formal determination, depending on the path and the field of specialization. Essential is here the cover of these final documents with real competencies as distinctive sign of power and capability of individuals and groups aiming the progress of society as a whole. The quality of education depends largely on the quality of all stakeholders: teachers with their professional competence, all other educators who

influence implicitly and explicitly the evolution of learners (parents, other professionals who are tangential involved in education). The latter is absolutely necessary to recognize their limits in terms of expertise in education, unless they have specific training in the field.

The students have highlighted some other conditions that determine the quality of fruits and, analogically, the quality of the educational approach.

First should be stressed the role of the leaves, that facilitate the relation between what the ground gives for the tree and the context conditions (sun, atmosphere and the water). They have been put into analogy with the methodology of teaching that connects the contents with the didactic means, within the climate of the partnership between teacher and students. The wide context of life for a tree and for school life is also a subject of analogy. Expected outcomes in education depend on the natural environment, socio-cultural context of education and the development of the relationship between students' innate data however. Similarly the quality of fruit depends on the natural environment and the level of previous development of each tree along their own evolution. Also, for the human being is important what it was obtained through education in earlier stages, especially when it is about the attitudinal plan. All these are conducive for the competence standards determining a specific balance between the designed expected outcomes and the real results (ideal and real curriculum).

Natural conditions, the weather specificity throughout the year, gardeners' craftsmanship are the real determinants of fruit quality. The actual conditions of implementation of the curriculum, educators' mastery and the degree of their motivation are key factors for quality of competencies acquired by students and, eventually even for the students' motivation for their own development.

As it was already suggested, the seeds (metaphorically speaking) encapsulate both when it is about fruit, and about the acquired students' competencies, a new future, a new sequence of life for trees and people alike.

Winter maintains and cares for seed, as the society should take care of everything that is human’s germs future.

An interesting analogy and distinction has been done with our students about the relation among learning situation- learning opportunity and learning experiences.

Distinguishing learning situation learning opportunity is suggested by the difference between the fruit trees grown in households and those raised in specialized orchard for production, where they are knowingly and willingly cared for obtaining a high quality of fruit. This analogy is specific to formal education.

The idea of the mentioned relationship in non-formal education context is suggested by the trees growing along the road. They could be planted willingly and could benefit by an early care, but the care process does not take on the dimensions of an orchards.

In the forests - where planting or care is not always caused willfully, in the same way as in informal education, the learning situation can be accidentally turned into learning opportunity. Transformation depends on the degree in which formal education has created positive attitudes towards the act of learning itself. Similarly, the care for the trees in forests depends on the degree of awareness about the importance of the forest; this is obtained by formal and non-formal education by the people who benefit.

1.2. The metaphor water, air, fire, ground

The metaphor ***water, air, fire, ground*** may be considered as a synthetic view about the structural elements of the learning situation. The next table presents the involved analogies and a short argue for each of them.

Nature	Learning situation/ curriculum	Explanation
The Man/ human being who uses *the water, air, fire, ground.*	Educational outcomes designed and obtained as humans' competencies	Man uses Air, Water, Fire, and Ground for his own life and for the future of his fellows. The future of humanity depends on how each human being knows how to use and appreciate these gifts
Air	Time of learning	Air, as the time, is vital. Air pollution and wasted time are resources that cannot be recovered. Both caring about purity and protection of the atmosphere and the management of the human being time are issues involving intelligence and mastery.
Ground	Contents	The Ground and implicitly the Earth have many riches. A careful selection of these riches should be done according to various moments of life development and for each subject of this development. The beneficiary of this richness should be able to pay back to the ground and Earth. That's because the earth's

		riches should not decrease but on the contrary. Likewise, human culture and civilization have values and unsuspected treasures. But education must carefully select curriculum contents. They must make possible the development both of the learner and of the culture and civilization themselves. The educated people should be able to develop the Culture and Civilization of Humanity.
Water	Teaching methodology focused on learning	Water is the sculptor of genius in nature. Teaching methods in education should carefully carve the rock to release the Sphinx of it. The treasure of the human potential must be released. The methods should be as vivid as water. They should sprightly or smoothly run, as the water does, appropriately to the passing landscape. The methods must be adapted to each personality, to help it flourish.
Fire	Evaluation (assessment) methodology focused on learning	Fire should not be primarily because it burns. The fire should be particularly revealing as a source of glare and light. The evaluation process should not be considered important only because it gives verdicts and measured rank. Thus, the assessment should not be primarily judgment, but a starting point for self-reflection and self-development.

2. Education and professionals of education – landmarks and treasures of mankind's future

Everywhere in the world, theoretically, education is a priority. But it seems to be interesting that at the same time, the professionals of education are not put on the right place on the socio-professional hierarchy. This situation is quasi-unanimous, even the degree of consideration for educators as professionals is dispersed over a very wide scale. An in depth analysis of this situation should be a priority and a special concern *for the educators themselves*. *The respect needs firstly self respect*. The power of education is inside the educational system, inside of the human resources of this system (educators and learners alike.

The educational system involves professionals with different degrees of training for the specific field of education. Most of human resources are specialists in different cultural, technological or scientific fields with a short training for teaching profession. There are specialists in education itself, in curriculum theory, assessment, educational counseling, educational management, adults' training etc. There is a specialized language within the sciences of education field.

Using the same instrument of metaphor one can say that since the human exists on the Earth the process of birth has existed, not assisted by someone specialized at the beginning. But no one denies nowadays the specialized role of a gynecologist, instead the importance of a specist in curriculum or, generally speaking in sciences of education is obviously neglected.

The problem is that professionals of education do not anything to fight against this cliché. An external solution appears to be expected. And it will never come.

This final of paper is a serious invitation for reflection addressed to all the professionals in Sciences of Education which should be more assertive when it is about of using the correct specialty language in different contexts, especially in projects (national and international projects as well), when it is about the accuracy of their professional domain.

And first of all, a core unity of views is also necessary in the field of sciences of education itself. The professional conferences, focused on this issues, should be more interesting and effective than the conferences done only for increasing the number of points of the individuals' portfolios, or the assessment points of an institutional structure.

I have the strong belief that the reform and the change should be found in ourselves, in our mutual trust and in the trust about our role and power.

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GOOD PRACTICES AND INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES ACQUIRED THROUGH PROJECTS

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Abstract: *In the present article I would like to reveal the results of the projects that were conducted by our faculty in the past years. The projects won by our institution brought about high level knowledge, the best experiences, good practices and offered opportunities to develop partnerships between different institution and persons. We have thus partners from different universities from Romania: "Transilvania" University, "1 December"University of Alba-Iulia, and from abroad: Higher School of Education Fafe of Portugal, Marmara University of Turkey, Liepaja University of Latvia, University of Cordoba, Spain as well as partners from different nonprofit institution, like Institute of Health from Luxemburg, Agapsy from France, Trajets from Switzerland, Article 23 from Belgium. The main objective of our projects was the identification of key tools for the development of effectiveness in the field of education. Though the development and implementation of educational projects involved a considerable amount of time, effort, and other resources, the expected outcomes were oriented towards bringing the educational process to a new level of excellence. The projects we have developed, have focused on best practices and also on obtaining more effective and sustainable results.*

Key words: *projects, educational fields, partnerships, relationships, good experience, developing, experience*

1.Project Perspectives of formation through a master`s programme of specialists in the field of early education and young learners on a superior quality level (PERFORMER).

In the last five yearS our faculty has earned some important projects which brought a different and important vision concerning education. One of the important projects was PERFORMER, more exactly *Perspectives of formation through a master`s programme of specialists in the field of early education and young learnerson a superior quality level.* It was a project financed by the Social European Fund through Sectorial Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007 – 2013, priority axis Education and training in support for growth and development of knowledge

based society, major intervention area, Quality in superior education. This project aims at elaborating and implementing a master`s programme that is compatible with the requirements of ARACIS – Romania, ISPEF – Italy and to create a profile of competences for the profession of psycho – pedagogue for early education and young learners. By structuring the PERFORMER master`s programme we have elaborated a profile of competences that the master degree student acquired throughout his two years of study. So, the master`s degree that we implemented build up a profile of competences in agreement with ARACIS standards, ISPEF model and PERFORMER structure. The fundamental objective of the master`s programme aims at professionalizing the field of early education and young learners through the development of a functional system of competences based on knowledge and specific abilities in the field of speciality, as well as the development of a system of attitudes that would allow proper and efficient adaptation to imminent changes in pre-university education, especially pre-school and primary school education.

The university that develops the programme is "Transilvania" University of Brasov and the partners are „1 Decembrie" University of Alba-Iulia, „AurelVlaicu" University of Aradand Instituto di ScienzePsicologichedellaEducazione e dellaFormazione Roma (ISPEF), Italy.

The transnational partnership was made in order to make use of the Italian partner`s experience in the field, by adjusting the experience to our conditions and by increasing the quality of curriculum construction. This will lead to the awarding of a certification from ECE (European Center of Education) along with the master`s degree diploma, which is a real gain for master`s students. This certification confers an international acknowledgement of the acquired competences for the graduates of this master`s programme.

1.1.The innovative aspects of the project

Seeking to implement these standards, we can outline the specific objectives of this master`s programme:

- The extension of fundamental conceptual system specific to early education and young learners and its adjustment to the specifics of preschool and primary school education in order to achieve a holistic and flexible vision upon the institutionalized educational act at that age;
- Understanding the necessity to approach learning through games, a fundamental activity in childhood, specific way of acquiring knowledge at an early age and passing on to specific learning activities;
- Diversifying competences necessary to carrying out educational activities in different fields of knowledge: language and communication,

sciences, as well as to the formation and development of abilities, skills and attitudes towards learning.

- The graduates` ability to successfully implement child/pupil centred educational strategies and to develop the communication and relating abilities of children;
- The graduates` ability to use certain educational practices regarding psycho-pedagogic counselling and solving situations of educational crisis;
- Professionalizing pre-school/ primary school teachers in the field of developing educational projects, educational partnerships and educational marketing so as to involve as many educational factors as possible in children`s education.
- The development of an inter and trans-disciplinary vision of learning at young ages and early education in accordance with the directions of National Curriculum.

1.2.The new dimension of approaching the formation by master degree

The vision of this project involves a new approach to formation based on the four pillars of modern pedagogy: to know, to do, to be and to communicate. Starting from these desiderates, which are considered innovative by the entire academic world, we will try to put them into practice and not use them only theoretically. This way, their usage will bring about the development of creativity and didactic autonomy of trainees. As a consequence, the competences of the master`s programme Psycho – pedagogy of early education and young learner shave been outlined. The curricular construction is balanced, with six modules a year and 60 credits, containing 24 disciplines and 120 credits. Each semester has type A, B, C and D activities (according to ISPEF):

- Area A of formation of the ISPEF model named *Area Lezioni in Aula e Seminari*;
- Area B of formation – *Apprendimento E-learning e ricerca in internet (E-learning and internet research);*
- Area C of formation – *Stage di sperimentazione et di interveto in ambito professionale* (Experiential strategies and strategies of intervention in the professional environment);
- Area D of formation–*Documentazione etevisione dei per corsi formativi. Stesura della Relazione finale* (Documenting and monitoring of formative paths. Writing of Dissertation).

Regarding the collective learning activities - mainly courses (C) and seminars (S) - Romanian model operates mainly with standards of 2C+1S=3 hours/week (namely 42 hours per semester) and of 1C+1S=2 hours/week (namely 28 hours per semester), resulting in an average per semester of 35 hours/discipline, which at 6 disciplines per semester leads to an average of

210 hours/ semester and 42- hours/year. The ISPEF Model operates with an average per semester of 30 hours/discipline, which at 6 disciplines per semester leads to an average of 180 hours/ semester and 360 hours/ year, namely less than the Romanian model with 30 hours/semester and 60 hours/year. Under these circumstances, the only option to maintain constant the value of credits (expressed in number of hours) is to diminish the number of hours allocated for independent/individual learning activities. The curriculum of the master`s programme abides the modular manner of organization of contents and teaching-learning activities applied by ISPEF. Therefore:

-the study disciplines and the learning activities are grouped in 12 modules (6 modules per year), each module containing two disciplines and being credited with a package of 10 credits;

-within each module, the first discipline (scheduled in the first semester) has a highly theoretical character or/and of fundamental training in the field, and the second discipline (scheduled in the second semester) has a practical/applied character; this difference is marked also by the forms of didactic activity, for the first discipline being allocated 2 hours of lecture and one of seminar, and for the second one, only one hour of lecture and 2 hours of seminar.

Professional training was designed as a distinctive module (with distinctive disciplines, normed in the academic curricula), in order to adjust the ISPEF model to internal practices (national), that regulate two hours of training in the didactic norm. This was possible by redistributing certain hours from those comprised in area C of formation– *Stage di sperimentazione et di interveto in ambito professionale* (Experiential stages and stages of intervention in the professional environment).

To follow internal (national) standards that require a minimum number of optional disciplines, we have listed in the curriculum three optional courses (a share of 13, 34%) without giving up on any discipline agreed with ISPEF, to follow internal (national) standards that require a minimum number of optional disciplines.

The success of the project can be seen in the continuous of the master, nowadays we have 3 series of master graduated.

2. The ERASMUS Intensive Programme (IP) "Play, Toys and Culture"

This project aims to develop a course for early childhood and elementary education major students which focuses on play, toys and games related to culture. Nowadays, as mentioned by the predecessors Frobel, Montessori and Steiner, the child is regarded as a personality in development, with its own training needs, with the right to education in a favorable environment. Each child is unique and non-recurring. Playing is specific to childhood; through

games children assimilate knowledge, and develop their skills and abilities. So that by the instrumentality of the project structure we had offered courses to students from different countries, five students from each country. The students had the opportunity to review theories of play in different countries and cultures, to research and to learn about the social and cultural heritage, to use traditional types of play, games and toys delivered by the participating countries. The IP of the project aimed to create a multicultural teaching community, as well as teachers and students that promoted the knowledge about using play and also modern and traditional toys as pedagogical tools for 21st century European children. An important trait of the project was the development of a European network that, we thought would promote new strategies of using play and toys between teachers, parents and other childhood professionals. Knowing the importance of the play and toys at early ages, we supposed to the best advocates of children's right to play and learn through play. The IP of the project "Play, Toys and Culture" has advanced the necessity of development of the following transversal competences of the students, future teachers:

- using a common foreign language (English) in teaching and in the social contexts;
- discovering cultural differences and integrate them in their professional and everyday life;
- developing proper attitudes and skills by collaborating and communicating with others at European level;
- promoting ICT for communication and dissemination of knowledge, good ideas, results, and products of the project.

Integrated idiosyncratic perspectives, ideas, experiences, know-how, and feelings as objectives of the project were materialized in multilateral collaboration in a European space. So the IP integrated five higher education institutions from different countries, namely: Higher School of Education of Fafe (Portugal), University of Córdoba (Spain), Marmara University (Turkey), Liepajas University (Latvia), and Aurel Vlaicu of Arad University (Romania). All the objectives of the project was fulfilled along a two academic years (2012-2013 and 2013-2014), coordinated by the Higher School of Education of Fafe (PT). For developing the structure of the project more than 20 University teachers and 50 students participated from the Higher School of Education of Fafe.

The conception of the project had this structure: the 25 participating students, five of each country, were expected to follow a two-week intensive course. The courses had a series of theoretical conferences and seminars on the role of play and games in children's development, mainly conducted by specialized international scholars from different backgrounds, such as 'Theories of Play and the role of toys within childhood pedagogy', 'The role

of play and toys within Reggio Emilia Approach', 'The role of play and toys within High Scope Curriculum', 'Toys and socialization', 'The role of play in childhood development'. The all conferences were followed by discussions and debates, what promoted students' insights and real learning by reflection and cultural transfer.

The most important part of this project were the visits to different Toy Museums in Portugal, mainly Ponte de Lima National Portuguese Toy Museum and Sintra International Toy Museum. These visits offered the students and professors the opportunity to learn about the history of toys and game. Each visit was followed by student group work, by selecting a research topic that was compared, interpreted a presented by each group of students from the participating countries. The next activity during the project stage in Fafe, Portugal was to plan the adaptation and construction of traditional games and/or toys as pedagogical tools for early childhood and elementary education. Each student group work followed what they had learnt from their visits, but also not forgetting the objective of education, they had to create two games and two toys from educational activities. Beside the knowledge that the students accumulated during the stage, an important aspect of project was at the same time that collaborative work between the students from different countries and culture. They, in an atmosphere of friendly competition, had elaborated and had constructed games and toys shown on the temporary exhibition entitled "Traditional Toys and Games for 21st Century European Children" at IESF.

During the two years of project, the professors and students involved was the opportunities to acquire the main objectives of the project "Play, Toys and Culture":

- to be aware to the importance of play for teaching and learning;
- to be able to use games and toys in the most ingenuous way for educational planning in preschool and elementary education;
- to develop in students, future teachers a reflective perspective about using play and toys in their professional practice in an innovative way;
- to elaborate a creative presentation about the value of play in an integrated perspectives;
- to promote traditional and cultural manufactured artifacts and use them wisely in education;
- to be aware about the role of community in education and the importance of the community active citizens;
- to reinforce the vital role of play on children's health in human mentality.

The next step in the IP of the project was the students` outcomes. Back in their countries they had to elaborate articles about their achievements. This was the students` assessment after the learning stages.
For professor the project ended with an International Conference where each partner in the project underlined the most important achievement during the project. Each group of professors and students participant in project had to elaborate two chapters in a book of projects. The professor had to elaborate a material about *Early Education Across European Countries (0-6)* and another one about*Early years teacher training across European countries* and the students had to elaborate a theoretical material about *University students and their international experiences within the ERASMUS Intensive Programme* and another about *University academic experiences within the Erasmus intensive programme.*

3. SPSM- Employability and Mental Health in Europe: urgent needs for training, social integration and employability

The necessity of the project follow the ascertainment that nowadays people who contacted a mental condition at some point in their lives are considered a socially disadvantaged group. European social policies promote direction for improving the life of this category of population. One of them is equal access to initial and continuous training for reintegration in real life. In most times they face serious issues when seeking employment, because of different obstacles like: cognitive disabilities, inabilities, lacks of vocational experience, but also the mentality of the society. Therefore they need constant support and the present project tries to make a small contribution to the improvement of vulnerable people`s lives.

The main objective of the project, SPSM- Employability and Mental Health in Europe: urgent needs for training, social integration and employability is the improvement of techniques used by professionals in the social and occupational insertion of people with mental disabilities on the labour market. The project aims the improvement of abilities and practices of all involved parties: beneficiaries, professionals and employers engaged in the labour market insertion and social reintegration of beneficiaries. The project is a plea for reflection, search and implementation of viable solutions for supporting people in vulnerable situations at a certain point in their lives. The project is based on generally valid humanitarian principles:

- Responsibility of community team;
- the community`s involvement;
- Balance between the components of the system;
- Continuous care;
- Minimal restrictive alternatives;

- Emphasis on rehabilitation;
- Specialization of care;
- The involvement of beneficiaries and their families in the process of care.

The improvement of care programmes for people with mental disorders, the steps taken in the improvement of life quality as well as the efforts made for their socio-professional integration have been based on the evidence of clinical and community practice. The National Programme for Mental Health and the Nongovernmental Organizations aim to lower the morbidity caused by mental disorders and the improvement of health parameters. The priority objectives pay attention to:

- raising awareness among decision makers;
- reducing risk and vulnerability factors for mental illness;
- public awareness on the concept of mental health in the value system of Romanian society.

The project SPSM planned to bring together specialists in mental disorders, research centres, universities and experts in the field and all participants had analysed the strong points and the weak points of training offers in this field.
The future step is to organize pilot training seminars with mutual methodology for the specialists that work with people that suffer by mental illness (Knapp, M, McDaid, D. & Parsonage, M. (Eds) 2011).
The main aim of the training seminars is to find the proper ways for the professional reintegration of mentally disordered people. Pilot training seminars have to follow a training strategyso that specialists acquire specific abilities needed to change the quality of life of mentally disordered people. The current situation such as inadaptability, lack of courage, shortcomings, failure must be improved through an adapted methodology. The experts in the domain of social work have to identify the shortcomings of the professional integration, aiming strategic orientations that would be centred on six priorities:

- following the disabled people`s needs;
- adapted methodology for training contexts for specialists;
- developing activities according to priorities and objectives;
- constructing the methodology as intervention concerning socio-economic and cultural realities of the community.

Studies have revealed that the main mechanisms that lead to discrimination/stigmatization are mostly:

- lack of funding and efficient management of existing resources;
- insufficient specialists and lack of patience and concern of the staff;
- lack of public information, which turns into prejudice and
- intolerance towards people with mental health problems;

• lack of assistance programs / social inclusion and community services dedicated to people with mental health problems;
• lack or insufficient level of development of social services for people with mental health problems;
• lack of public information.

Responsibility for the improvement of mental health services lies with key actors in the system that have the same goals which they try to achieve in a unitary and persistent manner:

- professionals in health care - psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses, doctors and pharmacists - who play the main role in treating people with mental health problems;
- Civil society representatives - representatives of NGOs, teachers, priests, social workers - expected to have an active role in prevention, post-admission monitoring and social inclusion of people with mental health problems;
- central and local authorities, which play an important role in developing policies and strategies, change the legislative framework and financing / developing programs and services addressed to people with mental health problems;
- population.

At this stage of work, we propose for discussion a referential training, built on these six items. We find in them the emergence of the three axes of knowledge: conceptual, technical and relational, which is the foundation of building referential training for specialists in employability:

a) Conceptual knowledge: of the competences aimed at adapting cultural knowledge and promotes the development of mental structures, promoting strategic and global vision of situations. They promote and develop adaptation capacities to the environment, allowing self-adjustment.
b) Relational knowledge: These take into account social skills indoors, outdoors and in relations with the hierarchy.
c) Technical knowledge: These take into account the ability and experience related to the acquisition of methods and tools useful in professional activities.

4.The aim of the research is to point out young peoples' identification of vocational counselling needs, unemployment regional statistics, relevant qualifications on the local labour market, and active national policies for offering employment opportunities to young people. To fulfill the goal of the project's goal, a questionnaire will be developed and distributed via e-mail or face to face meetings to a total of 400 young respondents (100 from 4 participant Countries) and 40 local stakeholders (10 from 4 participant

Countries). The research study will conclude on best practices used by local stakeholders in offering young people a chance to a long term professional insertion. Each of the 6 Partners, will disseminate 10 CDs with the Research to local stakeholders: public and private employment agencies, High schools, local and regional public or private entities that offer vocational counseling to young people. The research study will be posted on OER Platform for free download and it will be presented in a International Conference on topics during the project. This Research aims to identify and evaluate young people's vocational counseling needs, in order to better understand and address young employability best strategies. The research will be our assessment tool for identifying our beneficiary (young unemployed and career counseling professionals) counseling needs in order to receive and offer high quality counseling services in the EU labor market. In this activity there will be involved all Partners. For the best implementation of the project a WRM Cloud will be designed and hosted by the whole duration of the project. This Platform represents a database for all outcomes of the project, financial aspects, technical aspects, documents and back-up files. Each Partner will have full access to all information under an individual user name. WRM Cloud will support Virtual Conferences, e-mails of the project team, a Forum and other necessary resources for Project Management Implementation. All intellectual Outputs are peer-reviewed by the team project on this Platform.

There will be available on the OER website of the project, 6 On-line free courses on Vocational career counselling: Self-assessment, Opportunities awareness, Taking decisions, Transition planning, Career Management and Entrepreneurship, dedicated to vocational career counsellors, trainers, youth workers and any other professional figure that uses career counselling strategies throughout th entire 7 months of the prroject. On-line courses will have their own curricula, based on the Handbook of Vocational counselling, developed during first two years of the project, by each of the Partners, except X-house. The preparation of curricula, content and quizzes will enroll over a period of 7 months. A selection procedure for beneficiaries will be developed and implemented. Each of the 6 On-line courses will enroll over a period of one month and will end with a Quiz. Participants who earn more than 65 points will receive a Participation Diploma signed by the Partner Career Coach and a YouthPass Certificate. All Partners will be Moderators and will offer online tutoring activities for beneficiaries. After certification, each Partner will asses the impact of learning outcomes on beneficiariesfor a period of two months.

The Handbook on Vocational Counselling will consist of 6 Chapters: Self-assessment, Opportunities awareness, Taking decisions, Transition planning, Career Management and Entrepreneurship. It will be structured in

200 pages and written in English. All Partners except X-House will be involved in the activity of designing the structure and elaborating resource materials for a period of 7 months. Each of the six Partners involved will take full responsibility for the development of one of the six main Chapters. The Handbook will be edited under a Romanian Publishing House, then printed and multiplied in 40 copies. Each Country will receive 10 copies, which will consist of ther own vocational counselling Methodology. The Handbook will be freely disseminated on OER Platform and will serve as content support for designing On-line courses. The activity of designing and elaborating the Handbook will last 7 months and will involve all Partners except X-House. All 6 Partners will agree on the structure of the Handbook.

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THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT THEORY FOR THE EDUCATION AND MENTAL HEALTH OF THE CHILD

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Abstract*: According to the ecosystemic model of Bronfenbrenner (1979), the development of an individual is part of an environmental system that is complex and in interaction, built around a microsystem and being dinamic in relation to a macrosystem. This article presents and questions the ecological theory of human development and wants to illustrate the applications of the Bronfenbrenner model in the field of today's education and in the field of mental health of the child and adult.The social ecology theory takes as a postulate that the development and behavior of the individual are the result of continuous influences between the individual and his environment. If we are not careful, a child who has potential, can develop behavioral problems or problems of adaptation in an environment with high-level risk factors. After having quickly presented the ecological approaches in sociology and psychology from 1920 to 1950, two cases of schools and pedagogical projects based on self-esteem and creativity will be illustrated: one in Luxembourg, Europe, and the other in the USA, in Washington.They show how the mental health of young children may affect the learning process. In the field of public mental health, the declination of the Bronfenbrenner theory is relevant: the Ottawa Charter, WHO, 1986, has been supporting, for 30 years, the creation of favorable environments that determine good physical and mental health of the population.*

Keywords:*ecosystemic model, human development, mental health of the child, education, self-esteem, creativity, Ottawa Charter.*

According to the ecosystemic model of Bronfenbrenner (1979), the development of an individual is part of an environmental system that is complex and in interaction. Each system is dynamic and constructs the individual's development process. This brief article has two objectives:

1. It registers the "theory of the ecology of human development" in approach to other models,
2. To present that theory and to illustrate the aplications of the Bonfenbronner model in the field of today's education and in the field of child's mental health.

Theoretical inscription

Bronfenbrenner's theory is based on diverse approaches, especially biological approaches of living that postulate as an explanatory model of social relationships between living organisms and their natural environment. The psychiatric/ psychological approaches are focused on the individual determinants (personal history, personality, mental health, parenting knowledge, stages of development.). (Freud, Piaget, Erikson ...). Sociological approaches take into consideration the social determinants (education level, poverty rates, unemployment rates, social isolation), (Léonard, Straus). The ecological approaches, centered on the notion of complexity and on interrelationships of individual and environmental factors, have also enriched the thought of Bronfenbrenner: they take into consideration political, social and economical contexts.

1. Two major influence schools

- **The human ecology in sociology**(USA)1920

This is certainly also all the reflection on human ecology in sociology (USA), of the School of Chicago, who founded the reflection with the work on the effects of urbanization (Simmel, 1905). In this current, the focus is on the social data, économic and démographic areas of human activity (Parket Burgess, 1926). More recently, the spatial distribution of urban population and the social phenomenon (Mayer, 1998) are studied.

- **The social ecology inpsychology**(USA)1950

This current of development of community psychology founds the work of Barker et al. (1955, 1963) on the behaviors in connection with the life contexts. It is through the development of these approaches that the human development model of Bronfenbrenner (1979) was able to find an extension and a legitimate contribution.

2. The theory of human development of Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979)

This approach is based on reflections of theories, that were briefly discussed above, it brings a more macroscopic vision that includes all the interaction

systems that determine individual behaviors. Bronfenbrenner presents it like a form of cumulative theory of « interlocked systems ».For him, five systems interact on personal life existence conditions.These systems or contexts produce individual and collective attitudes and behaviors:

1. The microsystem: is the immediate environment of the individual;
2. The mesosystem represents the places in which the individual lives: teachers, neighborhood, religion, parental education;
3. The exosystem constitutes the external factors affecting more or less directly the individual. It is a broad set of structures that are social and / or organizational and that govern other systems: the economic level of the parents, the pedagogical project of the school ...;
4. The macrosystem comprises the mesosystem and the exosystem : it regroupes the social, cultural and politic values of the society. They exert an influence over the behaviors and attitudes, both collective and individual;
5. The chronosystem concerns the dynamic and temporal dimension of every human environment in relation to social and cultural variables. Therefore, the chronosystem includes the normative transition links (passage of a period of existence to another, partly influenced by the other systems).

This model constitutes a conceptual analyzing tool with a schematic presentation in Figure 1.

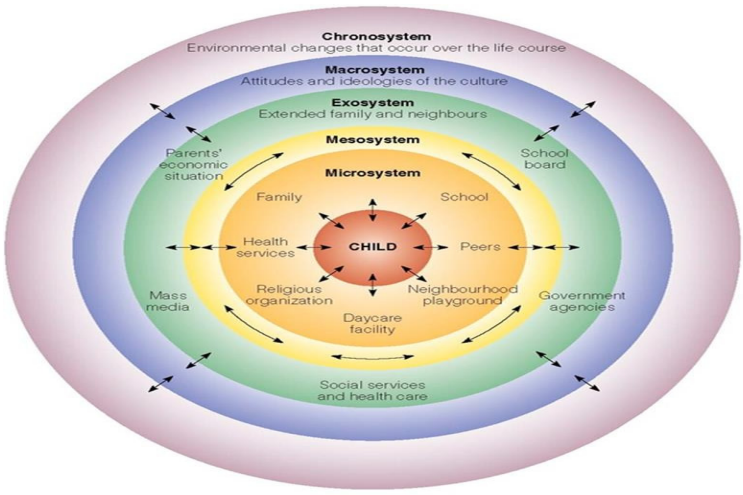


Figure 1 . Schematic presentation of the theory of Urie Bronfenbrenner, 1979

The postulate of Bronfenbrenner's social ecology theory focuses on a vision of development and behavior of the individual who is the product of continuous influences between himself and his life context. This theory should make vigilant parents, educators, professionals, and financial and political deciders.In effect, a child who has potential, can develop behavioral problems or problems in adapting in an environment with high-level risk factors.

This model favors a better understanding of the behaviors and attitudes of individuals, MICRO/MESO systems.

It makes teachers and parents reflect on building favorable environments for well-being and for the harmonious development of an individual, -MESO/EXO systems. The model allows to deconstruct the process which could favor or inhibit the well-being and the physical and mental health. It favors identify the levers of collective action -MACRO system, (political context, cultural context …)

3. Two cases of schools and pedagogical projects based on a positive and healthy development of the child

First case.Schools of Sanem, Luxembourg

The project "Ensemble on est plus fort"- "Zesumme si mir staark!" ("We are stronger together") aims to « Combat prejudice and inequality by encouraging the creativity and self-esteem of students ».

For 10 years, the teachers from the Sanem Schools in Luxembourg participate in prevention and sensitizing workshops for children of 7 and 8 years. 500 students from 40 classes have benefited from these approaches.

The project includes four thematics: violence, music, body work through dance, and the "fair play". The goal is to give children self-esteem at school, by giving them strength and by learning them to do other things than fighting each other, for example, in case of conflict.

According to Bronfenbrenner's theory, the project is built on the dimensions of the EXO system: teachers and educators. It allows students of the MICRO system, to step back, to integrate the other systems, to be in interaction with others.The project of a school has become a national project, it has questioned the MACRO system and the policy makers who are involved.

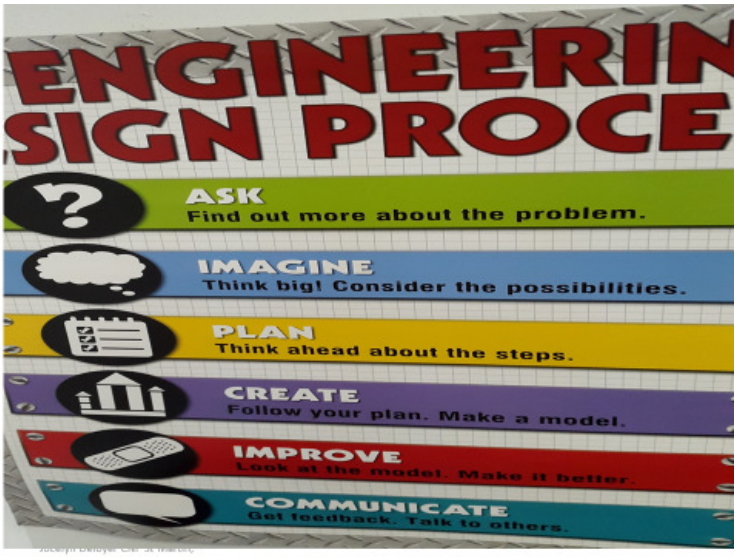
Second case USA. Washington. Blue birds of Alexandria. Virginie

The case involves children of 5 years. It shows how the mental health of young children and their positive development can affect their ability to learn how to read, how to work in teams, and the structuring of their spirit. The actions concern the MESO and the EXO Systems, (the teachers, the pedagogical project of the establishment) to act on the MICRO System, the young students. Figures 2 and 3.

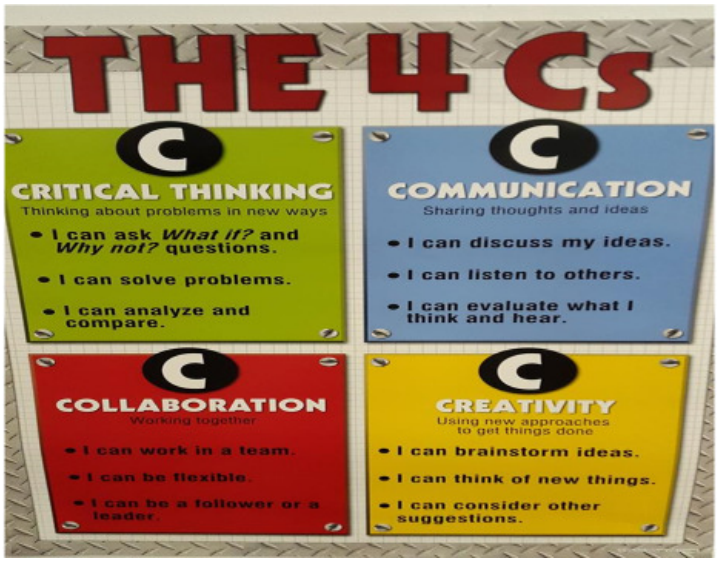
The project is based on the MICRO system, students learn how to work in teams, in a constructive way. The structuration of the thought is the same for students and teachers. They build common values. The pedagogical project's actions on the EXO system, pedagogical directors, the MESO system, teachers, to act on the MICRO System (Students).

These 2 cases, hinged to the explanatory model of Urie Bronfenbrenner, allow us to draw a relevant lesson in the education field. The theory of systems emboitésis verified. In effect, in the two cases there are favored the:

- Understanding the behaviors and attitudes of individuals, MICRO system;
- Contribution to the well-being and physical and mental health, EXO-MACRO systems;
- Reflection of teachers and parents to build favorable environments for well being and harmonious development, EXO-MESO system.



Figures 2. Structuration of the positive spirit and team behavior



Figures 3. Structuration of the positive spirit and team behavior

4. A declination of the theory of human development in the field of physic and mental health

For 30 years, the model is used to define the process of constructing favorable environments, not only for education and human development, but also to promote good physical and mental health, (Ottawa Charter, WHO - 1986). The figure 4 of the Public Health Agency of Canada for a positive mental health illustrates how the theoryzation of Bronfenbrenner is declined.It is based on the concept of "health promotion" which predicts the creation of favorable environments (Macro system) to reinforce the communal action (Exo system) and to acquire individual skills (Micro-Meso systems).The model allows us to list the risk factors and forms the basis of the elaboration work of public policy of mental health and education.

Figure 4. The Ottawa Charter (OMS-1986) to build the conditions for good physical and mental health on the model of theory of systems of Bronfenbrenner

Discussion

The contribution of Bronfenbrenner's theory is important and relevant. It constitutes a support for understanding the behaviors of individuals in the complex society in which we live.It allows us to deconstruct the development process of harmful interactions to conduct a positive change for the individuals and groups in the contextual system. In effect, it serves as a guide and a methodological tool for intervention and action on all registers of life and on all moments of life: it refers to the responsibility of each actor, whatever their level of intervention is.

- At the level of Micro system, it questions the individuals themselves, from childhood to adulthood.
- At the level of Mezo system, it interpellates the responsibility of families.
- At the level of the Exo system, it refers to the responsibilities of the professionals, teachers and educators, it encourages them to examine their practices in order to develop them.
- At the level of Macro system, there are the financers and politicians who are concerned to develop favorable environments in all living places (schools, companies, cities, neighborhoods) by adequate policies for positive human development.
- At the level of the Chrono system, it recalls the dynamics of life, social dynamics where nothing is fixed, where everything is constantly in motion.

The theory of Bronfenbrenner isn't obsolete and is still relevant: it influences the open approaches to education and the promotion of positive mental health, taking into account the different dimensions of the individual life's records and registering them in temporality.

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DEVELOPING THE COMPETENCE OF "LEARNING TO LEARN" IN THE INITIAL TRAINING FOR TEACHERS

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Abstract: *Using methods and techniques of effective lifelong learning, for training and continuous professional development is one of the transversal competences that the "Pedagogy of Primary and Preschool Education (PPPE)" study program should develop in students, future teachers. The cross-curricular status of these competences does not exclude the need and possibility for its development in a training context, precisely delineated, at the level of an academic discipline. This article focuses on the experience generated by the introduction in the curriculum of such a discipline- "Effective learning techniques", for the PPPE students, since the academic year 2015-2016 at "Lucian Blaga" University in Sibiu. Capitalizing on the analysis of the students' products and of their answers in a structured interview, the study provides a blueprint for this training experience, from the perspective of those involved in such an endeavor.*

Keywords: *transversal competences, learning to learn, future teachers*

1. Introduction

In recent years there have been concerns and systematic efforts in Romania to restructure the curriculum, both in pre-university and university education, in terms of competences training for students. These competences are underlying the curriculum, the university specializations, qualifications or professional standards (Bîrzea, 2010).

These concerns and approaches are directly connected to trends in education policy in Europe. Thus, learning to learn is one of the eight key competences listed in Recommendation Parliament and the European Council (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2006), along with others such as: communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, mathematical competence and basic

competences in science and technology, digital competence, social and civic skills, spirit of initiative and entrepreneurship, cultural awareness and expression. This document states that these skills are needed by all individuals for personal fulfillment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment. In Romania these competences determine the student's training profile for primary and secondary education (according to the 2011 National Education Law, article 68).

In this EU Recommendation, learning to learn is defined as "the ability to pursue and persist in learning, to organize one's own learning, through effective management of time and information, both individually and in groups. This competence includes awareness of one's learning process and needs, identifying available opportunities, and the ability to overcome obstacles in order to learn successfully. This competence means gaining, processing and assimilating new knowledge and skills, as well as seeking and making use of guidance. Learning to learn engages learners to build on prior learning and life experiences in order to use and apply knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts: at home, at work, in education and in training. Motivation and confidence are crucial to an individual's competence" (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2006, annex, paragraph 5).

Focusing on competences is an assumed orientation in higher education too. Thus, according to the Methodology of implementation and use of the National Framework of Qualifications in Higher Education (2009), completing the process of learning a particular school cycle (Bachelor, Master or Doctorate) leads to obtaining a qualification, linked to the level of learning outcomes with professional and transversal competences.

While professional competences refer to the ability to select, combine and use the appropriate knowledge, skills and other acquisitions (values and attitudes) in order to successfully solve a special category of work or learning situations, circumscribed to that particular profession, in terms of effectiveness and efficiency, transversal competences transcend a particular field or study program and have a trans-disciplinary nature. The Methodology of implementation and use of the National Qualifications Framework in Higher Education (2009) identified among transversal skills: teamwork skills, oral and written communication in the mother tongue / foreign language skills, using information and communication technology, problem solving and decision making, recognition and respect for diversity and multiculturalism, learning autonomy, initiative and entrepreneurship, openness to lifelong learning, respecting and developing of professional values and ethics. Therefore, the power of learning to learn is integrated in these transversal competences.

2. Theoretical Foundation

Addressing the question of the competence of learning to learn in the context of the program of Bachelor Studies - Pedagogy of Primary and Preschool Education (PPPE), we mention that using the methods and techniques of effective learning throughout life, for training and continuing professional development is one of transversal competence on this program that must be developed in students - future teachers for primary and preschool, according to RNCIS (National Register of Qualifications in Higher Education), along with other transversal and, of course, professional competences.

The competence of learning to learn is a transversal competence that graduates of the PPPE study program need not only for personal fulfillment, but also to meet the multiple and increasingly complex demands of the teaching profession and for active participation in the professional environment. The roles of teachers and schools are changing, and so are expectations about them: teachers are asked to teach in increasingly multicultural classrooms, integrate students with special needs, use ICT for teaching effectively, engage in evaluation and accountability processes, and involve parents in schools (OECD, 2009).

Teaching staff nowadays need the competences to constantly learn and innovate in order to adapt the educational practices. Čepić et al. (2015) points out that the new tasks and roles require new competences from teachers such as the "learning to learn" competence (including adaptation to change, self-regulated learning and coping with failure). The competence of learning to learn is an essential tool that enables permanent education.

Then, learning to learn is an important teacher competence from the perspective that students should develop this competence too. Teachers can be a real support in developing the competence to learn of the students, only if they have developed this competence themselves. Teacher training programs can not neglect or lightly address the competence of learning to learn. Bercu (2010) believes that this competence should be seen in relation to the training programs of teachers and trainers, and its development "should benefit from a consistent and coherent approach at the training curriculum level, not only for students, but also for teachers, trainers and adults in general" (p.71).

Mainly there are three ways in which the development of this transversal competence can be supported in the PPPE study program. A first way is

constituted by a cross-curricular approach, where all subjects in the PPPE program's curriculum and consequently all teachers involved in the program contributes to the development of the competence of learning to learn. Thus, the specific academic activities, the nature of the organization forms of teaching (lectures, seminars, practical activities, laboratories etc.), by applying different teaching methods (lecture, conversation, discussion, cooperative learning, etc.), by exploiting the different assessment methods (written, oral examination, practical tests, portfolios, projects, etc.) require the exercise of academic skills, healthy study habits (taking notes, effective reading, writing essays, work organization etc) that need mastering in order to achieve success.

A second way relates to the integration of this learning to learn competence in the subjects in the curriculum for this specialization by explicitly treating some of the themes and learning outcomes. Disciplines such as: Developmental Psychology, Educational Psychology, Theory and Methodology of Training etc. include in their aims the development of the competence of learning to learn, addressing theoretical and practical learning activities, such as: dynamic of learning, peculiarities of the learning process at certain ages, learning theories and methods etc.

Another approach to learning to learn can be achieved at the level of a stand-alone curricular discipline. This article focuses on an approach inspired by this third variant of integration, by introducing in the curriculum of the PPPE specialization a discipline - Effective Learning Techniques, in the first year, first semester (2015-2016), consisting of 2 hours of seminar, weekly.

3. Methodology

The subjects of this study were 49 students enrolled in PPPE specialization, freshmen, who attended the discipline of Effective Learning Techniques (ELT). Three types of activities were used: classroom activities (seminar - presentations, discussions, exercises, applications), library activities (information and documentation) and participation in scientific events (conferences) as public attenders.

Throughout the semester we intended to facilitate the assimilation/ practice by students of knowledge/ skills related to learning to learn competence, such as knowing and understand his/ her preferred learning strategies, using techniques of efficient learning, efficient use of learning resources; practicing skills on planning and learning management; monitoring their own learning process; using reflection on the learning experiences they used. The elements of motivation and attitude were not neglected either: simulating motivation and approaching the learning process

with confidence, the cultivation of perseverance, a curiosity to look for opportunities to learn and apply learning in a variety of life contexts.

Students work was objectified in developing portfolios. The analysis of the students' activity products, contained in individual portfolios, and the interview method were used to collect data.

The study's questions were:

1. What are the positive aspects identified in the conception and production processes for their portfolio's products and what were the difficulties the students faced?
2. How do the students perceive - from the perspective of strengths, needs, opportunities and threats - the learning experience offered by this discipline (Effective Learning Techniques) during their first semester at university?

It is worth noting that the first question gives an overview of the teacher responsible for the discipline about the learning experiences offered within the EFL discipline, a perspective outlined over the semester; the second question brings into focus the students' perspective. In what follows, we will share some of the learning experiences offered to students in order to support the "learning to learn" competence.

4. Results and discussion

Student activity was reflected in several products developed during the semester. Some of these products were presented in front of their peers and teacher. All products were included in their individual portfolio, products such as: themed poster - "About me", the analysis of personal learning styles, specialty books presentations, double journal, the Cornell note-taking system, graphic organizer on a course theme/ concept, learning journals, argumentative essay, other representative products of the learning activity (notebook, reading cards etc.). Next, we present some of the activities and products developed within this discipline, noting that the difficulties encountered in achieving these products were considered a natural part of the learning process and the students received support and constructive feed-back from the teacher and peers.

The development and presentation of the poster with the theme: "About me" (personal data, interests, values, learning issues, ideals, what I like / I do not like, future projects etc.) was a challenging activity for the students and had a double purpose: as a way to synthesize and present in an attractive form data related to their personality, but also as a way to support knowing each other at group level, because students did not know each other- these posters were developed in the beginning of their first year at university. This

way, the students have learned a lot of information about their peers' concerns, interests, their experiences, practicing oral presentation.

Positive aspects: personal presentation varied from student to student, sometimes with a touch of creativity and originality, using the poster as a support in giving a presentation, encouraging discussion about the interests of students, future plans related to careers, knowing each other, concerns for the aesthetic appearance of the poster (rendered by mixing text and images, colors, varied layouts). As difficulties, these are worth a mention: managing emotions during the presentation, finding a balance regarding information for their poster (some posters were overloaded, while others were very thin, content- wise).

The identification and analysis of the learning style was conducted using the Questionnaire to identify the learning style and the Brain hemispheric preference questionnaire (Linksman, 1999). Each student completed the two questionnaires, which became the supports for the characterization of their learning style.

Positive aspects: students have identified their favorite style/ preferred learning styles and have characterized it/ them; they have realized that learning occurs in different ways, that there are no "superior" or "inferior" styles, that they learn something new easier if the material is presented in a way that corresponds to the way in which they store information, that there are important pedagogical implications for the differentiation and individualization of learning- from the fact that people learn in different ways- implications that a teacher must take into account in the design and implementation of educational activities. No particular difficulties were noted in relation to this activity.

Presenting a specialty books offered the students the opportunity to choose, read and practice the presentation of works from the fields of psychology and pedagogy, following a recommended structure: naming the author, title, publisher, city, year, identifying the central theme of the book or its area of interest, presenting some of the contents (organization, ideas, quotes), delineation of audiences to whom the work is addressed to, expressing a personal opinion. It was also a way to encourage students to approach specialized literature and capitalize on their visits to the university's library.

Positive aspects: practicing documentation to present the work, developing the skills to orally present a specialized paper, broadening the professional horizon by discovering such papers, having contact with the specialized language, with authors, ideas, concepts specific to the field of education. There have been difficulties in capturing the central ideas of the specialty books and with expressing personal opinion.

Note-taking was a topic that enjoyed special attention, because student participation in courses and seminars exploit this ability. After discussing some rules to streamline information registration: abbreviations, schematics, numbering, marking keywords, layout, use of colors (Bernat, 2015), two ways of taking notes were proposed for practice to the students: the double diary (notes in the form of ideas, concepts, content elements/comments, reactions, connections, questions) and the Cornell system (notes/ questions, connections, personal reflections, keywords/ abstract). Students practiced using these tools on scientific texts but also videos, in the Learning documentary category (Human Mind, BBC, Get Smart).

Positive aspects: the systematization and organizing information, listening / viewing / active reading, asking questions, highlighting content by layout, practicing the efficient recording and processing of information, practicing the synthesis capacity. Difficulties were recorded regarding the establishment of connections between notes and previous information and identifying keywords.

Elaborating the cognitive organizers (conceptual maps, tables, diagrams, etc.) after getting in contact with information was another activity for the students; they had the possibility to choose the informational content from the psychological/ pedagogical area and to practice creating such charts. Positive aspects: supporting the understanding by using classification, illustration, summarizing and systematizing information and practicing the analysis and synthesis operations. Difficulties: conceptual maps were overloaded or too thin, difficulties in prioritizing information, in identifying the criteria for classification.

For argumentative writing on a topic (of their choice) from the education area, students were given a framework for structuring their ideas: introduction (presenting the theme, definitions, arguments for choosing the theme, position regarding the theme); contents (detailing aspects of introduction, relevant information about the theme, arguments, evidence etc.); conclusion (summary of the main ideas, implications of the theme, steps that follow etc.). Here are some of the themes students have chosen and developed: *The relationship between formal, non-formal, informal education; School uniforms; Education and success in life; Lifelong learning; School-family relationship; The Kindergarten - an environment for child development; The role of the family in child development; School violence; The child and the TV; Homework etc.*

Positive aspects: practicing the ability to organize and prioritize information, issuing judgments and value judgments, assuming attitudes, expressing originality, compiling a bibliography and citing it. The biggest difficulties were giving arguments and correctly citing the bibliographic resources.

Regarding the reflective practice, students were asked to complete a minimum of three learning journals (using this structure: *What have we learned? / How did we learn? / How did I feel? / How / Where can I use what I learned?*). These journals were completed following their participation in courses, seminars or other activities. The use of this instrument was encouraged in the context of students participating in other academic/ scientific activities too.

Positive aspects: students practiced their capacity for reflection on their learning experiences, identifying added value in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes, the methodology used and the ability to use what they have learned. Some students did demonstrate a reflection process that was analytic and deep, while others approached completing the learning journals with superficiality.

To find answers to the second question of interest - the question referring to the perception of the strengths / needs, opportunities and threats for their learning experiences participating in this discipline - we used the individual interview method. In structuring the end of the semester interview we used the SWOT analysis of their own learning process we developed during the seminars.

The strengths were identified by students starting with the following questions: *What have you learned as a result of participation in the ELT seminar? What do you know/ can do now as a result of participation in this seminar?* As strengths, students noted: knowledge and application of study techniques specific to the academic activity (graphic representation of ideas, writing essays, active reading, note-taking etc.), identification and characterization of learning styles, harnessing learning sources (books, internet etc.), the opportunity to give a personal touch to their products, knowing each other at group level, active listening of the others and sharing experiences and knowledge with their colleagues and the teacher, expression of personal opinions, active involvement in classroom activities, use reflection on activities, approaching learning with more confidence.

We quote from the students interventions: *"I discovered my learning style and I will try to make the most of it"* (student A. N.); *"I learned to take notes in ways that I did not know. It was interesting! I already use this skill in other courses."* (student G. S.); *"I learned about a lot of psychology and pedagogy books. It probably would have taken me a lot of time to discover them for myself."* (student M. C.); *"I always felt challenged by the tasks proposed by this discipline, but I feel I have evolved in terms of my way to learn and I have more confidence that I can succeed in exams."* (student T. O.);

Weaknesses / needs were identified by students, starting from the following questions: *What could you further improve? What don't you know /*

do better yet?; What learning needs were left uncovered? Students identified some issues that need to be improved, or weaknesses: difficulty to follow a learning program, problems in giving arguments, trouble with correctly citing sources according to academic standards, organizing and preserving study materials (lectures, notes, electronic materials etc.). Here are some interventions from the students: *"I still have difficulties in keeping and organizing notes and additional study materials for each subject. I'm not a very organized person and therefore lose much time and energy when I want to learn."*(student S. F.); *"I'm not sure yet whether I know how to quote correctly or not. I received information and examples of this, but I have to practice more."* (student S. A.)

As opportunities (*What learning opportunities did you have at this seminar ?; How did you capitalize?*) students have appreciated: the presence of this subject in the curriculum, in terms of usefulness and relevance for student activity, a real opportunity to practice learning techniques not only for this discipline, but all other disciplines, the visits to the university library and the documentation activities carried out there, sharing learning experiences with peers and the teacher, participation in scientific events (like conferences). The students' interventions are revealing in this regard: "*I find it great to have the opportunity to learn how to learn, not only about what and how much to learn."* (student K. F.); *"We discovered the university's library and I find it to be a place that's very well equipped and designed for the needs of students. For me it is a reference point in terms of psychology and pedagogy books. Now I know where I can find them."*(student M. M.); *"The ability to participate in the public conference Lifelong Learning in Action: The university, employers, trainers and the community working together (19 - 20 November 2015, Sibiu) and then discuss the learning experiences we got there at the seminar was a great idea. I came into contact with information, people, other modes of presentation and, especially, I learned differently. "*

The question: *What obstacles have you encountered during the learning process in this seminar?* has highlighted a few external problems faced by students, such as: the difficulty to make the study program at faculty work with their job schedule (for students that were working), the pressures of family obligations, the difficulty to adapt to the dorm life, especially in terms of finding a peaceful and personal study place. Here's what student N. A. said: *"The hardest thing is to reconcile my college classes to my work hours. I lost some activities for that reason. I tried to catch-up with help from colleagues, but I am aware that it's not the same experience as being in the classroom. "*

The difficulties the students encountered during the semester while being enrolled in the ELT discipline became reflection subjects for

optimization of the activities in this discipline, but also for the concentration of efforts of other teachers involved in the program to provide support for academic work, to find the opportunities to practice the skills that are still problematic and to give/ receive constructive feedback.

5. Conclusions

The presence of explicit steps for the development of this competence of learning to learn at an university level is justified not only by the need to support the personal development of the students and to facilitate the process of adaptation to the standards of didactic and scientific activities in the university, but also from the perspective that graduates of this the program will be responsible for laying the foundations of the competence of learning to learn for the children they will work with. If teachers have difficulties in this area, it is unlikely that they will turn into a resource and a source of support and inspiration for their students. Beyond the success of the approach described in this study, the real challenge is in front of the students enrolled in the study program PPPE, which will have to demonstrate the competence in the academic environment first and then in their professional career and take lifelong learning as a means of personal and professional development.

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THE INFLUENCE OF THE THEMATIC STUDY ON THE COMMUNICATION ABILITIES AND ON THE LEARNING RESULTS OFPUPILS THAT ARE PART OF THE STEP BY STEP EDUCATIONAL ALTERNATIVE

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Abstract:*This study presents a pedagogical quasi experiment starting from the idea that realizing a harmonious education through the interdisciplinary activities that took place by thematic study for the classes in the Step by Step educational alternative, is an essential element when it comes to the student's schooling success. Motivation is a sine-qua-non factor in the child's formation. Thus, studying the level of the development of the communication abilities was chosen as a theme of the research, within the thematic study, in the interdisciplinary activities. The method of research was the experiment and its conclusions strengthen the idea that by thematic study, the Step by Step educational alternative significantly makes a contribution to the development of the harmonious education of children.*

Key words:*Step by Step classes, thematic study, communicative abilities.*

INTRODUCTION

The idea for the selection of this topic started from what has been suggested by Jean Piaget's words who said that "The education should be oriented to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of the respect for the fundamental rights and freedom of the human being". Nowadays the Romanian system of education tries to get integrated in the new European educational wave, according to which real equal chances are offered to everybody by the re-valorization of the subjective dimension of the educational act that says that the student "is not" but he "becomes". According to the specialists in the sciences of education, in the didactic space coexist at least two types of situations: ritualized and repetitive situations that the teacher approaches and solves quickly and efficiently, typical to the traditional system of education but also new and

unusual situations that configure a space of uncertainty and risk – and these last ones need new approaches, unspecified, nonconventional, creative, typical to educational alternatives.

The new approach proposed by these alternatives imposes the revalorization of the subjective dimension of the educational act. It is just this problem that is being tried to be solved by educational alternatives especially by the Step by Step educational alternative.

FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS

The thematic study represents a way of putting into practice the school curriculum. The formation and the full development of the abilities and the skills that the student has to assimilate are thus naturally assured. The thematic teaching involves the harmonization of the different aspects of teaching by exploring an interesting idea that touches, through its content, different subjects. Through the harmonization of the themes of school subjects with the planning of contents, the alternative meets the students' needs but also the request of the national curriculum. It is the individualization of the program focused on the child that is being emphasized and not the teaching of school subjects. So, the didactic process has to include the elaboration of projects, learning in activity centers, discussions, visits, guests in the class, trips or hiking. Pupils like to learn for the basic subjects like reading, writing or math when those are mingled with notions connected with nature or social education.

The thematic teaching is an *active-participative* method which places the child in the role of the initiator of the learning act, of explorer of the universe, of learning and it determines him to become independent. Through the thematic study the theoretical knowledge is mingled with the practical exploration activity, by an active instruction that opposes the instruction of verbal, linear type.

In order to initiate and develop a thematic study it is necessary to follow certain stages:

Stage 1

- *Establishing the theme* of the study by the students, through the collective analysis, of their proposals - concerning what they are interested in. students will debate the themes that have been proposed by themselves, bringing pro and con arguments. Then, by democratic vote, the theme for the thematic study will be established.
- *The directions of development:* talks with the children, the map of the syllabus in network, discussions with the persons that can be involved in the study.

- *Establishing the period of time* when the thematic study takes place, according to the complexity or the diversity of the themes
- *Planning and projecting the activity:* the inventorying of the existing materials and the realizing, together with the students, of a list with the necessary materials-some of them can be brought or made by the students – realizing a list of activities appropriate to the theme, that can be developed in class, a list with human resources that can help the good development of the study (parents, members of the family, specialists)

Stage II

- *Establishing roles and responsibilities*
- *The development:* explorations, recording data and facts, realizing classifications, sorting out, descriptions of some objects, dramatization, creating riddles by the children as a game in which to gasp the characteristics of the vegetables that have been picked up.

Stage III

- *Adding details*
- *Attributing a finality* to the finite product:storing the vegetables in the C.P.V. pantry, tasting the vegetables together with the old people
- *Assessing* the thematic study

METHODOLOGY

Within the research we started from the premise that harmonious education realized within the thematic study sustains the child's development intellectually, socially, emotionally, esthetically, leading to the improvement of pupils' results and to the development of their communication abilities. Thus, the following was chosen as a research theme: the development of communication abilities, within the thematic study, for interdisciplinary activities, for the 3rd graders.

The general objectives of the investigations have been:

- recognizing the influence of the thematic study on the positive results obtained by the 3rd graders;
- developing the communication abilities for the pupils involved in the Step by Step educational alternative and also the interactive didactic strategies;
- developing the communication abilities also involves developing the pupils' cognitive, affective and social abilities;

The operational objectives have been:

- determining the influence of the thematic study on pupils' results;
- emphasizing the fact that the methods used within the thematic study facilitate the development of pupils' communication abilities;
- identifying the factors that influence the cohesion of the group of students;

The method of research has been the pedagogical experiment and the following have been used as instruments of collecting data: questionnaires for the teachers, questionnaires for the students, the direct observation, observation files/records.

The experiment started from the following general hypothesis: the thematic study, through its interdisciplinary activities, positively influences pupils' results by putting into practice the requirements of realizing the syllabus of the thematic study the pupils develop involvement, responsibility and social integration. The operational hypothesis were as follows:

- If the thematic study is applied, by the harmonious teaching of specific subjects then we will be able to reach a high level of preparation and involvement in the learning activity of the participants (pupils, teachers, parents).
- If all the activities that took place during the thematic study determine a dynamic and interactive approach of the theme then the willingness of the children towards communication and relationship will increase.
- If teaching contents by realizing a network curriculum is made by using the appropriate methods, then the children's activity is stimulated, positively influencing their school success.

The sample of subjects has been formed by pupils with ages between 8, 9 and 10 years old, because at this level of development, the psycho-pedagogical characteristics are about the same. Considering that at this level of development the children's communication and relationship abilities have already been outlined, the thematic teaching can be successfully realized, helping the identification of the pupils' mutual interests and the acknowledgement of their belonging to a certain community.

Likewise, we have chosen teachers that are about the same age, the same experience in the field, all of them having the 1st didactic degree and especially all of them teaching and having been formed in the Step by Step educational alternative, with a teaching experience of at least four years in the field. Another motivation of the choice of subjects (the teachers) is the fact that the pedagogical communication style of these ones is the democratic one. (It is about the fact that they had been working in the alternative?) I am

mentioning the fact that the two classes are functioning in this school year as a traditional system, but one of them had agreed to develop the activities in the spirit of the alternative.

Two teachers that lead groups of pupils with ages between 8, 9 and 10 years old (3rd graders) were part of this research. The number of the participating pupils is 30 as it can be observed in the tables that follow:

Table no 1. Pupils involved in the research

3rd graders	No .of children	Girls	Boys
Work sample	30	17	13

The pupils are very well built, both physically and mentally, coming from ordinary families.

Table no .2. Pupils involved in the research – according to their environment and material state

The study group	No. of children	The family environment			The material state		
		Organized	Disorganized	One of the parents is abroad	Very good	Good	Satisfactory
The preparatory group	30	19	3	8	5	18	7

THE PEDAGOGICAL EXPERIMENT:

In order to be able to observe in a more nuanced manner the role of the thematic study by interdisciplinary activities, we have appreciated as being more appropriate the use of the method of the pedagogical experiment. When it came to the development of the activities proposed by the syllabus of the 3rd grade, traditional methods of teaching the contents have been applied to one class and for the other we have tried the approach of contents from the perspective of the thematic study, the theme *The Living World.*

Using the method of the thematic study in teaching the contents set by the syllabus improves the students' results, through a better student-student, student-teacher or student-experts communication. We have reached this conclusion after having applied a pedagogical experiment that has had as a starting point the objectives and the hypothesis mentioned above.

Because there is only one class per level in our school we appealed to a parallel class from another institution with the same number of students, using the technique of parallel groups:

The control group (the control sample) – formed by 15 pupils

The experimental group (the experimental sample) – formed by 15 pupils

During the day the contents from the school curriculum for the following subjects have been taught:

- Romanian – "Describing an object/a person. Describing an activity"
- Science – "Live bodies. The plants"
- Civic education – "Persons with special needs"
- The content sample has been represented by the contents of the school curriculum for Science. The preliminary theme: "Live bodies. Lifeless bodies" has been evaluated as a sample.

The ascertaining stage has been marked by an individual worksheet in which have been checked: the subjects' initial knowledge as far as the contents of the school curriculum are concerned and then the obtained results have been registered according to the table below:

Table no 3. The results registered by students in the ascertaining stage

Group	Sample No.	Marks			
		Very good	Good	Sufficent	Insufficent
Classes of pupils	30	19	8	3	-

The test applied to the whole sample of students regards the revision of the knowledge detained by the 3rd graders up to that moment. It is a time of bringing the knowledge up to date once again.

After having been given the tests, the children from the class in which this activity had taken place were told the themes they would have to learn about: live bodies and lifeless bodies and persons with special needs and afterwards they were asked for opinions. Some of them have parents that work for the Shelter for Old People from Sacu have identified in the people committed there persons who have special needs. They have been suggested to pay a visit to that institution the next day and the students agreed.

The experimental stage is that in which the control group had classical lessons where they had been taught in the traditional way having used the manual and the classical methods. The experimental group had the chance to take part in an unusual lesson. After *The Morning Meeting,* having read the message and having announced the themes, there came the mini-lessons. During the mini-lessons the students have been explained essential things about live bodies and lifeless bodies, about developing cycles which make a difference between the two categories and also about people who have the same developing cycle. The pupils have noticed that old people and children are categories that need special attention. By extension, discussions have been carried out and children have also identified other categories of people who need special care and the way they can make a contribution to helping these persons.

A short stop at the centers (*Science and Social studies*) had given to the pupils the possibility to receive some information about the themes of the day. (10 min/center)

Afterwards they paid a visit to the old people asylum where the pupils had a meeting with the seniors, some in a wheelchair, with the manager, the psychologist and some members of the staff. They asked them a lot of questions about the way they live, how they are taken care of, but the funniest were about what school was like when they were children. They were very vexed when they found out how school was like back then. Next came the activity during which they picked up, together with other two old men, vegetables from the garden looked after by the last ones: peppers, egg plants, tomatoes, potatoes. They have been pleased to see the red, pink and yellow, orange, big average and small tomatoes but also the white egg plants and the peppers of different kinds and colors. Each of them described to the others the vegetable he/she liked best (both the plant and the part of it that can be used). They have noticed the environmental conditions that are necessary for the plant's harmonious development. They have sorted them and stored them in cases in the pantry. As a reward they each got a vegetable of their choice. The biggest rewards were the thanks they got.

The meditation stage took place the second day and it was marked by discussions about the visit, their impressions, opinions, debates about certain events, the realization of a collage made from photos taken by the students and their teacher during the visit by choosing the most representative moments that had impressed them.

INTERPRETING RESULTS

The following results have been registered after the ascertaining stage:

Table no .4. The control group results:

The group	Sample No.	Marks			
		Very good	Good	Sufficent	Insufficent
The Control group	15	8	5	2	0

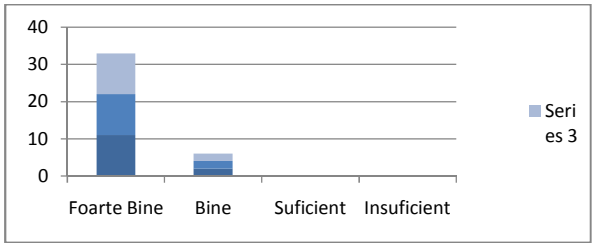
Table no .5. Experimental group results:

Group	Sample No.	Marks			
		Very good	Good	Sufficent	Insufficent
Experimental group	15	11	4	0	0

Table no .6. Results between the two groups

	Very good	Good	Sufficent	Insufficent
EXPERIMENTAL GROUP	11	4	0	0
CONTROL GROUP	8	5	2	0

From the above graphics different results between the two groups can be observed.



By comparing the results obtained by the two groups of students we can conclude that the experimental group got better results in the final test,

fact that acknowledges the hypothesis that by involving pupils through the method of the thematic study their results improve considerably.

CONCLUSIONS

By centralizing the answers got in the working sheets, by analyzing the results at the tests but also the behavior of the subjects of the research a lot of conclusions have been identified as far as the influence of the thematic study on the communication abilities and the results of learning are concerned.

The use of the thematic study develops pupils' communication abilities. Bydebating the theme, by the talks the students had with one another and with their teacher in establishing the network, by putting children in extraordinary situations and in the situation of deciding by themselves upon what they what to learn about, they are all encouraged to have dialogues, to state and also to sustain their own ideas, to formulate arguments. Likewise, they find themselves in the situation to have dialogues with grown up persons, to use addressing formulas, to formulate questions that spontaneously and directly arise from their need to know more. Their curiosity, accordingly exploited by the teacher, becomes an absolute motivating factor. We consider this to be the most significant way of developing true communication abilities, arising from a controlled spontaneity.

The thematic study offers to the students a different perspective on the teaching-learning activity, more attractive and at the same time, more motivating. As a result of the questionnaires that have been applied, it was obvious that all the students from the experimental group have shown a great interest when participating to the given activities and that, at the end of the day, everybody felt happy. Not the same thing happened within the control group where some of the students were indifferent and two of them were unhappy. This proves that the students and his aspirations need to remain in the center of the didactic act. As a result of the activities developed within the study the students gained confidence in themselves, got used to debate, about what is not very clear to them, had the opportunity to communicate and understood that there's a dialogue between themselves and the teacher/experts.

Implementing the method of the thematic study improves the nature of the relationships between the students having as an effect the cohesion of the group. It can be noticed that, after the activity ended the relationships are visibly improved and they keep on discussing about what had happened and what they have realized, even during break time. Even the least communicative and the least sociable of the students took part in these

discussions. Through the debates initiated by the teacher they have developed respect for one another's opinions, sense of responsibility and involvement and it was obvious that the problems that deal with social integration improved. All the students have observed an improvement in the state of mind created in the class (100%) compared with the students from the control group that noticed no change. We have also seen that, dynamic, interesting activities that effectively involve the student, really determine him to willingly come to school with great pleasure.

As a last conclusion, it is impossible not to be noticed the effect that the thematic study has on both the students and their parents. It is obvious in three different fields of the child's development: the cognitive field, the emotional/affective and the social one.

From a first perspective, a cognitive one we can notice the unitary vision in which the contents from the curriculum are taught and learned (e.g. *"The live world"*). Students find themselves in the situation of searching for information from lots of sources in order to stick to the research theme. They operate without thinking, as a game of responsibility, the thinking operations as analysis and synthesis, heuristic thinking, and so on, these ones being determined by the making of the thematic map and by the ways of realizing it.

If we regard it from the perspective of the emotional/affective field, we can notice that children develop self-confidence, they trust their own abilities more, self-esteem, the sense of dignity and self -appreciation. By relating themselves to the other students they start feeling useful within the group and through their activities they rejoice together with their colleagues, they are solidary and they have a feeling of satisfaction when finalizing a thing well done.

From a social point of view, the children find themselves in the situation to work together and to communicate with one another but also with grownups, parents or experts, some of these being unknown. Children, according to the law of the permanently unsatisfied curiosity at this age, *"need to"* beat the shyness that adults arouse and to ask questions, to take part in discussions, to initiate constructive dialogues but also to answer the questions when they have to. Only like this do they get to socialize, they develop their cooperation spirit, the feeling of belonging to a group. By working together with the adults, children develop their feeling of belonging to a group and the adults also (either if they are from the family or experts from a public institution) develop a sense of responsibility towards the problems of the new generations that are left nowadays more and more in the school's responsibility.

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THE SOCIAL REPRESENTATION OF TEACHERS BETWEEN REALITY AND ASPIRATION

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Abstract: *The teacher's role in the society, is essential. As a trainer and a personal model, the teacher sets the tone for a strong community. The image of the teacher is reflected in social consciousness and it is correlated with the attractiveness of the profession. In our research, through two studies, we plan to analyze how the social representation of teachers coincides with their self-perceived image in the discharge of professional duties, and the attractiveness of the teaching profession among high school students' final grades. The results allow us to say that, unfortunately, between social representation of teachers in society, with reference to the discharge of professional duties and their self-perceived image, there are big differences.*

Key words: *social representation, the image of the teacher, the attractiveness of the profession.*

Romanian education is going through a big challenge. On the one hand the society expects better and better results from graduates, on the other hand the job perspective is getting weaker. Under these conditions, the quality of teaching is a challenge. Beyond the transmission of knowledge, the educator's task is forming and developing a harmonious personalities of young students. As an actor of the educational system, the teacher should always find the perfect balance between what he or she can offer and what is expected of him or her.

The great majority of teachers are either over 40 years or up to 30 years, the most active segment in terms of professional, 30-40 years, is the most underrepresented. Young teachers remain for the moment in education until they find something more suitable.

The social representation is depending on how the circumstances reconstructs reality. Supported by two pillars, one individual and a social one, this is actually a system of values, a practical way to learn about the world around. As a form of social conscience, it shows how the social actors communicate their conceived messages, promote a certain type of image.

In the development and operation of social representations, S. Moscovici (1995, p. 34) outlined the action of two mechanisms: anchoring and objectification. Anchoring tries to reduce strange ideas to the usual categories and images, and objectification tries to transform something abstract into something concrete, to make something that exists in our minds in something that exists in the physical world. Anchoring is a process that reduces what is alien and disturbing, unknown in our system of categories, something known and familiar. By anchoring social need are closer, familiar, appreciated. This particular statute gives representations of theories of common sense, forms of social knowledge. To categorize someone or something is to choose a paradigm of those stored in our memory and to establish a relationship with its positive or negative (S. Moscovici, 1995, p.35).

Anchoring has several steps. First object represented takes on a particular significance, this is done by two types of complementary activities: assessment activities, classification and categorization on one hand, on the other hand by coding activities. Secondly, by anchoring representation provides an interpretation of the social world, enabling integration of this kind of knowledge into a system of pre-existing knowledge. Lately, anchoring representations becomes active elements of social life. Thus, the representation will bear the mark of expectations, values, norms group's produced.

In order to be more easily manipulated the represented object must be assigned to certain traits, comparing it to a certain prototype already subsisting in the collective memory. Comparison allows framing object in a category. Moscovici underlines the role as a possible means of establishing the identity of an object, phenomenon. Basically this mechanism is trying to establish a relationship between something real and imaginary (S. Moscovici, 1995, p. 35).

Anchoring operates closely with belief systems, values, knowledges previously developed and socially shared. Participating in the creation of social representation anchoring becomes itself a way to manipulate the knowledge. The anchoring mechanism follows the objectification of representations that complements the explanatory model of the generation and operation of social representation, it is an extension of objectification (Dois W., A. Palmonari, 1996, p. 28). Anchoring points to the

three basic functions of representation: the cognitive function of integrating the new; to interpret reality and conducts orientation and social relations .
As a mode of social thinking, objectifying make the abstract concrete, materializes word, clarifies unknown ideas, unfamiliar with the real. Objectifying means to discover the iconic quality of an idea or an inaccurate beings, to replicate the concept in a picture (S. Moscovici, 1995, p .45).

The information coming from the outside is selected out of context, and then the meanings that will be serialized into a structure is called the nucleus of an imaginative figurative character. So what it is abstract objectification materializes, turns a concept into an image or a figurative knot. The social representation is the process that establishes a relationship between subject and object, each with its attributes. Social representations are vectors, central opinions, beliefs, collective behaviors. In education, social representations of teachers are particularly important. Social representations about the teaching profession are present in the minds of prospective teachers before they start teaching, they have been taken form stereotypes (Adam, 2013 http://www.rcsedu.info).

Individual approach to stereotypes stipulates that over time, individuals develop beliefs concerning the characteristics of social groups, and show how this knowledge affects their reporting to different individuals who belong to those groups (Iluţ, 2001, p . 147) .

Social representation of a profession, recognition by the community depends on the level of qualification, competence, professionalism and motivation of those who practice that profession. Thus, social representation requires the presence of teachers with pedagogical skills or competencies that determine its success in the educational process.

Chircev defines a set of teaching skills as personality traits of the educator, enabling him to achieve maximum results in any circumstance, in any class (Chircev, cited Sălăvăstru, 2004, p. 152).

The image of the teacher decreased, and results of schools with excellent results are hardly promoted. Instead negative media abounds with examples and highlights perhaps more than needed. It requires a closer involvement in promoting the profile of the teacher, a continuous dissemination of good practices and good results obtained by most teachers.

Methodology

Objectives and hypotheses: In our research, through two studies, we plan to analyze if the social representation of teachers coincides with their self-perceived image and how much the teaching profession isappealing among High school in terminal grades students. Thus, the first study assumes that there is a significant difference between self-perceived image of teachers and social representation of teachers on how teachers perform their

professional duties, and the second study states that the number of students who want to become teachers is decreasing.

Participants: In the first study, there were three categories of participants:

• 104 community members, randomly selected: 67 women and 37 men, aged between 35 and 60 years, of which 53 are urban and 51 from rural areas;

• 89 high school students from two high schools in Oradea, 49 girls and 40 boys aged between 15 - 18 years;

• 97 teachers, 62 women and 35 men, 58 from urban and 41 from rural areas, aged between 23 and 58 years.

For the second study we worked with 109 students from XIth - XIIth grades, 64 girls and 45 boys from two national colleges and two technical high schools from Oradea, aged between 16 and 18 years.

Instruments: In the first study we used three questionnaires with ten open questions, one for each of the three categories of participants, and in the second study, students were asked to answer the question: Would you like to become a teacher? They were asked to provide three arguments for their chosen answers.

Procedure: First we wanted to find out if of the teachers' image in the community and among students coincides with their self-perceived image in the discharge of professional duties. The three categories of participants, weighted by their responses positive, negative or neutral, are found in Table 1:

Answers	**Members from communities**	**Teachers**	**Students**
Positive	28	72	17
Negative	66	5	51
Neutrals	10	20	21
Total	104	97	89

Given the frequency responses, we applied for comparing $\chi 2$ test.

For research was used SPSS, Chi Square test .

Table 2. Frequencies observed, as expected, percentages and adjusted standardized residues on participants' answers

		Answers				**Total**
			Positives	**Negatives**	**Neutrals**	
Participants	**Members**	Observed requencies	28	66	10	104

	from communities	Expected requencies	42.0	43.8	18.3	
		Adjusted standardized residues	**-3.5**	**5.5**	**-2.7**	
	Teachers	Observed requencies	72	5	20	97
		Expected requencies	39.1	40.8	17.1	
		Adjusted standardized residues	**8.3**	**-9.0**	1.0	
	Students	Observed fequencies	17	51	21	89
		Expected fequencies	35.9	37.4	15.7	
		Adjusted standardized residues	**-4.9**	**3.5**	1.8	
Total		Observed requencies	117	122	51	290

In table 2 we can track the observed, the expected and adjusted standardized residuals for responses of 290 participants in our research, operationalized through positive negative or neutral feedback. To see where the differences are significant, adjusted standardized residuals are pursuing individual cells. The values contained in range (-2, 2) are considered indicators of significant differences between observed and expected frequencies.

Table 3. Significant adjusted standardized residuals value

Answer:	Adjusted standardized residuals value		
Quality	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Community	-3.5	5.5	-2.7
Teachers	8.3	-9.0	-
Students	-4.9	3.5	-

As we can see, there are significant differences between the three categories of participants. The biggest difference was obtained for the teacher's answeres who are discordant with the other participants by placing

the opposite if positive answers or negative, thereby strengthening our statements stipulated in hypothesis.

Table 4. Value of $\chi 2$ test.

	Value	Df	Sig
Coeficient (Pearson) $\chi 2$	95.935(a)	4	.000
Nr. valid cases	290		

0 cells (.0 %) have expected frequency less than 5 .
The minimum expected frequency is 15.65

The values in the above table confirms our research: participants' responses analyzing the situation, we have a degree of freedom $\chi 2$ 4 95.935 with a significance level .000 lower than the critical sig of .05, so we can say, without a risk of error of less than 1 %, there are significant differences in responses between the three categories of participants in this study.

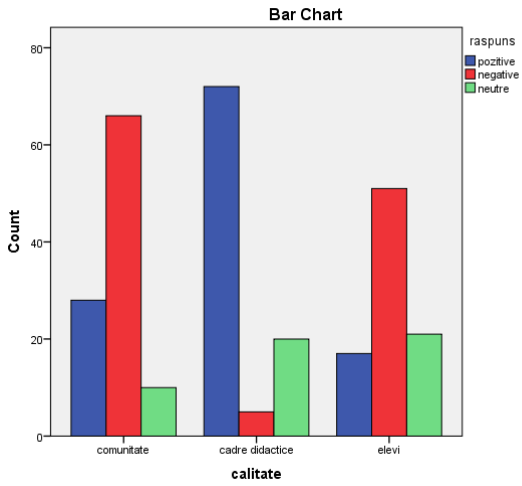

Figure 1. Graphical representation of the situation of the participants' to the first study answers.

In this figure we can seen that the differences between the responses of community members, teachers or students on the opinion they have about the way in which teachers fulfill their role of educator in society are very different. The obtained results allow us to say that, unfortunately, between social representation of teachers in society, with reference to the discharge of professional duties and their self-perceived image, there are big differences. This is because, in our opinion, that every teacher more or less subjectively considers to fulfill its noble role of educator. Moreover, most teachers make many sacrifices and believes that mistreated socially. Among the responses from teachers found the question: Do you fulfill the duties of educator?The most common and largely positive, are: *Yes, I hate to disappoint my students; Yes, I often make even more than I was asked; I try to fulfill all tasks, although sometimes I feel unmotivated.* At the opposite pole we find disapproving answers from the community members: *The teachers don't do their job as they should., They should be better prepared to deal with more serious about educating and guiding children., Some aren't well prepared, aren't made for this profession., Many teachers do not teach in the classroom to get students to come to private lessons.*

The students argued that*: Unfortunately, some of the teachers don't know how to teach and prefer to talk about anything else on the subject of the lesson., Some teach us a little but they demand a lot., The majority of teachers are subjective and do not even hide this., After 12 o'clock we are free all the time., The teachers are talking on the phone during the classes., There are very few teachers who are doing their job and deserves to be respected., They don't have patience with us, offend and humiliate us.,*

In the second study, we thought it would be useful to see if there are high school students eager to become teachers. Thus, we asked 109 students in XIth – XIIth grades, 64 girls and 45 boys from two national colleges and two technical school high schools from Oradea to answer the question if they would like to become a teacher and provide three arguments for their chhosen answeres. Of the 109 students, only 14 have expressed their willingness to become teachers. Among the arguments of those 14 students we have found some constants*: I love children., Is a beautiful profession, it offer decent working conditions and the opportunity to be always up to date in a particular field., I have more free time and holidays and so I can do something else.* Unfortunately the majority of students, even if they would like to be teachers would not choose this profession because*: It's a stressful*

work., Students do not respect you and they work for nothing., No, the students don't appreciate them and I wouldn't like to work in these conditions., No, because I don't find it as an interesting job… every day doing the same thing, it becomes monotonous., I don't think I would be able., I'm not attracted at all to the field., No, because it's a hard job, you must prepare more and have more patience.

Students interviewed know very well what would be their priorities if they would became teachers: I wouldn't distinguish between students., I would never teach if I wasn't well prepared., I wouldn't give unfairly marks and I wouldn't teach too much in a hour., I wouldn't take bribes., I would teach things that are useful in life., I would never beat a child., I would not label a student unprepared, but I fight to make him to want to learn., I should try to be fair and honest with my students., I would not you insist to teach them useless stuff., I should try to make students to learn with pleasure not for fear or marks., I should respect the break and I would listen the students., I would never leave the class until my students understand the lesson., I would never make a student feel bad., I wouldn't offend students., I'd do classes interesting. I would insult students and fairness should be a priority for me, I don't want to be a teacher, but if by mistake I would be, I would try to make less mistakes than my teachers.

Conclusion

The results of our research confirm that there are differences between the way teachers evaluate their work and social representation of this. Closely related to this is the lack of attractiveness of the profession among community in general and among students in particular. As the role of the teacher, the principal actor in education is essential, we think that we need an intervention program to promote more positively the profile of the teacher in the society.

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THE DYNAMIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED EMPLOYMENT SELF-CONFIDENCE AND PERCEIVED EMPLOYMENT CHALLENGES - A POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT APPROACH TO YOUTH CAREER COUNSELLING

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Abstract:*This paper is focused on analyzing youth perception on employment self-confidence, in order to best anticipate their behaviour and action pattern related to perceived employment challenges. The main purpose of current study is to analyze the dynamic relationship between perceived employment self-confidence and perceived employment challenges in career counselling of 432 last year students and young graduates from 4 European countries. The dynamic relationship identified, demonstrates that extreme scores (low and high) on perceived employment self-confidence hamper perceived employment challenges, making clients much more vulnerable in the face of future professional uncertainties, creating a vicious circle which outputs reflect an active/passive professional opportunities searching behaviour pattern. In the end, this inconsistent behaviour will only damage clients perceived employment self-confidence. Meanwhile, balanced perceived employment self-confidence will trigger healthy perceived employment challenges, engaging youth clients in a positive search behaviour quest for professional opportunities.*

Keywords: *positive youth development, youthcareer counselling, dynamic relationship, perceived employment self-confidence, perceived employment challenges.*

1. Introduction

As the scientific literature depicts, Positive Youth Development (PYD) refers to intentional efforts of other youth, adults, communities, government agencies and schools to provide opportunities for youth to enhance their interests, skills, and abilities. PYD most commonly refer to programs specifically designed to optimize youth developmental progress.

As one of the most important researcher in the PYD topic states, the youth development field has incorporated the perspective of ecology of human development: the mutual accommodation between an active, growing human being and the immediate setting in which the developing person lives, and has sought to understand and describe adolescent development in the context of the critical social systems in which youth grow and learn (Cahill et al., 2002).

Karen Pittman, one of the first advocates for positive youth development, best described this strategy in the phrase „Problem-free isn't fully prepared" (Pittman, 1999), developing the model of 5 Cs as a framework for understanding positive youth development outcomes (Pittman et. al. 2003):

- **Confidence** - a sense of self-worth and mastery; having a sense of self-efficacy (belief in one's capacity to succeed),
- **Character** - taking responsibility; a sense of independence and individuality; connection to principles and values,
- **Connection** - a sense of safety, structure, and belonging; positive bonds with people and social institutions,
- **Competence** - the ability to act effectively in school, in social situations, and at work,
- **Contribution** - active participation and leadership in a variety of settings; making a difference.

As one can see, self-confidence is extremely important in almost every aspect of our existence, representing also a core process in any career counselling theoretical approach or practice. Scientifically literature depicts the fact that people who lack self-confidence can find it difficult to face challenges, especially young people addressing career development issues. Being a dynamical concept, building up a healthy self-confidence requires a permanent willing act and needs external positive feed-back, coming in terms of professional counselling for constant confirmation, up to a point when client's mindset is ready to be autonomous and develop by its own, in terms of self-empowerment.

When practicing building up self-confidence in career counselling, PYD theories suggest priorities to be addressed. First of all, clients should particularly understand the difference between conceit (bragging about self)

and confidence (being self-aware), the last requiring reality constant checking and honest and accurate self-assessment (Tan, H. K. K., et. al., 2011). The other aspects to be regarded for refer to: building assertiveness, seeking small victories instead of manifesting failure avoidance behaviour, mentorship, pursuing a healthy lifestyle.

2. Methodology

The objective of the present research is to test the dynamical relationship hypothesis between two core concepts: perceived employment self-confidence and perceived employment challenges, a dynamic career counselling approach.

The project under which study has been performed was focused on the needs of the unemployed youth in the countries of the participating organizations aiming to improve the quality and accessibility of educational and training provisions through the use of ICT as well as to provide new skills for gaining long term employment and for entrepreneurship. The aim of the questionnaire used was to point out young people's identification of vocational counselling needs, unemployment statistics, relevant competencies on the labour market, and current knowledge on active national policies in offering employment opportunities for young people.

The main purpose of current study is to highlight the relationship between perceived employment self-confidence and perceived employment challenges of 432 last year students and young graduates from 4 European countries.

Among other questions that are not the subject of this current research, young people were asked to rate (1=lowest, 5=highest) 6 issues that they consider bringing them self-confidence in finding a job (Item 26). Aspects regarding perceived self-confidence referred to: a clear sense of what can be accomplished, validation through past examples of success, testimony from others, friends and family support, stories of successful campaigns, mentors and role models.

Regarding perceived employment challenges, young people were asked to rate (1=lowest, 5=highest) 4 issues that they consider to represent challenges in their future job (Item 14). Aspects referred to: over-enthusiasm about the new job, overwhelmed with work-load, not feeling part of the team, feeling confused, unsure about tasks.

A total of 432 youth have voluntarily responded to our online questionnaire in four languages, 38,2% is represented by male respondents and 61,8% by female youth respondents. Regarding respondents' age, 46,1% are aged between 15 and 19, representing last year high school teens, 20,4%

are aged between 20 and 24, representing bachelors and 33,6% are aged between 25 and 29, representing students enrolled in master programs.

3. Results

The present study assumes that there is a dynamical relationship between perceived employment self-confidence and perceived employment challenges in youth career counselling process.

In curvilinear relationships variables grow together until they reach a certain point (positive relationship) and then one of them increases while the other decreases (negative relationship) or vice versa. This relationship can be easily identified graphically by a Scatterplot, choosing additional two representations of the regression line: Linear and Quadratic model.

The Scatterplot diagram presented in Figure 1, demonstrates curvilinear relationship between perceived employment self-confidence on the horizontal axis and perceived employment challenges, represented on the vertical axis.

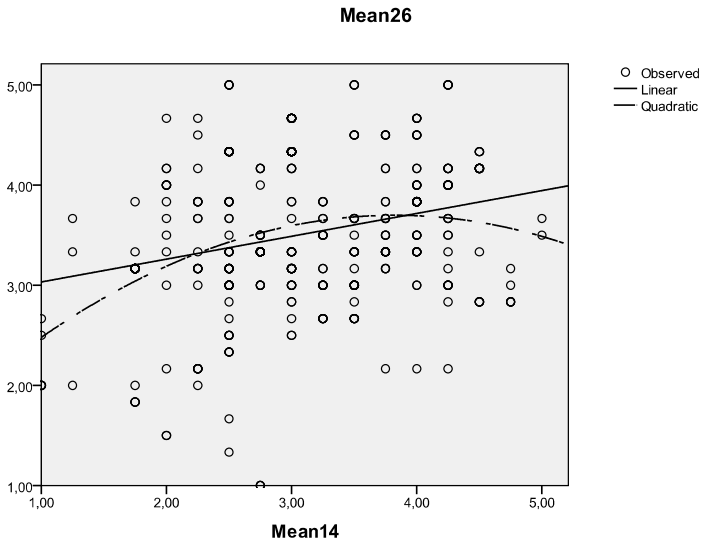

Fig. 1. The dynamic relationship between perceived employment self-confidence (Mean 26) and perceived employment challenges (Mean 14)

In order to test our hypothesis that states that between perceived employment self-confidence and perceived employment challenges there is a significant dynamic relationship, we have used a confirmatory factor analysis, based on multiple regression analysis for curvilinear effects.

There is a very high correlation between perceived employment self-confidence – Item 26 (MD=3,512, SD=0,735) and perceived employment assistance – Item 14 (MD=3,101, SD=0,837) of r = 0,260 significant at a p < 0,01 which methodologically allows us to proceed with confirmatory factor analysis.

Testing for curvilinear relationship, we have used the hierarchical multiple regressions, the dependent variable being perceived employment self-confidence, and the dependent variable in step 1 perceived employment challenges, and in step 2 squared perceived employment challenges.

Table 1 presents the fitting of the two models, linear – Model 1and curvilinear/ quadratic – Model 2. As we can see in Model 1 the model that supposes linear relationship, perceived employment self-confidence accounts for 6,5% of the variance in perceived employment challenges with an F = 31,062 significant at a p < 0,01. In Model 2, the model that supposes curvilinear relationship, perceived employment self-confidence accounts for 9, 2% of the variance in perceived employment challenges with an F = 13,931 significant at a p < 0,01.

Table 1. *Linear and curvilinear regression models for perceived employment self-confidence depending on perceived employment challenges.*

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	,260[a]	,067	,065	,71125	,067	31,062	1	430	,000
2	,311[b]	,097	,092	,70080	,029	13,931	1	429	,000

a. Predictors: (Constant), *Perceived employment challenges (Mean14)*

b. Predictors: (Constant), *Mean14,Perceived employment challenges squared (Mean14sqrt)*

ANOVA[c]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	15,714	1	15,714	31,062	,000[a]
	Residual	217,530	430	,506		
	Total	233,244	431			
2	Regression	22,556	2	11,278	22,964	,000[b]
	Residual	210,688	429	,491		
	Total	233,244	431			

a. Predictors: (Constant), *Mean14*

b. Predictors: (Constant), *Mean14, Mean14sqrt*

c. Dependent Variable: *Perceived employment self-confidence (Mean26)*

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2,804	,131		21,330	,000
	Mean14	,228	,041	,260	5,573	,000
2	(Constant)	1,463	,382		3,829	,000
	Mean14	1,169	,255	1,330	4,579	,000
	Mean14sqrt	-,153	,041	-1,084	-3,732	,000

a. Dependent Variable: *Perceived employment self-confidence (Mean26)*

All standardized coefficients of Beta (B= 0,260; B= 1,330 and B= -1,084) are significant at p values < 0,01 which gives a high consistency to our both models. Changing Beta coefficient's sign from + to - means that the effect is growing in the opposite direction, which clearly demonstrates the curvilinear relationship between perceived employment self-confidence and perceived employment challenges. The additional incremental predictive capacity of 3 percents, added by including the squared perceived employment challenge

variable which is accounting for the band in the regression line, clearly prove that there is a dynamic relationship between perceived employment self-confidence and perceived employment challenges. Although the data clearly demonstrate collinearity, the tolerance threshold is well below the permissible limit, this result is somewhat expected, given the almost perfect correlation between one variable and its square.

4. Conclusions and implications

This research brings a dynamical view of understanding the market of career counselling services, mostly dedicated to youth. Perceived employment self-confidence and perceived employment challenges prove to be crucial concepts when designing client's employment decision making pattern.

The dynamic relationship identified, demonstrates that extreme scores (low and high) on perceived employment self-confidence hamper perceived employment challenges, making clients much more vulnerable in the face of future professional uncertainties, creating a vicious circle which outputs reflect an active/passive professional opportunities searching behaviour pattern. In the end, this inconsistent behaviour will only damage clients perceived employment self-confidence. Meanwhile, balanced perceived employment self-confidence will trigger healthy perceived employment challenges, engaging youth clients in a positive search behaviour quest for professional opportunities.

The dynamic aspect of the self-confidence construct mainstreams from the fact that even maintaining personal confidence when professional life is relatively normal can also be demandingly challenging. When bumping into unexpected professional challenges, like in our case short-term or long-term youth employment, it is becoming a very difficult task to avoid giving in to self-doubt and uncertainty and cope with self-confidence.

When clients feel confident, they are more resourceful, challenges seem less threatening and have much less impact on their self-security issues. On the other hand, when clients feel unconfident, they become unsteady in their ability to make decisions and eventually take action. As in all areas of personal and professional development, finding balance is always the answer, the challenge for career counsellors becomes developing in clients a special set of unique abilities that refer to having a realistic, balanced view of one's own abilities and in the same time having enough self confidence to visualize themselves managing unexpected challenges. And most of all, clients need to acknowledge that self confidence, as a personal perception, is an inner feeling of certainty and capability of accomplishing specific tasks.

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CONTEMPORARY APPROACH TO MUSIC CONTENT AT THE PRESCHOOL AND PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL

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Abstract*: For decades, during the Yugoslav period, school courses held in the languages of ethnic communities used textbooks translated from Serbian (Serbo - Croatian). In the case of music textbooks, there was a possibility of introducing some texts and songs specific to the ethnic community in question. In the last decade, music textbooks aimed to be used by members of ethnic communities have been conceptualized so that they use content specific to the community and not translations from Serbian. This allows for a substantial enrichment of the musical repertoire with examples that are specific to the ethnic community in question. In the case of textbooks for primary grades, it means introducing a greater number of songs and musical examples from the Romanian folklore.*

Keywords*: textbooks, folkloric content, folk-musical skills, music education.*

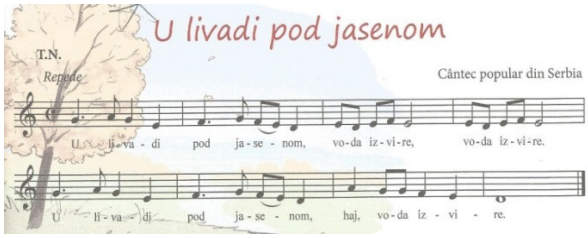
A highly visible feature of the music textbook for grade four of elementary school, also mentioned by its author in the preface, is the emphasis on acquiring knowledge related to the culture of music itself, as the discipline is called[1]. In the preface, professor Ion Lelea indicates the elements that the class will revise and those that are new for the students, available to students and teachers. As was indicated by the author, the textbook focuses on the following:
- Folk music and the art music;
- Musical rhythm and melody;
- Properties of the musical sound;
- Notes, pauses, the linear system;
- Measure, the bar line, signs of repetition;
- Writing and reading notes;
- Melodic and rhythmic instruments;
- Improving the reading and the writing of the musical alphabet;
- Singing and listening to new music compositions;
- Acquisition of musical sound durations;

[1]Translator's note: The full name of the discipline is "Musical culture".

- The measure of four times;
- Gama C A major, tone, semitone, stage;
- Singing in two voices;
- Recognition of fragments of music and musical instruments;
- Analysis of melody;
- Learning of musical genres; (Lelea, 2010).

Referring to the repertoire of folk variety included in the manual for grade four, which draws our attention to its teaching potential, we can say that this is indeed used with the aim to achieve the mentioned objectives. So, in order to revise the measures of 3/4 and 4/4, the author uses a Serbian Banat folk song entitled 'Lepo ti je rano uraniti' (meaning: "It's nice to get up early") that combines the two measures into a success heterometrics in terms of artistic and didactic value. The song is widely known, which facilitates achieving the objective. Also, the emergence of dotted quarter notes, followed by eights in the two 2/4 measures appearing in this song, leads to the consolidation of these difficult rhythmic formulas during several stages of musical development. Doing solfeggio and marking the strokes of this song, the students can very successfully learn or revise those two types of measures.

Another known song of folk variety, namely, 'U livadi pod jasenom' is used for recapitulating the measure 4/4. This song has an accentuated melodicity and is accompanied by the advent of dotted quarter notes and eighth notes, without too big melodic leaps (the only leap being the quint D1 - A1 in measure 6-7), with an age-appropriate ambitus (the song is placed into modal structure of the type ionic D1-A1, having as its basis the sound C and as its final sound the sound D), can be used both as an instrumental piece (played on the piano, block-flute or other instrument) as well as for voice reproduction. The author indicates the availability of all levels of musical development of children (T.N. - all levels). The song may very easily be used when practicing solfeggio because it is characterized by a progressive and a mixed melodic contour and can be very useful for practicing the marking of strokes of the measure 4/4. In short, the example is very well chosen to cover a broader range of objectives proposed by this school discipline for the fourth grade of primary school.



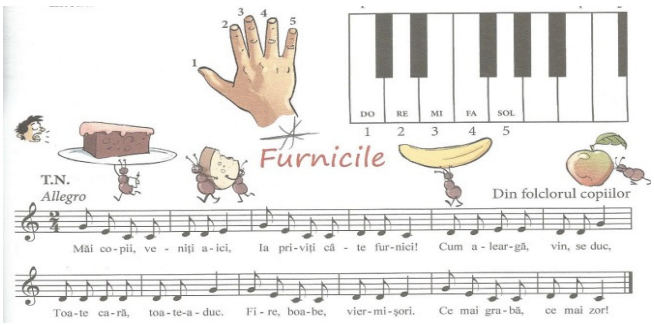
Following other examples of folk music from the pages of the textbook, we note that they were skillfully chosen by the author in order to help achieve the operational objectives. So, for example, the song 'Adă, lupe, oile' (meaning: "Wolf, bring the sheep"), which emerged from children's folklore, is used to revise the signs of repetition. The mentioned song consists of two simple melodic lines, the first having two measures and the second having four measures. The repetition sign appears after the first melodic line. Although it is simple in terms of melody (its structure is a hemitonic pentachord, with the sound D1 being the basis and the final sound), with a mainly descending melodic contour, it may help to acquire the objective. It can be sung by a soloist after a frontal approach of the lesson, so that the singer sings the first two measures (those that repeat) and the other children sing the second melodic line.

For introducing the symbol of corona or fermata, the prolongation of the sound, the author again uses a popular song (following T. Popović, as the author notes). The song in question is 'Cucule, pană galbenă' found on page 35. Originating in folklore, the song introduces the corona in the place of caesuras, which is not always placed at the end of the melodic line, but sometimes after its first sound. That way, the rhythmic structure of eights with sporadic subdivisions of sixteenths, close to the giusto – syllabic rhythmic system, marks the text fragments or syllables considered important. This is done in an expressive way by using caesuras.

The song 'Cucule, pană galbenă' has four sharps (F# - C# - G# - D#) and obviously a tendency toward the sonorous structure with the sound E. This can be considered to be an ionic structure with E as the basic sound, having the final sound on the sixth sound of the sonorous structure (C#), which does not occur often in Romanian folklore. Ambitus of the song is age-appropriate (C#1 - D#1 - E1 - F#1 - G#1 - B1).

'Furnicile' is a song originating in the children's folklore found on page 41 of the textbook. It is indicated that all students in the class can play it, that is, it is intended for all levels of musical development. Understandably, since it originates in children's folklore, it is not particularly difficult in terms of its rhythmics and metrics and it can even be used with children younger than

primary-school fourth grade children. However, the author's idea was for it to be used for instrumental performance. In support of this claim is the fact that there are indications preceding the song about the basic rules of the order of finger when playing an instrument with keyboards. The ambitus of the song oscillates between C1 and G1, which does not necessitate a highly advanced technique (or a change in the position of the right hand). This makes it easy to play it on a keyboard instrument. The song can also very easily be played on another instrument (block - flute or xylophone), but above all, it is meant for vocal reproduction, given its origin deep in the children's folklore. The song 'Furnicile' can be seen in other music textbooks authored by Professor Lelea, but with another teaching objective. Using the same song at different ages for different purposes is no exception and no novelty in the textbooks used in Romanian schools in Serbia. Using the same song several times at different ages is actually strongly recommended, since some new elements will be much more easily learnt if the text of the song is already well known. However, this practice should not be used to exaggeration (Stojanović, G., Protić V.: 2004).



In order for fourth-grade students to get important insight about the dynamic elements and to successfully revise them, the author proposes a folk song entitled 'Ecoul'.

It is already known from the teaching practice that the perception of nuances is best achieved when the same melodic and rhythmic fragment is contrasted in relation to the different dynamic nuances. In order to describe this effect for children, the most useful way is to invoke the idea of an echo. In this respect, the song that is found on page 57 is very useful. This song, which has two measures and which occurs as an identic rhythmic and melodic repetition of the previous two measures, having the same literary text, creates a full effect. The author indicates the nuance of *mf* at the beginning of the song, the echo coming in a *pp* context. During the song, this echo effect appears once again in the last two measures. In fact, the song has only one

melodic line which is repeated twice, the last two measures having the effect of an echo. Its sonority is profoundly tonal, so we can talk about the sonorous structure of a C Major with its typical functionality. The vocal reproduction of the song can be accomplished frontally, followed by the reorganization of students into groups who would then emulate the echo and produce the text according to the given dynamic indicators. Of course, once learnt, these nuances can be enriched with other terms related to the dynamics, maintaining the idea of contrasting them.

On page 67 of the textbook, the author offers another piece of music with folk origin, this time originating in the children's folklore. This song encourages the vocal and instrumental reproduction in the classroom. 'Cîntă Mierla' is based on two voices and two percussion instruments. The parts designated for vocal reproduction can also be played on an instrument (Lelea, 2010).

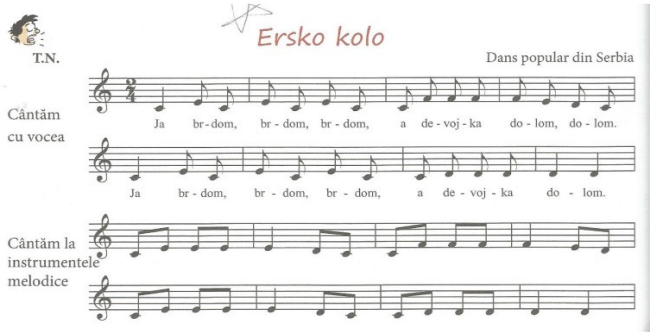
Practicing the vocal - instrumental reproduction in the classroom is crucial for the musical development of students, and especially for developing their ability to notice nuances, as well as for developing the sense of rhythm and harmonic hearing.

The piece of music, that is the song, is not particularly difficult in terms of its melody and rhythm, even though its ambitus is an octave (C1 - C2). After the musical text is deciphered, as well as both voices by way of doing the solfeggio, and the corresponding strokes are marked, the example can be produced in more than one way since the students had already leant the literary text. This can be done by reversing the roles of the students (the vocal reproduction of voices, the instrumental reproduction, the production of percussion elements etc.).

This song offers great potential when it comes to revising certain elements used in writing, which had already been learnt, such as signs of repetition, quarter rests or some terms related to tempo, demonstrating once again the great possibilities offered by the repertoire of folklore in terms of teaching music (Stojanović, G., Protić V.: 2004).

Another example we give is a song originating in the Serbian folklore entitled 'Ersko kolo', as presented by the author on page 72 of the music textbook for grade four of the elementary (primary) school. Although meant as a vocal performance, the song is a good example of adapting folk content in order to be used in achieving the teaching objectives. Also, the mentioned example, namely, 'Ersko kolo', can be reproduced both as a vocal and as an instrumental piece. With a reduced ambitus situated between C1 and F1 and with the final sound of D1, i.e. the second sound of the sonorous structure (stage II), a termination specific for the Serbian folklore Serbian, this example poses no difficulty for vocal production. References of the author about the Serbian traditional music and the domination of the flute in the

Serbian folklore, is indicative of the desire for the song to be played on the block - flute, an instrument often present in schools in Serbia. However, the song 'Ersko kolo' can be played on a keyboard instrument without much finger-placing related trouble and it is also easy to play it on a xylophone or even guitar. The way of organizing the production of the song, the combination of vocal and instrumental elements, resorting to division into groups or solo reproduction with other children accompanying the song, very often depends on the involvement and skills of the teacher (Lelea, 2010).



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A DIFFERENT KIND OF EDUCATION

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Abstract: *This work contains the onset of a very effective subject in the pedagogy of nowadays. There are so many ways and alternatives of education in the 21st century that is so hard to decide wich one is the most proper. Any kind of instructing that follows the interests of the child is the best way to educate. The society has also a great word to say when it comes to this theme. Building the future corectly means raising a strong generation that is always ready to stand up for itself and its beliefs.*

Key words: *education, outdoor learning, different, borders, society, future, imagination, experiencing.*

Education has been an often debated subject since ancient times. No matter how it was defined it always had the child in its central point. From the beginning of the times, there has always been a concern referring to the child's best interests, to make a better world through education, to build the future on the most solid bases, as well as possible. It all started with the instruction throughout family and continued with the one in the formal environment. To educate means to prepare the individuals for the future life in a group. Therefore, it came the need of healthy members of a healthy society, both mentally and physically. The society understood this need and came with a helpful hand in order to maintain balance and to build a world that can offer a proper environment for the development of the child.

A lot of time has passed since then but our modern society is still concerned to discover and offer the best ways of education still for the same purposes. To educate has to be a matter not just for experts in education, for teachers or for parents, it has to be an issue for all individuals and members of the society. There are so many books and articles, brochures and leaflets of how to do it, when and where. So many ideas, ways and styles that can be

used to educate, but still a single goal: the child. When we think of education, we often have the image and idea of an institution where there are lots of pupils and a person in front of them, eventually giving them information. But in the modern times there are so many sources of information, so many places and ways a child can get informed that the idea of the teacher staying in the front of its class and dictating empty sentences that pupils have to memorize and then reproduce by heart it's long forgotten. Or this is how it should be. The purpose of modern education is to show kids the way they can learn, but not necessarily by cumulating knowledge but also by living, experiencing, trying, adventuring, tasting, feeling and discovering life, but real life exactly as it is.

Modern education should not create a perfect image of our world but show children the real universe with its good parts and its flaws. A twenty first century child should be able to face life and its struggles, to be brave enough to ask questions, to be curious enough to search for answers, happy enough to follow his own path even if it is different from what he had encountered before, to be adventurous enough to walk on roads never walked before. The modern society does not need people who are insecure and never know where to go but on the contrary, individuals that are strong in mind and heart, who trust themselves because they know themselves and they are sure of what they want to become and where they want to be.

When we think of a different kind of education, the first thing that comes in our mind is to make changes. Teachers often complain that they do not have enough resources to educate and there is also the problem of financials that has to be discussed. People often think of big changes that need a lot of time to be valid. They think of massive changes in the curriculum and start with the doubt that this change is ever going to happen. The only thing that human beings do not see when it comes to education is that nature and human nature has already given them every single thing they need to bring out what is best in every single child.

Considering the fact that every child has its personality we need an education that is focused on the individual. If we build up a system that is preoccupied of developing and building every child's personality in its own pace, then half of the war against the institutional education is half won. Every parent has the desire to offer the best learning system they can to their children, but what it is to be done when they have to face a system they do not believe in and the types of education that seem to be different are too hard to reach? They end up by indulging themselves in the solutions offered by the society. This is the first wrong step that people do, cutting the wings of brave little birds willing to fly and start their lives properly. Day by day, the same society that once wanted to create perfect individuals now does

exactly the reverse, by wanting individuals who can be easily manipulated and leaded. This is why more and more children become sad and bored with a lack of creativity and imagination not knowing what they want in life, living someone else's dreams. Unfortunately in the future this is the kind of individuals who are going to rule our society and fulfill the needs of our modern world. At this point the main purpose of education is already lost. The question is what can we do to avoid this dangerous circle of cause-effect? The answer is going back to the idea that I have pointed out earlier. It is all about getting back to the roots. Showing the children how to use what is already built in their mind, soul and body, what nature has given them. The only duty of a real teacher is to help children discover and use what they already have. To help them find and follow the direction they feel attracted to, to develop their abilities, to bravely follow their dreams and build up a future they feel they have to build, doing the things they like, want, feel attracted to.

A different kind of education should observe and treat every member of it in order to be able to help them find their way offering them a personalized instruction, counseling, attention and not lastly love.

From the very first time when it came to theoretical ideas everything was fine but the difficulties appeared when the theory had to be practiced. We are facing the same issue here and now. Why is it so hard when we have all the resources we need and the best experts in the world? What can teachers do in class to practice everything they have learned?

First of all it is time to give up on all misconceptions. The only thing that matters here and now is the child and its needs today. They should start with the optimistic idea that they will succeed no matter what. The power of the positive thinking will automatically transfer to the children. If a child is told that he can do whatever he wants the results will get better and better. It is very important to emphasize the positive aspects of a child's behavior instead of the negative ones because this way the individual will want to repeat a certain behavior in order to be appreciated. It is as simple as this. Even if it seems like with one flower we cannot bring the spring, we will be surprised to find out that little changes can lead to huge reforms. Family is the first place where children can leave their imprint. Even uneducated parents can be reinstructed in a positive way by following the behavior of their children.

Another step is to break out from the usual pattern and let our imagination free regarding education. This can be done by teaching the children to be their own teachers. This means letting them find their way in their own time and in their own place. Establishing borders is not a proper

way of education. And neither is giving them everything on the spot. Helping them in everything and answering their questions is a smart way to offer them directions worthy to take into account.

A different education means being practical all the time, in all situations, not only as teachers but also as individuals. Being practical means not being afraid of using all our senses to explore the world that surrounds us. It is the same for children. Confucius has a famous quote about how we can teach differently: "I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand." I think that no further comment is necessary. This means I will have to forget everything about how to do things and let nature follow its course. It is not a problem to get dirty hands and clothes in the classroom and outside if this leads to a new phase in the development of the child. It is not an issue to touch, use "dangerous" instruments, try out new things and explore if you bring a smile on the child's face, if at the end of the day the child can show up something, feels that he has an accomplishment or is thankful for being a step ahead.

Changing the scene should never represent a problem. Using nature should always be the first choice. There have been researches done lately about children's preferences regarding the instruments used in education and gaming. The results were astonishing and should be a signal for all teachers or educational experts. It was clearly shown that children prefer nature and its elements instead of using prefabricated toys in their gaming. Even in the most fitted classrooms or yards we can see children using branches, pieces of wood, paper, stones, water, sand, bricks, ropes, leaves, sticks or other materials found in nature. Are not these facts enough for making changes from a theoretical education to a practical one considering the fact that this is what children prefer? Should not that be the most important thing, if we all say that we have a child based educational system? Let us take children out from the artificially illuminated boxes and move them outside, in the nature, where they can find themselves and their own instruments of gaming and why not learning. Outdoor learning and outdoor education come as useful instruments in order to emphasize the practical learning. Only a few hours of outdoor classes monthly used both for learning and gaming can bring a bonus to every educational system. There are so many activities that can help teachers to use outdoor learning as a connection between disciplines.

I have experienced parts of outdoor learning concept during my studies in Norway. It is well known that in Norway there is one of the best educational systems in the whole world. If they could implement this why not try to learn from the best? It can be weird in the beginning but the results are promising and satisfying. Some parents would definitely object this idea because taking kids out in nature, showing them surviving skills or life hacks

can be sometimes scary, but we are nature and we have nature and it is proven that the best type of education is done in nature, using nature.

These are only a few of the handy facts we can operate with either as teachers, parents or useful members of the society. Let us all get together and form brave, intelligent, passionate, loving human beings for a different world, always ready to stand up for themselves and for their beliefs.

The world is made of happy teachers, strong engineers, loving doctors, passionate artists, dreamers and makers, doers and believers, singers and dancers, lovely people who try to follow their dreams, to chase their future, to make the world a better place. These are the children that need to be educated, observed, directed, loved and appreciated. Every single soul is a future teacher, doctor, dancer, artist, engineer and so on. That is how we should see every one of them.

A different kind of education? After all it has never been about a different kind of education but about the right kind of education. Every kind of education that has the child in its center is the right kind of education.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS KEY COMPETENCES ANDTRANSVERSAL SKILLS THROUGHT PRACTICE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

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

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

pedagogical approaches and practices.

1. Indroduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

The European Commission has a key role to play in supporting the process of change and promoting international peer learning, as well.

2. Theoretical Foundation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The extinctions of this integrated patterns lead on practicing colaborative learning using appropiate methods and giving new learning oportunities between students and teachers as well.

3. Methodology

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

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

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

4. Results and discussion

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

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

interview method were used to collect data.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. Conclusions

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

building and not in training and skills development.

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

The students acquired an incresed level of knowledge,improved proffessional competences in practice teaching related with the initial stage fromthe assumtion research. Therefore we can end the research with the declaration: according to the experiment we found that at the final stage of the two semessters students achieved a fullfilment participation related to assessment competences of learning outcomes.

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

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ERATUM

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

Gabriela KELEMEN, Laurence FOND HARMANT, Mihaela ARDELEAN GAVRILĂ, Catalin NACHE, Michel PLUSS, Jean-Michel STASSEN, *Education for mental health 48*

Mihaela GAVRILĂ-ARDELEAN, Laurence FOND HARMANT, Gabriela KELEMEN, Catalin NACHE, Michel PLUSS, Jean-Michel STASSEN, *Work meeting report from Arad, in the project 'SPSM – employability' 170*

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