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JOURNAL PLUS EDUCATION



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Autorii își asumă răspunderea pentru conținutul și proveniența materialelor publicate în revistă.

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SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING ON TEACHER TRAINING STUDIES PROGRAMS

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Abstract: *This article presents some aspects of self-directed learning, another way of learning and another approach than commonly shown us the teacher-directed learning, that we try to implement into our license, postgraduate and master teacher training studies programs. In the first phase of our study we proposed to students to open their minds and souls to fill-in in a survey concerning how self-directed they consider themselves to be, and, in the second phase we described the facts which we have been done for empowering students into self-directed learning.*

Keywords - *self-directed learning, personal survey, “My mirror”, “Let your passion shine”*

*“Life isn’t about finding yourself;
Life is about creating yourself”
Unknown*

Introduction

Obviously, the learning paths and methods are in this moment in the middle of all the discussions concerning the learning process in an interactive, authentic and visible way, for shaping the minds of learners, not to fill it.

A lot of educators, from kindergarten to the university level, try to implement adequate paths and methods in their curriculum for improving their teaching effort and to foster the efficiency of learning experiences of the learners.

Educational leaders indicate a sustained improvement in teacher training by means of new forms of learning – transformative, interactive, authentic and visible way – helped by a lot of learning methods. Transformative learning, based on interactive, authentic and visible learning

methods are concentrates on two pillars – educator and educable – but with the final goal, the educable!

From the field's literature there are a multitude of interactive methods but self-driven, self-directed, autonomous, self-regulated, self-taught or self-organized learning are often overlapping. Therefore, different concepts often refer to nearly identical issues or one and the same term is used by different authors to describe, in some case, considerably distinctive issues.

At the center of all these discussions, teaching and learning effort with different kind of methods are associated with the learners as individuals (Klein, 2009).

Overview of self-directed learning

The concepts of self-directed, self-organized and action-oriented learning, which are subsequently used interchangeably, emphasize the individual design of the learning process by the educable (Gnahs & Siedel, 2002). The learners are in the middle of decisions and of way of learning.

Definitions of self-directed or self-organized learning emphasize frequently the subject control for the educable in the self-directed learning in comparison to traditional teaching-learning forms.

Self-directed learning is any increase in knowledge, skill or performance pursued by any individual for personal reasons employing any means, in any place at any time at any age.

Self-organized as well as self-directed or self-driven learning are overall no unilateral expression of the initiative of educable, but rather mean a complementary relationship between the guidance of the learning process by the teacher on the one hand, and self-responsibility of the educable for the design of the learning process on the other hand.

The teachers have, in the context of traditional learning approach, a relatively strong role as a transmitter of knowledge, being the authority who choose what is learned, why it is to be learned, how it is to be learned, when, where and at what age.

In the self-directed learning, the teachers are not superfluous even with a maximum of self-control of the educable but, however, their roles changing profoundly.

In nowadays it's seems to be a transition from teacher-directed learning to self-directed learning but not so simple because the teachers are called to play the consultative and tutorial role. The teachers teach not only knowledge, but also train skills, form attitudes, help empower, show ways, advice and encourage the educable.

This partial change in function of teachers is not connected, as often highlighted, with sinking needs for support the educable. The opposite, so an increase in this demand is more likely to be expected, in case of an increase in the proportion of forms of self-organized learning in teaching and learning arrangements. This is partly due to an increasing demand for tutorial support during group and individual work phase.

Self-directed learning, however, is not only a target of educational effort but in the same time a requirement, as well as a method, of innovative teaching and learning process. Thus the skills that the learners need in order to manage their learning effectively and efficiently cannot simply be assumed as existed. Instead they must be developed systematically and thus the performance skills of the educable, as in the ability to plan their learning independently and specifically, to perform the learning process, create and evaluate, must be firstly created. The approach of this kind of learning involves designing the objectives, choosing the content and the channels of communication, assuming the regulations and evaluation awareness of learning process.

Self-directed learning opens up not only a greater range possibility for choice, but also leads to increased accountability of educable for their learning process. One must not only ensure an adequate understanding of the subject, but also the access to and the reception of facts.

How could our students discover their self-directed learning ability?

From the different sources of scientific information we have chosen the following personal survey, that we have proposed to our students from teacher training studies programs (license, postgraduate and master) to find their profile:

„Consider the following aspects of self-directed learning.

Rate yourself on the below 30 items.

Remember: this is not a test. There are no right answers. This is a personal survey for your eyes only, and for your use in deciding how to become more self-directed. Make your response useful by being as clear and accurate as you can.

A few points on how to identify your strengths:

a) Events in your day will tell you a lot. Think about particular situations, remember what you thought and what you did, and then decide what it reveals.

b) What activities do you eagerly pursue, activities that feel good when you are doing them. What are you doing when you're happy, when you are absorbed in the activity? These almost certainly reveal assets.

c) What dreams about the future have you had during your lifetime and what dreams do you have now? We are usually passionate about what we feel we can, or could, do well.

d) Note any patterns of repeated thought, feeling or activity and check out whether or not they reveal personal assets.

e) Trust yourself. This is a topic you know well, or can know well – the self in self-directed. If you have a friend to work with, you can interview each other. Allow time to reflect and dig.

Follow the items below!

The item on the left describes “1” - *Not self-directed*; the item on the right describes “10” - *Very self-directed*. Circle the number that most accurately rates where you stand on the scale.

1. Attribution: In my opinion, people succeed in life because...
They are lucky 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ***They make it happen***
2. Self-talk: My thoughts about my potential for success are usually...
Negative 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ***Positive***
3. Influence: When I decide to do something, I am most strongly influenced by...
Other people 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ***My own decisions***
4. Self-awareness: My knowledge about my personal strengths and capacities is...
Very limited 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ***Very complete***
5. Interests: I have a number of interests that I pursue regularly.
False 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ***True***
6. Effectiveness: If I decided to make a change in my life, I would likely...
Be unable to do it 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ***Do it successfully***
7. Curiosity: In the course of a day or week I find myself asking questions and searching for answers...
Very seldom 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ***Very often***
8. Clarity: What I want to do next is usually...
A mystery to me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ***Clear to me***
9. Learning: I find new ideas or skills that I want to learn...
Very rarely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ***Every day***
10. Creating: I have original ideas worth expressing...
Very seldom 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ***Very often***
11. Goal-Setting: In my day-to-day life, I...
Take things as they come 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ***Regularly set goals to achieve***
12. Challenge: I challenge myself to go into new activities and to reach new levels of performance...

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *Often*

13. Planning: When I have a task to complete, I lay out a strategic plan for doing it efficiently and effectively...

Not in my lifetime 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *Every time*

14. Determination: When I'm doing a project and the work gets difficult, I run into problems, or people hassle me...

I quit 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *I persevere*

15. 15. Organization: When it comes to scheduling my time, prioritizing my work, and gathering the resources I need, I'm...

Hopeless 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *Skilled*

16. Support: When I plan and launch a project, I feel that those around me - family, colleagues, friends - will...

Ignore or diminish 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *Support and encourage my work*

17. Learning: The special, personal ways that I learn best,

Are unknown to me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *I know and use*

18. Motivation: Can you motivate yourself to start new projects and to keep going until they are finished?

No 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *Yes*

19. Openness: When new ideas, approaches, techniques or equipment come along,

I ignore them 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *I find out about them*

20. Assistance: When I need guidance or assistance...

I struggle through on my own 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *I ask for help*

21. Self-examination: When I'm messing up, and I'm feeling low...

I think about something else 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *I try to figure out what's happening*

22. Process analysis: When a project I'm working on breaks down...

I quit 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *I figure out what's going wrong and fix it*

23. Skills: I use a very effective procedure for learning new skills.

False 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *True*

24. Vision: I have a vision of my future that I want to make happen.

False 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *True*

25. Voice: Do you know your own ideas about things, your own feelings, the values that you consider important, the contributions that you want to make – in other words, do you know yourself?

No 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *Yes*

26. Field: Is there a field of knowledge (eg. educational sciences), a field of activity (eg. writing), a profession (eg. professor) or work (eg. starting a business) that you want to be very good at?

No 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *Yes*

27. Expectation: When I begin a project I usually expect to

Fail 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *Succeed*

28. Strategy: When you want something to happen, do you think through a strategy to make it happen?

No 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *Yes*

29. Celebration: When I achieve a goal, complete a project, or make a contribution:

I move to the next task 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *I celebrate*

30. Pleasure: When I'm doing one of my projects...

It's grim, dull work 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 *I am happy and fulfilled*

The basic theme is to identify your strengths and play to them when you are deciding what to do.

Write these headings in your journal and fill in as many items as you can. Generally, begin with the most important or strongest items. Start your list and keep adding ideas as you think of them or discover them.

A. Knowledge: What do you know a lot about?

Your knowledge may be about anything; it can come from any source, such as, experience, authorities, work, reading, a course, television, a pod-cast, experiments, study, a speech or a conversation. Examples: healthy diets, bringing up children, building with stone, local history, karate, musicals, animal diseases, surviving on the streets, welding robotics, hunting.

B. Skills: What do you know how to do well?

These may include skills developed and used at work, around the house, in sports or games, at your hobbies or recreational activities, or in anything else that you do. Examples: pupils training, laboratory experiments, finding bargains, swimmer-competitor, reading fast and remembering, managing household finances, dog training, chairing a committee, watercolour painting, laser technology, growing things, day-trading stocks.

C. Your Strengths: Identify any personal characteristics that contribute to your success and productivity.

Examples: I'm very disciplined about pursuing my goals, I take charge, Generally positive about things, My faith sustains me, I'm a good communicator, I play to win, I'm careful; I like to think things over before I make my move. I'm sensitive to others.

D. Your Abilities: What kinds of things do you have a talent for, or believe you have, if given the chance to use it?

Examples: I have the ability to fix things. I relate easily to other people. The only thing I've ever thought about doing is soccer. I seem to be able to help disturbed people. I think I could run a large organization if I had the opportunity. People tell me that I'm a natural at music, especially singing. I thrive in the outdoors. Don't worry about overlapping entries between any of these or other categories.

E. Your Interests: What kinds of things do you like to do; what have you dreamed of doing; what is your vision?

Examples: I have always dreamed of having a small shop selling children's clothes that I design and make (maybe not all of them) myself. I've never traveled beyond this continent. I'd love to travel to some exotic place and work there. I want to make a lot of money and live a rich lifestyle. I want to meet a partner to love and be loved by. I'd like to make a difference by helping others, Spiritual. I need, I want, to be more spiritual.

F. Your Experience: The things you have done in your life.

What have you done that equips you for future tasks you choose to pursue, or has opened the doors of possibility to you? What experiences were compelling, exciting? What have you done that you might build on? Examples: I canvassed in a political campaign. Army cadet corps. During college, I worked in a research laboratory. High school football. I teach history. A group of us taught old people computers. I spent 30 days in jail for drunk driving. Greg and I hiked a quarter of the Appalachian Trail. I wrote a column in the local newspaper years ago. I volunteered in a nursing home.

G. Your Category: A category you want to add to this profile.

If there is any other kind of data you want to add to your profile, add it here. Include anything that prepares you for action or would support you when you take action. Examples: Sculpture is one of my hobbies and is a separate category of assets that I have to work with. It includes such items as modeling in clay, sharpening tools, shaping wood, creating ideas, a shop and equipment, mounting an exhibition, developing a portfolio, and so on. If there is a category that has equipped you with a number of resources, add it here. Someone suggested, "Why not a category of questions I want to answer?" Why not?

Identify and use your strongest abilities

In each category, look over the list you have written down, identify the features that you consider to be your strongest, and mark them with a highlighter. These are the key assets you can depend on whenever you are preparing to take action. When it is time to act, these key features will outline the productive resources at your disposal, what we could call your "productive personality."

Identify any themes that stand out, and with those in mind, name several activities that you might pursue. Name three to five in your journal and then select one activity that you find especially attractive.

Here is one example: Bill sees that one of his interests is "Helping others" (E), and that he is "Sensitive to others." (C) He also notes that he "Relates easily to other people."(D) Taking these together, Bill sees the theme of working with others clearly outlined. When it comes to action this

will be a serious guide to his choices. The possible activities he worked out included...

Taking a course in interpersonal relationships

Working as a volunteer in a local NGO

Becoming a group leader in a spiritual study group at church

Asking a counselor for guidance on improving his relationships at work

Devoting time to improving his relationship with his children

Bill decided that working with a group at church was the most attractive choice for him right now, but he also realized that all five of the activities seemed interesting to him. Looking at his profile again, Bill found three other themes and cited them in his journal for future reference.

A summary of work with your profile

1. Identify the features in each category of your profile that are your strongest. Three to five strong features is a useful guide to your choices.

2. Search your profile for the themes for action that are suggested, especially by the key features you have highlighted. One of Bill's themes, for example, was relationships.

3. Identify three to five activities you could pursue following the theme that interests you the most.

This is a lot of work, but when you are finished, you will be well prepared to move forward in self-directed activities. And it is about a subject we all know well - ourselves."

<http://www.selfdirectedlearning.com/index.php/becoming-self-directed/activity-2-how-self-directed-are-you>

What we have been done, as educators, to value their opportunity to learn in a self-directed way?

After the completion of the survey we demanded to our students to keep a journal entitled „*My mirror*” on which they fill-in almost daily for *discover and to create themselves*.

It's not a diary, it's a book for recording ideas and plans, and its purpose is to support their efforts to be more self-directed in learning.

Here are a few of the reasons that we explain of students why it is important to drive the journal:

✓ It's a great place to work through the activities in this study program, which make perfect journal entries because they are all focused on your personal progress as a self-directed learning entrepreneur.

✓ You can watch your own progress in your journal, page by page, and check it out by looking back at any time.

✓ You will never lose another great idea again. They come and go like dreams, unless we catch them as you will by getting them down in your journal.

✓ You won't have to go searching for missing papers any more either. Everything about your self-initiated projects will be in one place and easy to access.

✓ Being productive in learning activities you choose is the best way to become self-directed. Self-directed activity is an excellent method of learning anywhere, any time, at any age – in your own special way.

✓ This will be your most important textbook, and you will be its author. It will contain ideas you find and record because they are important to you. Your selections will accumulate into a body of knowledge that will give you real power in your field(s) of interest.

✓ This will be your planning book for all of the activities you pursue. It will also be the record of what you do, what you decide to change, and what you learn when you put your plan into action.

✓ Your journal will be the private place where you study the process that you followed as you worked through your project, and where you study yourself as a performer. Such studies will lead you to changes that will greatly improve your learning efficiency.

✓ Your journal will be the companion you can talk to at any time about what you are thinking and doing. People's eyes may glaze over when you talk about your special interest and passion.

As a consequence of completing the journal, the following requirement arised:

A. In a six-week period, think about and choose a theme in the educational field to subscribe under the umbrella „*Let your passion shine!*”. In that period students had all the desired assistance from the educator/professor or assisstant professor/ in designing, organizing, deploying, controllng and evaluating their own project, with a title and content to represent it but which to fit in the educational field, being at the same time a project based learning

Thus were born projects such as:

Community - educator interrelation

Educational alternatives at the level of the primary cycle

Children's Group management in the kindergarten

Developing students creativity through fine art

The drawing as a reflection of multiple intelligences

Logic and argumentation

Carl Gustav Jung and his key concepts

School and computer science revolution

Practical laboratory applications with the PowerPoint software

The advantages and disadvantages of using IT in physics lessons

Dog and puppy - affiliation to literary specie

The study of French language in gymnasium education

Healthy eating, healthy body, healthy mind

Nature's friends

Consumer protection

The monarchy

Romanian ethnic-traditions

Interactive learning of Byzantine iconography

Ethics in education

Negotiation and mediation of the conflicts between high school students

Photo, art of the message

Interactive sports teaching methods

Etc.

B. Starting with the seventh week they have had to presents their thoughts from the project, in PowerPoint or Prezi, in such a way to persuade the audience formed by their colleagues (their peers) and educators. Each of these participants asked questions and appreciate the quality of the presentation - both, in terms of face to face communication and technological performance.

C. Then each presenter and each participant (classmate or professor) completed a rating scale based on which students received marks. In this way, we also had the intention to increase their conscience on self-evaluation, inter-evaluation and evaluation made by the educators.

The students was excited on this way of learning, they achieved a lot of confidence in themselves and, in the meantime, they had obtained good marks.

Conclusion

Forms of self-directed and self-organized learning have, as opposed to traditional methods, the potential to lead, on both cognitive and emotional-motivational level, to improved learning outcomes. They allow the promotion and strengthening of academic performance in broad sense. In addition to a specific support of context-learning success of the educable, for example they lead also to the strengthening of their independence, self-responsibility and project base learning competence. Undergoing self-organized and action-oriented learning is, in a constantly changing world, a vital foundation for the lifelong learning and an important part of individual life biographies in the knowledge society.

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EDUCATION OF THE THIRD MILLENNIUM BETWEEN THE MIRRORS OF WISDOM, RESPONSIBILITY, AND DIGNITY

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Abstract: *The article is the express of a genuine concern about what it is happening nowadays in education worldwide. In spite of a more and more declared interest for this essential area, the reality rather shows a superficial approach of education both on strategic and tactical levels. Curriculum reforms happen everywhere in the world. On some meridians an educational reform has a starting point and an end. On others they seem to have only a perpetual beginning. Any reform needs a frame of reference with core theoretical bases, but the fundamental aspects of education, including the convergence of the specialty language are still in the middle of the crises. Education itself is considered as a field of anybody's expertise. The simple access to the power of decision appears that gives the full level of expertise for no matter who has this opportunity of decision power. The paper is an approach of several core issues derived from the expressed concern: (1) The ambiguity and plurisemantics of using basic concepts in the educational field; (2) What is understood by pedagogy and curriculum; (3) The role of professionals of education. (4) A last part with ten core milestone of curriculum reform in the world considered to be of interest is eventually presented. This analyze with its conclusions is based on reflecting upon the specialty literature, and has as fundamentals an experience of more than 42 years as professional of education, from practitioner status until professor, and passing through all of the educational levels, from kindergarten to adult's education, acting both in main stream and in special needs sectors. About 30 years of these 42 offered the opportunity of a bird eye scrutinize, based on acting as manager in different educational areas. Thus, some of the expressed opinions could be of interest.*

Key words: *science(s) of education, pedagogy, curriculum, professional of education professionals of curriculum, practitioners of education and practitioners of curriculum, educational and curriculum reform.*

1. Introduction

Along my practical experience as teacher, educational counselor, trainer for continuing training of teachers, and, eventually, professor PhD, I had the opportunity to be in contact with people working within the educational practical field. Young or adults not very far from the end of their career, they have responded diversely in front of the speedy change of what it's happening in society and, implicitly, in education. Their position about the educational reforms is essentially very interesting.

The real opinions about these reforms are somehow hidden or dissimulated, in Romania, at least but not only. Here, the education is under an ongoing reform which seems to be without compass.

Thus, in this context, there are teachers who do not understand anything about the endless reform and recognize this reality; but they are very few. There are other teachers who understand almost nothing but have not the strength to recognize this and they react in two different ways. A first category of teachers keep quiet in public, listen and do what they were used to do. A second category, involving people extremely preoccupied to succeed in their career, no matter how, also don't understand anything or understand almost nothing. But they pretend to know everything. They are very vocal, use even in excess the new terminology, or what they think as being a new methodology, and try to be noticed everywhere. They take papers and pictures and produce proofs. And, as I have notice, like almost everywhere in the world, these proofs became a kind of purpose in itself. They cover a superficial qualitative work. But the core issue of misunderstanding or of the lack of understanding is still there, as a fundamental of a long time waited results of the educational reform, with its core sector: the curriculum reform.

With this experience in mind, I have not been surprised to find on internet the Goldstein Rebecca's statement of teaching philosophy. She appears to be a young teachers' trainer, "teacher educator", in her terms.

I'll quote a part of this statement because it, as a trigger of the sadness engulfed in my previously mentioned experience, represents the reason of reflecting upon the general issues emerging from the educational field and of writing this paper.

Theory.... Practice.... Praxis.... Pedagogy.... As a graduate student and novice teacher, these terms were thrown about as forms of cultural and intellectual capital that separated the theorists from the practitioners. If you were a theorist you understood that all four terms were interrelated, or, that was what we'd understood from reading people like Freire, Bourdieu, and Lather. If you were a practitioner (in our program that meant you were "just a teacher"), you'd heard the words, perhaps used them, and were predominantly anti-theory because in your mind it had no real-world application. As someone who wanted to be and do it all--theory, practice, practice, and pedagogy—I found myself trapped in two worlds that while not outright enemies, certainly held an uneasy truce with one another. The irony of that is how such an uneasy relationship can limit the possibility of understanding that we can gain from both worlds. In the case of the theorist/practitioner divide, it is sad to think of the opportunities lost for learning. In all honesty, I continue to grapple with how we connect theory, practice, praxis, and pedagogy.

The author of this statement wrote these thoughts from the perspective of a teacher's educator; some other interesting concerns are highlighted.

As a teacher educator, it is important for me to model how these ideas come to together in my classroom. It is hard, however, to make that explicit to student(s-) [teachers], particularly since they are still experiencing teaching in the abstract. It is even harder to get student(s-) [teachers], to understand that every decision they make regarding teaching, learning, and knowledge, evolves from a core set of beliefs that they have about themselves, their students, and the world in general. As these beliefs become more sophisticated, they begin to mirror many of the theories that already exist. At the same time, students come to our classrooms with deeply embedded theories about the nature of the world, teaching, and learning. These theories, while not necessarily representative of those of the academy, still shape what these future teachers will do in their classrooms. That I understand that theory and practice live side by side in my classroom is one thing. To make it transparent so that students can see it is another matter. And, engaging students to explore their own theories as they put them into practice requires challenging their very core understandings of how teaching becomes teaching. (Goldstein Rebecca [w.y.]

A multitude of question marks arises reading this statement. An in depth reflection upon the gap between theory and practice, and even between the theoreticians and practitioners, between the reform designers and the teachers who implement the designed educational reforms should be a real concern.

Also, what a genuine educational reform is and where it must start from?

Who should be the leading actors and the genuine beneficiaries of an educational reform? Are the theorists of education important in this approach or anybody can design and manage the process?

These few questions and many others became the starting point of several considerations.

In this paper the focus will be limited on some fundamental theoretical issues, because the topic is far too complex to be briefly covered.

2. Ambiguity and plurisemantics of using basic concepts in the educational field

Mitter, W. (1982) arises the issue of even the duality of the basic term: science of education or sciences of education. The author says that there are scholars or specialists who express a kind of repugnance against highly sophisticated arguing on the abstract levels (Von Hentig, p.496 apud Mitter W. (1982, p.84). But a strong commitment to an educational science which is dedicated to the improvement of the educational practice deserves to take the risk of such an argue, in Mitter opinion.

Together with Mitter W, I know that an approach of using at least of the core terms, explaining their meaning is necessary, especially because of the ambiguity of the pedagogical language as it appears in different languages. As I have mentioned in a previous edited book the terminological differences appear particularly between the English language literature and the French language literature (or Latin languages in general). Sometimes, the same concept, with identical meaning appears as being different because of the specificity of the used language (Niculescu R.M. 2010,p.142). This is an enough strong reason for the authors to stress the meaning of a concept or phrase used within the paper or book context by the authors themselves , after no matter how complex passing through literature is done and how detailed are presented other different definitions and meanings for the respective concept or phrase. The readers should be aware during the reading about the meaning given by the author(s) for the respective issue. If an explicit definition of the author is missing the readers decodes the concept or the phrase using their own way of understanding them.

Within the limits of this paper only several terms should be approached; education, science(s) of education, pedagogy, and curriculum are the first to be considered.

In English the term of "education" covers both the theoretical and the practical field, while in other languages significant differences of this term, other subsequent and connected tones are to be found.

Historically speaking, a great debate can be detected around the concept of education and the field covered by it, on one side, and the claimed "motherhood" by different sciences: (mainly) by Philosophy, Psychology and even Sociology. Probably, because of these many claims of motherhood, a kind of "anti-educational" vogue may be detected within higher educational institutions; it may be also seen as a anti-educationists trend or even fashion. The cause could be also the fact that educations, as a common act, that exists since the human became a being of the world, everybody think that is a specialist.

The scientific approach of the education, a science or a group of connected branches entirely focused on education, scrutinized from different perspectives is strongly denied in" a good number of pamphlets and also sophisticated writings (Mitter W, 1982,p.93). There are "serious deficiencies and destructive patterns or activities in the area of education". This reality should be accepted. But this is not a good enough reason to "refute those who go on regarding education from a substantially positive point of view"(Mitter W, 1982, p.93). And it is not an enough reason to not take into account the necessity of existing and developing a genuine science around this concept and its reference field.

Based on an essential agreement with Mitter W. and the authors quoted in the presented paper, I pinpoint that: education as action within any society, done formally, non-formally and informally was, is and will be a fundamental one for the survival and development of the human being. The essence of this phenomenon has changed along the human history, its way of being done, the balance among the three mentioned forms is different today and,, probably will be something else tomorrow. The complexity of education grows as long as the complexity of society itself grows and the meaning of the concept education has been constantly modified. Mitter W. highlights the idea that if "new considerations and new inquiries are necessary it doesn't mean that the education itself as a core issue of a complex science should be refuted.

A protest against the existing educational theories and patterns could be accepted, and here it is the role of the specialists in the area to be aware that something should be re-thought. In my opinion, a new balance between the professionals specialized in other domains and the genuine professionals of education should be the high concern of nowadays. Even the other professionals are, in fact the product of education itself. But, nowadays, becomes obvious that the educational field on the entire period of ontogenesis seems to register a significant number of fails; thus, a broader

analysis should be taken into account, done in team not neglecting and denying the significance of education as a science. The education of all the children and students should be scrutinized, analyzed and assessed according to the requests of this new millennium. This kind of analyses must not be done only of those with special needs (gifted, with their excellent performances, and those who need a special aid for coping with their own education process). What is happening with the regular representatives of the new generations? Which is the cause or the source of their passivity, their worrying lack of motivation for an effective process of learning? Which are the weaknesses of education in their case?

These questions (legitimate and strongly existing even if their expression is a kind of underground one) should emphasize the role of looking at education from a high scientifically perspective. Mitter W (1982, p.94) suggests here the necessity to put together the efforts of all the professionals in education and all the others fields of sciences, for the them area of connection to the educational phenomenon, in order to establish appropriate aims, perspectives and postulates for the educational phenomenon in this specific era. What is important but sad in the same time, is that ideas had been highlighted in already 1982, within a conference of comparative pedagogy and now, after more than thirty years the problems still exists and they seem to be even stronger.

I agree with Mitter's statement that the issues of connection between education in theory and practice are extremely complex. Therefore the educationists (from the theoretical and practical field) must be deeply focused on what Educational Science represents as a system of disciplines dealing with both fundamental and practical issues in the field. The practitioners should "contribute to optimally exploring their own possibilities, but also respect the limit these possibility are set by man's intellectual and moral capacity". On the other side the professionals from the theoretical field of education should take into account what the field of practice signalizes. I stress the necessity that the principle of unity in diversity should be effectively connected to the principle of liberty in diversity (highlighted by Treml A.K. 1981, apud Mitter W., 1982, p. 94).

3. Pedagogy and curriculum

These are other two concepts that need a special attention.

Murphy (2008) signalizes that "in different cultures at different points of time in history, the meaning and status of pedagogy have shifted" (Murphy P., 2008, p.28)

While in Britain the ‘dominant educational institutions ... have had no concern with theory and its relation with practice (Simon (1981, p.11, apud Murphy 2008p.28), in other western and eastern European countries pedagogy has a tradition of study. Simon is quoted as saying that “the failure to examine pedagogy limits the potential for effecting change through education. More than this, Simon quoting Fletcher’s, 1889, views that these changes are not possible ‘without something like scientific discussion on educational subjects, without pedagogy...’”(apud Murphy, 2008,p.28) The author quotes Best, that states: ”however, in spite of this tradition [in the mentioned countries], or because of it, the study of pedagogy is one of confusion, ambiguity and change (Best, 1988 apud Murhy, 2008, p.28). In Best’s view, the status and meaning of pedagogy have changed in recent times and have been ‘devalued, deflected from its original meaning, or even discredited’.

All these represent statements implying or suggest the idea that the term pedagogy refers to the theoretical plan of education.

As Murphy highlighted, quoting some others authors, I agree that to examine pedagogy limits and its potential represents a strong condition of effective changes both in education and in society. Authors as Shulman (1987) or Fletcher’s (1889) with their beliefs, are quoted in order to stress the necessity to reconsider the term, the concept and the role of PEDAGOGY.

Analyzing the historical development of pedagogy as different authors or books present it (Murphy P., 2008, More Alex., 2003, Pedagogic theory, 2014.) defined developmental stages of a theoretical approach of education have been established. The observed stages are, obviously, strongly influenced by the reality and the level of development and force of the economic, social and scientific life of each historical moment.

Psychology, with its development of the theories of learning, sociology and anthropology, with always new approaches of the humans and their role in society, the new technology, and the growing complexity of the life of human society have determined interesting effects upon pedagogy. An interesting sliding from the central role of the educator within the educational process towards a stronger and more active role of the learners for their own development and education appears as obvious. This is happening firstly in formal education but has both roots and effects from and upon the non-formal and informal education as well.

When it is about the formal education, Pedagogy, as a theoretical approach of educational phenomenon, had a dual role along all this time. It always represented, on one side, a starting point, as a theoretical reference, for the practical approach. These theoretical bases had been roots for: designing the educational influence, the design implementation step, and further for the assessment moment. On the other side, Pedagogy had been a

necessary receiver of the assessment results, seen as determinants of change inside the pedagogy itself.

Unfortunately, the rhythm, the depth, the consistency and the fluidity of these passages from theory to practice and back to theory have implied and still record syncope with unpredictable effects.

The last decades of the previous century and, more than ever these first years of the third millennium, highlighted the new philosophy of the curriculum that still acting like a land of quicksand.

Even if the term of curriculum has ancient roots, the explicit use come from the Middle Ages (the 5th century – the 15th century) when was promoted a type of curriculum focused on areas of knowledge, on organized in subjects contents, taught by mastery exposures of educators belonging to the order of clerics (Legendre, R., 2005: 322, apud Niculescu R., 2010, p.25).

Thus, the medieval meanings of the concept of curriculum are relatively restrictive. The theory of curriculum (the reflexive approach of this concept and its implication within the real educational phenomenon) could be situated at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Since then, the theory of curriculum has had an amazing development but with so many ramifications that it has reached an eclectic approach that nowadays is confusing. The professionals of curriculum extend the concept, from the formal education towards the other two forms of educational phenomenon: non-formal and informal education. It is not the intention of detailing the approach of these issues in this paper. The topic has been approached in other papers. Important is to stress in this context that, in spite of sophisticated theoretical positions, the official documents of curriculum seem to remain within the restrictiveness of the first use of the term and, aware or not, referring only to formal education and having as central point still the contents to be taught, even if, in theory, the philosophy is much more wider. That is why the phrase "*pedagogy and curriculum*" is still in vogue, despite the ambiguities involved. Some arguments for this statement are further presented.

An abundant presentation of different positions of educationists and specialists in education can be find in literature (More Alex., 2003, Westbrook J. at all, 2013), but it gives not enough arguments to conclude what is in fact the balance between pedagogy and curriculum, because of the simple reason that the two terms are still ambiguously defined.

A wide spectrum of approaches is to be found. For instance More A. (2003) treats the relation between the two concepts from the point of view of the teaching- and learning process. Generally speaking, at More A. or in other literature sources curriculum is seen only on the school level. The issue seems to be to clarify the necessary balance between *whatis to be taught*"(what is most commonly understood by the term '*curriculum*' says

More A. 2014,p.170) and *how to be taught* (what is most commonly understood by the term ‘*pedagogy*’, More A. 2014, p.171), in order to develop appropriate knowledge and skills. In nowadays papers the “*skill*” term has been extended to the concept of competencies, that imply attitudes, as well, and encapsulates knowledge as basis of the operational side of the competency: of capacities). It is not the place and the necessity to add here another complex debate focused on using concepts like competence/ competences, or competency/ competencies. I can notice and highlight here, that, in the More’s statement the term *pedagogy* is focused almost only on methodology of teaching.

Vygotsky and Piaget are quoted as being concerned with what Barnes has defined as ‘the central problem of teaching’: that is, ‘how to put adult knowledge at children’s disposal so that it does not become a strait-jacket’ (Barnes 1976, p. 80 apud More Alex, 2014 p.15).

The author also stresses the issue of a dangerous gap between the skills and knowledge (in nowadays terms : the competencies) that young people are encouraged to develop and acquire at school and their correspondents that are needed for individual and collective success in ‘the world outside’ (Blenkin et al. 1992; Kemmis et al. 1983; Apple 1980, apud More A. 2014, p.45). These words remind me about something read into an Australian paper where a teacher of pre-school education were suggesting that in school it is happening like when the children plays ” by adults within the dolls’ house) only pretending to live something real, still imitated but far from reality. Outside world in its development should be a reference point for the learner training, for their competencies development.

Many papers and books in literature seem to criticize more or less explicitly the so called imposed curriculum. More A. (2003) provides an entire chapter to this issue (6. Working With and Against Official Policy: pedagogic and curricular alternatives). The National Curricula are relatively new and they have been received with a huge reserve by the teachers (especially in countries like Great Britain is). Their existence is put under the umbrella of a so called *top-down perspective in pedagogy*. This is considered by Giroux (1988, apud. Arash V. Naeini, Nima Shakouri , 2016) as the source of the gap between the theory and practice in educational field, with a perverse effect : a kind of passive attitude both of teachers and students (Elliot,1991, Kumaravadivelu,2003, apud. Arash V. Naeini, Nima Shakouri , 2016),p.586).

The centralized curriculum seems to have consequences upon the evaluation process, as well. ” Schick’s division (1971, as cited in Kiely& Rea-Dickins, 2005) sheds light on this issue. He divides the evaluation system of his time into five groups: 1. Eyewash evaluation: to make a program look good. 2. Whitewash evaluation: to cover over the failure of a

3. Submarine evaluation: to sink an unpopular programmer. 4. Posture evaluation: to satisfy a condition of funding and 5. Postponement evaluation: to put off the need to act (p. 947). Therefore, it can be concluded that such educational systems, in their entirety (pedagogy a term used by Kumaravadivelu, 2001) leave little room, if any, for teachers' active participation." (apud Arash V. Naeini, Nima Shakouri, 2016, p.586) Not only these writings but the school and the wider educational field itself show that a more serious active involvement of teachers and students is necessary for properly preparing young generations for a real and speedy changing life. *Pedagogy of practicality* is requested. However, a good question may appear: *which are the limits of this practicability?*

Ommagio (1986) and further Pennycook (1989) (apud Arash V. Naeini, Nima Shakouri, 2016, p.586,587) say that the "prepackaged" set of procedures to which everyone is expected to slavishly subscribe, and the so called interested knowledge delivered within this top-down philosophy can determine socio-cultural and political inequities. It is true that an imposed curriculum has its risks as previously presented. The risks of conformity may also go in the area of teaching methodology. But one can go further with the stressing of risks.

Without entering in the extended field of a socio-cultural and philosophical approach of education, it is obvious that a too obedient attitude of teachers in this top-down approach of *pedagogy and curriculum* (concepts used with the meaning presented above) determines incredible situations. I, and a group of colleagues, had the occasion to be in contact with a European educational context considered as high quality one. There, I have met educators using very clever conceived teaching materials and potentially effective; unfortunately the teachers appeared as not having any adequate idea about why they use them, and for what benefits for children. More than this, they looked as being totally uninterested about this perspective. They simply were asked to apply a procedure implying the use of these materials. No more questions and reflections!

Consequently, I can agree the idea that conformity can lead to an uncritical and unproductive society. Pre-fabricated procedures and teaching materials, suggested or, more evil, imposed without giving space and opportunities to teachers for thinking, arguing and eventually deciding what to choose or create for a particular group of students needs can be more than dangerous. The passivity and the useless sense may be insinuated for both teachers and students and a genuine development of effective competencies necessary for a changing society remain a simple sterile statement.

Something more dangerous than imposed methods may be highlighted. One can speak about the imposed or induced attitudes of

obedience in front of educational procedures, methods and teaching materials considered "modern" but less understood.

For instance, nowadays it is in fashion to work with the critical thinking methodology. Is it wrong? No, if we agree the idea that a critical thinking attitude versus a reality with a speed of change like nowadays involves is more than necessary. However, in the real educational field, a lot of not understood procedures connected to critical thinking methodology are used without any kind of critical thinking responsibility. The essence of the so called set of methods involved within the process of developing a critical thinking attitude of students seems to be not understood but only they are frenetically used. I do believe that here it is not the issue of imposed methods to be used, but of delivered procedures, not entirely and in depth understood. The term imposed is probably not the very proper one. A kind of self-ordering appears, for being as the others, for being in trend. This attitude has deep roots within a not enough explained philosophy of a central curriculum purpose.

A contents that is considered adequate as knowledge base for developing a specified kind of necessary competencies, should be delivered by using appropriated methods. The development of effective cognitive, motor and/or social competencies trough the respective content approach is the core purpose for a peculiar group of student. Together with Kumaravadivelu (2003, apud Arash V. Naeini, Nima Shakouri , 2016, p.587), I agree that "a solution, and one of the three attributes of postmethod pedagogy" should be for teachers to seek "alternative to methods " and even creative procedures with keeping the essence of the recommended methods, but being suitable for the concrete context of a particular learning situation. Thus, I also agree the idea that "practitioners should be empowered to free themselves from the shackles of a method-based ideology and formulate their own theories of practice congruent with their context" (Arash V. Naeini, Nima Shakouri , 2016,p.587). This philosophy allows freedom for diversity even if the national/ central curriculum asks and leads towards a necessary unity.

I add a supporting argue from Richards (2013, apud Arash V. Naeini, Nima Shakouri, 2016, p.588) who pleads for the appropriateness of teachers' freedom to find their own way to adopt and adapt a central curriculum design. When planning their lessons, they should follow a process of inquiry and deliberation, after a proper investigation, reflection, changing ideas and sharing experiences with other teachers. I would add also the importance of scrutinizing the specificity of one cohort of learners compared to others the teachers had worked with, along their own career. It seems to be a more appropriate curriculum approach, keeping the core issues and demands of the central design, following the core competences to be developed according the central curriculum, but accepting a kind of unpredictability of the outcomes for each student as an individual, giving to each students the necessary space to develop individually, according to his/ her own possibilities, needs and aspirations. I do believe that, thinking in terms of this philosophy, a wider space of genuine development based on activism and

motivated involvement within the learning process is available for each both teachers and learners.

When Nation & Macalister, 2010 (apud Arash V. Naeini, Nima Shakouri , 2016, p.588) say that teachers have to make choices regarding curriculum design in every lesson they do not mean that it is supposed that teachers should produce materials for their own classes, "but that they should both practice doing so every now and then to remain critical and autonomous, and apart from that, have a transformative approach to the received materials and curriculum."(Arash V. Naeini, Nima Shakouri , 2016, p.588). A process of transformation is highlighted here but to transform something it is necessary to have what the transformation has as a base.

The following figure (nr. 1) represents an attempt to put together a series of ideas generated by the previous presentation in order to visually expose the possible relationship between the concepts involved. On this figure, the reader can design the various synthetic aspects surprised above. Specifically he or she can reflect on the teaching-learning process as it is implied at different levels: (1) the level of education as a complex phenomenon; (2) the theory of education in general (called in some literature works as pedagogical level); (3) the educational practice level in which the curriculum (formal) already designed at the strategic (pedagogical) level is implemented, is put into practice with more or less explicit or direct-indirect influences from the non-formal and informal curriculum.

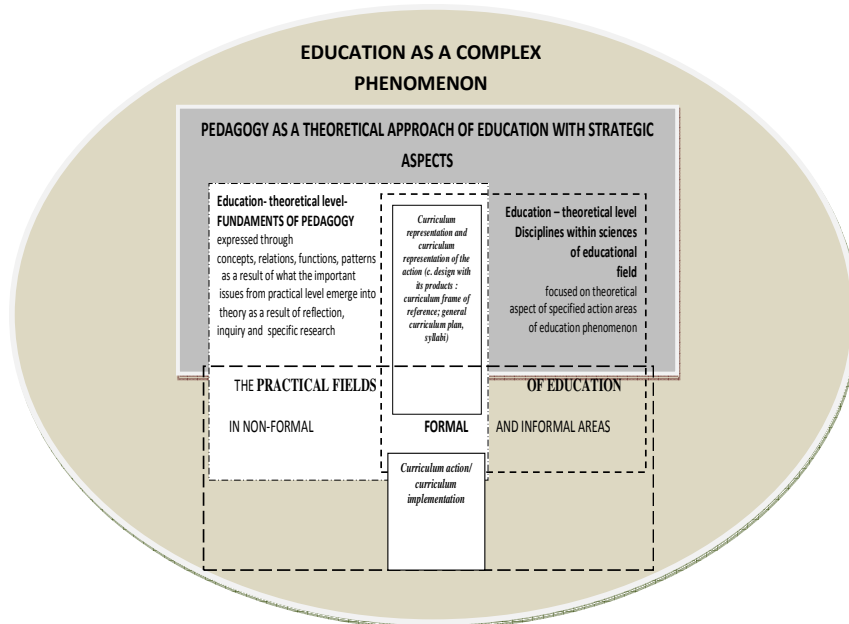


Fig. 1. Pedagogy and curriculum

4.Role of professionals of education.

A thorny issue is highlighted in specialty literature: the necessity of professionals of education able to deliver a central curriculum and basic materials to be used when this central curriculum is implemented. A wide range of opinions are presented by the literature, in a diachronic or synchronic approach. It is not the intention of this paper to debate all these opinions but some core ideas have been felt to be necessarily pinpointed.

This beginning of the third millennium arises so many new issues in the life of the Planet. It becomes obvious that the human being living successfully nowadays and looking to the future to be must be solidly equipped with adequate competencies: based on essential knowledge, able to put in practice and find out cognitive capacities rapidly adapted to always changing daily requests, and guided by appropriate attitudes and values for a global world. Some aspects are genuinely common for the entire world. They however receive peculiar nuances within continental and national context.

These aspects should value and contained within central curriculum plans aiming to facilitate the effective changes, sharing ideas and practices worldwide. On the other side, it becomes highly necessary to let the "*educational cells*" represented by the life of each classroom to have its own freedom. These must follow the wide route of central curriculum but with a selected vehicle and adequately packed baggage (content and methodology), adapted from what it is supposed to be carried (done) as common request; a peculiar class/ group of students need their own specificity aiming a adequate, genuine and effective development. They do need their own rhythm of travel (learning) and its own stops for recharging and adjustment, according to the particular qualities of each traveler (learner); all these, with the clear aim of achieving at the highest possible level the destination of the educational route, the necessary competencies for survival and for developing the society within which each learner of the present will be a future active worker/professional and citizen.

The role of the teacher is considered as the central one along entire this process. The quoted paper pinpoints the idea that teachers can play a vital role in the success of a curriculum. Arash V. Naeini and Nima Shakouri (2016) reiterate the idea supported by Widdowson (1990) that "what learners do is not directly determined by the syllabus but is a consequence of how the syllabus is methodologically mediated by the teacher in the pursuit of his own course of instruction" (Widdowson [1990] p. 129, apud Arash V. Naeini, Nima Shakouri , 2016, p.589).

However, the role of the central curriculum and its quality must not be denied or minimized even the previous idea can be accepted. This high

quality central curriculum must be understood as a general route to be followed by the educational system within a specific socio-cultural context. There are as many central curricula as many national or provincial structures exist in the world, in a world with other kind of connections nowadays. The specificity of the new world requests a necessary connection among these curricula as well.

The world itself needs another core type of personality for the human beings of the third millennium. Humans of nowadays and of the future must be capable to adapt themselves to changes and challenges as never had been before. That is why it is not possible and desirable to let the entire decision of developing the specific curricula only on the individual levels of teachers no matter how good they could be. A core structure of the designed outcomes¹ of curricula worldwide may be desirable in the new context. Consequently the connections among curricula designers, implying an effective sharing of knowledge and good practices among the specialist in curriculum development appear to be more than necessary. International research educational programs focused explicitly on these aspects may be extremely useful.

That is why the role of the specialists in pedagogy, generally speaking, and in curriculum development, particularly, proves to be a major one. They may be expected to play the role of the architects of the main routes of curricula in the world, aware about their role, responsible and open minded. Their power to influence the educational policies in different countries should be higher that it is today. The unity in diversity should be the concern of the strategic level of curriculum design. On the other side, the unity of these main routes of curricula, as a necessity, does not exclude the active role of each teacher when it is about the tactical level of curriculum within the implementation process. Even if the new world of the future requests personalities with specific core features, they remain unique on the individual levels and, therefore, the development of each personality must take into account the peculiar enculturation context, the specificity of each child or student along its own development process in ontogenesis.

5. Some common milestones of curriculum development in the world

In my opinion some core issues should be considered as milestones for the curricula development and implementation within a global world.

¹Expected outcomes or expected results (as they are called in several curricula; e.g. Ontario curriculum)

1. Each national (central) curriculum design should be developed according to what it is happening on a wider referential area (geographically, culturally, socially and economically speaking)

2. The specialists in pedagogy and curriculum development should work together, sharing ideas and experience, trying to understand each other, speaking a common language on the level of core concepts and accepting in an open minded manner the inevitable differences that emerge from the specificity of each concrete linguistic, cultural-economical, social and religious context, with acceptance and positive attitude and without tendencies of imposing any ideas from a group to another. They have to keep in mind the benefit of the future citizens of this Blue Planet for the genuine preservation of its treasure and against any destructive tendency no matter where it could come from.

3. The communication among the specialist in pedagogy and curriculum development with all the teachers that are to be connected in the process of implementation and evaluation of curriculum must be the best one. The teachers as practitioners do need a genuine and effective understanding of what a new curriculum design intends. This may be done within the in-service training programs, before the implementation starting focused on explaining everything is necessary about the new curricula; further, well designed and effective done continuing education programs may help the necessary ongoing adjustments asked by the practice itself. These programs may serve as sources for a continuing curriculum assessment favoring the high quality of implementation and of the final results: the obtained learners' competencies. This training should involve more and more effective the specialists in pedagogy and curriculum development as well.

4. Any new central curriculum at a national/ provincial level, as a strategic approach should emerge from the entire previous experience with the already implemented curriculum, experience that involves highly actively each teachers of the reference area.

5. The implementation process of a new developed central curriculum should be preceded by an pilot process of assessment with criteria focused on competencies claimed both by the local social-economical-cultural request of the near future, and the general social-economical-cultural requests, common for a wider area, if not for the entire world.

6. The post design curriculum assessment, along and after a pilot implementation, must be followed by necessary adjustments finalized before its generalized implementation within the area it was designed for.

7. The process of the generalized implementation must be preceded by effective explanation of the intentions of the new curriculum design, of its general frame, not only for the practitioners but for parents, decision makers

belonging to communities and even media (in order to avoid later wrong or embarrassing comments) . The genuine understanding of the core issues and of the degree of teachers' freedom to adapt and chose what it is important and suitable for each learner, of the responsibility of each teacher for the decision making process on the tactical level of curriculum must be also issues strongly considered by the managers of curriculum design and implementation.

8. The monitoring process of curriculum implementation should have clear milestones, defined perspectives and criteria; effective monitoring actions must be carried on. Some core aspects are to be taken into account:

8.1. The effectiveness of a curriculum is determined by the added value regarding the structure of the developed competencies for each learner involved within the teaching-learning process; from this point of view, the perspective of the final product, the central issue of curricula should be the learners and their competences development. The products of curriculum are not the central plans and the subordinate syllabi. They are only the final product of the curriculum design. In the culinary art, however ingenious and valuable are the recipes, the final value is given by the quality of the prepared products. The role of professionals in the culinary field is to meet the basic requirements of the recipes, while maximizing the values of the potential at hand. Similarly, when we are talking about the science and art of education, highly well conceived curricula and syllabi may exist, as products of curriculum design; but their quality is eventually measured in the competencies of each student under their influence in the educational process. This quality also depends on the mastery of practitioners of education to effectively implement them, by maximizing the students' individual potential and using plenary the contextual conditions.

8.2. The central role of the teacher must genuinely be a reality not only an official declaration. This issue must be correctly understood both by managers and teachers, each category being able to assume and properly act in their specific roles. The freedom of decision for teachers must be a reality even if the general route to be followed is established by the central curriculum plan. The teachers must not be only receivers of requests, prolific producers of papers and "proofs" about what they do with the students and passive actors in a play felt like a " foreign coat".

8.3. The central curriculum can establish what kinds of clothes are expected to be produced, can offer necessary suitable materials, suggestions about how to be cut and sewn the clothes in question. It is not necessary and maybe even not at all desirable that each teacher to have the skills of a fashion designer. But each teacher should be able to know what kind of clothes is suitable for every child's or student's clothing even if, generally speaking they all belong to a pre-established established category. The

teacher should also know what materials are necessary and appropriate for each cloth for each student, what kind of tools may be used within each specific context. The choice should be the teacher's responsibility, together with their students and the students' families, all the time all of them being aware that each child must finally have adequate clothes for their own future time, respecting their personality, their specificity and not transforming them into passive wearers of clothes felt as extraneous.

The *extraneous cloth metaphor*, used both for how the teachers and students could

feel and act in interaction with a new curriculum, can suggestively explain why teachers and students may act passively when the interaction is not well managed. The perverse results are imminent: lack of motivation for teachers and learners, superficiality in teaching and learning, and eventually, a low standard of students' competencies obtained as results. And what's worse is that neither teachers nor students have a sense of harm; an extraneous cloth is given up without regrets.

8.4. The monitors and the assessors of curriculum effectiveness must take into consideration all these aspects. They have to understand the importance of focusing the assessing process of the outcomes of curriculum on *the added value for each student* (as already has been mentioned above). The comparing the acquisitions in terms of competences of different learners or putting them into an evaluative rapport with an external standardized scales could be important for statistic but it is not essential for an effective education of all the categories of learners, an education for the real life of the future, a life of changes that asks strong and flexible competencies developed as high as possible for each individual learner. The learners are different, the contexts of curriculum/ curricula implementation are different, and the cultural, social, economic and financial resources are substantially different even if the central curriculum is common. There are to be appreciated the different levels of students' performance if an improvement is noticed. It is true that in a world of competition the learners as graduates or competitors will be in the situation to be compared through the competencies they have achieved; but in educational circumstances the main concern must be to maximally develop the individual potentials within specific and concrete context. The life itself will make the differences later, in a fair way, if the role of education had been properly achieved.

9. The entire process of curriculum evolution from design, through implementation, assessment and further towards preparing a new cycle of curriculum development must have continuity, congruence and consistency. For these qualities are responsible, in my opinion (slightly different by what Kumaravadivelu, 2001, apud Arash V. Naeini, Nima Shakouri, 2016, p.586 states) both professionals, specialists in pedagogy and curriculum, and

teachers specialists in teaching various fields. *Pedagogy of practicality* means to act as professional at any level in a way to facilitate the maximum and genuine development of each human potential.

10. The genuine focus on the individual development implies the creativity, and the responsible courage of each teacher who really work in the benefit of each child/student. McDonough and Shaw, 2003, cited a saying of an advisor for the Council of Europe who stressed the idea that the individualization can be respected even within a hugely authoritarian framework. Until a certain point this saying can be true, with a condition: the authoritarian frame to be a wise one that take into account the necessity of unity even if the real world is a huge diversity. The central authority must understand, respect, "co-ordinate and potentiate" the freedom of teachers to work in a personalized way with the particular learner. A genuine respect for these leading actors of the educational process may be stronger expressed. But this respect is also conditioned by a more evident expression of what is represented by the self-respect.

All these ten milestones, as a genuine Decalogue, should be points of reflection and analyze for the representatives of the three main involved categories of human resources within each educational reforms: educational policy representatives, professionals of education and curriculum ones and practitioners' representatives. All of them should be creative professionals in their place of acting, and responsible designer of a future society through the products of their synergic activity: the future professionals in different areas and citizens in society. Creativity implies freedom but, in the same time, the freedom has a price: the high degree of awareness of the huge responsibility for the quality of this future. Both, respect and self respect, trust and self-trust are values and attitudes without which nothing of high quality is possible. The corollary of the dignity is the strongly requested additional value to all the previously mentioned qualities..

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CREATIVITY, PERFORMANCE AND EMOTIONAL BALANCE

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Abstract: *Creativity is one of the cognitive skills required by performance in the 21st century. In the current society which is fully technological and tends to automatize everything, no one can deny the importance of creativity as necessary and useful attribute of knowledge. However, there are different ways of approaching it due to its features that are like a magical aspect of thinking (Sparks, 2011, p. 3).² Studies have highlighted that there is mutual determination between creativity as specific, innovative and emotional intelligence. A person is considered creative if s/he can produce original, innovative, unique ideas or products. Creative thinking allows a person to explore different aspects of life in completely different ways than the common way of thinking. A manner of analysing the creative phenomenon is to observe creative personalities, to identify the cognitive characteristics that are different from the others such as creative strategies, cognitive styles, resolving strategies, overwhelming imagination, inspiration, intuition and other elements (Piiro, 2011). Rational mind is the one that confers understanding and reflection along with emotional experiences that put their mark on human personality and thinking. Creativity is a skill that can be developed in schools, if it is identified and proper strategies are used such as engaging the individual in his/her own development with all the abilities along with presenting all opportunities for social evolution.(Glassner & Schwarz, 2007)³.*

Key words: *Creativity, Emotional Intelligence, identification, formative intervention*

² S. Sparks, Science looks at how to inspire creativity. Education Week, 201131(14), 1–16, p.3

³ A., Glassner, & B. B. Schwarz, What stands and develops between creative and critical thinking? Argumentation? Thinking Skills and Creativity, 20072, 10–18.

Literature review

Creativity, a psychological context difficult to define and operationalize bears defining components in itself. The first one is novelty, originality and the uniqueness of thought or product created. The second aspect refers to their relevance in socio-cultural plan.

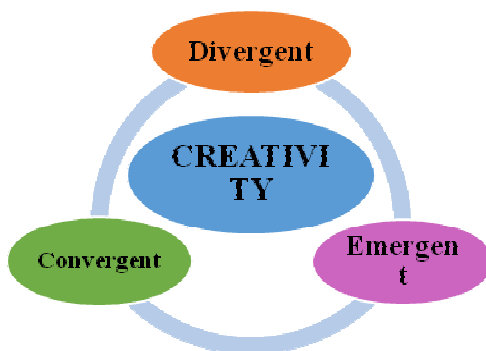


Figure no.1. The creative thinking

Creativity lies at the intersection of the dynamic interaction of the cognitive components of general intelligence and the aptitude attributes. One of the most appropriate definitions is the following: “a mental process by which an individual creates new ideas or products, or recombines existing ideas and products, in a fashion that is novel to him or her” (Gallagher & Gallagher, 1994, p. 319).⁴

All researchers in the field agree that the features that someone can identify in a creative person are: fluency, flexibility, originality and complexity of ideas. Fluency refers to the quality of thinking, flexibility refers to applicability of an idea under various aspects, originality refers to how unique the idea is. Developing creativity depends on many factors, often random (European University Association). Creative imagination is an important component of creativity that leads to the integration of empirical knowledge into logical reasoning, cognitive strategies duplicated by features such as intuition and understanding, found in success and performance. Harvard Gardner when referring to annotation creativity: “When I examine myself and my methods of thought I come to the conclusion that the gift of fantasy has meant more to me than my talent for absorbing positive

⁴ J. J., Gallagher, & S. A. Gallagher, Teaching the gifted child (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 1994, p.319.

knowledge” (Gardner, 1993, p. 105). Intuition is a feature of creative personality; which human understanding cannot reasonably explain. What is intuition? It is a mental illumination that is simply present there and triggers a flashing reaction to some events, actions and phenomena independent of rational thinking. Intuition occurs when the concerns in solving a problem persist and happen instantly, as a mental flashing and lead to new levels of knowledge in research. Innovation, intuition is a rapid passage across the boundaries of investigation and determines the selection of the most appropriate information in solving a problem by using the most appropriate information kept in memory (Gordon and Berger 2003). Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to understand feelings and emotions and to manage them so as to contribute to performance. Howard Gardner in his *Frame of mind*⁵, defined the human being as composed of several types of intelligence. A relationship of self-dignity is created between intelligence and feeling. Emotional intelligence, as Goleman calls it in his book *"Emotional Intelligence"* (1995)⁶, reminds of illogical pulses that are imprinted on successes in everyday life. Appropriate management of emotions contributes substantially to increased school performance, so teachers have a duty to know the well-being of their learners and to take into account their particularities. Emotional intelligence helps to increase the learners` creativity in the context of understanding and addressing them according to their own development needs.

How to flourish creativity in classroom

Activity is guided in any classroom by a teacher who has to achieve certain objectives according to the curriculum, and within limited teaching time. Even homogeneous classes are made up of individualities, each with its aptitude, with the specificity of thought, with its own rhythm of solving the learning task. As the focus is generally placed on memorizing formulas and definitions, somehow creative thinking and creative skills are placed secondly. Learners with special intellectual and creative skills are emotionally sensitive and affected by the lack of feedback and personal valuation and will experience a serious negative impact in such situations. Individualized learning, sufficient time for learners to express their ideas, capitalizing on and encouraging the most innovative approaches to classroom problems, are the incubator for developing creativity. Another feature of the creative personality is the asynchronous development between

⁵H. Gardner, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. New York: Basic Books. 1991/2011

⁶D. Goleman, *Emotional intelligence*. New York: Bantam Books. 1995

intellectual, creative and social-emotional skills. These learners need affective reinforcement, encouragement, to improve self-esteem, self-awareness, identification with others like-minds. In this respect, it is necessary:

- to pay more attention to the learners` affective needs;
- to introduce in schools a day when students work freely on their own projects⁷;
- to place learners in learning situations where to compare and find similarities and differences;
- to classify objects based on their own criteria;
- to make analogies;
- to create metaphors that highlight the relationships between objects and concepts⁸.

If educators use interactive methods, learners are able to develop in time mental models based on experiences and permanently enriched in and outside school through non-formal activities, permanently making the transfer of knowledge and skills from one domain to another, *combinatorial conjunctions*⁹ in educational practice. Using these working tools, educators better understand concepts and relationships between them and manage to adapt them to other totally different areas.

Study methodology

Measuring a person's level of creativity is a difficult task for which conventional, standardized instruments that involve a great deal of subjectivism cannot be used. Teresa Amabile, professor and psychologist, designed at Harvard University in 1982 The Consensual Assessment technique, based on the use of experts (judges) in the field. The purpose is to make the assessment more objective¹⁰. Her method was called-gold standard. We have conducted a study on the relationship between the development of creativity and the learners` effective emotional level with students from Primary and pre-school education study programme, students who are preparing to become teachers for early education and early schooling. We

⁷K. Petty, Reflections on the 20% project. Retrieved from The Tech Classroom 2013, March 20. website:

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⁸S. Glynn, The teaching with analogies model: Build conceptual bridges with mental models. *Science and Children*, 44(2007), 8 52–55.

⁹P. Thagard, Creative combination of representations: Scientific discovery and technological invention. In R. Proctor & E. J. Capaldi (Eds.), *Psychology of science*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2010.

¹⁰<http://www.creativehuddle.co.uk/the-consensual-assessment-technique> (accessed 17.09.2016)

used the Torrance's test of Creative Thinking (TTCT)¹¹ and Thinking Creatively with words (TTCT) testing samples to identify the pupils' creativity level in grades 1-4. Students had the task to reflect upon their life experiences and then draw a picture with reference to them. Through these tests, the level of fluency of thinking, the design of the drawing based on critical thinking, the originality of the drawings, the perseverance for completing the required task and the abstraction ability in defining the drawing were followed. (Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire - Child Form) (TEIQue-CF) (S. Mavroveli & K. V. Petrides, Institute of Education, University of London)¹²

3. Results and Discussion Table no.1. Torrance's test of Creative Thinking (TTCT)

No	The Figural TTCT	Pre-test Mean (SD)	Post-tests Mean (SD)	t	P
1.	emotional expressiveness	3.9	8.4	.25	.54
2.	storytelling articulateness	9.7.	16.7	.24	.43
3.	movement or action	7.9	12.3	.25	.32
4.	expressiveness of titles	10.3	14.0	.17	.26
5.	synthesis of incomplete figures	9.0	12.0	.19	.51
6.	synthesis of lines or circles	8.3	13.0	.24	.64
7.	unusual visualization	6.7	14.0	.16	.45
8.	internal visualization	8.0	12.0	.18	.37
9.	extending or breaking boundaries	9.7	16.7	.23	.52
10.	humour	7.0	11.7	.16	.27
11.	richness of imagery	8.3	13.0	.25	.37
12.	colourfulness of imagery	8.6	12.3	.18	.56
13.	fantasy	9.9	16.7	.15	.21

Table no.2.The Verbal TTCT: Thinking Creatively with Words

No	The Figural TTCT	Pre-test Mean (SD)	Post-tests Mean (SD)	t	p
1.	fluency	.043	.23	.32	.46

¹¹<http://www.ststesting.com/ngifted.html> (accessed 21.09.2016)

¹²<http://www.psychometriclab.com/Home/Default/14> (accessed 20.09.2016)

2.	flexibility	.098	.31	.65	.87
3.	originality	.061	.75	.39	.70

After the identification of creative students, we have intervened through methods of stimulating creative students by giving them emotional support, by providing feedback, through discussions with students towards their own achievements, through constant stimulation and encouragement.

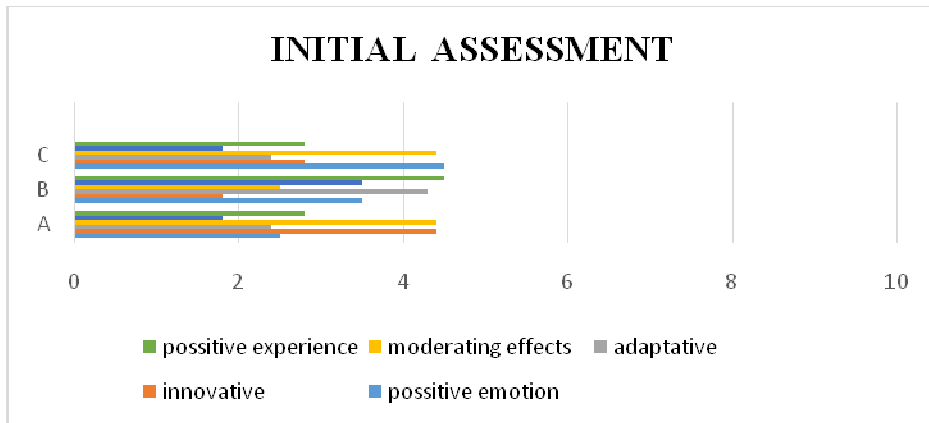


Fig.no.2.Initial assessment of students assessment

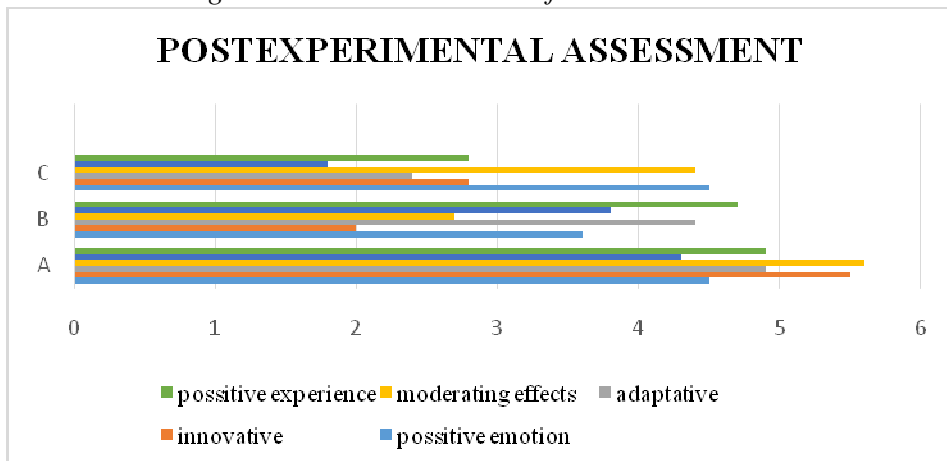


Fig.no.3.1.Postexperimental assessment of student's assessment

To determine the importance of emotional support for creative students, we have used the five elements of differentiation between the experimental group and the control group. After analysing the solutions for the five variables: positive experience, moderating effects, adaptive experience,

innovative response and positive emotion according to the analysed percentage we can assume an increase in the adaptability level and positive reactions in the program offered to the experimental group that received a constant affective support. Students helped the pupils involved in the study, thus facilitating the development of emotional aspects. The results of the study reveal the importance of emotional support given by an informed person, encouragement, morale, permanent highlighting of the positive aspects of the usual behaviour of creative students. Affective support is the defining key in developing the skills of creative learners. There are significant differences between students, some methods are suitable for certain students, and others need to be readjusted according to their individual peculiarities. The study has confirmed the importance of emotional support.

Conclusions

Learners, so different from each other, are capable of original discovery, original creations, creative thinking. Everything depends on how educators find the most appropriate methods to stimulate their native giftedness and lead them to maximum development. It has been found that the dynamic interaction between personality, cognitive, emotional and psychomotor traits in stimulating and motivating conditions leads to the assertion of learners' creative skills in their area of giftedness. Creativity is an act, an idea, a product that can change a field and turn reality in a positive meaning (Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi). Creative learners are visionary, have a great curiosity and the ability to make connections beyond the capacity of others by asking questions, observing, exploring, reviewing and analysing in detail the different phenomena and events. Introvert and bent to perfection, creative people need constant emotional support and encouragement.

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PRESCHOOL TEACHERS AND OTHER PRESCHOOL PROFESSIONALS IN PORTUGAL: DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract:

The opening hours of kindergartens have been gradually extended in Portugal over the last years and so has the time devoted to the social and family support component. It is established in Preschool Education that the preschool teacher is the only professional who can legally perform pedagogical duties in the kindergarten, with a work schedule of 25 hours per week. Reality shows that over the last years, professionals other than preschool teachers have been performing tasks in this educational context, within the social or family support component. The aim of this study is to assess who these professionals are and in what time and space of the kindergarten they develop their activities: whether it is just within the social component or within the instructional component as well. To do so, we sought to determine preschool teachers' opinion regarding the performance of those professionals and identify the areas in which they intervene. We used qualitative and quantitative field research, through a structured questionnaire survey containing closed and open questions, provided in paper format during the months of January and February 2017. The sample is composed of the preschool teachers working in both the private and public sectors in the city of Bragança – Northern Portugal. The results are expected to cast light on the following: the perceptions of a group of preschool teachers regarding the presence of other professionals performing activities within their teaching time; the activities developed; the several curricular areas laid down by the Curricular Guidelines for Preschool Education (CGPE) which are covered by the preschool teachers; and the time assigned to such areas. The study group was selected considering its representativeness regarding

sociodemographic heterogeneity bearing in mind the different profiles (public and private) of the institutions where they worked.

Keywords: *Preschool; Extracurricular Activities; Curricular Areas.*

1-Introduction

This research work intends to reflect on the participation of professionals, other than preschool teachers, who perform educational tasks in Preschool Education institutions in the city of Bragança, Portugal. To do so, we sought the opinion of a group of preschool teachers from the public and private sectors through a questionnaire survey, whose results are presented further ahead. We were able to determine who these professionals are, as well as the areas in which they intervene and when and where they develop their activities in the kindergarten.

2 -Theoretical framework

There is no formal curriculum for Preschool Education in Portugal. However, there are Curricular Guidelines which must be followed by the preschool teacher. The new *Curricular Guidelines for Preschool Education* (CGPE) from 2016 represent a set of pedagogical and organisational general principles which help preschool teachers in the curricular management and in leading the educational process to be developed with the children. They also establish that preschool teachers are the only professionals who are properly specialised and that they must perform five hours of teaching duties with the children in their class in the kindergarten. Besides their special qualifications, preschool teachers are also better trained to plan and assess due to the deeper knowledge they acquire of the group through observation, record and documentation: “They take into account the child’s features, creating opportunities which enable them to fulfil all their potentialities” (Silva et al. 2016:12), and “...they adopt differentiated pedagogical practices which may respond to each child’s individual features and their differences” (Idem, ibidem:12). In a nutshell, the preschool teacher is the only professional qualified to work on all the areas, domains and subdomains of the CGPE.

The action of the preschool teacher must be intentional and purposeful, implying a reflection on the aims of their pedagogical practices and the way they organise and adapt their action to the children’s needs.

This reflection is based on an interactive cycle – observe, plan, act, assess – supported by different ways of recording and documenting data, enabling the preschool teacher to make decisions regarding their practice and to adapt it to the characteristics of each child, group and social context they work in (Silva et al, 2016:5).

Developing this process with the participation of several stakeholders (children, other professionals, parents / families) involves ways of communication and strategies which promote such participation and enable the articulation among the several life contexts of the child. The whole organisation of the activities developed in the preschool classroom is the responsibility of the preschool teacher, who must seek the support of a whole educational team available for the organisation and structuring of such activities.

The participation of other professionals working with the same group of children in the planning and assessment process is one of the means that guarantee the curriculum coherence as well as other 'views' over children's learning. Other professionals as well as parents/families must be involved and held responsible for their children's education. They also have the right to participate in the development of their pedagogical journey (Idem, *ibidem*:16).

Preschool Education has recently been rethought, which has originated significant changes, namely in the public sector, with a considerable increase of the supply of a wider schedule by public institutions (a need that the private sector already met), especially as far as the social or family support component is concerned. In this course of action, the flexibility of preschool institutions' opening hours was established so that the families' difficulties can be mitigated. Therefore, the importance of developing entertainment activities within the social component has been more valued.

The distinction between instructional activities and the social or family support component has raised some issues: since all the time spent by the child at the institution is educational, a distinction must be made between what happens during the five instructional hours that all the children have the right to attend and which are the exclusive responsibility of the preschool teacher and the remaining time that these children spend at the kindergarten, which must also be monitored/supervised by these professionals. A clear distinction must be made between two kinds of time in Preschool Education: instructional time and family support time. The first implies a structured education aiming to provide certain development and learning processes planned by the preschool teacher, thus providing the child with stimulæ and challenges so that they can progress and achieve levels of development and learning which they would not reach on their own. On the other hand, the second represents an informal educational process. The instructional time covers five hours per day whereas the family support time is changeable and also less marked by a well-established sequence, according to families' needs. It is a time marked by a more free and loose pace, when all the children must have the chance to play spontaneously and be free to choose what they wish to do (Silva & Vilhena, 2002).

Since these activities rely essentially on the children's free-will, the proposals to be presented must allow the children to organise themselves, according to the available space, materials and resources. This time must allow the implementation of simple game projects, which may be individual, in pairs, in small groups or with the whole group, and which will preferably be led by the children "It is crucial to create an atmosphere which is orderly and provides the conditions for the children not to feel forced to engage in an activity" (Silva e Vilhena, op. cit:60). It is in this social or family support component that other professionals from different areas will have to participate systematically, through activities which can meet the children and families' needs and interests.

3. Framework and methodologic options

A qualitative and quantitative field research was carried out through the use of a structured questionnaire survey containing closed and open questions and made available in paper format, conducted during the months of January and February 2017. The sample was composed of the preschool teachers working in the public and private sectors in the city of Bragança.

4. Data display and critical analysis: questionnaire survey

The questionnaire survey conducted involved preschool teachers from the city of Bragança, from both the public and the private sectors. A total of 62 people were surveyed, 50% of whom were working in the public sector and the other 50% in the private sector. Within the private sector, the preschool teachers performing educational duties in the nursery rooms of the institutions also responded to the survey.

As far as age is concerned, the population of preschool teachers was distributed as follows: 4.8% (3 teachers) in the 20-30 year-old age range; 25.8% (16 teachers) in the 31-40 year-old range; 22.6% (14 teachers) in 41-50 year-old range; and 46.8% (29 teachers) in the age range between 51 and 60 years old.

The data shows that the majority of the preschool teachers fall in the 51 to 60 year-old range. We also highlight that only three preschool teachers are between 20 and 30 years old.

With regard to gender, we determined that only one of the preschool teachers is male.

In respect to the length of service, 6.5% of the preschool teachers (4) have less than 5 years; 12.9% (8) have between 6 and 10 years; 14.5% (9) have between 11 and 15 years; 6.5% (4) have between 16 and 20 years; 12.9% (8) have between 21 and 25 years; 32.3% (20) have between 26 and 30 years; and 14.5% (9) have more than 31 years of service.

We observe that the lowest percentages of length of service (6.5%), which corresponds to 4 preschool teachers, are those who have less than 5 years and between 16 and 20 years of service. The age range showing the highest length of service corresponds to the teachers who have between 26 and 30 years of service. The data also shows that there are 25 preschool teachers with 0 to 20 years of service, and 37 teachers with 21 to 40 years of service, being the latter the most representative group. This leads us to conclude that there is an ageing population of preschool teachers in Bragança and no renewal of staff.

Among the respondents, only 8.1% (5) have temporary contracts and 91.9% (57) have permanent contracts. Therefore, the results indicate that there are few opportunities of new entries nowadays, since the staff ranks are complete.

With regard to the results concerning the respondents' qualifications, 82.3% (51) have a bachelor or equivalent degree and 17.7% (10) have a master's degree.

Among the respondents, 33 are heads of their class and 27 are not. We must add that there are 33 preschool rooms in Bragança and that all the heads of class were surveyed.

The study showed that there are 3 institutions with only one classroom and one permanent preschool teacher. It also showed that there are institutions where the number of preschool teachers is much higher than the number of classrooms per institution, namely: seven institutions with 15 preschool teachers and nine institutions with eleven teachers. This happens in the School Centres of public institutions.

With regard to the preschool teachers' perceptions concerning the several activities developed in the kindergarten, the study revealed a wide diversity of opinions. The table below depicts the answers given by the respondents regarding the curricular areas covered at the kindergarten.

Table 1. Curricular Areas covered per week

Areas	1x	2x	3 or + x	Never	No Answer
Personal and Social Development	0	1	43	1	17
World Knowledge and Understanding	0	9	34	1	18
Expression and Communication: Motor Development Domain	10	14	19	1	18
Expression and Communication: Oral Language Domain and Approaching Written Language	1	5	38	1	17
Expression and Communication: Mathematical Domain	6	8	30	1	17

Expression and Communication: Artistic Development Domain – Visual Arts Subdomain	5	13	26	1	17
Expression and Communication: Artistic Development Domain – Drama Subdomain	13	20	11	1	17
Expression and Communication: Artistic Development Domain – Music Subdomain	2	9	32	2	17
Expression and Communication: Artistic Development Domain – Dance Subdomain	9	20	14	2	17

We highlight that many of the respondents did not answer this question due to the fact that they were not heads of class and were performing their duties in nursery rooms. However, some of them answered according to previous years in which they were heads of class.

The analysis of the table shows that the most covered areas are the following: Personal and Social Development and Expression and Communication - Oral Language Domain and Approaching Written Language, immediately followed by World Knowledge and Understanding. However, with regard to the first, there is one teacher who only covers this area twice a week and another teacher who never covers it.

The least covered area is that of Expression and Communication and its subdomains, within which the Dance subdomain is the least covered of all. This might be due to the fact that it is a new subdomain of the CGPE.

Considering question 2 “Indicate whether there are professionals other than preschool teachers developing activities during your instructional time in the institution where you work”, 93.4% (57 teachers) answered ‘yes’ and only 6.6% (4 teachers) answered ‘no’. Only one teacher did not answer this question. Therefore, the data shows that in most institutions there are professionals other than preschool teachers developing activities during teachers’ instructional time, which is the central question of this research work.

In question 2.1 “Indicate in which area/domain such professionals develop their activities”, we determined that those professionals other than preschool teachers predominantly develop activities in the following areas: Music (75.9% - 44 answers); Physical Education (63.8% - 37 answers); Foreign Language - English (32.8% - 19 answers); and ICT (1.7% - 1 answer). The topic ‘others’ obtained 22.4% - 13 answers, among which: the domain of Dance with 4 answers; the domain of Oral Language and Approaching Written Language with 3 answers; Body Language with one answer; Early Intervention with one answer; Swimming with one answer; and Health (ensured by nurses) with one answer. By Analysing this data, we found that there is a predominance of activities guided towards Physical Education and

Music, which may have one of the following possible explanations: either the preschool teachers' lack of training in these areas or the excess of professionals specialised in these areas, which may lead to their recruitment to work on these components at the kindergarten.

In light of the 57 answers obtained to question 2.2 "What is the frequency of these activities?", we confirmed that the activities are mostly developed once a week (84.2% - 48 answers) or twice a week (12.3% - 7 answers), and that School Health intervenes in Preschool Education institutions 2 or 3 times per term. These answers prove the systematic nature of these activities within the preschool teacher's instructional time.

With regard to question 2.3 "What is the length of these activities?", all the 57 answers given show unanimity with 100% stating a length up to 50 minutes. This is a positive aspect since the time assigned to these activities is not excessive.

In question 2.4 "Whose initiative was it for these other professionals' intervention in the kindergarten?", the data shows that among the 58 answers obtained, 51.7% (30 answers) indicate the administrative board of the institution; 31% (18 answers) indicate the administrative board of the School Centre; 25.9% (15 answers) indicate the preschool teacher; 10.3% (6 answers) indicate the children's parents; and 8.6% (5 answers) indicate 'others' such as the speech therapist, the Town Council (1 answer) and the Sports Department of the Polytechnic Institute (1 answer). Therefore, we can conclude that in most cases, the initiative came from the administrative board of either the institutions or the School Centres (82.7% - 48 answers). We also highlight that 25.9% (15 answers) indicate that it was the head of class preschool teacher's initiative and 10.3% (6 answers) stated that it had been the parents' initiative. The fact that the lowest percentage corresponds to the preschool teacher's initiative is a positive aspect, since it proves that the initiative of recruiting other professionals is mostly taken by the administrative boards of the institutions or School Centres.

In question 2.5 "Do you consider the existence of these activities during instructional time as an asset?", there were 59 answers. Among these, 88.1% (52 answers) consider these activities during instructional time as an asset. Only 10.2% (6 answers) did not consider them as an asset, and 1.7% (1) answered 'maybe'. These answers indicate the preschool teachers' concern with curricular enrichment, beneficial to the child's holistic development, obtained through the intervention of other specialised professionals.

The majority of the opinions expressed reveal that the activities led by professionals other than preschool teachers are an asset to the children's development, representing a complement to the work developed by the preschool teacher. Only one small minority of answers point such activities as negative, on the grounds that they disturb the routine of the activities

planned by the preschool teacher, considering them as an asset only when developed outside the instructional time and within the family support component as extracurricular activities.

Question 2.6 asked the respondents' opinion regarding several items in which they would indicate the options they mostly identified with, namely: 1 – I totally disagree; 2 – I disagree; 3 – I partially agree; 4 – I agree; 5 – I totally agree.

Statement a) "Should professionals other than preschool teachers develop regular activities during the kindergarten instructional time?" obtained 15 answers (24.2%) of 'I totally disagree'; 7 answers (11.3%) stating 'I disagree'; 15 answers (24.2%) 'I partially agree'; 17 answers (27.4%) 'I agree'; and 8 respondents (12.9%) chose 'I totally agree'. The results obtained in this item were totally disparate since 27.4% of the respondents agree with the statement, 24.2% partially agree and 24.2% totally disagree. Only 12.9% of the preschool teachers totally agree with the statement.

Statement b) "Should professionals other than preschool teachers occasionally develop activities during the kindergarten instructional time?" obtained the following answers: 18 (35.3%) stated to partially agree; 15 (29.4%) said they agree; 7 (13.7%) totally disagree; and 6 (11.8%) disagree. This item reveals a higher consensus regarding the occasional development of activities by other professionals during instructional time.

The answers to question c) "Should professionals other than preschool teachers develop activities in the kindergarten only during extracurricular time?" were as follows: 13 respondents (25.5%) partially agree; 12 (23.5%) agree and totally agree; 7 (13.7%) totally disagree and disagree. Most of the preschool teachers surveyed think that the activities developed by other professionals must be implemented during extracurricular time.

Statement d) "Only preschool teachers should develop activities during the kindergarten instructional time" obtained the following answers: 13 respondents (25.5%) totally disagree; the same number (13 - 25.5%) totally agree; 11 (21.6%) disagree; 9 (17.6%) agree; and 5 (9.8%) partially agree. 51% of the preschool teachers surveyed are in antagonistic positions, namely of total agreement and total disagreement.

The answers regarding statement e) "Should extracurricular or family support activities exist in the kindergarten?" were as follows: 31 preschool teachers (60.8%) stated to totally agree; 10 (19.6%) said they agree; 5 (9.8%) partially agree; and 4 respondents (7.8%) totally disagree. The vast majority of the preschool teachers surveyed agree with the existence of extracurricular activities in the kindergarten.

Question 2.7 "In what situations do other preschool teachers develop activities within the kindergarten instructional time?" was answered by 48 respondents. Among these, 49 (84.5%) indicated that 'only in the absence of

the head of group teacher’; 7 (12.1%) chose ‘in activities for which the teacher does not feel prepared’; 14 (24.1%) chose the option ‘others’. A wide variety of explanations were given for the fact that other preschool teachers who are not the head of the class are developing activities during the kindergarten instructional time, namely: the organisation of collective activities, the existence of a very distinctive age range group, or the recruitment of support to the head of class teacher by the kindergarten.

5. Final Considerations

By way of conclusion, this research work revealed that there are many professionals, who are not preschool teachers, developing different activities within the Preschool Education contexts in the city of Bragança. Such activities are developed either systematically within the preschool teacher’s instructional time or within the social or family support component. We believe that these professionals represent an asset to the kindergarten, provided that they are supported by the preschool teacher, both during instructional time and family support time. What is not desirable, however, is the systematicity of their action during instructional time, since this time of 5 hours per day is the responsibility of the preschool teacher, who is the best prepared professional to cover the several areas, domains and subdomains laid down in the CGPE. The preschool teacher may seek the collaboration of other professionals, but always occasionally and to meet the needs of their educational purpose. The systematicity of those professionals’ action must only occur during the social or family support component.

It is our opinion that Preschool Education, which is responsible for the management of instructional time, will have to ensure ways of articulation and coherence with the family support component. Such decision is, in our view, an organisational one and must, therefore, be included in the institution’s project and involve other stakeholders apart from those directly involved in the children’s education (preschool teacher or animator/assistant). Given the diversity of possible situations within the preschool education national network, it is important to clarify the possible roles and duties of the several stakeholders.

Despite not being against the intervention of professionals with other qualifications in the family support component, we share the claims of Silva & Vilhena (2002) and support the idea that the preschool teacher must play a paramount role in ensuring a certain educational continuity between the two moments while also marking their diversity.

The institutional status of the professionals who ensure the family support component may vary from preschool assistants who accompany the curricular activities to staff recruited for that specific purpose and only

performing that particular duty, as observed in most of the answers to our survey.

Currently, socio-educational animation is a career with specific features, for which there is specific training, whether it is through vocational courses of levels 2 and 3 or through a bachelor degree. In the light of the answers obtained in the survey, we also found that the skills in an artistic area (playing a musical instrument, taking part in a drama club) or in a sports area (practising a sports modality) represent privileged criteria in the selection of the professional.

According to Silva & Vilhena (2002), such recruitment should involve a previous interview and might consider the possibility of a probation period (two weeks to one month) under the supervision of a preschool teacher or of the kindergarten head teacher. This is not confirmed by any of the answers given to our survey.

Since socio-educational animation represents a professional activity, those who perform it should have opportunities of on-the-job training, whether it is in the institution or together with other professionals performing the same duties, all while making the most of the training opportunities arising from the articulation work with preschool teachers. Parents and guardians play an important role in the decision-making regarding socio-educational animation since it is related to their needs. The ways of attendance and the working period of such activities must meet the whole of the parents' needs. Therefore, this staff should have the possibility to integrate a specific framework and a time to plan and assess their action together.

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HAVE STILL THE ADULTS A GENUINE NEED FOR LEARNING?

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Abstract: *The paper intends to highlight an important issue: the specifics of adults' learning process nowadays, the dynamics of motivation for formal learning activities (within tertiary education and/ or lifelong learning), the difficulties of educators in relation to adults' learners, and the position of society versus this segment of permanent education. Based on a systematic observation along five academic years, it is stressed that, the stated conclusions are required to be verified by an in depth research.*

The paper announces the existence of such a research, whose results will be the topic of further papers. Some core aspects of this approach are presented. The paper has the explicit intention to emphasize a thorny contemporary problem, by pointing out some worrying aspects in adult education, which may have earlier roots in ontogenesis. The presentation intends to be an additional and serious pleading for considering education a genuine national and universal priority, by renouncing to the pretend this priority only in the official papers. The worsening of the presented aspects, within the conditions of a nebulous actuality is highlighted and, also the huge danger of the "time of to pretend" (meaning to mime a reality that does not exist as such) is explained.

Key words: *adult education, adults' learning process in actual time, effects of to pretend as a banner of nowadays life.*

1. The world we live in

The issue of adaptation has become a real problem for the society we live in, because it has brought many changes in adults' life, with a remarkable rate and speed of these changes. The entire Earth has turned the borders of its sequences into delicate traces and has facilitated the flight from one end to the other not only with the speed of airplanes of the latest technology, but with rapidly communicated words and thoughts, as well.

In only twenty-five years, traditional distinctions between generations have widened, with antagonisms taking increasingly nuanced forms, with tension and apparent risks of incongruity. This happens despite the tendency to preserve appearances to a greater extent than ever. To pretend (meaning to mime a reality that does not exist as such), as a generalized attitude, seems to have become an accepted motto with open arms more or less wide, but with an obvious tendency to become permanence. How the people cope with all these is an issue of learning. The need of learning receives deep and complex meanings nowadays. Unfortunately, these meanings do not imply always positive facets.

2. Learning process and aspects of learning, nowadays

The learning process is a very natural one, for all beings in this world. However it has specific features for human beings. In this particular case, the learning process involves the acquiring of knowledge, as cognitive basics of competencies, the development of appropriate capacities (skills), necessary to an effective adaptation to permanent and speedy changing, all accompanied by efficient development or modeling of attitudes and appropriate behaviors as answers of more and more complex tasks.

Psychologists and specialists in education have scrutinized and analyzed in depth the peculiar aspects of the learning process. A consistent number of learning theories are to be found in literature. These theories are seen as "a body of principles advocated by psychologists and educators to explain how people acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes. (The learning process, 2003). Theories of learning may be genuinely important for designing an effective educational process based on appropriate teaching and assessment methodologies, both focused on learning, precisely because they try to explain how people learn. The role of the motivation for learning, the core characteristics of the learning process, different learning styles etc. are other connected issues of the mentioned theories.

2.1. Characteristics of the human learning process

Generally speaking, there are some core ideas emerging from an extremely different approach of the complex process of human learning. They are mainly focused on the characteristics of the learning process. Thus, some of the commonly recognized features can be synthesized in several points.

- **The learning process of a human being always has a purpose.**

For the other beings, the purpose of an action does not genuinely exist; it is more correct to speak about the existence of a triggering cause. Basically,

they try to find food, security, development, and to ensure the species perpetuation.

Any being must learn in a particular way how to meet specific needs. The pyramid of necessities is much more complex for human beings. It is interesting to notice that the genuineness of the purposes of learning is considerably distorted at human beings comparatively to any other beings on the Earth, in spite or, maybe, because of this complexity.

The specificity of the range of the adults' learning targets in this decade of the third millennium is one of the hypostases of the previously mentioned issue.

The learning purpose may be significantly different, from a learner to another, even if they are involved in the same or similar learning activities. (Bakar, K. A., Sulaiman, N. F. & Rafeai, Z. A. M. , 2010). The purpose can be designed for a long, medium or short term, and the action of learning is triggered by a very personal motivation (intrinsic or extrinsic, as well, depending on the place of the established target; it can be placed inside or outside of the learning process itself). The literature stresses that there are differences of performance according the age and depending on the type of received feedback. (Simon, J. R., Howard, J. H., & Howard, D. V. 2010)

Based on a long term process of managed direct observation, one can say that a lot of peculiar and differential aspects are obvious at the adults of nowadays who are involved in different types of formal learning process: master degree programs, adult's postgraduate training courses or, even simply training sessions for adults, without professional formal implications. Thus, no matter to what type of activity they are involved in, the observed adult subjects have seemed to have a less and less genuine interest for the learning process itself. In other words, the adults of nowadays appear as being less and less interested in the essence of the learning process: to acquire valuable and effective competencies (both for general usage and for professional or social fields of applicability).

Their enrolment in programs that assume learning process is, rather, determined by the social needs (as need for affiliation); more specifically, nowadays one can speak about the social need of belonging to certain social categories, the most often to those defined by the possession of diplomas that attest the completion of some studies. Sometimes, much enough, and more often, apparently, the purpose is not even that previously presented. A kind of spirit of imitation, of flock effect is the roots of the agglomeration at enrollment for defined specialties that are changed from time to time, as the fashion is changed. This is a typical situation not only for the master degree programs, but for undergraduate ones as well; the situation also appears to be similar when it is about the advertised training programs for adults. In this particular case the fashion appears to be the main trigger of the enrolment.

The necessary credits for different professional or social purposes may also be the enrolment trigger. The saddest aspect is that a minimum quantum of curiosity does not exist beyond the mentioned enrolment based to be in fashion or to obtain the so hunted credits. This shade of curiosity could be used as a starting point by the trainer for an effective learning process.

But it seems that a kind of a double-sense contagious influence is engulfed by a kind of swirl: students with no purpose for genuine learning, with an absent or low interest for acquired learning experiences determine absent or low level of concern for designing and implementing learning situations on the trainers side.

The effectiveness of the learning activities is under the shadow. The interest in the show, to create advertising effects, seems to be the basic concerns of many bidders for adult learning activities. In this case, for the adults' training designers consider obsolete, useless to create appropriate assessment tools for an adequate evaluation focused on the effectiveness of learning. Two aims seem to be necessarily covered by the organizers side: to tick officially or formally requested activities and/ or earning money if the training courses are to be paid. For beneficiaries it become important to earn points for portofolio, credits, or, pure and simple to be in fashion. Thus, "to pretend behavior" becomes a master in this field.

➤ **The learning process has a significant numbers of facets.**

These facets (The learning process, 2003) led the theorist to classify learning on different types focused on:

- *the canals* of learning (perceptual, motor, verbal, conceptual, problem solving, and emotional);
- *the field of activity where the learning process occurs or is meant for; in this case the use and the development of specific capacities are involved; it is about:*
 - *intellectual skills/ competencies, as facilitators of performance of a culturally or professionally relevant task;*
 - *cognitive strategies* as ways/ strategies for learning in order to develop the mentioned intellectual capacities, in a more effective way. They refer to how to organized the learning steps, to predict or guess meanings from the context, to summarize meanings, to use memory and imagination as supports in learning approach, how and how much to repeat what is to be learned, attitudinal adjustments or changes in order to increase the effectiveness of the learning process.
- Others two facets of the learning process are connected to the deepness of learning: *surface or deep learning.*

The multiple faces and the complexity of learning process are also intimately influenced by what the specialists in education name as *hidden curriculum*. The learning process may be explicitly focused on something

specific, but the context, the way of teaching, the selection of the learning situation and personality of teacher, the personalities of the learners and their interconnections have significant effects upon what and how the students learn and on the quality of the learning process outcomes (adapted after The learning process, 2003)

The issue of this hidden curriculum gives a plus of complexity to the learning process, in the light of what the previous considerations about the learning purposes of students, with their effects upon the quality of the delivered learning activities have implied. Two fields of disinterest seem to intertwine and, consequently, to influence each other under the sign of claiming to do something of quality. This unfortunate interpenetration, in which the facets of learning are used rather as design statements (long lists of competencies to be achieved) or as tools in the stage performance of the show (the facets: perceptual, motor, verbal, conceptual, pretending problem solving, and much emotional, being intensely used); these lead towards the already explained as "the land of to pretend". And, what it is interesting is that as larger the pretending land is as more the further presented characteristic of the learning process becomes, unfortunately, less a necessity as it should be, but only as an *appearance*.

➤ **Genuine learning must be an active process.**

This feature should be extremely important for a learning activity designer. The designer has to be aware that the learning activity involves learning situations suitable for a specific group of learners and derived from the necessity to achieve specified and previously defined finalities (outcomes, expectations for learning). The designer must genuinely understand the process of developing competencies. This process is based on the correct considering of the structure of competency: the necessary knowledge base, the connected capacities developed by practicing, and directing and supporting attitudes. It is obvious that the action of the students/ learners is essential for obtaining better results for all the three components of competency and for the competency itself as a synergetic result of their interconnection. When it is about the discovered knowledge the active implication of learners leads to better achievement, of course. If they act aware about a specified purpose, aiming to fulfill defined outcomes both capacities and attitudes are properly developed. Thus, acting by learner is a core condition of the learning process quality. The simple possession of knowledge without the capacity, the desire and motivation to apply them in adequate contexts to solve real problems (professional, social, or even creative cognitive) is a false end useless result.

➤ **Learning is the result of the experience**

The turning of the learning situations designed by educator or put into action by the life itself into learning experiences unique for each learner is a core issue of curriculum theory. The importance of the awareness of the purpose of learning for both educators and learners (within formal, non-formal and even informal education where the learner is the only selector of the learning situations offered by life) should not be demonstrated.

But, even if these ideas are, for a long time, genuine truisms, the reality of the education and training seems to not consider them other than declarative. The so called activism in learning has more and more the essence of acting within a surrogate active process of learning, where the students move a lot, speak together, act etc. But it is not valued a really concerted context, with genuine concern about what is being acquired and at what level of quality. The care for fun, to feel good becomes prevalent. Of course, this positive emotional context should not be neglected, but when it becomes an end in itself, the effects are rather negative. The quality of the each stage of acquired experiences becomes the starting point for what kind of learning experiences are asked and enjoyed on further stages. The pretending attitude, both from educators as designer and managers of the learning process, and learners as beneficiary of it, may be (and it is actually) one of the sources for the superficial attitude (previously described) of those who learn in this final of the first decade of the third millennium.

2.2. Learning process seems to be governed by principles

These principles are generally accepted, even if their order or formulations are slightly different.

➤ ***Learning process has a motif- principle of readiness***

Individuals learn sensible better when they have an obvious motif of learning. The role of the educator or the trainer in developing this awareness is determined by the learners' age and by their level of instruction and culture. This motivation for a specific learning activity is sensible influenced by the hierarchy of all the other activities in the learner concrete life with their specific motivation. Prioritizing is itself a competence that has to be learned along the educational process, especially inside the schooling period. The motif of learning can emerge from inside the learning process or from outside of it. Children learn first because they need to be loved by their parents, by the teacher, or, if the stimulation from outside is an inappropriate one, they learn for different kind of recompenses. Normally, the motivation for learning follows a route from outside to inside the learning process if this is professionally leaded by the educators. There are a lot of areas where the learning process remain extrinsically motivated, and it is normal to be like this. But there is a real danger when nothing is learned by a teenager or, later,

by an adult, with a genuine intrinsic motivation. (Simon, J. R., Howard, J. H., & Howard, D. V., 2010); Oletić A., Ilić N., 2014); Chiew Fen Ng and Poh Kiat Ng , 2015).

The situation appears more complex for adults' learning. Generally speaking they have, simultaneously, several statuses (as professionals, parents, son/daughter, sister/brother, colleague etc). Each of these statuses arise requests for learning as a general process and sometimes as an activity within a formal context. When an adult become enrolled in a formal training activity (within a professional field for further training and updating, or for re-training in another professional field etc.) at the beginning both the extrinsic and intrinsic motivation could appear: it depends on context and is different from person to person. The trainer may and should have a huge role for ensuring an internalization route of the trainee's learning motivation.

However, the trainer's effort is not enough. The trainee comes with his/her own purpose of the enrolment in the formal learning activity. The effort of the trainers, sometimes, does not lead to expected results, when this enrolment is rooted on the spirit of the herd, the trends of the fashion for training at a given moment, or it occurs as a compulsory act, force by an authority or an important need for professional ascension more than a genuine wish for professional development.

There are no supportive learning experiences in the history of such kind of learners to be used as fundamentals. They are not ready to learn. In this case, the delicate issue of how the trainers themselves are motivated by their trainees becomes a serious aspect.

➤ The principle of **effect**

- This principle is strongly connected to the previously mentioned one. The importance of the emotional reaction of the student along and at the end of the learning process is highlighted. The positive and appropriate strong emotions have obviously a supportive influence for the learning experiences. This principle is extraordinary important with a condition: positive emotions should not be a purpose in themselves: they should accompany the learning process. A properly supportive role is determined by a moderate intensity; the positive emotions should be prevalent in correlation with the incidentally negative emotions that could produce frustration, confusion or futility for learner, but that cannot entirely be avoided (adapted after: Simon, J. R., Howard, J. H., & Howard, D. V., 2010, and The learning process. 2003).

➤ The principle of **intensity**

On its turn, the principle of effect is connected to the principle of intensity. An exciting learning situation teaches more than a routine or boring one. An intense activity has significant effects on the quality of the

students' learning experiences. The activism of learning is also involved here because it is obvious that something that students have acted, experienced, and practiced (for repetition purposes, with consolidating effects), the aware reorganizing of knowledge and capacities lead to outcomes generating positive and supportive emotion.

➤ The principles of **recency and primacy** (The Learning process.2003)¹³

The recency principle states, that things most recently learned are best remembered. However, this principle should be understood in a complex way. The learning process must have continuity, fluidity, consistency, and flexibility. These attributes are difficult to be achieved in adults' training for several reasons. Their own history as learners is different for an adult to another. They have significantly different initial competencies (general-cognitive, specialized, etc), a wide spectrum of motivation for learning, personal attitudes versus their enrollment in the training program, and, not at all to be neglected, they have nuanced features of personality.

Thus, to answer properly about an old knowledge or to be able to activate an old capacity could be a success for some of them, for others may be a failure. The mastery of the trainer to design learning situations taking into account all the possible differences and permanently adjusting the design to the necessity of each moment of the implementation are conditions for ensuring the previously mentioned characteristics of the learning process. Sometimes, the correction of bad or inaccurate acquired knowledge and/or capacities, the influence upon inappropriate attitudes must be a core concern of the trainer and these are sources of difficulties because the principle of primacy is not facilitated. This principle states that knowledge or a capacity must be correctly learn for the very beginning, for being further the bases for development. The process of correction appears to be much more difficult that the adequate learning from the very beginning.

The above presentation highlights several points of attention. They are implied by the figure nr. 1

A formal learning process involves two human categories: the provider of the learning situations (WHO) and the learner (for WHOM) the beneficiary of the learning situation, the learner. The learners may involve themselves in the learning process in two ways: highly aware and with a clear learning purpose and using the learning situation as a learning

¹³ The learning process, 2003,

http://www.dynamicflight.com/avcfibook/learning_process/

opportunity, or as simple actors (more or less passive) of it. Both cases are followed by a unique learning experience for each learner. Nevertheless, the quality of the learners' acquisitions is different for each of them, according to the degree of the awareness, voluntarily implied effort, and effective involvement in the learning process.

The two main actors of the learning process (educator and learner) have well defined roles: the educator/ trainer is the author of designing and managing the whole process of learning through his/her manner of teaching. The learner is the beneficiary, the actor and manager of his/her own process of learning.

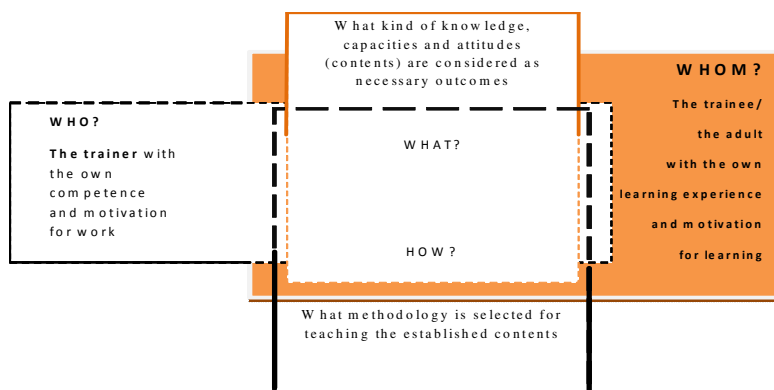


Figure 1: The learning process and its elements

The results of the learning process are designed as expected outcome on the learner's level. Simultaneously, the trainer gets his or her own learning experience after implementing and assessing the learning situation design. The trainer learns more about the trainees' psychology, about the influence of their personal learning style on the learning outcomes. In the same time the trainer learns about the appropriateness of the contents and of the selection of the teaching methodology, about the effectiveness of the teaching style. The trainer may also obtain valuable information about the human relations implied by a learning situation implementation (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). The only condition for all this aspects of a trainer's learning experience is a genuine reflective attitude based on a strong motivation for teaching.

Thus, the two main actors of the learning process influence each other in a very interesting way. The teaching style interconnects with the learners' learning styles. Their interconnection generates important information for the designs of future learning situations (selection and the maintenance of the contents, communication ways, and, especially the methodology of teaching-

learning-assessing process). An over- motivation and a great effort of the trainer to provide qualitative training sessions impacted by the lack of motivation of the learners, their resistance to an in depth approach, for practicing, generate frustration.

Usually, these feelings terns into two possible direction of a further action of the trainer:

- the trainer tries to find out those elements that are desirable for a specific group of trainees and fructifying them for at least a minimum quality of the results of the learning activity.
- he or she lets things go on no matter what happens, because of a too obvious indifference from the trainees side. The choice is strongly determined by institutional, social and economic reasons.

Sometimes, and lately, maybe too more often, the attitude of *”pretending to do what is requested”* seems to be the winner, and in this situation the quality of work remains only a *”big nothing nicely painted”*.

3. Perverse effects of the confusion between the genuine need for learning and other specific needs of adults

The previous presentation highlighted the difficulty of working with adults in the training area.

Some key ideas about adults’ learning and their specific need of learning in the new millennium should be stressed. Generally speaking the adults have a complex manner of learning. Their individual learning style, progressively developed along ontogenesis process is one facet of difference between adults when they become formal learners: this facet is strongly influenced by their perception of self, their complexes and their self-esteem.

Usually a group of trainees is extremely heterogeneous: they may have the same initial type of training, the same specialty sometimes, but they however have their own professional experience, the personal status of each one, their own interpersonal relations. All these are individually connected to each learner's perception of the trainers, of the learning activity itself; and all these create a complex of influences (hidden curriculum) with interesting and often perverse effects on the learning outcomes.

Our contemporary life appears to have some characteristics as interesting sources for the difficulty to work efficiently with the young or less young adults.

One important cause may be the superficiality of thinking about the genuine utility of learning, accompanied by the crazy run for the acquisition of diplomas or other forms of certification, to get points all only for having a thick personal portfolio.

Another possible cause may be the lack of interest for reading, the tendency of compressing and impoverish the verbal language, because of the

virtual communication, completed with the obvious attitude of avoiding an in-depth information and almost the runaway behavior from thinking with their own mind, after a so long lack of practicing this.

The academic work with young adults and adults in their middle age became more and more challenging in the last period because of all these but also because there are on the educational market a set of offers for a quick specialization. Thus, a few dozen hours, *training pills*, often taken from other cultures and not at all adapted to the one in which they are applied, come as alternatives to master programs that ask at least one year (60 credits) or even two years (180).

In these conditions, it is obviously difficult for candidates to enroll themselves and to be kept inside the university. If they finalize a university program, quite a lot graduates remain in fact uninterested in their genuine training, but still extremely sensitive to the type of diploma obtained and the possibility to work after.

If the same possibilities of professional insertion are offered by both a master degree and a several weeks training program, the balance became an unfair one. The candidates seem to be interested only on their future *insertion* within a job and not at all about their effective *integration* within the professional field.

It seems that the bureaucratic aspects of educational life became much more important than the essence of education and training itself.

For the remained "Don Quixote" scholars of educational system, especially in tertiary education, the emotional and motivated survival became a real challenge, in these conditions. It is a silent challenge, usually felt but not recognized, a challenge that has as a perverse effect the real decrease of their motivation for the qualitative work, or their migration towards other professional areas.

4. The need for research, reflection and effective action

The comments above presented are the result of a formally managed observation on several cohorts of graduate students in university, on teachers and other professional involved in in-service training. The observational process started in 2012. In that year, after two years of working far from the undergraduate and graduate students, a significant gap between previous generations and those I found out at my return blew up in my mind. My colleagues who continued their activity have equally noticed the decrease in the quality of the educational results in the new cohorts, but for somebody coming back after a while, the gap with all its qualitative implications appeared as being dramatic.

The spontaneous observation, initially, with the mentioned conclusive aspects have generated the idea of a more in depth scrutinizing of

the situation, aiming not only to write down some conclusions but to find out appropriate solutions for solving, or at least improving a major issue.

There are some constraints that make almost impossible the radically change of the situation and they are intimately connected to the educational policy. But, still, some corrections can be done within the academic activity itself.

An intentioned and managed observation aiming to generate hypotheses and ideas to be analyzed and connected has been initiated. This was accompanied by the implementation of a complex assessment system for several successive cohorts. It is based on defined qualitative criteria, focused on elements of competencies (or even competencies as a whole), kept for all the involved cohorts, even if the topics of the assessment has been changed each year .

The declared attitude versus learning and some motivational aspects have been investigated by the means of questionnaires and focus groups during the activity of courses and seminars. Their results have been and are (the activity is in progress) analyzed in connections with the compared results of the students' assessment along several academic years when the assessment way has common and constant core milestones.

The methodology of teaching has been adapted year after year, according to the master program, the study year, and the concrete group personality of each cohort. A considerable number and facets and nuanced difficulties have been highlighted. The results of this on process research will be subject of further presentations.

This research is focused on the tertiary education, but it is really necessary a analysis of what is happening along the whole trajectory of schooling with the attitudes of students versus the learning process. Causes, factors of influence should be detected, analyzed and measures of decreasing their negative influence must be taken into account. Every activity field of a society (no matter how important they claim to be) receives human resources formed basically and as specialists, from the educational system. Scholars and teachers, managers in educational field and politicians must become aware about this truth. The entire society has to understand that without education society can exist no other than chaotic. Here, in educational field (family and school) are to be found the roots of the well being and well functioning of the society, and the causes of failures as well. Education must be a national and worldwide priority, but not only in the official documents. The *Kingdom of to Pretend* must be eradicated first in the area of education!

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CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES ON IMPROVING EFFECTIVE TEACHING AT FIRST YEAR STUDENTS IN ENGINEERING HIGHER EDUCATION- A STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: *The ultimate criterion of effective teaching is effective and successful learning. The paper focuses on an ascertaining research that investigates the students' opinion about the effective teaching characteristics through a survey based on a questionnaire that was sent to 233 first year students from Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania, attending classes to prepare for a teaching career. The revised set of characteristics of effective teaching according to the Griffith University's PRO-Teaching project (Klopper, C., Drew, S., 2015) presented originally as 'eight dimensions of good teaching' (Nulty, 2001) provided a structured framework that has been the basis for our study in students' evaluation of effective teaching. The data collection procedure was based on a survey with a 5-point Likert scale and an open-ended question with comment box. The students in the contemporary educational system prefer interactive teaching strategies, suitable personal characteristics of teachers and a good teacher-student relationship.*

Keywords: *effective teaching; learning; metacognition; higher education; future teachers.*

1. Focus of the paper

The emergence of the discourse around teaching and learning is one of the more remarkable phenomena of the last decade in higher education. There is a substantial research evidence that shows how good teaching makes a

difference in student learning, so that students who are well taught learn more than students who are poorly taught. Currently, teaching is increasingly perceived as putting the student in the formal learning situation as a development of student learning ability, making him more responsible and more involved in the act of learning. Thus, the ultimate outcome of instructional practice is effective student learning (Donald, 2000). Good teaching encourages high quality student learning (Ramsden, 1992). The ultimate criterion of effective teaching is effective and successful learning; new pedagogies should help students develop over time as independent, autonomous learners able to effectively design, pursue and achieve their own learning goals and personal aspirations as well as master curricular learning goals. The ultimate goal for teachers, as John Hattie has described, is to 'help students to become their own teachers' (2014). The premise of our study was to enhance teaching practice and student learning, in order to address the perceived need to improve teaching quality (teaching for learning) and to provide opportunities for future teachers to improve their understanding of effective teaching and of their learning (learning for teaching). The ten characteristics of effective teaching presented originally as 'eight dimensions of good teaching' (Nulty, 2001) provided a structured framework that has been the basis for students' evaluation of effective teaching in engineering higher education.

2. Theoretical framework for the study

2.1. Defining effective teaching

The importance of effective teaching is recognized throughout the literature. Tarr et al. (2006) asserts that at the heart of quality education is quality teaching. Teaching is not a single activity, but is comprised of content knowledge/expertise and a set of activities or skills necessary to facilitate and assess student learning.

Effective higher education teaching is a 'contested concept' (Skelton, 2004) with varying definitions. Numerous attempts have been made to identify its characteristics, using a variety of theoretical perspectives, but there is no universally accepted definition of effective university teaching (Johnson & Ryan, 2000; Paulsen, 2002; Trigwell, 2001). There is an abundance of lists offered throughout the literature of what constitutes effective teaching (Sullivan, 2001; Young, 2006; Childs, 2010; Buchanan, 1997; Nicholls, 2002; Reid & Johnstone, 1999; etc.). These lists focus on a diverse range of practices such as lesson preparation and delivery, assessment and feedback and characteristics such as patience and professionalism. Although each list is undoubtedly effective in theory,

research suggests that this does not transfer in practice. For instance, Centra (1993) defines effective teaching as ‘that which produces beneficial and purposeful student learning by using the appropriate procedures’. Braskamp and Ory (1994) include both teaching and learning in their definition, defining effective teaching as the ‘creation of situations in which appropriate learning occurs; shaping those situations is what successful teachers have learned to do effectively’. Campbell, Kyriakides, Muijs and Robinson (2003) defined teacher’s effectiveness as the impact of classroom factors on the performance of student, while P. Westwood (2006) believes that effective teaching is as an approach of providing all the students with utmost opportunities. McKeachie (1994) defined effective teaching as ‘the degree to which one has facilitated student achievement of educational goals’. That means teaching is effective when it achieves its intended educational goals.

So, effective teaching has been broadly understood as teaching that is oriented to and focused on students and their learning, that is deep and meaningful. Defining teaching effectiveness can be approached from either an instructional process perspective or from an educational outcomes process perspective (d’Apollonia & Abrami, 1997). Although both teacher characteristics and course grades can be considered as indicators of the effectiveness of teaching, they are influenced by external factors. Hence, other sources, such as the students’ perceptions of their learning should be used to complement the data. Some researchers suggest, it is what the students can do or what they believe they can do, that should be considered as indicators of the effectiveness of teaching (Ramsden, 2003). ‘Teaching gains a functional and effective structure in the context of other didactic activities if and only if it induces a real learning process, motivating students to engage in activities that require effort, understanding, assimilation of values (knowledge, skills, attitudes), to make transfers and creative applications’ (Neacsu, I., 1990).

Higher education has utilized student evaluations of teaching effectiveness as a means of measuring the degree of teaching effectiveness that is present in the classroom (Algozzine et al., 2004; Hendry & Dean, 2002; Steiner, Holley, Gerdes & Campbell, 2006; Wright, 2006). Student evaluation of teaching effectiveness were initially intended as a mechanism for students to provide feedback that teachers could utilize to inform and guide change in instructional methods.

2.2. Characteristics of effective teaching

Effective teaching is complex and research indicates that measures of effective teaching are multifaceted and multidimensional (Marsh & Roche, 1997; Sheehan & DuPrey, 1999; Tang, 1997; Feldman, 2007; Biggs, 2003; Nulty, 2001; etc.). Although Patrick & Smart (1998) claim that there appears

to be little agreement on the nature and number of dimensions that represent teaching effectiveness, their view is not shared by most researchers in the field. Focusing on higher education, Ramsden (1992) comments, ‘although good teaching is undoubtedly a complicated matter, there is a substantial measure of agreement among these empirical studies about its essential characteristics.’ So, an extant of literature provides numerous accounts that describe characteristics of effective teaching.

Ralph (2003) conducted a study on teaching effectiveness using how well students learn as the criterion. The students were given 32 hypothetical instructor profiles and were asked to rank nine selected teaching factors developed by Marsh and Hocevar (1993). Ralph identified five attributes of effective instructors: commitment to learners; knowledge of material; organization and management of the environment; desire to improve; collaboration with others. Ralph concluded that ‘exemplary teaching is identifiable and the quality of its constituent components can be assessed’ (Delaney et al., 2010). More recently, in a study of graduate students enrolled in a course on curriculum design and teaching methods, Saroyan et al. (2009) found the students expressed four ideas about effective teachers’ actions. Specifically, effective teachers convey knowledge, prepare and manage instruction, promote learning and help students grow so they can learn independently. After the course, the students were inclined to place more emphasis on the promotion of learning and student growth. In a study, Marsh (2010) delineates the characteristics of effective teachers to include ‘highly knowledgeable, communicate well, give clear instructions in their teaching and have good relations with children, staff, and parents’.

The revised set of characteristics of effective teaching according to the Griffith University’s PRO-Teaching project (Klopper, C., Drew, S., 2015) presented originally as ‘eight dimensions of good teaching’ (Nulty, 2001) provided a structured framework that has been the basis for our study in students’ evaluation of effective teaching. Refining characteristics of effective teaching has principally involved moving the focus from the teacher to the effect of the teaching upon the students. Effective teaching connotes a suite of teacher behaviors that encompass not only what the teacher does, but also what the student does (Shuell, 1986) and that is ultimately more important as Biggs (2003) has emphasized.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

To investigate the university students’ opinion about the effective teaching characteristics measured on ten dimensions (Klopper, C., Drew, S., 2015), an exploratory study design was realized which aimed to identify the level of the development of these variables. For this purpose, answers to the

following question were sought: *What is the perception of first year students (future teachers) on the qualities of effective teaching?* The data gathering procedure was the implementation of the questionnaire. The obtained data were statistically descriptive analyzed by calculating mean, standard deviation and frequency distribution. In the process of analysing and interpreting the data obtained, we used the SPSS 21.0 statistical software.

3.2. Participants

The participants in this study were first year students from Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, enrolled in the program for initial training of teachers for secondary education. Of the 233 students, 128 students were male and 105 were female students. All students were invited to take part in the study; no coercion was exercised and there were no penalties for non-participation.

3.3. Measures

The revised set of characteristics of effective teaching according to the Griffith University's PRO-Teaching project (Klopper, C., Drew, S., 2015) has been presented originally as 'eight dimensions of good teaching' (Nulty, 2001). It provided a structured framework that has been the basis for our study in students' evaluation of effective teaching. The dimensions of effective teaching were built on observable indicators of the behaviors manifested by the teachers. The quantitative research instrument was named the Student' Evaluation Questionnaire on Effective Teaching. The final version of the questionnaire included ten items, a five-point Likert scale which allowed respondents to express a very large extent (1), largely (2), a small extent (3), a very small extent (4) and not at all (5) in response to each of the statements included and an open-ended question with comment box. The Cronbach-alpha coefficient calculated for the final version indicates a very good internal consistency of the research tool (α Cronbach = 0.807).

4. Results

Concerning the perceived level of effective teaching for future teachers, it was resorted to calculating an average of the participants' responses for each of the ten dimensions of effective teaching. The data obtained are shown in Table 1. Analysis at the level of observed scores for each variable followed showed a medium perceived level of effective teaching. For effective teaching the highest scores were recorded at using appropriate teaching materials and aids and the lowest scores were recorded at regularly testing student knowledge, giving feedback.

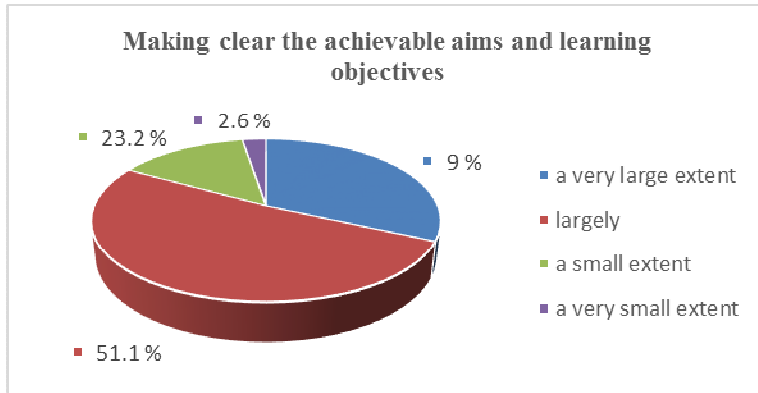
Asked which is the general opinion in terms of defining and conveying clear, explicit, realistic and challenging yet the achievable aims and learning

objectives, respondents had different opinions. Thus, if a share of 72.1% of them stated that the opinion is a very large extent and largely, a rate of 27.9% stated that their opinion is a small extent and a very small extent. It's important to note that there has been no response indicating the clear, explicit, realistic definition of aims and learning objectives.

Table 1. The perceived level of the effective teaching

Dimensions of the effective teaching	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Lower	Higher
1. Making clear the achievable aims and learning objectives	23 3	2.24	0.676	1	4
2. Demonstrating advanced discipline knowledge	23 3	2.09	0.821	1	5
3. Using pedagogical/teaching techniques and strategies	23 3	2.81	0.798	1	5
4. Demonstrating suitable personal characteristics	23 3	2.80	0.803	1	5
5. Regularly testing student knowledge, giving feedback	23 3	3.03	0.991	1	5
6. Encouraging to reflect on own knowledge or on other new areas of knowledge	23 3	2.87	0.985	1	5
7. Organizing learning activities in a structured and coherent manner	23 3	2.37	0.991	1	5
8. Using the available features of the learning environment	23 3	2.37	1.026	1	5
9. Using appropriate teaching materials and aids	23 3	1.89	0.769	1	5
10. Revealing a scholarly approach to teaching and seeking to improve teaching performance	23 3	2.47	0.866	1	5
Total		2.49			

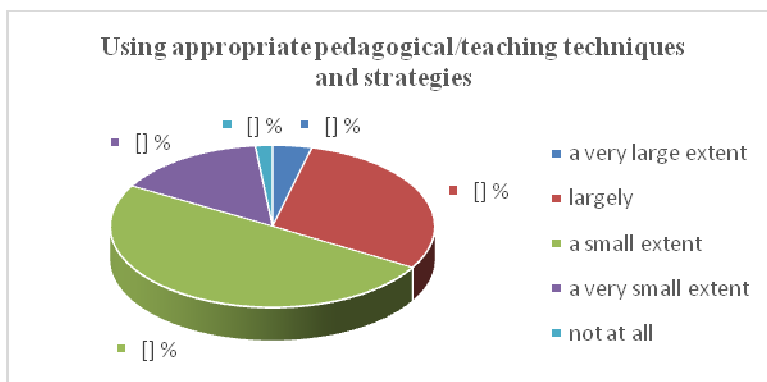
Figure 1. Distribution of the answers for the first dimension



Thus, a significant percentage of students (52.4% largely and 22.7% a very large extent) believe that the teachers demonstrate that they have advanced content knowledge by creating clear explanations and addressing student questions. A very low percentage of respondents (18.9% in a small extent and 5.6% a very small extent) states that teachers demonstrate advanced content knowledge as shown in the data interpreted statistically.

Also, a percentage of 29.6% (largely) and 3.9% (a very large extent) of students believe that teachers demonstrate a teaching style supported by appropriate strategies for creating interest and effectively engaging students in learning activities. We notice a significant percentage (64.8%) of students who believe that teachers exhibit in small extent and a very small extent a teaching style supported by appropriate strategies. The frequencies for each answer are shown in the figure below:

Figure 2. Distribution of the answers for the third dimension

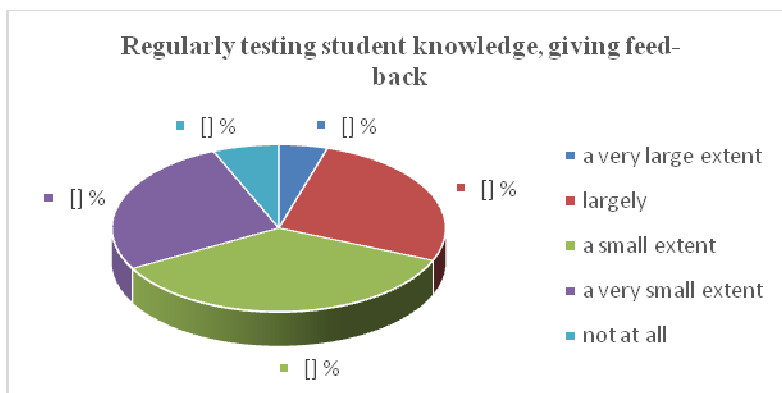


We also note that a large percentage of university students involved in observational research consider that the teachers exhibit personal characteristics that engage, stimulate, encourage and inspire students to learn

in a large extent (33.9%). From the answers of most students (48.5% and 16.7%) results that in a small extent and a very small extent teachers display concern for students and their learning, motivation, availability to students to render assistance.

There is a percentage of university students (31.3%) who recognize that in a large and a very large extent the teachers engage with activities in class that test student understanding and then adapt or adopt teaching strategies to further develop that understanding. A significant percentage of respondents (35.6% in a small extent and 26.6% a very small extent) state that teachers engage less with the use of formative assessment procedures. It's important to note that that there have been 15 responses indicating the teachers do not engage with activities that test student understanding (see figure below).

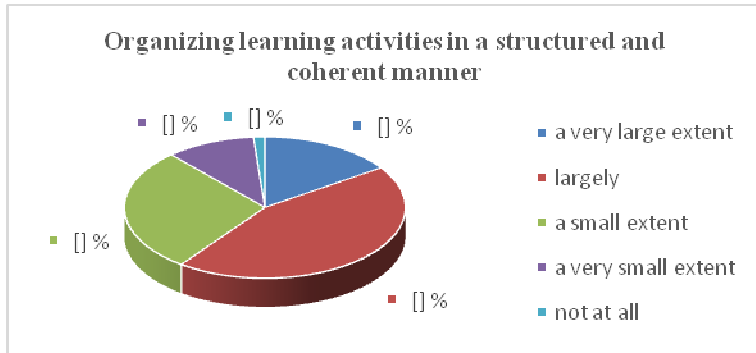
Figure 3. Distribution of the answers for the fifth dimension



Following the opinion of university students regarding the frequency of behaviors by which teachers encourage students to reflect and share what they already know about the topic, discuss how it relates to others things that they know and hypothesize about its implications for particular problems and cases, the responses are as follows: 6.4% a very large extent, 31.3% largely, 36.5% a small extent, 20.6% a very small extent and 5.2% not at all.

We also note that a large percentage of university students involved in our research consider that the teachers organize learning activities and assessments in a structured and coherent manner that assists students to achieve the stated learning objectives in a large and very large extent (60.1%).

Figure 4. Distribution of the answers for the seventh dimension

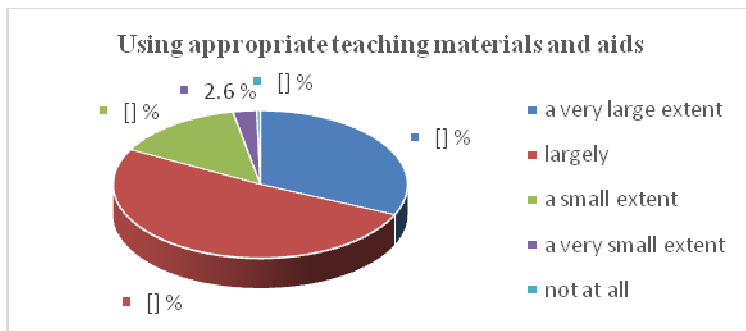


The results are shown in the figure above. A low percentage of respondents (28.3% in a small extent and 10.3% a very small extent) states that teachers organize learning activities and assessments in a structured and coherent manner.

Aiming at following university students' opinion regarding the frequency with which teachers effectively use the available features of the learning environment (temperature, lighting levels, noise levels etc.) to enhance their teaching and the student learning experience, from the analyzed data it appears that much of the students (60.9%) state that teachers use the available features of the learning environment.

To the question 9, 'To what extent the teachers choose appropriate teaching materials and aids and make use of them in an appropriate manner that assist students to reach the learning objectives?', most students surveyed rated their teachers use appropriate teaching materials and aids in a very large extent 31.8%, respectively largely 51.1%. Less than a quarter of the subjects, 39 subjects, rated as a small extent the teachers use appropriate teaching materials and aids (see figure below).

Figure 5. Distribution of the answers for the ninth dimension



Thus, the most students (54.5%) responded that their teachers demonstrate a commitment of improving their teaching. We notice a percentage of 36.1% in small extent and 6.9% a very small extent of students' responses who believe that teachers demonstrate a scholarly approach to teaching and seek to improve performance.

5. Discussions

The paramount aim of teaching is that students learn. Effective teaching is roughly defined as teaching that brings about effective and meaningful student learning. Successful student learning is achieved through a continuous process of students' linking new knowledge to their experiences and their existing knowledge base. Good teaching is that which helps students take control of their learning. This happens best 'when teachers see learning through the eyes of their student and students see themselves as their own teachers' (Hattie, 2014). The teacher is not only a subject of education what assumes different roles of teaching activity, but also an active person of their own training in order to be able to carry out an efficient and beneficial activity both from the viewpoint development of the personality the beneficiaries of education and as training and continuing development.

The major objective of this study was to identify the perception on the qualities of effective teaching at future teachers. The analysis of participants' responses, as presented in Table 1, shows that future teachers' qualities of effective teaching is generally positive. On Likert scale with 5 points, used for research, it appears that the favorable/ positive qualities of effective teaching of future teachers has an average $M = 2.49$. Across all the questions examined in this study, the scores awarded by respondents indicate a more favorable perspective than unfavorable on effective teaching characteristics. The students surveyed appreciate that they are generally satisfied about what they have been offered and their dissatisfaction relates to more subtle aspects of teaching such as teaching strategies, student-teacher relationships, personal characteristics of teachers in this context, as shown in open response question. Also, an important place is the explanation and implementation of the information, as well as the deepening the contents of the courses.

According to a large percentage of university students the clarity of aims and objectives is useful because it means that the act of teaching can be purposeful, deliberate and planned. Framing any instructional act by stating its aims and learning objectives is the first opportunity to engage students, providing clear purpose, relevance and a focus for their learning efforts. Well-organized courses consider learning objectives as an essential component of each course's design. Clearly formulating and setting the operational objectives (in terms of observable behavior) and communicating

them to the students, who will accept them and then internalize and assume them are a fundamental component of effective teaching.

From the perspective of most students, the effective university teachers demonstrate excellent knowledge of their subject and this is a necessary attribute of an effective teacher. These perceptions align strongly with the importance of creating a supportive learning environment and scaffolding learning, of organizing learning activities in a structured and coherent manner, of encouraging to reflect on own knowledge or on other new areas of knowledge and notably with Biggs' (2003) work on constructive alignment. The discipline content knowledge and the pedagogical skills are inextricably linked. Effective teachers focus on learning and learning outcomes by having a strong understanding of the content and pedagogical content knowledge. Rather than focusing on what teachers need to teach and how they should teach it, teachers need to subtly shift their paradigm to what it is that students need to learn and how they will best learn it (Biggs & Tang, 2007). The teachers select and structure the content adequately, ensuring their articulation and adaptation according to the specifics of the group of students (general level of training, interest, motivation, etc.). It seems that teachers who teach based on the exposure of the content, set for themselves very well the information they want to teach and can successfully deal with the questions of the students about the contents they have spoken, so they know very well the scientific information they have to teach, but does not attach great importance to explaining the practical relevance of content.

From the student's point of view, only 33.5% of students consider that their teachers demonstrate a teaching style supported by appropriate strategies for creating interest and effectively engaging students in learning activities. The university teachers can use a myriad of strategies to optimize student learning. Cooperative learning groups (group projects) give students opportunities to collaborate on brainstorming ideas and completing the learning tasks. Teachers can enable students to think critically and to solve problems by integrating problem-based assignments for students to complete individually or in a group. Problem based learning stimulates students to develop the ability to think critically, analyze problems, find and apply appropriate learning resources. The experiential learning activities allow students to apply knowledge, encourage collaborative participation and engagement and stimulate students' communication, social and problem solving skills. Personalized reflection and applying learning to other contexts are critical factors in effective experiential learning. Case studies are another interactive method with a positive impact on learning, develop the capacity to analyze practical situations, critical thinking, decision making, research capacity, cooperative work. Teachers can also develop hybrid courses that

integrate online components into traditional classroom settings, allowing student to interact with the teacher and other students and complete group activities in class or assignments and submit them by e-mail, Google Drive, Blackboard or other venues. Teachers' use of various methods and strategies in the presentation of subject content, in important discussions and debates and in encouraging small group interactions may help to nurture student curiosity. These approaches encourage students to study issues from divergent views. The activation should be understood not only as a means of optimizing the instructive-educational actions, but also as an opportunity for the induction and orientation of the individual study and the autonomous study of the student. In other words, the student carries the means of his own development. Therefore, from the point of view of the interviewed students, teachers relying on deepening practical aspects are convinced that providing examples and practical experiences to students have a greater influence on the learning process, so it is preferable to a classical teaching method. According to the interviewed students, teachers are not only concerned with the simple transmission of knowledge, but also with the means of transmitting them, which involves accessing the subject matter and supporting the students in acquiring them, both cognitively and metacognitively.

Future teachers have preferences for specific characteristics of effective teacher because some of them lead to results that students desire. Demonstrating suitable personal characteristics (patient, flexible, good listener, empathetic, enthusiastic etc.) is only one factor of a good teaching. The participants of the study put emphasis that a teacher should be innovative, motivating, dedicated, active, knowledgeable and interactive, as shown by data from open response question. Our results coincide with Santrock's (2010) that in effective teaching, a teacher should have both professional knowledge/expertise and personal characteristics like, dedication, motivation and caring attitude towards work and students.

The data on regularly testing student knowledge, giving feedback (35.6% in a small extent and 26.6% a very small extent) shows the low use of formative assessment practices, poor representation of assessment activities that can respond to the particular needs of students immediately. This leads to the impossibility of regulating the educational action along the way, which consequently has negative effects on the level of performance of the students requiring differentiated or intensive care and support. The university teachers should learn from their students by continuously assessing the effect of their teaching on student learning and modifying their approach based on that evidence. Consequently, formative feedback serves to inform both the teacher and the student and is, at the same time, critical to both the teacher's and the learner's effectiveness. The critical evaluation of

learning outcomes has the potential to indicate new teaching strategies. The application of formative assessment practices as a way of developing teaching styles to student learning needs is an important aspect covered in the literature. Evaluation valued as an authentic training tool, which allows to regulate the training by the student himself, to construct their own routes, becomes a self-regulated evaluation, a highly personalized formative assessment (Bocoş, M., 2013). Among the assessment methods applicable to disciplines in the field of engineering sciences, the teachers include short exercises, homework or portfolios, as well as self-evaluation of assimilated knowledge and formed skills.

Achieving higher order learning outcomes occurs as the result of adopting a deep approach to learning and this is part of the role of an effective teacher. Accordingly, effective teaching focuses on encouraging deep learning outcomes and is characterized by the constructivist structuring of lessons, setting of learning tasks, creation of challenge and provision of quality feedback that leads to students' engagement with personal reflective questions. An imperative for the design of didactic activities is the need to develop both a disciplinary reflection on the scientific content to be approached and a transversal pedagogical reflection on the act of learning. The optimal ways of articulating the factors that influence it are: students' intelligence profiles, learning styles, learning and teaching strategies valorized, didactic methodologies etc. The reflective-interactive training model values the individual and collective personal reflection of students about new cognitive and metacognitive knowledge and strategies, but also the debate over various issues, direct experimentation on objects, phenomena and processes of reality, as a preparation for integration into society. Students should be learnt how to learn the different subjects of study and there should be explicit concerns for the development of their metacognitive abilities. To further stimulate students, teachers can include in activities the learning strategies that empower them to enhance metacognitive abilities by applying classroom information to their own lives. Through using learning strategies and stating course expectations and goals, teachers help students increase their self-regulation skills and take responsibility for their learning. Encouraging students to take ownership of their learning also allows them to experience enhanced self-direction and self-awareness.

An elaboration on the expression of seven dimension emphasizes the elements of structure and coherence that generate a sense of organization to the teaching and learning activities in a class. A large percentage of university students consider that the teachers organize learning activities and assessments in a structured and coherent manner that assists students to achieve the stated learning objectives in a large and very large extent (60.1%). It is essential for educators to provide detailed syllabi with course

information, competences, objectives, assignments, course policies, due dates and a schedule. Teacher preparation, knowledge of subject matter and organization play an instrumental role in student success (Bain, 2004). The more organized and planning-oriented a teacher is, the more likely students will be to view him or her as knowledgeable and learn the material in a structured manner. The university curriculum as an ensemble of educational processes and learning, training and research experiences that the student makes during university studies, must be conceived as theory and practice that express the indissoluble unity between four fundamental elements: educational goals, educational content, instructional strategies and evaluation strategies.

Making appropriate use of the learning environment denotes the teacher's understanding of the limitations that the environment places on the effectiveness of different teaching strategies. To be most effective, the teacher must understand how to make optimal use of the range of tools and affordances available in that environment to complement teaching strategies and to enhance student learning. From our study, much of the students (60.9%) state that teachers use the available features of the learning environment to enhance their teaching and the student learning experience.

With appropriate teaching materials and aids the intent is to improve the quality of explanation and stimulate student interest in teaching and learning activities, as seen in the high proportion of students' responses. In this matter, teaching materials and aids offer some facilitation as they offer multiple channels of information for learners with a range of learning approaches and styles. Design and preparation of the teaching materials is part of designing the activity that uses them appropriately. In this technologically driven society, integrating technology into classroom learning is essential. Using technology enables students to see tutorials online, access course information, submit assignments etc. Solely utilizing a didactic approach prevents students from optimally processing and applying their knowledge and has a negative impact on their ability to conceptualize material and practice skills. University teachers who integrate technology into their classrooms increase student engagement. Appropriate teaching materials and aids include online tutorials, instructional software and other web-based resources that enhance student engagement in place of standard presentation formats. Students practice skills through interactive tutorials and exercises, electronic presentations and demonstrations, reading materials developed by teachers, examples and exercises in the student's field of interest, links to other relevant online materials and individual and group laboratory assignments.

A scholarly approach to teaching is about being a reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983) and about engaging with scholarly literature to

inform teaching practice (Shulman, 1986). It is time for teachers to rigorously analyze their own way of thinking and teaching, their own curricular reflection, to realize their advantages and disadvantages, to teach the students effectively metaknowledge and to form and develop metacognitive skills. Only by helping students to learn and only by trying to know and understand how they learn, their learning styles, learning strategies etc., teachers will be able to identify and implement flexible, more effective teaching methods to stimulate motivated cognitive and metacognitive learning.

6. Conclusions

Students have a pivotal role in making effective teaching. We consider relevant the fact that both for educational course activities and for laboratory, seminar and project activities, the expectations of the investigated students converge towards the processing and accessibility of contents, for their illustration and, especially, for highlighting their practical and applicative dimension.

Analyzing these teaching elements, we can assert that in the teaching from the perspective of conducting learning, students are actively involved in understanding and knowledge, taking into account the premise that the mere presentation of a content does not mean anything to a student unless it is suggested/recommended/indicated concrete ways of cognitive and metacognitive reporting to that content. Synthesizing, we can conclude that efficient teaching involves capturing the analytical attention of students, orienting their intellectual and practical action in well-defined directions, effectively changing their effort to knowledge directed to solving learning tasks, imposing a learning rhythm and stimulating individual study efforts. Although the empirical base of this study is relatively small, we consider the findings can reveal some perspectives of the higher education system impact on students and can identify some landmarks of how an effective policy would come to be designed and implemented. Extending such study to other contexts of the instructional process and including larger samples would make it possible to form research-based studies that could inform teachers of initial training program, university teachers, higher education institutional managers and policy-makers about the effective teaching and quality of instructional process in Romanian higher education system.

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THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND THE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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Love, the will of conception, order and consciousness of duty, all these have to master in a family. Not the pleasure but pure joy, made by the beauty of common ideal. Petre Țuțea

Abstract: *Religious education gives sap to the desire, to ability and responsibility of self-improvement. The educated man in a religious way or the emotionally intelligent man finds his way to complete his person as well emotionally, intellectually, morally, aesthetically, physically and professionally. It is not easy but it's worth the effort to help those towards whom we have the responsibility to educate, to pave their way for understanding and make peace with themselves, with others and with Providence, no matter how, through Christian education, through religion classes or through an education according to the theory of emotional intelligence.*

Keywords: *religious education, emotional intelligence, art of education, psychopedagogical principles of christinity*

Education, an art

For years, we have been going through a reform in education. A real, genuine and effective reform should start with educating the educators (teachers and parents) and the renewal of the art of education.

Children nowadays are different because the world is different. As a teacher, a parent, an educator could stand in front of them with authority he must have personal value. In other words to have a complex personality, harmonious, to be a scholar, a professional, a man of high professional personal morality. Only the personal value resulting from the above features make out of the educator an educational authority loved and followed, a

stimulator for the man to become a human. If the teacher is well prepared in his field, he does his job consistently but he is blasé and permanently dissatisfied, he does not love his students, he is not himself Christianly educated or emotionally intelligent, does not mean much for his students; he cannot be the role model of perseverance, responsibility, tolerance, of peace lived and poured out, of love for his students.

Here lies the great mistake: in school, alongside education for science, it is also necessary education as an art. Science requires accuracy and truth, art implies spiritual beauty, love, understanding, inspiration, originality and creativity, these are all the ingredients that make the educator being obeyed and followed.

The renewal of art of education does not mean upgrading or other computerized methods nor to let everything to the child's choice, to tell him he is right in everything he does. The renewal of art education means a real understanding and respect for the child, his stages of development, knowing his soul-spiritual needs, respect for his freedom, granting understanding, tolerance, the empathy he needs; it means jumping from transmitting information to a learning built on communication and full involvement. Art means to achieve school learning that can be taken beyond school and house walls. A learning based on an open relationship, on communication, the discussions at the expense of what was learned, on expressing personal opinions on putting into practice what was learned at school in real contexts. It is common today to meet suffering souls, with many internal problems, who do not know how to relate to life and keep repeating the question: What should I do? What does life want from me? Torn apart souls, people that start many things and do not finish anything and always remain dissatisfied. People with problems are becoming more and more. Why? **It is a lack of education.** The way we educate our children do not inculcate forces that make the man powerful in life. What makes man have problems, is what he lacks, because he hasn't found in himself at certain ages of childhood, adolescence and youth, forces that cannot be awakened later that is an irreversible harm.

Focusing on the acquisition of information leads to one-sided education, addressing only to the intellect, which is the minor part, just a support manifestation of the human being. The excess of information at an early age, when the child does not yet have the ability to judge logically, leads to a dogmatic thinking, it dries the soul. The race of 4-6 subjects on a daily basis, if continued in a more diluted form of educational activity, by preparing the homework, destroys the ability to listen to and to concentrate, decreases ability to memorise, there is installed a shallow breath and a weakening of the lungs, of the will and of life forces.

Education, as it happens nowadays, makes us forget that first of all *we need to learn in order to be human.*

Pedagogy and school are one step behind the development and the needs of society. And, who can say exactly how will the world of tomorrow be, how will work the society of our children and grandchildren?

On the other hand we live in an era that requires retraining every five years, which can be achieved only with a man that in school acquired skills and not information that can be found on Google.

The optimal solution is educating, training a free and open-minded person, with a vivid thinking, motivated, active, creative that is able to cope with any changes. As statements, it is the educational ideal expressed in the Education Act.

The problem persists on how this ideal is put into practice, both existing problem in education that gives school and most of the parents.

Everyone will have to learn to live for the joy of being, for love, kindness, empathy, positive emotions.

Teachers often complain that attitudes practiced in school are not valued in the family. Parenting is an honor but also a responsibility. When a man wants to drive a car he must learn first. He attends school, passes an exam and gets a driving licence. But the parent? Who teaches him? Who gives him a parent certificate? Strange, isn't it? The child is our future, as a civilization we should show responsibility towards our future!

Usually, the parent is often very unprepared and unfit for this role, which he wants very much, decided not to make the mistakes that were made to him. It is not only his fault that he is not ready for being a parent. Largely, it is the fault of society. And lately there have been started various programs to educate parents. Some parents have the willingness to inform themselves and learn about their child's education, motivated by the love for his child and the increasing number of difficult situations that arise.

Education is a way to ourselves rather than a way for the educated. Paradoxically, apparently, real education is actually a self-education. Knowing yourself you know the others, educating yourself, you become able to educate. Teachers and parents, we all need to learn to make an art out of education which children could live.

Real education makes a man human, connecting with himself, with the society, with the world, with the spiritual and leading him towards that spiritual development which is his own and necessary.

The difference between a boring teacher and one loved by children is made by a real knowledge of human life seen and accepted entirely, the passion with which we do our activity as an educator, a passion determined by the degree of development of Christian living or of emotional intelligence.

A history and theoretical aspects of emotional intelligence theory

Instruction and religious education predispose us and train us in a greater measure to accept and understand the person next to us. Only if we have also a religious education and if we situate well in the religion area, we become more generous with others, we are no longer suspicious and we do not see the others as virtual "dangers". Only the one who doubts his faith flees from the other, isolates himself and blames the other. When students incorporate specific values and experience faith, they reach the empathic capacity necessary to understand the faith of the other, to respect honestly the diversity of religion, to open himself to the other, to offer himself and to really value him. Dialogue, authentic and constructive communication is made between people religiously educated, trained sufficiently, informed regarding their own religion and other religions or denominations.

Being religiously educated or emotionally intelligent means being educated to start towards self-becoming and educating himself through others and the others through himself.

The concern for the study and research in this field has as its starting point the reality observed by each of us and proven by professionals that many people with very good school results, with a high IQ or a well-developed academic intelligence copes less well in daily life, while another category of subjects, although with poor school results, with a low IQ compared to the first category, they have outstanding achievements. Therefore this question was asked: How do the latter manage to cope with difficult life circumstances?

Many psychologists have realized that the ability to ensure success in everyday life is different from the academic intelligence, it is a kind of sensitivity specific to personal needs, to human relationships. Thus was born the new concept of emotional intelligence.

Studies on emotional intelligence are relatively new, starting around the 90s, when the family and the society has lost sight of formation in the area of human relations. The best representative is considered to be Daniel Goleman by his book *Emotional Intelligence*, published and republished by various publishing houses.

Although this term is relatively new, emerged as a concern of psychology, of education when the lack of Christian education began to be felt, components of emotional intelligence were raised in the statements of Socrates (470-399 BC) "Know yourself!". In the holy book, both the Old and New Testaments "Do not do to another what you do not like!" And "Love your neighbor as you love yourself!" These exhortations, merely propose a manifestation of components of emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence is a construction of several elements: self-knowledge, understanding our own emotions, managing efficiently our own emotions and the significantly increase of life quality, a better understanding of the others and the living with a high degree of comfort, creating better relations at all levels with the others and the increase of personal productivity.

In life, according to statistical surveys, the emotional competence is at least as important as are professional skills.

Developing emotional intelligence requires a long-term practice of the capacity of understanding and managing our own emotions and those of others, to create harmonious relations yourself, with others and with the providence, as a manifestation of love towards our neighbour.

In order to succeed in life Goleman believes that each of us should learn and practice the main dimensions of emotional intelligence. Adults, teachers and parents will be able to develop emotional and social potential of children, teaching them to adopt and develop emotional intelligence features, involving them in a permanent training activity by helping them:

- to identify and differentiate their personal experiences;
- to learn more about how and where they can externalize feelings;
- to develop their empathy - the ability to put feelings into line with the needs of others;
- to read body language and other nonverbal aspects in order to achieve better communication and understanding the needs of others;
- to learn to listen to opinions, desires and needs of others;
- to learn to be constructive, positive, open in the relation with others.

All these ways of expression of love towards our neighbour, expressed in a psychological language, we may call them manifestations of emotional intelligence.

In a dynamic world, in a continuous changing, as the one we live, we need individuals trained to adapt quickly, almost instinctively but constructive and positive to unforeseen situations, that is individuals who beyond academic intelligence, beyond the good training, would be adequately prepared to face the moral challenges, according to the principles preached by Christianity.

A comparative analysis of the emotional intelligence components and the psychopedagogical principles of christinity

Emotionally intelligent people enjoy: good relations with others, compassion for others, reconciliation with themselves, self-motivation, performance enhanced at work, increased motivation, proactive attitude, initiative, self-confidence and confidence in others, an effective management of their own

life and of their own resources, availability and great ability to work with others.

Emotional intelligence components describe attitudes that match perfectly over what concerns psychopedagogical principles of the Holy Three Hierarchs.

Making a comparison, Table 1, it is easy to see that the objectives to which the two approaches are oriented are the same - the education of man with himself, with the others and with the Providence, responsible and involved in the activity according to the age.

Table 1

Components of emotional intelligence	Pedagogical principles of Christianity
Effective management of own emotions and the significant increase of the quality of life;	“When a house is not well managed and there govern nerves, screams, insults ... then all these burden the head of the family”. St. Basil the Great Interpretation to Psalm 28
A better understanding of others and living with a high degree of comfort;	"You should love your neighbour as you love yourself" New Testament, Matthew 22: 36-40
Creating better relationships at all levels with others and the increase personal productivity.	“All that you want to be made to you by others, you just do it to them” New Testament, Matthew 7:12 “Parents’ kindness towards children has positive result. Father’s kindness restrains the children, while his pride creates guts and impertinence “. St. Gregory the Theologian, Poems for others, The Poem.

Analysing, we can say that the emotionally intelligent teacher, does nothing but to follow pedagogical principles stated by the Three Hierarchs and the postulates of Old and New Testaments.

And if in school there are children from Christian families or belonging to other religions, agnostics or atheists, the purpose of the school is to train balanced, responsible, loving individuals. It is necessary to find the way to achieve the goal; following the principles of Christianity or of emotional intelligence theory, where religion is denied.

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THE METAPHORICAL PERCEPTIONS OF PROSPECTIVE ENGINEERING TEACHERS TOWARDS THE “EDUCATION”, “TEACHER” AND “TEACHING” CONCEPTS

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study is to display prospective teachers’ perceptions towards the concepts “education”, “teacher” and “teaching” through metaphors. This study is a qualitative research and data were collected via metaphors. The sample of this study consisted of 101 first year students studying in different faculties of Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania and participating in initial teachers training in the spring semester of 2016-2017 academic year. Participants completed the sentences: “Education is like ... because ...”, “Teacher is like ... because ...” and “Teaching is like...because...” The collected data was analysed through content analysis technique and interpreted accordingly. As a result, 6 categories with 71 metaphors about education, 6 categories with 52 metaphors about teacher and 6 categories with 64 metaphors about teaching were produced. It was concluded that prospective teachers had positive perceptions towards education, teacher and teaching. As another result, it could also be observed that their metaphors differed according to the faculty profile at which prospective teachers are being taught. Based on these data, the study offers a set of curriculum development solutions, oriented towards a more efficient academic teacher training program. The results are discussed in relation to their potential relevance for creating more reflexive prospective teachers and for the optimization of the teaching practice.*

Keywords: *metaphor; prospective teachers; teacher training; education; teacher; teaching.*

1. Focus of the paper

Examining the perceptions of the prospective teachers towards concepts about education, teacher and teaching helps us clearly identify their thoughts, perspectives and attitudes. The most powerful instruments for clearly identifying the perceptions of the prospective teachers regarding the abstract concepts are the metaphors these student teachers develop about them.

The metaphors represent the theories on which we base our thinking and actions and they act as an ordering and reference system. To understand how our processing of information works towards development of our personal systems of knowledge, we need to understand this system and the contents of it. Access to this understanding is either through reflection or by direct observation of our actions and reactions in relation to events and objects. With greater understanding of the metaphor system that we use, we can reject it, modify it or retain it. Exercising reflection on the main important issues that teachers face in their professional practice should become a principle infused into the initial and continuing teachers' training.

Within this framework, the aim of the present study is to investigate the opinions of prospective engineering teachers through their metaphors about education, teacher role and teaching profession.

2. Theoretical framework for the study

According to Berger, the metaphor is a form of analogy or "a mode of communication in which meaning is generated by making comparisons" (Berger, 2012). A metaphor is actually a strong analogy which suggests equivalence between the two objects/things being compared (*idem*). The aim of metaphor is to understand and interpret an issue according to another issue (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008). Studies of Lakoff and Johnson (2008) on metaphors are considered as an important stage. Recently, data has been collected by using metaphors in qualitative studies. Metaphor is evaluated as a strong mental device that the individual uses in understanding and explaining a highly abstract, complex or theoretical phenomenon (Yob 2003). Metaphors direct individuals to the new ways of existence and thinking. Essentially, a metaphor is influential and meaningful (*idem*). The metaphor is a useful device which makes it possible to talk about a new concept (Cameron 2010).

Metaphors about education are present in the didactic discourse in schools and in the discourse about education in various contexts. Psychology and pedagogy appealed to them with openness and receptivity. The tendency of pedagogy to affirm and consolidate its scientific status in the world of recognized sciences is presently sustained by the efforts to define educational phenomenon. Due to the complexity of the metaphor there have been given

tens of definitions of education or even hundreds for the intelligence and the creativity.

According to the author Elaine Botha (2009), educational metaphors accepted and rationalized by teachers are reflected especially in various aspects regarding the organization of the didactic activity: choosing the didactic methodology, the general deployment of the activities and organizing teaching experiences for students, in the personal way where the interactions between the actors involved in the educational process are formed. As Botha states, there is a widespread recognition of the fact that metaphors play a significant aesthetical, ornamental and pedagogical role not only in literature, but also in education. Botha also added that metaphors are found in all diverse areas of education and they are also constitutive of the models and theories that form the subject matter of the various disciplines taught in schools and universities. In line with this, Yazıcı (2013) points out the significance of metaphors in the educational settings, as “metaphors are used to make teaching and learning of difficult concepts easier and as the consequence of this students learn complex definitions, recognize their interactions among them and organize them in their minds through the implementation of comparison, exemplification, association, visualization and interpretation processes”.

Educational metaphors can transcend disciplinary fields in order to provide the possibility of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary openings, which is fundamental for scientific contemporary development in a creative manner. The author Ken Robinson (2011) pointed out the necessity of a profound change of the contemporary educational systems, from the perspective of a holistic approach to training and human personality developing program, by avoiding the so called "toxic focus" exclusively on the academic area: "For the present the challenge is to transform educational systems into something much more suitable for the needs of the 21st century. In the center of this transformation must lie a totally different approach to human creativity and intelligence”. Also, Ken Robinson invites teachers to re-become farmers of the spirit, to identify the excellence area specific for each student and to "look after" it as plant. The statements refer to the role of the metaphor used in the child education in the 18th century of the enlightenment, when J. J. Rousseau aroused the interest of his time.

Some metaphor studies conducted in the field of education focused on concepts such as inspector (Toremén & Dos, 2009), school (Saban, 2008; Ozdemir & Akkaya, 2013), teacher (Saban, Koçbeker, & Saban, 2006; Kalyoncu, 2012), school director (Cerit 2008; Yalcin & Erginer 2012), university teacher (Tortop, 2013), student (Capan, 2010), education (Low, 2008), giftedness (Olthouse, 2014), academic writing (Wan, 2014), learning

to teach process (Gatti & Catalano 2015) and reflective thinking (Ersozlu, 2013).

The metaphor has long been used to successfully facilitate education, fulfilling several functions, such as creating new perspectives, enabling categorization or aiding memorization (Low, 2008; Mayer, 1993). The use of metaphoric analogies has been pointed out as an essential aspect of academic discourse and practice, especially in the creation of theories (Boyd, 1993; Holyoak & Thagard, 1995). Metaphors can help teachers communicate with learners who need to understand a theory or abstract concepts (Duit, 1991; Leino & Drakenberg, 1993); they allow learners to generate inferences and test predictions (Dagher, 1995); they enable teachers to individualize teaching approaches to different learners and their different level of understanding (Duit, 1991). The prominence of metaphor in a certain context can enhance the learner's recall information (Cameron, 2003), especially in the case of more concrete metaphoric constructs and expressions.

Several studies have shown that learners have improved their critical thinking, questioning and problem-solving skills and the ability to apply those skills to scientific texts and ideas (Wittrock & Alesandrini, 1990). The research on metaphor in oral educational contexts focused on the school classroom interaction (Cameron, 2003) and the university lecture (Littlemore, 2001) and paid a special attention to the metaphor's pedagogic functions, its role in structuring the discourse, its systematic and spontaneous uses, combined with gestures. Also, the presence of metaphors in the classroom discourse, their socio-cognitive functions and educational implications have been exceptionally illustrated by Badley and Brummelen (2012).

Integrating metaphors in the practicum of the teaching and learning process gives the learners inspiration and motivation, facilitates understanding relations, similarities and differences, bridges elements of the known and the unknown world, and furthermore, assists the process of conceptualising new knowledge. In addition, the application of metaphor analysis in education research will contribute to a better understanding of the hidden motives influencing the world of education (Fábián, 2006).

Although there is abundant research exploring faculty's conceptions of teaching (Kane, Sandretto, & Heath, 2002; Kember, 1997; Samuelowicz & Bain, 2001), research exploring the conceptions of prospective teachers is scarce. Few researchers have focused on the conceptions of engineering professors (Donald, 1992; McKenna & Yalvac, 2007; Van Driel, Bulte, & Verloop, 2007) and even fewer on the conceptions of future engineering professors (Huang, Yellin, & Turns, 2005).

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

In this study, it was aimed to analyze the prospective engineering teachers' metaphorical perceptions towards the concepts such as education, teacher and teaching. It was also aimed to reveal the metaphors by determining the common characteristic of the metaphors and putting them under categories accordingly.

The metaphors were generated by prospective engineering teachers studying in different faculties of Technical University of Cluj-Napoca in 2016-2017 academic year. The question "What are the metaphorical perceptions of prospective engineering teachers towards the concepts of "education", "teacher" and "teaching"?" was searched for an answer and depending upon this question, the following sub-questions were asked:

1. What are the metaphors used by prospective engineering teachers for the concepts of "education", "teacher" and "teaching"?
2. Under which categories can the metaphors that were used by prospective engineering teachers for the concepts of "education", "teacher" and "teaching" be assembled?

3.2. Study group

The prospective engineering teachers who participated in this study attend the initial teacher training program. The participants consisted of the prospective teachers studying in different faculties of Technical University of Cluj-Napoca in 2016-2017 academic year. A total of 101 first year teacher students participated in the final study, 38 female and 63 male. The faculty profile which include these prospective teachers are given in the table below (Table 1).

Table 1. Demographical data of participants

		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	38	37.62
	Male	63	62.38
	Total	101	100
Profiles	Building	20	19.80
	Electrical	51	50.50
	Mechanical	30	29.70
	Total	101	100

3.3. Procedure

This study whose aim was to determine the metaphorical perceptions of prospective engineering teachers towards the concepts such as education, teacher and teaching is a qualitative research. In order to reveal out the

metaphorical perceptions of prospective teachers, they were asked to complete the following sentences: “Education is like ... because.....”, “A teacher is like ... because ...”, “Teaching is like ... because.....”. Content analysis, which incorporates the phases of coding, finding the themes and organizing

the data into codes and themes, was used in the data analysis. Content analysis is implemented when the research is not theoretically stated in an explicit way or when a further in-depth analysis is needed (Creswell 2007).

In the analysis of data, five steps were followed which are: (1) recording the data, (2) eliminating and sorting, (3) developing categories, (4) validity and reliability, (5) frequency and interpretation.

Out of the 110 students participating in the study, 101 of them developed metaphors that had a validity, making it possible to be used in the study. The consistency in the explanations of the metaphors developed by the participants has been taken into consideration. Two separate researchers examined and coded the metaphors of prospective teachers on education, teacher and teaching. Reliability of the research was calculated by using the formula of $\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{Consensus}}{\text{Consensus} + \text{Divergence}}$ (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Reliability coefficient was found as 85% in education metaphor of prospective teachers, 87% in teacher metaphor and 84% in teaching metaphor, respectively.

4. Results and discussions

This section includes the metaphors generated by prospective engineering teachers for the concepts of education, teacher and teaching. Categories which were comprised of the metaphors and characteristics of them were then explained by drawing on the metaphors generated by the participants. 101 prospective teachers produced 71 metaphors for the “education” concept under 6 categories, 52 metaphors for “teacher” concept under 6 categories and 64 metaphors for “teaching” concept under 6 categories.

4.1. Metaphors used by prospective teachers for concepts of education, teacher and teaching and categories derived from those metaphors

The 6 categories for “education” are as follows: Information source, Development, Enlightenment, Results, Key to success and Qualitative labels. The metaphors are mostly gathered under the “Development” (42.57%) and “Information source” (19.80%) categories. Under the category of “Development”, tree (n=7), human development (n=7), shaping (n=5), the cornerstone of the society (n=3), the scale of the sky (n=2), polishing the diamond (n=2), step to humanity (n=1), house (n=1), foundation (n=1), window to the future (n=1), hammer on hot iron (n=1), gardening (n=1),

maturation (n=1), a worm that turns into a butterfly (n=1), a person's past (n=1), bridge on a human life is concerned (n=1), art (n=1), human survival (n=1), life from another person's perspective (n=1), lifeline (n=1), building a better world (n=1), plasterin (n=1), guidance (n=1) are ranked. A sample statement regarding the "Development" category is: *"... is like guiding knowledge. Because s/he trains teacher for becoming teacher."* Under the category of "Information source", there are the metaphors of source of knowledge (n=4), soul nourishment (n=1), the lock of knowledge (n=1), gate to knowledge (n=1), the sky speaker (n=1), exploring the information (n=1), the art of self-discovery and creativity of uniqueness (n=1), the mind-company (n=1), the cultivation of soul and mind (n=1), the dictionary of life (n=1), map for knowledge (n=1), culture (n=1), island to be gradually discovered (n=1), source of life (n=1), meeting between the individual and society (n=1), knowing the fire without getting burned (n=1), the desire to know (n=1). A sample statement regarding the "Information source" category is: *"... is like a map for knowledge. Because it makes us find our road in teaching world."* Under the category of "Qualitative labels", there are the metaphors of heaven on earth (n=1), is better than pearls (n=1) salt in food (n=1), it is vital life (n=1), freedom (n=1), the aorta of life (n=1), life (n=1), lifestyle (n=1), water (n=1), the drop of brightness (n=1), the white coat (n=1). Metaphor sample in "Qualitative labels" category is as follows: *"...like salt in food. Because without it, it is savourless."* Under the category of „Results”, the metaphors are listed in descending order as follows: Lego toy (n=1), fruit (n=1), ore (n=1), motor (n=1), diamond (n=1), gold (n=1), the plate cake (n=1), product (n=1), the stick man helper blind, deaf human hearing aid and poor man's fortune (n=1), honey (n=1). Under the category of „Key to success”, successful future (n=5), bright way to reach success (n=3), compass towards infinity (n=1), key to success (n=1) are ranked. A sample expression related to metaphors in "Key to success" category is as follows: *"... is like a key to success. Because opens all questions' door."* Under the category of "Enlightenment", there are the metaphors of fire (n=2), intellectual light (n=1), the eye of a storm (n=1), the light at the end of the tunnel (n=1), the second birth (n=1), the transition from darkness to light (n=1).

The 6 categories for the "teacher" concept are as follows: Model, Guide, Knowledge provider, Enlightener, Negative social status and Specific features. The metaphors are mostly gathered under "teacher" concept as "Guide" (45.55%) and "Model" (19.80%) categories. Under the category of "Guide", the metaphors are listed in descending order as follows: guide (n=21), parent of education (n=6), pioneer (n=4), pillars (n=2), leader (n=2), scale of the sky (n=1), gate to wisdom (n=1), mentor (n=1), catalyst (n=1), tree root (n=1), master (n=1), driver (n=1), motor (n=1), coach of a team

(n=1), key for closed roads (n=1), water nest (n=1). A sample statement regarding the "Guide" category is: *"... is like a guide. Because we are guided by his/her knowledge and experience"*. Under the category of "Model", there are the metaphors of model (n=7), gardener (n=3), sculptor of personality (n=3), the artist (n=2), jewellery (n=1), farmer (n=1), the casting mold (n=1), example to follow (n=1), worker (n=1). Under the category of "Knowledge provider", the metaphors are listed in descending order as follows: source of knowledge (n=4), interactive book (n=3), living water spring (n=2), dictionary (n=1), chain huge of knowledge (n=1), erupting volcano every day (n=1), knowledge mill (n=1), learning mother (n=1), immortal knowledge wings (n=1). Metaphor sample in "Knowledge provider" category is as follows: *"... is like a dictionary. Because s/he explains us professional knowledge"*. Under the category of "Specific features", owl (n=1), child (n=1), Saint Sunday (n=1), oxygen in water (n=1), hearth (n=1), nature (n=1), container that is not empty (n=1), intelligent (n=1), hero in time combat (n=1), engineer can solve anything (n=1), friend (n=1), working bee (n=1) are ranked. Under the category of "Enlightener", there are the metaphors of candle (n=2), inspiration for the soul (n=2), angel of light (n=1), light guide (n=1), window through which the light comes (n=1). Metaphor sample in "Enlightener" category is given below: *"... like a candle. Because s/he enlightens around, s/he is the person who guides the society."* Under the category of "Negative social status", there is the metaphors of The Glabrous of the Harap-Alb Fairytale - necessary evil (n=1).

For "teaching" concept the 6 categories are as follows: Process, Disseminating information, Guidance, Socialization, Preparing for the future and Reflections. Prospective teachers mostly associated the concept of teaching with Disseminating information (40.59%) and this is followed by Process (21.79%), Guidance (17.82%), Reflections (9.90%), Socialization (4.95%) and Preparing for the future (4.95%) categories that embodied more metaphors than the first respectively. Under the category of "Disseminating information", there are the metaphors of sharing of new knowledge (n=17), fruit planting, sowing (n=7), full mine of jewels (n=1), cascade (n=1), coal (n=1), the Jordan of Education (n=1), arch of the lessons (n=1), power (n=1), cookbook (n=1), story (n=1), rainbow of knowledge (n=1), flight information (n=1), inheritance (n=1), gift (n=1), tree irrigation (n=1), solar wave emission (n=1), presentation of a label (n=1), writing a book (n=1), Swedish buffet (n=1). A sample expression related to metaphors in "Disseminating information" category is as follows: *"... is like a cookbook. Because it contains recipes of knowledge of different fields."* Under the category of "Process", the metaphors are listed in descending order as follows: way of transmitting knowledge (n=9), continuous journey tending to

infinity (n=2), transfer (n=2), path to life (n=1), grinding process (n=1), the magic (n=1), knowledge interpretation (n=1), the triggering (n=1), change of substance in containers (n=1), storm mind (n=1), journey to the center of the earth (n=1), hierarchy (n=1), how an animal takes its chick to hunt (n=1). Under the category of “Guidance”, guidance (n=2), forming (n=2), modelling (n=2), help (n=2), art (n=2), perfecting (n=1), continuous netting (n=1), sculpture of the brain (n=1), dough (n=1), building (n=1), the helm of a ship (n=1), creating a straight path for a tortuous field (n=1), forging (n=1) are ranked. Metaphor sample in “Guidance” category is given below: “... is like guiding knowledge. Because s/he trains the teacher for becoming the teacher.” Under the category of “Reflections”, there are the metaphors of overflow experiences (n=2), language learning (n=1), care (n=1), vital process (n=1), difficult (n=1), sacrificing (n=1), dedication (n=1), essential (n=1), the lioness who takes care of her cubs (n=1). Under the category of “Socialization”, the metaphors are listed in descending order as follows: interaction (n=1), the need to share with others what the teacher is already known (n=1), discussion during the road (n=1), way of socialization (n=1), bridge of ideas, experiences (n=1). Under the category of “Preparing for the future”, there are the metaphors of preparing the unknown (n=1), helping to take off (n=1), occupation (n=1), opportunity (n=1), way to start independent life (n=1).

4.2. Distribution of metaphors used by prospective teachers according to their faculty profile

The distribution of metaphor categories used by prospective teachers for “education” concept according to faculty profile at which they are taught was examined. Results based on that scope are given in Table 2.

Table 2. The distribution of metaphor categories according to faculty profile for “education” concept

	Information source		Development		Enlightenment		Results		Key to success		Qualitative labels		TOTAL	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Building Profile	1	5	10	50	2	10	2	10	1	5	4	20	20	19.80
Electrical Profile	12	23.53	21	41.17	2	3.92	5	9.80	7	13.72	4	7.84	51	50.50

Mechanical Profile	7	23.33	12	40	3	10	3	10	2	6.66	3	10	30	29.70
TOTAL	20	31.86	43	131.17	7	23.92	10	29.80	10	25.38	11	37.84	101	100

When Table 2 considered, it is seen that faculty profile of prospective teachers at which they are taught differed on their metaphors used for “education” concept. For instance, teacher students of Building Profile used metaphors in “Development” category (50%), but in a small extent the students used metaphors in “Information source” and “Key to success” categories. Teacher students of Electrical Profile (41.17%) and Mechanical Profile (40%) also used mostly metaphors in “Development” category. The fact that the majority of students that fall into this category of answers equal education with building, developing and shaping personality signals an initial orientation of them towards teaching as supporting students’ positive evolution. Electrical (23.53%) and Mechanical (23.33%) Profiles had a balanced distribution whereas teacher students of Building Profile have insufficiently associated education with “Information source” (5%) category. Furthermore, metaphors in “Key to success” category were mostly used by students of Electrical Profile. We notice the generally positive attitude towards the education as a key to personal and professional success. The three profiles had a balanced distribution in “Results” category. Given the little formal knowledge experience first year students have at the beginning of their studies, their focus on education as a product was to be expected. We anticipate that the deeper insight they will have in the training years on the processes of teaching and learning will make them increasingly aware on the importance of processes in education as well as that of products. 20% of students’ visions of Building Profile on education were expressed through synthetic qualitative labels that lead to the idea of general recognition the importance and necessity of education.

It can be said that faculty profile at which students are taught may have effect on the education indicating complexity and expressing the fact that the scope of education is the development, the modeling of the students' personality, the source of knowledge, the cultivation of the soul and the mind, ensure a successful future, it is essential and vital in life. A function of education is visible here, with more emphasis on development on personality than on social integration and development.

The distribution of metaphor categories used by prospective teachers for “teacher” concept according to faculty profile at which they are taught was examined. Categories of prospective teachers from the three profiles on "teacher" concept are given at Table 3.

Table 3. The distribution of metaphor categories according to faculty profile for “teacher” concept

	Model		Guide		Knowledge provider		Enlightener		Negative social status		Specific features		TOTAL	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Building Profile	7	35	6	30	4	20	2	10	0	0	1	5	20	19.80
Electrical Profile	5	9.80	2	54.90	7	13.72	3	5.88	1	1.96	7	13.72	51	50.50
Mechanical Profile	8	26.66	1	40	4	13.33	2	6.66	0	0	4	13.33	30	29.70
TOTAL	20	71.40	6	124.00	15	47.05	7	22.54	1	1.96	1	32.00	10	100

As seen in Table 3, the teacher students of Building Profile used metaphors in “Model” category (35%), but did not use any metaphor in “Negative social status” category. Prospective teachers of Electrical (54.90%) and Mechanical (40%) Profiles used mostly metaphors in “Guide” category and saw the teacher as a guide referring to specific teaching and school learning activities. Teachers who develop individuals’ current skills and help students’ learning, who don’t just give the information to the students, but also want them to gain methods of obtaining information as well as to gain the skill of using knowledge that can educate the future individuals. Furthermore, metaphors in “Knowledge provider” category were mostly used by students of Building Profile (20%). Participants developed metaphors belonging to this category because they thought that teacher plays an important role in keeping and sharing knowledge in order to make decisions about the effectiveness of the process, structuring of the teaching process and directing the students in accordance with their interests and talents. Electrical and Mechanical Profiles had a balanced distribution whereas students of Building Profile associate insufficiently the teacher with “Specific features” category, but more with “Enlightener” category. Most of the students referred to teachers both as model, knowledge provider and as illustrators of certain specific features which recognize that the responsibilities and mission of teachers is driven not only by the formal professional attributions, but also by dedication, commitment, intelligence, communication. Building (35%) and Mechanical (26.66%) Profiles were extensive in “Model” category. Among the metaphors generated by students for the “teacher” concept, there is only one negative which means there may be some negative perceptions towards teacher depending on various factors such as personal experiences. Prospective students believed that a teacher is a person who is a guide, a model, a subject specialist in his/ her subject area, an enlightener who reads, investigates, finds out the unknown and seeks to

be helpful for students. Categories of prospective teachers from the three profiles on "teaching" concept are given at Table 4. When the findings about the metaphors that first year students use about "teaching" concept are concerned, it is seen that they expressed their opinions through metaphors organized in 6 categories.

Table 4. The distribution of metaphor categories according to faculty profile for "teaching" concept

	Process		Disseminating information		Guidance		Socialization		Preparation for the future		Reflections		TOTAL	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Building Profile	4	20	8	40	5	25	0	0	1	5	2	10	20	19.80
Electrical Profile	9	17.64	23	45.09	9	17.64	4	7.84	2	3.92	4	7.84	51	50.50
Mechanical Profile	9	30	10	33.33	4	13.33	1	3.33	2	6.66	4	13.33	30	29.70
TOTAL	22	67.6	41	118.4	18	55.9	5	11.17	5	15.5	10	31.1	100	100
	2	4	2	2	8	7			8	0	7	1		

When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that faculty profile of prospective teachers at which they are taught differed on their metaphors used for "teaching" concept. First year students of Building Profile used metaphors in "Disseminating information" category (40%), but did not use any metaphor in "Socialization" category. Prospective students of Electrical Profile (45.09%) and Mechanical Profile (33.33%) used mostly metaphors in "Disseminating information" category, also. We emphasize that teaching is not limited to passing a volume of knowledge to a particular subject, but it involves systematic actions and operations undertaken to organize, develop and guide the learning activities performed by students. The three profiles had a balanced distribution in "Process" category, which means the teaching is seen as a process that involves students and is focused on the method of transmitting information, a continuous process of triggering, creating a hierarchy, transferring knowledge and maintaining the learning activity of the students. In this respect, students are actively involved in understanding and knowledge, taking into account the assumption that the mere presentation of content does not mean anything to the student unless it suggests/recommends/indicates concrete ways of cognitive and metacognitive regarding that content. Furthermore, metaphors in "Guidance" category were mostly used by students of Building Profile (25%), followed by Electrical (17.64%) and Mechanical (13.33%) Profiles. Naturally, we can talk about the predominance of a category, but it is essential that the major purpose of teaching is to promote and support learning and, implicitly, to achieve the proposed educational goals. These standards are designed to

provide guidance for understanding how students learn, what should be taught and the teaching skills necessary to support meaningful student achievement. While some students learn to self-regulate their learning, others need guidance, not only to acquire the strategies, but also to develop the conditional knowledge necessary to know how, when and where to these strategies can be applied appropriately. Teaching for learning is enhanced when students receive guidance for improvement work in an appropriate atmosphere, socializing, communicating ideas, feelings, experiences. Participants from Electrical (7.84%) and Mechanical (3.33%) Profiles developed metaphors belonging to “Socialization” category because they thought that communication, interaction, constantly changing ideas and feelings are an indispensable part of the process of teaching. The three profiles had a balanced distribution in “Reflections” category, which means first year students appreciate that present teaching is a vital and essential process, involves care, sacrifice and dedication. It is also important to notice the balanced distribution in “Preparing for the future” category for the three profiles is consistent with the main issues expressed by the actual policies and theories in education.

5. Conclusions

The present study was conducted to investigate prospective teachers’ metaphorical perceptions towards the concepts of education, teacher and teaching. The research method of metaphor analysis proves to be a potent tool for investigating the values, beliefs and attitudes of the participants of educational processes.

This study concluded that almost all of the 187 different metaphors generated by prospective teachers for the concepts of education, teacher and teaching were positive, which indicated that prospective teachers had positive perceptions towards these concepts. Among the metaphors generated by prospective teachers for education, teacher and teaching, there is only one which is negative. When the metaphors generated in the present study were analyzed, it was indicated that education was perceived as development, information source, results, key to success and enlightenment or given qualitative labels. The fact that the majority of students that fall into this category of answers equal education with building, developing and shaping personality signals an initial orientation of them towards teaching as supporting students’ positive evolution. Teacher students generally considered teacher as a person who is a guide, a model for students, plays an important role in keeping and sharing knowledge, is an illustrator of certain specific features. Characteristics of teacher can be perceived differently according to different variables such as faculty profile, level of education or experience. Prospective engineering teachers identified teaching as

disseminating information, process, guidance, attributes associate with teaching, socialization and preparing for the future. We emphasize that teaching is not limited to passing a volume of knowledge to a particular subject, but it involves systematic actions and operations undertaken to organize, develop and guide the learning activities performed by students. In this respect, students are actively involved in understanding and knowledge, taking into account the assumption that the mere presentation of content does not mean anything to the student unless it suggests/recommends/indicates concrete ways of cognitive and metacognitive regarding that content.

We consider that training the prospective teachers' reflection and self-reflection capability is crucial for raising awareness and for structuring personal and professional experiences, a principle that is pertinently argued by the studies of Korthagen et al. (2006). The investigation of pedagogical metaphors that describe the psycho-pedagogical vision proper to each student can represent not only an assumption, but also an essential step in the adoption of a metacognitive behavior in the act of designing and achievement of the educational act, and in increasing the capacity of students to become aware of their thoughts.

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THE DYNAMICS OF MOBILITY IN THE LIGHT OF THE ASSESSMENT OF MANDATORY TESTS, INTRODUCED IN THE NATIONAL SYSTEM OF EVALUATION, IN STUDENTS IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL STAGES

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Abstract:

Objectives: *The objective of this article is a comparative analysis of the dynamics of mobility in the light of the assessment of certain motor skills tests introduced in the primary and secondary educational system.*

Methods: *This research was conducted on October 2015 – April 2016, on a sample of 190 students, with ages between 7 and 15. The students undergoing this research were tested on eight motor aptitude tests in the National Assessment System of Physical Education and Sports (four tests for the primary education and four for the secondary education) and the results were compared depending on gender and stage of education.*

Results: *On the 5x5m /5x10m “shuttle” test, the dynamics of mobility was on a downward trend, both in girls and boys; on the long run test, on both genders, the dynamics of motion was on an upward trend whereas in students from the secondary education level the dynamics of mobility showed small variations; on the standing long jump test, on girls, the dynamics is on an upward trend, with very small variations, and in the secondary educational cycle, the dynamics of results shows a continuous increase, just as in boys, in both cycles of education; on the last test of aerobic gymnastics, the dynamics of the results obtained by both girls and boys shows variations, within both cycles of education.*

Conclusions: *The dynamics of mobility in students has shown low values in the case of the 5x5m shuttle test, in both educational cycles (both in boys and girls). The best results were achieved on the long run test, respectively on the endurance run and standing long jump.*

Keywords: *motor ability, dynamics, students, assessment, educational cycle*

1. INTRODUCTION

The concepts of psychomotor ability, psychomotor development and psychomotor deficiency are often defined in a different, even contradictory manner, depending on different schools and authors.

Nowadays, in our society, motor activity not only continues to be significantly important in the process of cognitive development and shaping of personality, but also represents a direct stimulus – almost exclusive – for one of the fundamental biological functions of every living being, of humans in particular (general mobility)^{2,3}.

The general mobility is the function that enables a coordinated movement of several body parts or of the entire body, with or without visual control, that combines actions of locomotion, of orientation change, of generating a force¹.

As far as the motor particularities of children in primary school are concerned, the author Balint⁴ states that these can be studied in the light of the level of instilling basic motor abilities and locomotor skills in children.

The motor ability in this stage is very strong, the capacity of motor learning is remarkable but the possibility of entrenching the newly acquired moves is low. Therefore, only a systematic repetition integrates and consolidates the new move in the child's motor ensemble. The fundamental motor skills are subject to a process of consolidation – improvement. At the beginning of the 7 years period, the child has positioning difficulties in relation to the ball trajectory. At the age of 9 – 11, the positioning for the ball is steadier and is characterized by maintaining a vertical postural stability⁵.

Puberty represents an optimal period for learning most of the motor skills that are sports specific, as well as for the development of motor abilities such as speed, endurance, bodily coordination. In addition to the improvement of basic motor skills, acquired in previous stages, the initiation in undergoing some sports activities and tests through acquiring technical and tactical elements specific to these activities is also one of the important objectives of this stage⁵.

The latter must be accompanied by an increased capacity of applying the motor skills in various circumstances and during leisure time⁶.

Also, during puberty (age of 10 – 14), mobility is characterized by a steep somatic development, especially between the age of 12 – 14. This age is characterized by an imbalance between the sizes of different body parts and between morphology and growth. The articular mobility shows relatively low values both in girls and boys⁶.

The assessment of students' aptitudes in physical education is done

depending on the objectives presented in the curriculum. This assessment aims at aspects such as physical and theoretical training, as well as the development of the child's intellect and of physical and functional skills etc. The assessment of the students' aptitudes is part of the educational process, which involves verification, evaluation and awarding of grades.

The National Education System of Assessment in Physical Education and Sports (S.N.E.E.F.S.) seeks to assess the main aptitudes and competencies foreseen in the curriculum⁸.

The evaluation criteria included in S.N.E.E.F.S. aim at achieving the framework objectives and the final standards of performance specific for each educational cycle, as well as the competencies established for each class, in the field of motor capacity, that is related to the practicing of sports branches provided for in the curriculum⁸.

The assessment system is related to the current provisions of the education plan and of the content of curricula, and it is applicable in all schools, regardless of available conditions; the system is meant only for classes that have physical education included in their common curriculum⁸.

Within the primary education cycle, the assessment is done through scores and in secondary education through grades. In primary education, the semestrial assessment will encompass at least three scores in each semester, whereas in secondary education, it is recommended that the semestrial assessment contain at least three grades (for the fifth, sixth and seventh grade) and two grades, for the eighth grade, for each semester of the academic year.

The purpose of this research is to show the dynamics of mobility in the light of the assessment of mandatory tests provided for in S.N.E.E.F.S., for students in primary and secondary education.

2. Material and methods

The research was conducted on October 2015 – April 2016 on a sample of 190 students, out of whom 90 were boys and 100 girls, aged between 7 and 15. The subjects of this study were students from "Andrei Mureșanu" High School – Brașov county, in primary and secondary education cycle. The students underwent eight mandatory tests included in the National System of Assessment in Physical Education and Sports, as follows: for *primary education* – test one - 5x5m shuttle; test 2 – long run; test 3 – standing long jump and test 4 – aerobatic gymnastics ; for *secondary education* – test 1 – 5x10m shuttle; test 2 – endurance run (500 – 800m - girls; 800 – 1000m – boys); test 3 – standing long jump and test 4 – aerobatic gymnastics.

For this assessment, there were chosen classes in each age category, one class per age category (I – VIII classes) for each education cycle (primary – secondary). We mention that, on some tests of motor skills, the SNEEFS scores were converted into grades.

After the students underwent the motor skills tests, a comparative analysis of their results dynamics was completed, depending on gender, for both educational cycles.

3. Results and discussions

3.1. Interpretation of the assessment results

3.1.1. Comparative results from the 5x5 m and 5x10 m shuttle test – girls and boys (primary and secondary education)

From the recorded data we notice that in both cycles of education the dynamics of the results obtained by girls is on an downward trend (Fig. 1), the arithmetic average of the results obtained in primary education being: in 1st grade, 6"91, in second grade, 6"80, in third grade, 6"72 and in fourth grade, 6"66. In secondary education, in fifth and sixth grade, the results obtained on this test are equal, 22"73, in seventh grade the value is 22"12 and in eighth grade 21"66 (Fig. 1).

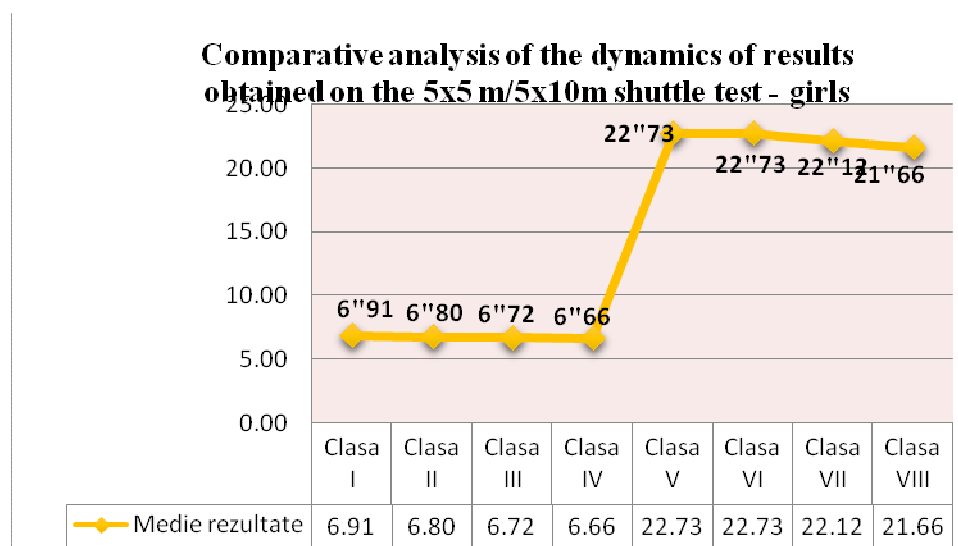


Fig. 1. The dynamics of results obtained on the 5x5m/5x10m shuttle test – girls

As far as boys are concerned, the dynamics of results is on the same downward trend (Fig. 2), the arithmetic averages of the results obtained in primary education being: in first grade, 6"54, in second grade, 6"47, in third grade, 6"31 and in fourth grade, 6"26. In secondary education, the values are the following: in fifth grade, 21"98, in sixth grade, 21"59, in seventh grade, 21"08, and in eighth grade, 20"10 (Fig. 2).

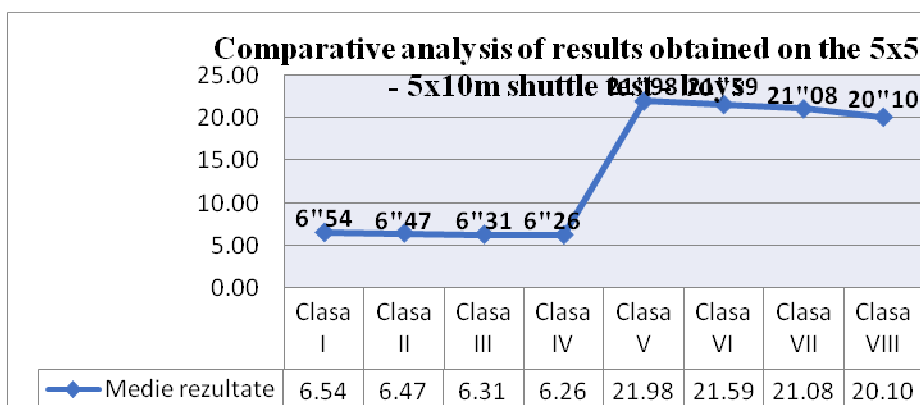


Fig. 2. The dynamics of results obtained on the 5x5m/5x10m shuttle test – boys

3.1.2. Comparative results achieved on the long run test (primary education) and the endurance run test (500-800m – girls; 800-1000m – boys)

In primary education, the dynamics of results achieved by girls on the long run test is on an upward trend, whereas in secondary education, the dynamics of results on the endurance run shows small variations (Fig. 3).

The arithmetic averages of results within primary education were: in first grade, 1'38", in second grade, 1'46", in third grade, 2'17" and in fourth grade, 2'34". In secondary education, we have the following results: in fifth grade, 3'43", in sixth grade, 3'13" (for the 500 m run), in seventh grade, 4'47", and in eighth grade, 4'37" (for the 800 m run) (Fig. 3).

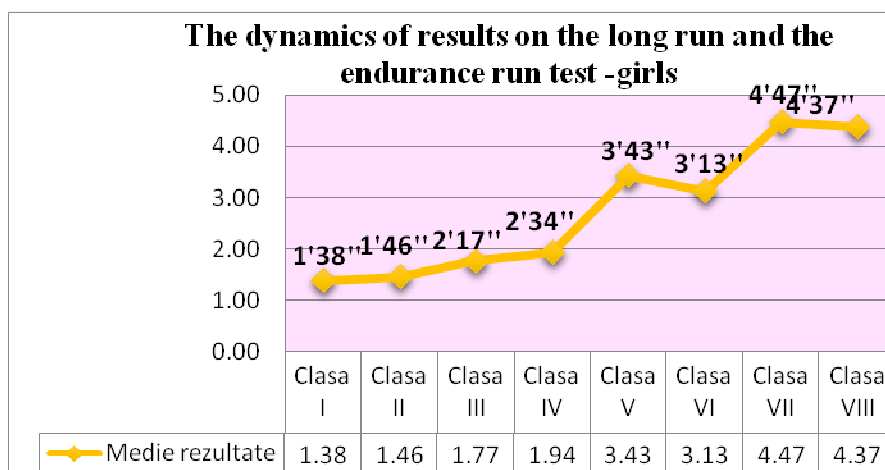


Fig. 3. The dynamics of results on the long run and the endurance run test – girls

In primary education, the dynamics of results achieved by boys in the long run test is on an upward trend, and in secondary education, the dynamics of results on the endurance run test shows small variations, same as in girls. (Fig. 4).

The arithmetic averages of results obtained in primary education were: in first grade, 1'42", in second grade, 2'26", in third grade, 2'09" and in fourth grade, 2'35". In secondary education, the achieved results were: in fifth grade, 3'79", in sixth grade, 3'51" (for the 800 m run), in seventh grade, 4'53", and in eighth grade, 4'45" (for the 1000 m run) (Fig. 4).

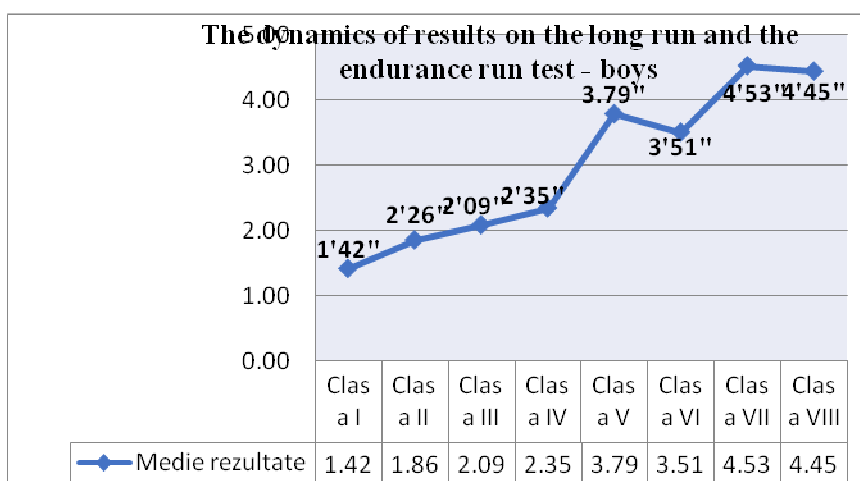


Fig. 4. The dynamics of results on the long run and the endurance run test– boys

3.1.3. Comparative results achieved on the standing long jump test - girls and boys (primary and secondary education).

In primary education, the dynamics of the results obtained by girls on the standing long jump test is on an upward trend, with very small variations, and in secondary education the dynamics of results shows a continuous growth. (Fig. 5).

The arithmetic averages of results in primary education were: in first grade, 1m07cm", in second grade, 1m13cm, in third grade, 1m12cm and in fourth grade, 1m19cm. In secondary education, we have the following results: in fifth grade, 1m24cm, in sixth and seventh grade –the values are equal, 1m37cm, and in eighth grade, 1m39cm (Fig. 5).

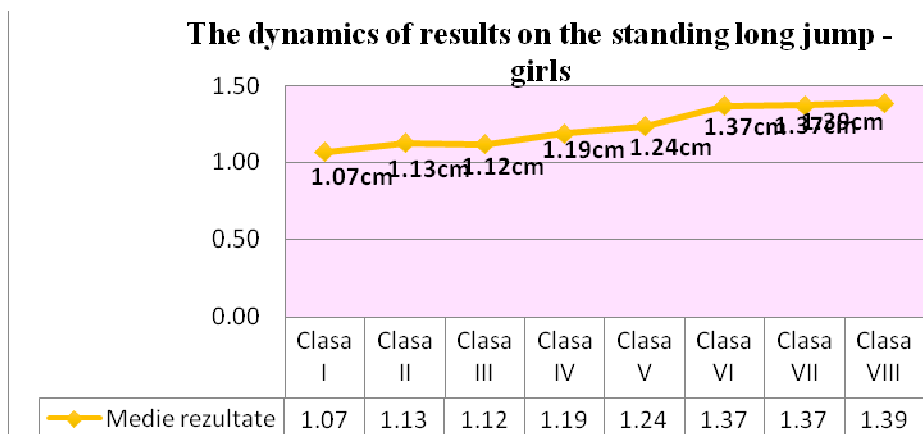


Fig. 5. The dynamics of results on the standing long jump test - girls

As far as boys are concerned, in primary and secondary education, the dynamics of results is continuously growing (Fig. 6).

The arithmetic averages of results obtained in primary education were: in first grade, 1m12cm", in second grade, 1m15cm, in third grade, 1m20cm and in fourth grade, 1m24cm. In secondary education, we have the following results: in fifth grade, 1m48cm, in sixth grade, 1m53cm, in seventh grade, 1m58cm, and in eighth grade, 1m67cm (Fig. 6).

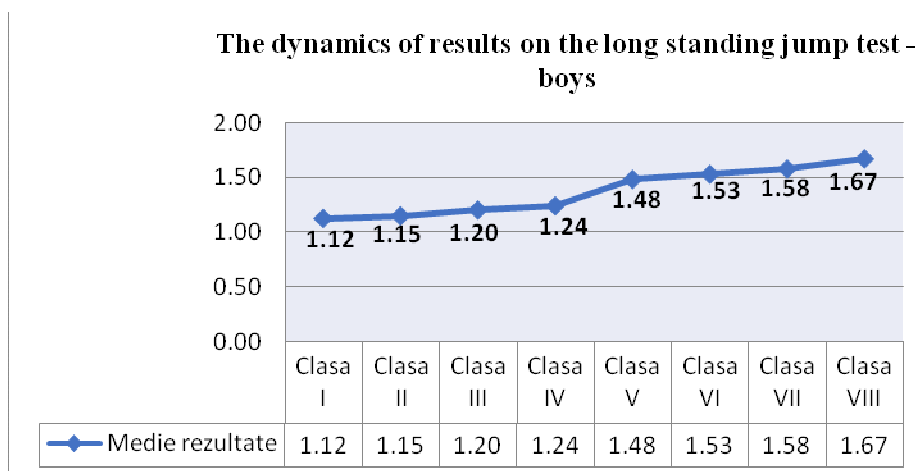


Fig. 6. The dynamics of results on the long standing jump test - boys

3.1.4. Comparative results achieved on the aerobic gymnastics test (isolated aerobic elements) - girls and boys (primary and secondary education).

The dynamics of results obtained by both girls and boys in gymnastics shows variations (oscillations), in both educational cycles (Fig. 7; 8).

The arithmetic averages of results achieved by girls in primary education were: in first grade, 7.44, in second grade, 7.39, in third grade, 7.31 and in fourth grade, 7.41. In secondary education, the results are as follows: in fifth grade, 7.64, in sixth grade, 7.67, in seventh grade, 7.32, and in eighth grade, 7.58 (Fig. 7).

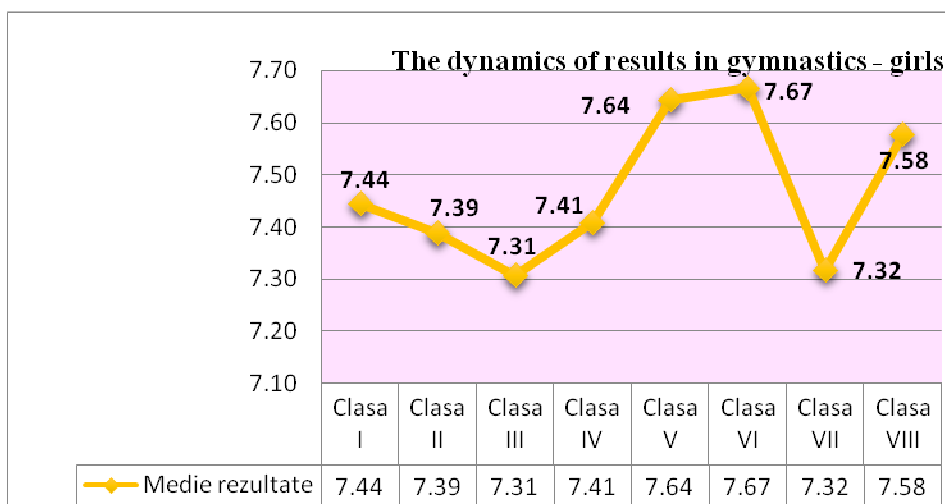


Fig. 7. The dynamics of results in gymnastics – girls

The arithmetic averages of results achieved by boys in primary education were: in first grade, 7.75, in second grade, 7.75, in third grade, 7.67 and in fourth grade, 7.78. In secondary education, we present the following values: in fifth grade, 7.91, in sixth grade, 7.70, in seventh grade, 7.67, and in eighth grade, 8.00 (Fig. 8).

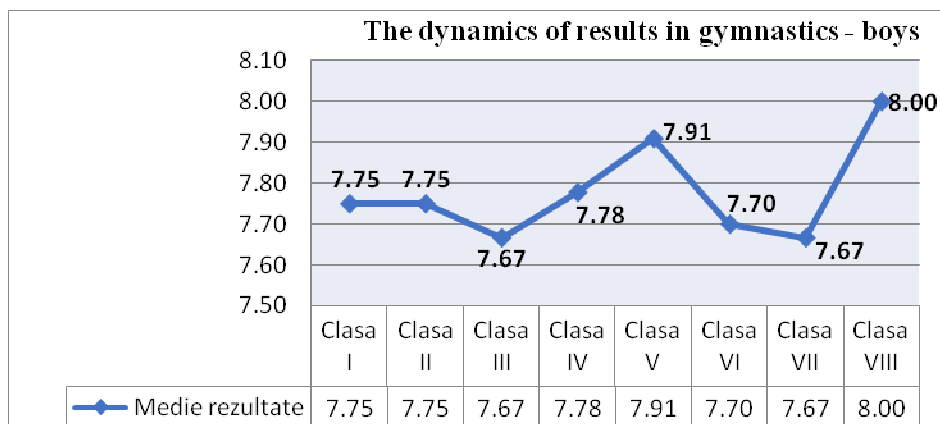


Fig. 8. The dynamics of results in gymnastics - boys

4. Conclusions

The study of mobility in published literature is performed on a structural and functional basis and it looks at mobility as a necessity that makes the system viable, in continuous development and adjustable⁷.

The results of our research have shown that the dynamics of students' mobility had the lowest values on the 5x5m, respectively, 5x10m shuttle test, for both educational cycles (both in boys and in girls). However, the best results were obtained on the long run test, the endurance run and on the standing long jump. The highest variations of mobility were achieved on the aerobic gymnastics test, for both educational cycles.

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THE INCLUSIVE TEACHER - ALTERNATIVE ROUTES FOR TEACHER IN THE FIELD OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION. A ROMANIAN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract:*To respond to the needs of all students, teachers must have access to a highly qualitative teaching training system that will allow them to get access to the most important and relevant information in the field of education. It is also important for future teachers to receive the proper practicum experience that will prepare them to become the 21st century teachers. But, in order to be ready to face inclusion in the classroom, teachers must receive the proper training so that they are prepared to teach in an inclusive environment. All teachers must hold a set of specific skills, teaching methods and tools so that they become able to provide children with a qualitative learning experience, that has as a main goal to value classroom diversity. That is why, we assume it is necessary to rethink the entire teacher training system in order that all teachers, regarding their specialization, to be properly trained in order to face inclusion in the classroom. The aim of this paper is to briefly present some alternative routes into the initial teacher training and continuing professional development at national level, underlining the advantages and limitation of each proposal according to the Romanian national legislation.*

Keywords: *teacher training, alternative routes, inclusive education, Romania.*

1. Introduction

In European countries it is important to have well - trained and well - informed teachers in order to ensure a workforce that can answer to the current socio-economic requirements. The European Commission states that a high-quality teaching is a prerequisite for high-quality education and training (COM 2007a). Despite this, a Commission to the Council and the

European Parliament report shows that the teacher training systems currently in place in the Member States do not promote the acquisition of the new teaching skills which have been made necessary by the changes in education and in society in general (COM, 2007b).

To do so, the main focus must shift from a system that values the acquisition of knowledge to a system that aims at developing student's transversal skills, with a strong accent on preparing future teachers to respond to diversity in the classroom. Therefore, the current structure of the national teacher training system needs to be redesigned and should be based on the assumption that improving the quality of teaching staff is the key. Other implications related to this topic refer to the process of attracting and selecting the best candidates for the teaching career, providing a qualitative system for the continuing professional development in order to reinforce teacher competences.

2. The teacher training system. Romania case study

In this context, the teacher training system is seen as playing an important role in our current educational system. The interest is on redefining the role of teachers and his qualification in accordance with the new requirements. According to the Romania National Educational Law it is important that "Apart from one or several specializations, the teaching staff may acquire didactic competences for the disciplines in the same fundamental area as the graduation area, by training programmes by Government decision" (Romania's Law of Education, 1/2011 Art. 244 (5)).

The competences needed for the teaching carrier are based on three great competences categories: (Potolea & Toma, 2013)

1. Special competences – are defined according to National Register of Qualifications in Higher Education (RNCIS) and are published on <http://www.rncis.ro>;
2. Professional competences – targeting: Design of teaching; Management and monitoring learning; Evaluation of educational activities; Use of the digital technologies; Knowledge of counseling and differential treatment of pupils; Classroom Management;
3. Transversal competences – targeting: Institutional development of the school and school-community partnership; Career Management and Personal Development; Applied Educational Research.

From all the above emerges the idea that all teachers should acquire skills that allows them to provide differentiated support for all children. All teachers must be able to cope with an inclusive educational system. Therefore, the recognition and the respect for diversity and intercultural are linked with the recognition and paying respect for individual differences, emphasizing the need to avoid any kind of discrimination. Teachers must pay

respect to the principles and to the rules of professional conduct, to promote a responsible attitude towards the teaching activity that must be personalized according to the uniqueness of every pupil. Based on these standards it can be shaped the teacher's profile so that could be in accordance with the professionalization concepts of the teaching career. Păun (2002) claims that the professionalization is a processes of creating a set of skills in a certain domain based on a set of theoretical and practical knowledge.

As Iucu (2001) notes, the initial teacher training system is a stage of transformations and restructurings and can only be in accordance with the future social, cultural, scientific, civic and spiritual values.

The changes occurred in the initial teaching training after the implementation of the Bologna Process brings into attention the restructuring of the initial teacher training system that is being conducted through the University's Teacher Training Departments (TTD), being organized as a concurrent model for initial teacher training.

In Romania, the Teacher Training Departments in universities has undergone a series of changes that aims to:

- introduce the interview as a way of selecting students that enroll in TTD;
- introduce a two level teacher training system in order to achieve the initial teaching training (called Level I and Level II)
- allocate more time, 56 hours instead of 42, to introduction courses as the course Pedagogy I (The Fundamentals of Pedagogy and the Curriculum Theory and Methodology) and Pedagogy II (Instructional Theory and Evaluation Theory and Methodology);
- introduce new courses such as: Classroom Management and Computer Assisted Education as compulsory subjects;
- introduce the graduation exam at the end of Level I and II.

However, according to the new National Education Law 1/2011, the initial teacher training system is stipulated to no longer be performed by TTDs following the concurrent model that allows the initial teacher training to be conducted along with the specialization training. Therefore, the new pathway into the teaching career must be done following a consecutive model, performed under a didactic master with a two-years-duration. After the graduation of this didactic maser, the new Law of education stipulates that a one-year of practical training, performed in a school under a mentor teacher supervision, is needed to enter the teaching career. Currently, both training systems are fully functional in Romania.

Starting from the changes occurred within the training systems and taking into account the European directives that puts a stress on building inclusive schools and inclusive societies, we come with a set of proposals in order to improve the initial teacher training and the continuing teacher development system. These proposals follow the requirements of a teacher teaching

system that wants to respect the inclusive education principle. Therefore, by going on with this study, we consider appropriate to start a debate by bringing into attention flexible routes into the teaching training system, highlighting the opportunities and limitations provided by these alternative ways.

3. Flexible routes into the teacher training. Possible scenarios

Starting from the assumption that the presence of children with special educational needs is a reality into the Romanian schools, teachers, now more than ever, must be prepared to be ready to teach all children regardless of their learning needs, behavioral, intellectual, emotional and social and physical capacities (Marin, 2014).

That is why, we assume it is necessary to rethink the entire teacher training system in order that all teachers, regarding their specialization, to be properly trained in order to face inclusion in the classroom. In the next chapter the main focus will be on presenting alternative routes into the initial teacher training and continuing professional development at national level.

3.1 Flexible routes into the initial teacher training for primary and preschool level in the field of inclusive education

We shall begin by bringing into discussion the teacher training programs for primary and preschool system. Nowadays, the training of pre-school and primary teachers in Romania is achieved through the Pre-school and primary teacher training departments. The curriculum for this programme does not include a course related to inclusive education. This course will allow all students to receive proper training in the field of inclusive education and to be ready to face inclusion in the classroom. The main motivation which stays at the base of this proposal is the importance of the pre-school and primary teachers in every child's life, by influencing pupils to develop a positive attitude towards appreciating diversity, making sure all children learn to appreciate and acknowledge the value of the diversity and to develop the participative skills.

Teachers as main promoters for diversity have the task to respect students' special educational needs, emphasizing the right that every child should have, the right to be seen as an active participant into the educational process, as a person and a member with equal rights within the community and within society. The primary and preschool teachers have a very important role in the development of children's personality that is why all future teachers must be thoroughly prepared to face inclusiveness in the classroom.

All in all, introducing Inclusive education course within the pre-school and primary teacher training system, can allow future teachers acquire knowledge, becoming familiar with the specific terminology of inclusive

education. They can also develop a positive attitude towards inclusiveness and the practice of inclusive education.

3.2 Flexible routes into the initial teacher training for secondary and high school level in the field of inclusive education

In the following pages there are presented three different routes into the initial teacher training for secondary and high school level.

Within the first proposal, Progressive Route 1, the teacher training system follows the consecutive model. We suggest the insertion of the study course *Inclusive Education* among the four other primary study courses. Thus in addition to the four fundamental pedagogical training study courses: Educational Psychology, Pedagogy I (Fundamentals of Pedagogy and Curriculum Theory), Pedagogy II (Instructional Theory and Evaluation Theory), and Classroom management we recommend to add the *Inclusive Education* study course as presented in Figure 1.

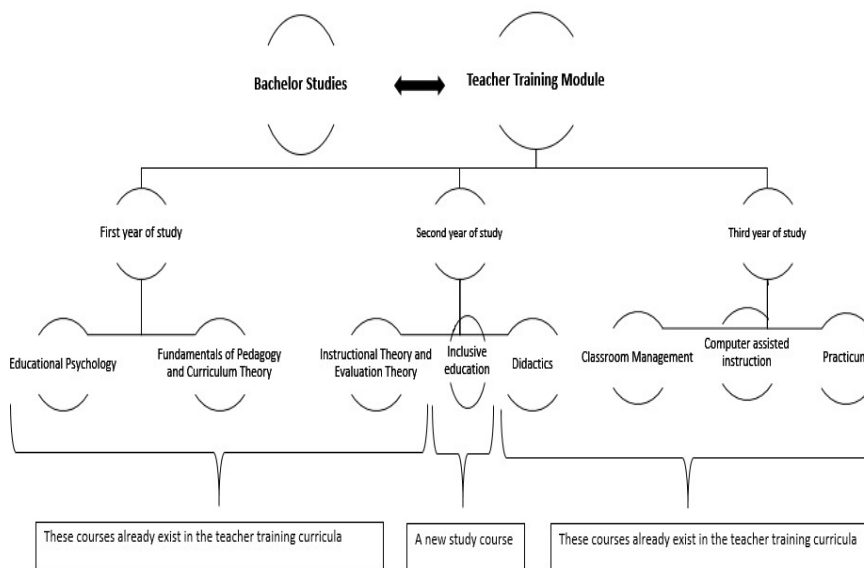


Figure 1 First proposal regarding the flexible routes into the initial teaching training

The main advantage is that all future teachers, regardless of their field of study and from an early stage into the teacher training career, have the possibility to acquire knowledge regarding inclusive education and they will be able to develop positive attitude towards inclusiveness. As a main limitation is the fact that the insertion of another study discipline will enhance the number of study hours within the third year of study.

The second proposal targets the implementation of a module that will be different from the existing one presented above. This module will focus only on inclusive education and is presented in Figure 2.

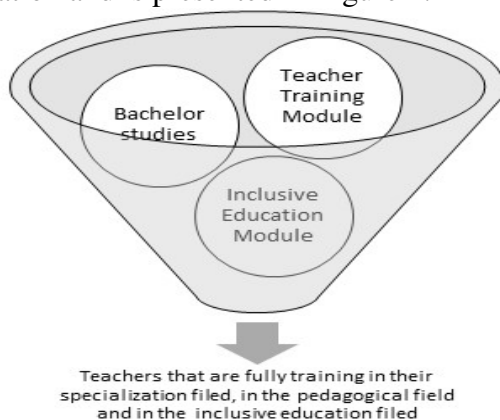


Figure 2 Second proposal regarding the flexible routes into the initial teaching training

In comparison with the first proposal, the second one implies the allocation of a larger number of study subjects which could cover the inclusive education domain generating a greater knowledge within the inclusive education field. The proposal implies that students must go through both a teacher training module and at the same time they must follow this distinctive module of inclusive education. The inclusive module does not only imply gathering knowledge into the inclusive education filed, but it can offer future students a practical perspective, the practicum that can be made in mainstream schools, but also on special schools. This Inclusive module can have a duration of one year and can be run in parallel with the classical one, giving future students to possibility to study courses such as: Concepts and Contexts of Special and Inclusive Education and Social, Emotional and Behavioral Development in Children with Speech. The main disadvantage is related to the time allocated for this module. Students who want to peruse the teaching career have to go not only through the three-year general teacher training module, but they also must go, in parallel, with the module that will allow them to get a proper training into the issues of inclusiveness. This means an overload of students' curricula, that students may not be ready to embrace.

A last proposal is in accordance with the new Romanian National Education Law 1/2011 that claims that the initial teacher training cannot be carried out through the TTDs, but it has to be done only at a master level, embracing the consecutive model into the initial teacher training. Starting from this new settlement of the Education Law, is presented the third flexible

regarding the initial teacher training that targets the implementation of a new didactic master focused on inclusive education. This third route is presented in Figure 3.

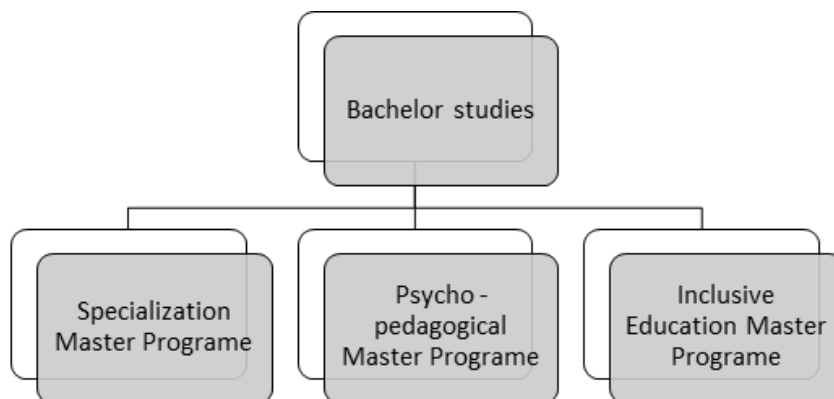


Figure 3 Third proposal regarding the flexible routes into the initial teaching training

The advantage of this proposal is that it allows to train specialists at the highest standards, throughout a master programme. The duration of these master, according to the Bologna process can be two years, meanwhile future teachers will have the opportunity to improve their professional practice through greater knowledge, skills, understanding and awareness related to inclusive education. A main limitation of this proposal is the fact that after graduation students cannot be obliged to follow this specific master programme. They have a variety of masters from where to choose, as presented in figure 3. So, future teachers can choose to follow a master programme related to their specialization (mathematics, physics, languages, chemistry, etc.), or they can follow a master that focuses on psycho-pedagogical master programme (school counselling, train the trainer, early childhood care and development) or a master on inclusiveness. That means that not all the teachers can benefit from a proper training related to inclusive education, therefore not all teachers are going to be ready to face inclusion in the classroom.

All the three alternative routes presented above are required to obtain accreditation from both the Ministry of Education and the Romanian National Qualifications Authority (ANC). The providers of this type of training courses can be higher education institutions.

3.3 Flexible routes regarding the teachers` continuing professional development in the field of inclusive education

While presenting the flexible routes for the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) it should be presented the importance that this process has significant and positive impact on the teaching career, especially having a positive impact on school performance by developing teachers' competence in teaching transversal competences and heterogeneous classes, and collaborating with both peers or parents (Angrist & Lavy, 2001; Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Rivkin, Hanushek, Kain, 2005; Rockoff, 2004)

3.3.1 CPD Progressive Route 1 - attending CPD training programs accredited by the National Qualifications Authority (ANC) with the aim of extending transversal competences.

The European Committee encourages the participation in the life-long education courses, meanwhile emphasizing its importance in the adults' professional development. According art. 328 from the Romanian Educational Law "The permanent education represents the overall teaching activities performed by each person during his lifetime in formal, non-formal and informal context, for training and developing competences in a multiple perspective: personal, civil, social or occupational [...] The life-long learning focuses on training and developing key competences and specific competences for an area of activity and also qualifications." (Romania Law of Education, 1/2011 Art. 328)

From the above mentioned it can be concluded that of the legislation points out that CPD is an essential pillar in supporting the development of a qualitative education system. However, European statistics show concerns about the Romanian situation regarding the participation of adults in the CPD courses. According to a study performed by Eurydice, the Northern countries, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, have already achieved the European target for 2020, meanwhile, Austria and Slovenia are close to fulfilling the target, while the adults' participation in education and training is far behind the EU indicator when it comes to Romania - where less than 2% of the adults people participate in education and training. (Eurydice, 2011)

For this training route to be considered feasible, it must be mentioned that going through CPD courses means teachers will earn credits, because within the Romanian education system it is compulsory that all teachers must obtain at least 90 ECTS over a period of 5 years.

3.3.2 Progressive Route 2 – participating at international mobility programs: Erasmus + programmes, community projects, bilateral and multilateral institutional projects, international projects.

The participation of teachers in several training courses through international mobility aims to provide learning opportunities by sharing knowledge and skills and also provides teachers with the opportunity to learn from the experience of the partner institutions or other colleagues from other countries. At the end of the mobility program, teachers can obtain a certificate (for short term programs) or a study document that certifies a level of qualification (for long-term programs). The participation of the teachers in the mobility programs is recognized according to the existing normative settlements for the teachers' continuous training courses and for their promotion in teaching career.

3.3.3 Progressive Route 3 - regular training programs: programs accredited by ANC

According to the Romanian order no. 4796 / 19.10.2001 Art. 2. (1) it is stipulated that the teacher training programs' is structured on modules and the minimum standard for teacher training program is of 90 ECTS.

Therefore, each teacher enrolled in a training program must accumulate, by the end of the statutory period of 5 years, a minimum of 90 ECTS from different training providers who can offer not only training programs as a whole, but also parts of them, module that added up make a total of 90 ECTS. Additional ECTS (those exceeding the minimum number of 90) will be considered a premise for obtaining facilities in future teaching career progression. The suppliers of the training programs can be either the higher education institutions through the Teacher Training Departments and through various teaching masters, the Teacher Training Houses (TTHs) or different NGOs with activities in the field of education, whose training programs have been approved by the National Centre for the Training of School Education (NCTSE).

All three alternative CPD routes target short programs, basically modular programs, that are offer by either higher education institutions, by different NGOs whose course are accredited by the Ministry of Education, by the Institute of Education Sciences, or by the National Agency for Community programs in Education and vocational training (ANPCDEFP).

Conclusions

It is necessary to implement a system of initial and continuing training that meets the current requirements of future teachers, regardless of their specialization and offer them a proper start into the teaching career. Moreover, teachers` have to go through a series of training courses in order

to prepare them to face inclusion in the classroom, acquiring special set of skills so that they will be able to work in an inclusive learning environment.

The need to incorporate these courses is supported by the school's reality seen through the eyes of national statistics. These statistics reveal a reality, namely that the presence of students with special needs is a constant in Romanian schools.

The regulation of the initial training curriculum should be based on a system that is centrally governed by the Ministry of Education and the National Authority for Qualifications. We consider necessary to keep the existing Bologna systems of initial teacher training that is implemented at national level and international level, but a greater importance should be given to the inserting a study course that prepares teachers for the inclusive education.

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WHY CHOOSE A SPECIFIC CAREER? WHY NOT...

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Abstract: *This study analysis the way in which a post-totalitarian society (such as ours) is seeing the counselling as a profession. The paper is also approaching the reasons which are giving the options for a higher education path in an educational system in which the practice of counselling is almost absent. For this purpose we used the Holland test to observe to what measure the students from the first year from the Educational Sciences specialization.*

Key words: *education, Holland test, career counselling, options*

State of the Art

Romanian society is a sick society. This society is sick because it has not solved the problems of the past and therefore cannot join wholeheartedly the present and especially the future. Split between the communist past and the democratic future, Romanian society today lives in confusion.

Expressing the social „disease”, school witnesses the same identity crisis as shown in many reform projects which were started but not finished: it can be said that the only constant of the school in the last twenty-three years is the transition. In such a context, the implementation of counselling programs at a social scale should represent a definite imperative (almost Kantian, one would say).

It is clear that the confused situation of the Romanian society is reflected in official-public position to counselling, on the one hand, and on the other hand, in the common man’s view. On a formal-institutional plan, legal regulations exist regarding the profession of psychologist, i.e. there is an association (*College of Psychologists from Romania*), which sets rules in the profession, which has a code of ethics (*Code of ethics for the profession of psychologist*) and a code of disciplinary proceedings, a methodology for accreditation of the association, etc. At the same time, there are accredited Master programs for counseling, at the Faculty of Education (accreditation comes from the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, an institution that authorizes and gives accreditation in the field

of higher education), even though in terms of counseling, it has no legal status as a regulated profession.

At the same time, there is an insufficient number of school counselors altogether (1 counselor per 1500 students), who should mainly deal with children with special educational needs. It is worth mentioning that they try their integration into regular school environments, even if there are dramatic situations: teachers at regular classes do not have the special skills or training and they are not offered appropriate training sessions. In addition, counselors – also called itinerant teachers – cannot spend more than a few hours a week in such a class, in order to provide the necessary expertise.

Regarding public opinion, the common man either ignores the existence of counseling and the opportunity to appeal to them, or they associate counseling with mental illness (a phrase with significant negative meaning). Most people vehemently reject the idea to appeal to a counselor for a child's emotional problems (no one wants to know that he could have a child with a mental illness, a visit at the counselor is often associated with mental illness).

One of the many consequences of public attitudes toward counselors and counseling is the absence of counselors in schools and especially in the vocational guidance of children. In fact, according to the law, what matters in choosing the type of school attended after compulsory education (almost all parents opt for school) is a mix from several average grades: „Admission to the secondary or vocational school is done by the following procedure: a) where the number of candidates does not exceed the number of seats offered by the school, admission will be based on the student's educational portfolio, b) If the number of candidates is greater than the number of seats offered by the school, admission is done taking into account the proportion of 70% of the student's educational portfolio, the average grades at the graduation exam from compulsory education as well as the average grade from the national assessment and the average grade at the end of the 9th grade and 30% of the achieved grade during the admission exam at the respective school” (The Romanian Government, 2011).

As a reminiscence of communism, vocational schools were abolished and this reveals a paradox typical of this type of totalitarian society: although it is considered that work (especially physical work, the kind of work that involves direct interaction with matter or minimal interaction mediated by simple mechanical machines) makes us human and it is a prerequisite and compulsory assimilation of high values, no one wanted to work, so no one wanted his children to attend a vocational school, but a high school and later on go to a university.

Options dictated by random

As a result, there is a career guidance program that takes account of students' personality characteristics as well as medium and long-term trends in the labor market, which is why the educational path of a student from Romania reveals glaring inadequacy: for example, graduates of high school focusing on mathematics and computer science (considered the best type of high school) with the option for the law school. This situation is described adequately (although it relates to the American education system) in (Bolles, 2007): „When we get out of school, or when we've been out of school for some time, and now are looking back, we realize there are three things a good education should have given us... *but in our case did not*. High school or college should have taught us: 1. How to choose and find a job. *A job that matches your gifts, skills, and experience. A job that not only puts bread on the table, clothes on your back, and shelter over your head, but also makes you happy* (p. 3).

Given this situation, during academic year 2013-2014 we applied a Holland questionnaire to first year students from the Faculty of Education Sciences (a total of 70 students) from the Petroleum-Gas University of Ploiești. The results are, as expected, surprising.

Distribution of high schools in cities

Distribution of respondents in large cities (two county capitals) and small towns, shows a higher proportion of candidates who have graduated from high schools in large cities (41 compared to 29), which would mean easier access to diversified sources of information. In fact, as mentioned, the circumstances are largely identical, since the presence of a school counsellor is signaled to one school and by a single respondent.

This leads us to advance two hypotheses: either the everyday presence of the digital infrastructure (internet, smart phone, tablet, laptop, etc.) clearly differentiates between small towns and big cities in terms of access to information, or the lack of interest in relation to high school graduates to their future career, disinterest of the formal and informal media that „block” search on their own in this area. However, our assumptions are contextual in relation to the fundamental reality of the absence of school counselling services in the Romanian education system.

Distribution of respondents by types of schools

Much more interesting is announced the distribution of respondents by types of schools. Bearing in mind the objectives of our study, we considered relevant high school grouping on the following three types: technical and technological high schools, philological and pedagogical high

schools (suitable for those who intend to be university graduates in science education) – see Figure 1

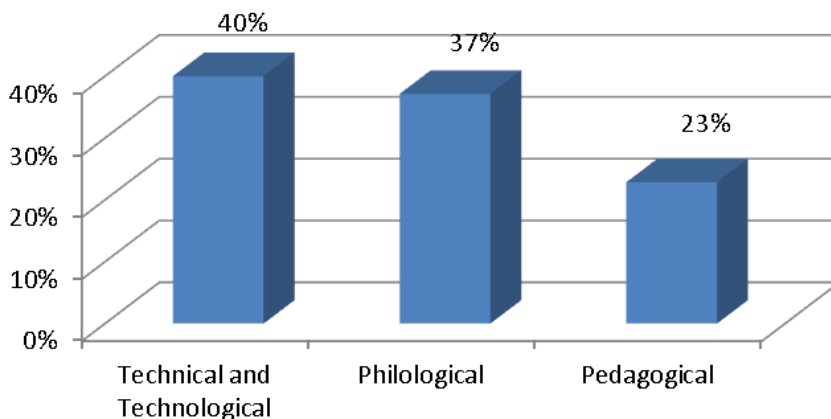


Fig. 1

In Romania there is currently one type of high school graduation exam – Baccalaureate – which allows a graduate to enroll in any academic specialization. Where appropriate, e.g. faculties of arts or education sciences, higher education institutions can organize aptitude tests which are eliminatory.

But beyond this bureaucracy, it is a significant presence that 28 respondents were graduates of technical and technological schools. However, it is worth noting the presence of the respondents coming from philological high schools with a relatively close cultural background to the profile of a student studying education sciences, but in fact attending such a faculty from the circumstantial reasons mentioned above (it is paradigmatic why they chose this specialization – the same students were freshmen three years ago; they gave one answer: because they loved children).

Why only 16 graduates of pedagogical high schools were enrolled in an education sciences college (that would have allowed them a natural continuation of studies begun in high school) since the two big cities from where we recruited the members of our sample approximately two hundred students annually graduate from pedagogical schools? Because many of them are turning to university studies focusing on philology, law, administration and economic sciences.

This is relevant for the confusion that reigns over the Romanian educational system, for children's attitudes influencing choices regarding the future studies and (possible) career, ultimately, for the indifference and inability of policy makers to reset priorities for the evolution of Romania's evolution on medium and long term.

Analysis of the data obtained by Holland test

The „Holland Code” for every kind of personality, as we know, is made up of a combination of three of the six identified types: Realistic (R), Investigative (I), Artistic (A), Social (S), Entrepreneurial (E), and Conventional (C). For the teacher, the code is SAE, i.e. social, artistic and entrepreneurial.

If we assume that the primary personality type (in this case S) covers special technical skills, that are profession-specific, the following personality types (in our case A and E) cover mainly transfer skills.

It is clear that the personality of a professional (regardless of the field) is not split/ shared in such components or skills that he has. But we can say that the primary personality type (in our case, S) constitutes the core of a profession, although in different combinations of personality specific to other professions, and is what we (according to the specific literature) have called transfer skills.

If the primary type of personality is the tough core of the necessary skills for a profession, the associated types give individuality, the specific way in which an individual manifests himself in the field of that profession (his personality brand). From this point of view, it is quite difficult to determine which the characteristics of a successful teacher are because one impresses by consistency and rigor, while another by enthusiasm and involvement (among others, according to personality types associated by Holland typology).

In the description from (Jigau, 2006), a social personality type is a person „who likes to work with people, in order to inform, advise, assist, train, educate, shape, care; has skills in using creative, nuanced language in this purposes” (p.38).

It appears that the teacher is the person who has powers regarding efficient social interactions, making homogeneous teams, developing an appropriate educational environment, developing project objectives and appropriate use of learning methods to arouse interest and, above all, motivate children.

Variations, as mentioned above, are introduced by the associated personality types, and in our case we find a large variety with a dominant - artistic personality type - represented by 29 members of the sample. The artistic type is likely to have a rather „affective-emotional approach to the world” (Jigau, 2006), in accordance with the way in which the child perceives the world at this age (p.37). In this sense in (Dewey, 1966) it’s written: „Again, the child’s life is an integral, a total one. He passes quickly and readily from one topic to another, as from one spot to another, but is not conscious of transition or break. There is no conscious isolation, hardly conscious distinction. The things that occupy him are held together by the

unity of the personal and social interests which his life carries along. Whatever is uppermost in his mind constitutes to him, for the time being, the whole universe” (p. 6). Those members of the sample characterized by the business type (12 in number) may „contaminate” children by energy, optimism and self-confidence. The conventional type, characteristic of 9 members of the sample, could attract conscientiousness, organization and practicality, while the investigative type brings to the fore the methodical, analytical spirit and contagious curiosity (7 members of the sample), etc.

The results of the Holland test – see Figure 2 - have led us to re-examine teaching strategies used in the preparation of future teachers also from this perspective.

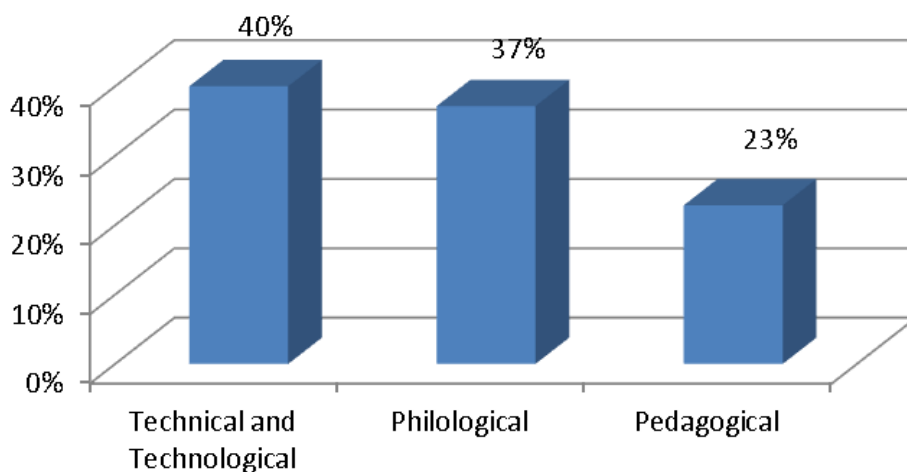


Fig. 2

If the primary type of personality should be seen as fundamental, and its features should be cultivated and refined through the curriculum, there are important characteristics of secondary and tertiary types because they allow us cultivation and refining of transfer skills, and these skills are those that are the teacher’s style, and his ace. Since the university under scrutiny offers training programs for teachers, we decided to re-think the content as well as the instructional strategies used within them.

What was lacking when making options

Referring to one of his works, and the role of career guidance in general, Norman Amundson said (Amundson & Poehnell, 1996): „... you will learn to discover who you are and what you can do, how to make the right choices for your future careers/ jobs and how to make plans that will help you get and find the jobs that are available on today’s changing labor market” (p. 5).

In this context, at the end of the first semester (three months had passed since the date of completion of the Holland test), we asked

respondents to note those information, activities, etc. that would be useful to make a knowledgeable option regarding future university studies. Beyond reproach (which we consider reasonable) to teachers (considered solely responsible), we have drawn very useful suggestions for people / institutions interested in this issue:

- Schools should have a counselling center and a school counselor;
- Counsellors, using appropriate tools, should provide students with relevant information about their skills and interests;
- related to their own skills and interests, developing projects with academic institutions and companies that support them, in order to put students in direct contact with the occupational environment and those people with whom they could identify;
- Visits to universities and access to promotional materials that provide relevant information about their seriousness (credentials etc.), fields of study, study conditions (laboratories, libraries, etc.) and living conditions (campus cafeteria, club, sports, prices, etc.);
- Introduction of social studies in technical high schools;
- Visits of students from those universities who are interesting for pupils;
- finding out the reasons why one should choose a college or another, especially in the light of advantages and disadvantages of the career(s) for which one prepares (note that personal interests and skills are overshadowed, which is explained by the absence of school counselors);
- organizing volunteer activities to assist students in the process of becoming aware of employment opportunities and personal interests;
- Information on the dynamics of the labor market;
- Information on those sites where you can get reliable information about universities and the labor market;
- under what conditions (secondary school graduation, etc.) one could be admitted to a university without fees in previous years (state universities in Romania offer prospective students a number of places which are free of charge (publicly funded) and a number of places which are paid (the fee is paid by students), access to free of charge places is permitted only if certain criteria are met, (of which) one is the average grade for the Baccalaureate, while scholarships for the first semester of studies are given by following the same criteria;
- Talks between former high school students, currently students at those colleges that pupils are interested in (in this way, one would encourage the establishment of *alumni* associations in high schools);
- Educational fairs organized by universities;
- organizing lectures in universities, possibly with the participation of university professors and some students.

It is worth noting that only one student considers relevant the information about the terms and conditions for obtaining a scholarship abroad, while no student considered relevant the information about the European labor market, although Romania has been a member of the European Union since 2007.

The first problem is that of the option for a particular school (say National College „Mihai Viteazul” from Ploiești), and then for a school profile, a conditional option in close connection with the procedure mentioned above on the one hand, and on the other hand, the number of secondary school graduates who, for one reason or another, choose the same school.

From the perspective of the university option, one may say that about half of the students who are part of our sample had to graduate from a high school they did not want, considering it unacceptable. The reasons why the kind of school was deemed unacceptable have no connection with dispositions, interests, their future plans, since at secondary level (first cycle of secondary education) there are almost no counselors, their number is quite limited, and their influence is meaningless on the basis of a quasi-generalized rejection of the idea of counseling on the one hand and, on the other hand, taking into account access procedures in high school.

Conversely, taking into account the school that the members of the target group have graduated from, we believe that the university option is groundless, even if there is justification for it. Thus, only students who come from one school (from a total of 14) refer to the existence of the school counselor, and out of these, only one student believes that the school counselor gave useful information regarding their choice of university (i.e., education science).

These data come from the responses of the sample members have offered to our request to note that information that would be needed to make an informed option about university (we mentioned the data earlier in this paper). Secondly, the conditions offered by universities in Romania are relatively similar, although the universities in the capital city (Bucharest, which is the largest cultural and economic center) offer more opportunities after graduation.

This advantage is offset by more expensive cost of living, meaning significantly higher costs for the future student, while European programs of scholarships for students (Leonardo, for example) tend to cancel this advantage, especially in those universities that have a counselling center and career guidance center that operate meaningfully. In line with the RAQAHE (Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), every university that has such a center receives a certain number of points (i.e., the existence of such a center is not a must on the one hand, and on the other

hand, what really counts is the formal existence of the center and not the volume and quality of activities).

The exaggerated tendency to centralize and unify curriculum almost entirely wiped out the differences between universities, those differences which resulted in the different schools of thought, with different questions and solutions (what we want to say is that the option for a university or another seems meaningless). It is this monochrome environment where high school graduates have to integrate in. For such graduates, career advice, own interests and values, dynamics and trends of the labor market are often empty words.

Conclusions

Beyond these re-settings of curricula, as far as the preparation of future teachers is concerned, the Holland test results have led us to develop a support program for high school students in the region of our university. We are aware that such a program would be necessary starting secondary school, but for now we do not have the resources to operate at this level and the program has the support and involvement of volunteer teachers and postgraduate students from the Faculty of Education Sciences:

- developing a website for high school pupils, that should be part of the University Counseling Centre. In this way, we could provide online resources to those interested: tools for self-knowledge and ways of using data, as well as data interpretation, information about universities, their credentials, the opportunities they provide (information will be provided by the universities, but will be monitored by our counselling center, because we want to provide a space for academic audiences), an online service for emergency situations, operating continuously and which requires the involvement of students making teams with students from the Master's program, information on institutions, regulations and trends of the (national and European) labor market etc.
- organization of joint teams (teachers and students, master students and students) to travel to schools in order to provide qualified support regarding career guidance (a kind of caravan that will have a set of tools that are appropriate to counseling and vocational guidance)
- organization of study visits of pupils interested in Petroleum-Gas University of Ploiești (and in other participating universities from our website) to attend certain courses, and organizing visits of professors to give lessons together with high school teachers in order to highlight the connection between the knowledge learned in school and university needs
- Involvement of business people/ companies in the activities of the center
- Organization of trainings on topics of career counselling with high school teachers and interested parents.

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TOY PREFERENCES IN CHILDREN; IMPACT OF GENDER AND CULTURE, AN OBSERVATIONAL STUDY

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Abstract: *Toy preferences in early childhood have an impact on and are reflective of gender socialisation which is considered as an indicator of, amongst other things, future life decisions. This study is the pilot for the main study in which the extent to which culture affects Turkish and British children's toy preferences together with a number of related variables will be investigated in a cross-cultural perspective.*

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

Key words: *toy, children, gender, socialization, culture, study*

1.Introduction

Socialisation connects different generations to one another and even though the members of a society change, cultural characteristics persist over time. Gender socialisation is a very important dimension of socialisation, it is the process during which children of different sexes are socialized into their gender roles and are taught what it means to be male or female (Molu,2014).The classical example of gender socialization is the experiment done with a baby that was introduced as a male to half of the study subjects and as a female to the other half. The results are interesting and quite disturbing at the same time. When the participants thought they were playing with a baby boy, "he" was offered toys, such as a hammer or rattle, while if the participants thought they were playing with a baby girl; "she" was

offered a doll. The participants also touched the baby differently. It was found that baby boys are often bounced, thus stimulating the whole body, whereas girls are touched more gently and less vigorously (Gleitman, Friedlund & Reisberg, 2000, as cited in Crespi, 2003).

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

Most parents are extremely interested in learning whether their newborn infant is a boy or a girl, and intentionally or not, this knowledge elicits in them a set of expectations consistent with beliefs about gender-role-appropriate traits. Parents generally prefer that their children adhere to traditional gender-roles, and are concerned when they do not (Martin, 1990). Children as young as eight months may already show a preference for 'boys' or 'girls' toys. Sex differences in toy preferences were noted in research as early as the 1930s (Parten, 1932. as cited in Alexander et. al. 2009). Even adult male and females display preferences for male- typical and female-typical toys (Alexander et. al., 2009).

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

As mentioned in the introduction, the extent to which culture affects toy preferences is the focus of a future investigation in which Turkish and British children's preferences and a number of related variables will be measured.

Here we piloted the procedure which comprised of an observation and a questionnaire.

2.Methodology

The following methodological steps have been designed and implemented:

- 1.Design of an observation chart(for children) and a questionnaire(for parents), both translated into Turkish.
2. Nine children between four and six years of age, who attend a public preschool in Istanbul and their parents participated in this pilot study.
3. Children's toy preferences were observed in three settings; playing(1) On their own, (2) with a group of children of the same gender and (3) with a group of children of the opposite gender (in a semi-constructed observation room)
- 4.Children were then asked to explain why they chose the toys that they did (noted by the researchers on the constructed observation chart)

5. Finally, their parents were asked to fill in the questionnaire designed by the researchers.
6. Researchers analysed the data by using descriptive analysis in order to investigate the impact of gender and parental attitudes in gender stereotypical toy preference.
7. Data analysed is fit in purpose and will be used in the main study where the extent to which culture affects children's toy preferences shall be investigated for Turkish and British children as well as measuring a number of related variables.
8. Conclusions were obtained from:
Data analysis
Literature review

2.1.Data Analysis

Descriptive Analysis has been used to analyze the data collected . It is the transformation of raw data into a form that will make them easy to understand and interpret; rearranging , ordering and manipulating data to generate descriptive information.(Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008)

3.Findings

The study group is comprised of nine children(4 boys and 5 girls), between four and six years of age, who attend a public preschool in Gaziosmanpasa, Istanbul.

Children have been observed concurrently by two researches , for 15-20 minutes, playing with a toy that they have preferred, 1) On their own, (2) with a group of children of the same gender and (3) with a group of children of the opposite gender. They have been given the opportunity for free preference of toys at each stage and in order to ensure equal opportunities for toy preference, they have been asked to collect the toys and put them in their places after each stage.

Children were asked to pick up a toy and start to play on their own by the researchers. The following table shows the findings related to their preferences.

Table1. Children’s toy preferences ; playing on their own

Student	Age	Toy Preference	Reason for preference	Shape	Colour	Function	Similarity	Familiarity	Observer’s Notes
C1 (Boy)	5	Lego	Attractiveness	X	X	X	-	X	Preferred to play with legos after having seen that his friend also preferred to play with legos(attractiveness)
C2(Girl)	5	Occupation Toys	Attractiveness	-	-	-	X(in classroom)	X	Had as well preferred to play with doctor’s kit previously, she likes playing with it(prior experience)
C3(Boy)	5,5	Big size Lego	Attractiveness	X	X	X	-	-	Had also preferred to play with the same toy previously (prior experience)
C4(Girl)	5	Dolls	Because she wants to play with them)Attractiveness)	-	-	-	X(at home)	X	Has expressed that she often plays with dolls at home Similarity, familiarity
C5(Boy)	5	Built a gun from lego parts	He likes to build guns and play with his friends. (Finds the toy exciting)	-	-	-	X(in classroom)	X	He builds guns from lego parts and plays with them even though the teacher does not allow him to do so
C6(Girl)	4,5	Dolls	Because she wants to play with them	X	X	-	X(at home)	X	Told the researcher that her brother has a male action figure at home similar to a doll
C7(Girl)	6	Puzzle	-	X	-	-	X(at home)	X	-
C8(Girl)	5	Puzzle	To create something.	-	-	X	X(at home)	X	
C9(Boy)	6	Puzzle	-	-	-	-	X(at home)	X	Preferred to play with the puzzle because the girls preferred to do so(attractiveness)

Table 1 indicates that boys, while playing on their own, have preferred to play with gender neutral toys, such as lego and puzzle, whereas 2 out of 5 girls have preferred to play with gender stereotypical toys whilst the other 3 preferred gender neutral toys.

One of the boys has been observed to utilize the gender neutral toy as a gender stereotypical one and one of the girls who preferred a gender stereotypical toy has expressed that she preferred that toy because she always plays with similar toys at home.

Table 2 indicates the findings of children’s toy preferences playing with a group of children of the same gender.

Table 2. Children’s toy preferences; playing with a group of children of the same gender

Student	Age	Toy Preference	Reason for preference	Shape	Colour	Function	Similarity	Familiarity	Observer’s Notes
C1(Boy)	5	Puzzle	Likes the toy-Attractiveness	-	-	-	-	x	Expressed that he played with the same toy before in a place other than home
C2(Girl)	5	Play House Toys	Likes the toy-Attractiveness	x	x	-	x(at home)	x	Had as well preferred to play with the same toys previously, she likes playing with them
C3(Boy)	5,5	Lego Gun	Because his playmate preferred that toy	x	x	x	-	-	Preferred to play with this toy due to his playmate’s preference
C4(Girl)	5	Puzzle	Because she wanted to design a carpet	-	-	-	X(at home)	x	Has expressed that she wanted to design a carpet with puzzle pieces
C5(Boy)	5	Built a gun from lego parts	He likes to build guns and play with his friends	-	-	x	-	-	He likes to build guns from lego parts and play with them with the other boys
C6(Girl)	4,5	Play House Toys and Kitchen Sets		-	-	-	-	-	She wanted to play with play house toys with a boy but they played for a short while before the boy got bored
C7(Girl)	6	Play House Toys and Kitchen Sets	Because she wants to play with them	x	x	-	x(at a place other than home)	x	Told the researcher that these are the only toys that she had been exposed to
C8(Girl)	5	Basket and books	Because she wanted to read books to the others	-	-	-	x(at home)	x	Expressed that she likes to read books to her playmates
C9(Boy)	6	Puzzle and tool kit		-	-	-	x(at home)	x	

As indicated in Table 2 , while playing with a group of children of the same gender; boys have preferred gender neutral toys , despite the fact that 2 boys have used the gender neutral toy as a gender stereotypical one. One of the boys preferred to play both with gender stereotypical and gender neutral toys whereas another one expressed that he preferred to play with the toy due to his playmate's choice. 3 out of 5 girls in the group preferred to play with gender stereotypical toys whereas the other 2 preferred to play with gender neutral toys.

Table 3 indicates the findings of children's toy preferences playing with a group of children of the opposite gender.

As indicated in Table 3,during play with a group of children of the opposite gender, 3 out of 4 boys have preferred to play with gender neutral toys whereas 1 boy preferred to play with gender stereotypical toys. 2 out of 5 girls have been observed to play with gender stereotypical toys whereas 3 girls preferred to play with gender neutral toys. One of the boys who preferred a gender neutral toy has expressed that he had preferred that toy with the purpose of playing action games with his playmates.

Table 3. Children’s toy preferences ; playing with a group of children of the opposite gender

Student	Age	Toy Preference	Reason for preference	Shape	Colour	Function	Similarity	Familiarity	Observer’s Notes
C1(Boy)	5	Puppets	In order to be able to play with his friend	-	x	x	X	X(at a place other than home)	
C2(Girl)	5	Play House Toys	Because she wants to play with them	-	-	x	X(at home)	X	
C3(Boy)	5,5	Occupation Toys; Doctor’s Kit	Because his playmate preferred that toy	X	X	X	-	-	Preferred to play with this toy due to his playmate’s preference
C4(Girl)	5	Puppets	Because they are fun	-	-	x	X	x	She preferred the toy and played with her friend
C5(Boy)	5	Lego	He likes lego guns	-	-	-	X	x	He wanted to play action games with his friends
C6(Girl)	4,5	Play House Toys and Kitchen Sets		-	-	-	-	-	She wanted to play with play house toys with a boy but they played for a short while before the boy got bored
C7(Girl)	6	Occupation Toys; Doctor’s Kit	She said that she likes doctors	-	-	x	X(at home)	X	Expressed that she preferred the toy because she likes the doctors, could have possibly identified the doctor with male gender
C8(Girl)	5	Puppets	Because I am a girl	x	-	-	-	-	Expressed that she preferred that toy because of her gender
C9(Boy)	6	Tool kit, saw	Because he likes the toy	x	x	-	-	-	Expressed that he preferred the saw because he liked the shape

Parental Observations

Table 4 indicates the findings of parental observations with respect to their children’s toy preferences.

Table 4. Parental Observations with respect to their children’s toy preferences

Student	C1(Boy)	C2(Girl)	C3(Boy)	C4(Girl)	C5(Boy)	C6(Girl)	C7(Girl)	C8(Girl)	C9(Boy)
1. What are your toy preferences for your child?	Car	Dolls	Car, Puzzle (I do not prefer guns)	Dolls, Kitchen Sets, Stickers Activity Books	Ball, Tool Kits	Dolls	Kitchen Sets Doctors Kit	Dolls	Car, Ball
2. Why did you prefer this toy for your child?	Because he likes to play with cars	Because of her gender	My son likes cars	Because she likes them	Because he likes to play with them, he likes to repair things	Because she prefers them	Because she likes to role play her favourite occupation	So that she can start learning how to communicate with babies	Because he likes to play with them
3. Have you ever taken the educational function of the toy into account when you made your choice?	Yes, I think it is important	Yes, I have	Yes	Occasionally, I would rather to buy toys that would make my child happy	Sometimes	Yes, I have	Yes	No	Yes
4. Do you allow him/ her to make his/her own choice or do you guide them in their preferences? Why?	I allow him to make his own choice, I do not guide him	Yes, I allow her but I also guide her because she wants to buy everything, especially flashy toys, so I need to guide her	Yes, I allow him, but I also guide him, especially when he wants to buy guns	I usually allow her but I also guide her by showing her other options especially when she wants to buy something expensive	I usually guide him when he wants to buy expensive toys, I try to show him other options	I usually allow her but sometimes she wants to buy toys which are not very functional such as flashing guns	I sometimes guide her so that she can buy a functional toy	I allow her to make her own choice, I do not guide her because she would not listen to me	I usually allow him to make his own choice but I also guide him in order to buy age appropriate toys
5. Do you think that children should play with gender stereotypical toys? Why?	Yes	Yes	He should play with gender stereotypical toys so that he can develop appropriate gender traits	She can play with opposite gender toys but should I notice that she spends too much time with them, I would investigate the reason/s why	No, I think he should play with different types of toys in order to have knowledge on their functions	Yes, I think girls should play with feminine toys such as dolls, kitchen sets, etc..	Yes	Girls should play with feminine toys so that they can be prepared for their future roles as housewives	He could play with feminine toys if he needs to play with girls
6. Would you be concerned if your son played with dolls (or daughter played with cars)?	I don't know	I would not be concerned	I would not be much concerned but should it be excessive , then I could be concerned	I would not be concerned unless it is too much	I would not be concerned, I would like that	I would not be concerned	Yes	I would not be concerned	No

7. What would you do if you found out your son plays with dolls (or daughter plays with cars)?	I would be angry	She can play, after all, it is a toy	I would warn him or seek professional help in order to guide him to play with gender appropriate toys	I would seek professional help if it were excessive	I would monitor how he played with the doll, and try to understand why he were playing with it	I would not do anything, she can play with every kind of toy unless it is harmful	I would monitor her other behaviours.	I would react strongly, I would remind him of his gender and offer him gender appropriate toys
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As indicated in Table 4, parents of 4 boys in the study group have expressed gender stereotypical toy preferences for their sons, in addition to this, 1 parent also had a preference for gender neutral toys. Parents of 4 out of 5 girls have expressed gender stereotypical toy preferences for their daughters whereas 1 parent prefers gender neutral toys as well.

When the reason for their preferences were asked, parents of 4 boys have expressed their children's liking of the toy as well as the parents of 5 girls, with only 1 parent of a girl strongly emphasizing her preference due to gender.

Regarding the impact of the educational function of toys on parents' preferences, all 4 boys' parents have expressed that they take the educational function into account whereas 4 out of 5 girls' parents have indicated the same with only 1 parent indicating the opposite.

Regarding the impact of children's demands on parental preference and parental guidance in toy purchase, all 4 boys' parents have indicated that they allow their sons to make their own choice and do not intervene in their preference unless they consider the toy as dysfunctional or harmful. It has been observed that there is a convergence in the answers.

Parents of the girls have indicated that they guide their daughters in their preferences and do not intervene unless they consider that the toy is inappropriate for the child's development. Only 1 parent has indicated that she does not guide her daughter since she would not take her advice.

Regarding the question whether they prefer to buy gender stereotypical toys for their children, 2 out of 4 boys' parents have indicated that their children should play with gender stereotypical toys whereas the other 2 have indicated that they do not have gender stereotypical preferences.

4 out of 5 girls' parents have indicated gender stereotypical toy preferences whereas only 1 parent has indicated that her daughter could play with opposite gender toys but she would seek professional help should she notice any "excessive preference".

Regarding their concern about their children's playing with opposite gender toys, 3 out of 4 boys' parents have indicated that they would not be concerned, only 1 parent did not give any comment.

3 out of 5 girls' parents have indicated that they would not be concerned and 1 parent has indicated that she would not be unless it is excessive, whereas 1 parent has indicated that she would be .

Regarding their reactions about their children's play with opposite gender toys, parents of 4 boys have replied respectively as;

I would be angry.

I would guide him to play with gender appropriate toys, I would seek professional help .

I would monitor him in order to find out how he communicates with the doll.

I would remind him of his gender and give him gender appropriate toys.

Parents of 5 girls have replied respectively as;

- She can play with these toys, after all,they are also toys.

- Should there be an excessive tendency, I would investigate the underlying causes through professional help.

- I would not do anything, she can play with every kind of toy.

- I would monitor her other behaviours.

One parent did not want to reply to this question without giving any reason

Table 5 indicates the children's and parents' toy preferences combined.

Table 5. Children's and Parents' Toy Preferences Combined

Toy Preferences	C1(Boy)	C5(Boy)	C3(Boy)	C9(Boy)	C4(Girl)	C2(Girl)	C7(Girl)	C8(Girl)	C6(Girl)
On their own	LEGO	LEGO	LEGO	PUZZLE	DOLLS	OCCUPATION TOYS	PUZZLE	PUZZLE	DOLLS
With a playmate of the same gender	PUZZLE	LEGO	LEGO	TOOL KIT	PUZZLE	PLAY HOUSE TOYS	PUZZLE	BASKET AND BOOKS	KITCHEN SETS, PLAY HOUSE TOYS
With a playmate of the opposite gender	PUPPET	LEGO	OCCUPATION TOYS, DOCTOR'S KIT	TOOL KIT	PUPPET	PLAY HOUSE TOYS	OCCUPATION TOYS	PUPPETS	PLAY HOUSE TOYS
Parental Preference	CARS	BALL, TOOL KIT	CARS, PUZZLE	CARS, BALL	DOLLS, KITCHEN SETS, STICKERS, ACTIVITY BOOKS	DOLLS, TEA SETS ETC...	KITCHEN SETS, DOCTOR'S KIT	DOLLS	DOLLS

As indicated in Table 5, of the 4 boys in the study group

C1, has gender neutral toy preferences whereas his parent has gender stereotypical toy preferences.

C5, has gender neutral toy preferences whereas his parent has gender stereotypical toy preferences.

C3, has gender neutral toy preferences whereas his parent has both gender neutral and gender stereotypical toy preferences,.

C9, has both gender neutral and gender stereotypical toy preferences whereas his parent has gender stereotypical toy preferences.

It can be observed that neither the boys nor their parents have preferred toys identified with the opposite gender such as kitchen sets, play house toys and dolls.

As indicated in Table 5, of the 5 girls in the study group;

C4, has both gender neutral and gender stereotypical toy preferences whereas her parent has gender stereotypical toy preferences.

C2, has both gender neutral and gender stereotypical toy preferences whereas her parent has gender stereotypical toy preferences

C7, has gender neutral toy preferences and so does her parent

C8, has gender neutral toy preferences whereas her parent has gender stereotypical toy preferences.

C6, has gender stereotypical toy preferences and so does her parent

It can be observed that neither the girls nor their parents have preferred toys identified with the opposite gender such as tool kits, cars and ball.

4. Discussion

Findings indicate that the children in the study group have gender stereotypical or gender neutral toy preferences when observed in the three play situations mentioned in methodology section. It is noteworthy that none of them preferred to play with opposite gender toys even during play with a group of children of the opposite gender.

Findings also reveal that parents have more gender stereotypical toy preferences in alignment with children's preferences.

Another finding is that children's preferences are also influenced by other children's preferences, the child might want to play with a toy that his/her friend prefers, due to attractiveness.

Another interesting finding is that even though some parents might allow their children to play with opposite gender toys, when it comes to buy toys for their children, they would rather to purchase gender stereotypical ones.

Findings also reveal parents' concerns about their children's play with opposite gender toys, should this happen, they would rather to closely monitor the situation or seek professional assistance in case of excessive play.

5. Conclusion

In the light of the findings, it can be observed that children's toy preferences are influenced by those of their parents'. It is quite difficult for a child to play with a toy which is considered as gender inappropriate by his/her parent, especially outside the classroom setting.

It can be concluded that cultural stereotypes have an impact on parents' toy preferences. They think that by giving gender stereotypical toys to their children, they can promote future gender appropriate roles. This is especially important for girls, as can be seen in one of the girls' parent's answer: "Girls should play with feminine toys so that they could be prepared for their future roles as housewives".

This impact on gender socialization is considered as an indicator of, amongst other things, future life decisions.

Literature also reveals that toys provide gendered experience; feminine toys promote the development of nurturance and domestic skills whereas masculine toys promote the development of spatial skills, risk-taking and competition.

This study is limited to a small study group and is carried out as a pilot for a main study in which Turkish and British children's preferences and a number of related variables such as gender of the child, gender and educational level of parents and cultural beliefs are being measured in a cross-cultural perspective.

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THE MUSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND THEIR INFLUENCE OF THE MUSICAL PREDISPOSITIONS DEVELOPMENT AT PRESCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

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Abstract: *There is a common position among experts in this field that musical predispositions are the product of cumulative interactions between inherited dispositions and environmental factors favorable to them. However, there is not enough information about their aspect which is supposed to be able to provide a systemic effect on the development of the elementary musical predisposition on preschool level. Therefore, it was necessary to create a scientific review of the traditional approach to musical activity in the current program of the musical education and then to examine the possibilities of application of modern teaching concepts and methods of the stimulative program for the purpose of studying the possibility of their influence on the development of musical predisposition on preschool level. The survey was conducted using Gordon's Primary Measures of Music Audiation test. In a comparison of the results we have come to the following conclusions: A significant influence on the development of basic musical predisposition was achieved through the activities within the stimulative program of musical education, while activities of the current program of musical education did not show a sufficient effect on their development. The hypotheses that suggested a statistically significant difference in auditory and rhythmical discrimination among children who have been involved in the implementation of the two programs (stimulative and current) has been confirmed.*

Key words: *preschool age, musical education programs, elementary musical abilities (auditory and rhythmical).*

Introduction

There is a common position among experts in this field that musical predispositions are the product of cumulative interactions between inherited dispositions and environmental factors favorable to them. There is a common

position among experts in this field that musical predispositions are the product of cumulative interactions between inherited dispositions and environmental factors favorable to them. However, there is not enough information about their aspect which is supposed to be able to provide a systemic effect on the development of the elementary musical predisposition on preschool level.

Therefore, it was necessary to create a scientific review of the traditional approach to musical activity in the current program of the musical education, because the methodic approaches as well as the goals and the tasks of the program, are not in harmony with the cotemporary pedagogic theories about the subject position of the child in the educational process.

Applying the cotemporary pedagogic procedures in the stimulative program for the elementary abilities (auditory and rhythmical) development with many musical activities, is the subject of this research in order to see the aspects of the possible influence on development of the musical predispositions at preschool age.

The comparison of the efficiency of the stimulative program for musical predisposition development with the specific content of the musical activities and the current musical education program in different preschool institutions represents as well the subject of this research.

The stimulative musical predisposition development program starts with the cotemporary pedagogic attitudes in an educational process and is there by made for the needs of the research of the possible influence on the musical predisposition development. It had been compared to the current music education program in the preschool institutions, which had not been consolidated with the cotemporary acknowledgements as shown in the theory analysis.

By involving the active children working methods, engaging the individuality principles and influencing the whole children personality development, we come to the cotemporary pedagogic opinion, which demands the different approach in education, focusing the music predisposition development. The current musical education program, presented in the preschool institutions, shows the certain characteristics, as below:

- The passive learning of the song lyrics with its melodically-rhythmical characteristics, without the real musical task in order to back up the auditory and rhythmical predisposition development;
- The development of the children`s voice, the accurate diction and articulation, with limiting the activities to singing and listening;
- Learning the songs by choir singing;

- In playing activities, we use the Orff instruments with the indefinite tone height.

The stimulative musical predisposition development program differs from the current music education program, and is based on the contemporary pedagogic ideas, showing the characteristics below:

- Musical activities assume: breathing exercises as the prerequisite for the vocal cords development, singing, listening to music not only from the audio players, but the “live” concerts, too, elementary music teaching, visual and manual ability stimulation, as well as the music games, traditional dances;

- The stimulation of the auditory and rhythmical abilities is shown as a part of the typical musical tasks that are the part of the musical contents adjustable to children age;

- The respect and applying of the individual adequacy principles;

- Instrumental accompanying as the backup for the precise intonation and the audio and vocal development during the singing;

- Gradually making the tasks for encouraging the auditory and rhythmical development, more complexed;

- Active engaging the children`s attention by using the obvious utilities, correlating with the musical tasks realization, as a goal for the elementary musical predisposition development;

- Consolidation and correlation between the musical activities and the other fields in order to circle the child`s ability development

The starting theory basis

In a contemporary society, people insist on possibilities that are present, speaking about the musical activity of a child, that is, about his active dialogue with the music that surrounds it. Taking this into consideration, the quality of musical atmosphere at home and preschool institution has the important role, so the parent`s task as well as the teacher`s, is to embrace the musical needs of a child, by provoking and encouraging the development to the optimal level, by planning the right musical activities. They should be adequate for a child being able to participate in a adequate, current, developmental and musical level. Creating the optimal conditions for the musical development, leads to the optimal actualization of the potential itself, and also to the realization of the optimal musical performance (Grujic, 2017).

The child`s development is a process that acquires the succession of certain levels or phases through which a child goes from the birth until the relative maturity. The child`s ability to react on different musical impulses intensively, in early childhood, is a proof of the fact that the musical

development starts by birth, even earlier in prenatal period. Some researches show that the optimal learning period, that is, the phase of the best closeness to the musical impressions, is between 6th and 24th month, and then between the age of 5 and 6, so that extraordinary musical sensitivity should be used properly (Mirkovic-Rados, 1996).

If we analyze the musical development determinants today, we can see the interaction between the inherited and environmental aspect, which shows that the musicality is the result of the mutual interaction of the inheritance and the positive environmental factors (Gordon, 1997; Shutter – Dyson, 1999). In many researches, the authors analyzed the nature of the musicality (Pflederer, 1963; Hallam&Shaw, 2002; Hallam&Prince, 2003; Hallam, 2010), the influence of the genetic predispositions (Jarvela, 2014; Guerrini, 2005; Oikkonen et al., 2016), and the influence of the musically stimulative environment the family or the preschool institution (Flohr, 1981; Brand, 1986; Persellin, 2006; Runfola et al., 2012).

Nowadays, the psychologist K. Mirkovic-Rados thinks that the musical talent shows up and develops during the musical activity of the individual, surrounded by the positive environmental conditions. She presumes that the musically stimulative environment influences the early talent and the higher level of it, as well as the appearance of the certain musical abilities, such as the absolute pitch. According to this author, the musical development, as already been mentioned, depends on the "amount" of the potential, as well as the environmental stimulation and the quality of the abilities, the dominant at the child (Mirkovic-Rados, 1996).

Methodology

The research goals referred to the conceivability, adequacy and efficiency of the pedagogic ideas and their check, which are the basis of the stimulative program for elementary musical abilities development and the methodological activities for achieving this goal. It was important to reach the relevant data which could help the analysis of the cotemporary pedagogic theory attitudes and find their impact on the musical predisposition development.

The aim of the research was to enlighten the possibilities and the specific characteristics of the influence on the musical predisposition development at the preschool age, considered to be the „critical period “in this way. It was thought that this age was not the age to do a lot, speaking of the musical predisposition development, unless you satisfy the conditions that were to be defined and checked.

Considering the concrete and operationalized idea of the musical predispositions, the research tasks were provided, considering the questions below:

- What kind of individual differences can be seen among the children, speaking of the auditory discrimination, is it possible to develop the auditory discrimination at the preschool age?
- What kind of individual differences can be seen among the children, speaking of the rhythmical discrimination, is it possible to develop the rhythmical discrimination at the preschool age?

The hypothesis had been set based on the subject, the goal and the task of the research:

- There is an assumption that the statistically significant difference could be shown speaking of the auditory discrimination among the children at the preschool institution, being exposed to the activities of the stimulative musical education program and the current musical education program.

There is an assumption that the statistically significant difference could be shown speaking of the rhythmical discrimination among the children at the preschool institution, being exposed to the activities of the stimulative musical education program and the current musical education program.

Applying the descriptive method in order to describe the actual appearances, the interpretation of the given results and getting the conclusions, seemed to be the need in resolving the problems of this research, as well as the theoretical analysis of the views, attitudes and the results of the researches.

The causable method was used in order to find the relation between the cause and the consequent between the factor influence and the elementary musical abilities of the preschool age children by using the ex-post-facto procedure. The statistical procedure was used in order to determinate the size of the researched appearances as well as their mutual relation.

The research technique for appraising the auditory and rhythmical predispositions used as the research technique in this publication, was the elementary musical abilities test by E. Gordon (Gordon, 1986), as the appraisal of the auditory and rhythmical predispositions.

The samples were the children of preschool groups in one preschool institution. The children were divided into experimental and the controlled group. The stimulative musical education program activities were in the experimental group, and the current musical education activities were in the controlled group. Both groups had the equal number of children (50).

The test-retest procedure used for this research on the experimental and the controlled group had the aim of checking the performance of the current and the stimulative program of the musical education speaking of the musical predisposition development. The time between the test and the retest was a year.

The children from both groups (controlled and experimental) were tested the same day by Gordon`s test. The sample of 100 children was divided into five groups in which were by twenty children. They were sorted by alphabetical order. Considering the time of testing (45 minutes), the pauses between the groups were one hour. The test has the tone and the rhythmical part with the practice examples, and then the forty tasks. In order to accomplish the activities of the test, the child does not need to write or read.

Each task is being reproduced on the CD by naming the certain subject (for example the cup, an apple, the doll...), and the same subject is presented on the answer list above the certain task. After listening a pair of phrases in each of the tasks, in tone, and then the rhythmical part, a child has to defer weather the phrases are the same or different and to circle them on the answer list as the pair of the same or the different faces if it considers the phrases are different(Rados,1996).

The research results

The next tasks were presumed by this research:

- What kind of individual differences among the children can be shown, speaking of the auditory discrimination, and can it be developed at the preschool age?
- What kind of individual differences among the children can be shown, speaking of the rhythmical discrimination, and can it be developed at the preschool age?

The hypothesis of the research has been set and it reads:

There is an assumption that the statistically significant difference will be shown speaking of the auditory and rhythmic discrimination among the children at the preschool institution, being exposed to the activities of the stimulative musical education program(experimental group) and the current musical education program(controlled group).

After the Gordon`s test, the appraising of the auditory and rhythmical abilities, among the predictable population, by using Z- statistics, we got the results of the advancing differences, considering the auditory and rhythmical discrimination:

Chart 01 – Gordon`s test- the results of the advancing differences, considering the auditory and rhythmical discrimination (tone and rhythmic subscale) between the experimental and the controlled group (shown in percentile ranges).

1. Gordon`s test-differences in auditory and rhythmical discrimination	Experimental		Controlled		rek	Difference		
	ME	σ M	MK	σ K		(ME-MK)	σ D M	Z
Initial status	31,204	1,844	32,02	2,392	-0,017	-0,816	3,019	-0,27
Final status	83,938	1,478	42,183	2,598	0,006	41,755	2,989	13,969
Progress M2-M1	52,734	2,011	10,163	4,426	0,075	42,571	4,676	9,104
Z	26,215		2,295			9,104		

The groups E and K have a small variance of the average value that at the initial test, but the value for Z from – 0.27 for that variance so small that that cannot be significant at the level of 0.05, that is

$$Z = -0,27 < Z_{0,01} = 2,33$$

So, we can conclude that the both groups can be considered as not different, but cannot say that they were the same. There can be a little or not at all doubt, that the both populations, from which the samples were, differ in a way of the average accomplishment in the final experiment check. The value for Z is 13,969, which is significantly above the level 0,01 in a one way test (Z is from 2,33), that is

$$Z = 13,969 > Z_{0,01} = 2,33$$

The difference between the final ME-MK and the conclusion based on her seems definite enough, and the fact that the group E showed the statistically significant progression in criteria test connected to the group K.

The average progression at the group E is 52,734, and at the group K is 10,163. When we take under consideration the small correlation $r_{ek} = 0,075$ and calculate the standard error in the progress, we find the Z from 9,104 which represents the test of difference in the progress of these two samples which is satisfactory as in case of the final status, so the difference is significant above the level of 0,01, that is

$$Z = 9,104 > Z_{0,01} = 2,33$$

Based on the results we can conclude that there are statistically significant differences in progressing between the experimental and the controlled group at the Gordon's test speaking of the auditory and rhythmic discrimination on behalf of applying the stimulative musical education program.

Gordon's test- differences in the auditory discrimination

After the Gordon's test, the appraising of the auditory abilities part, among the predictable population, by using Z- statistics, we got the results of the advancing differences, considering the auditory discrimination.

Chart 02- Gordon's test-the results of the advancing differences, considering the auditory discrimination (tone subscale) between the experimental and the controlled group (shown in percentile ranges).

1. Gordon's test-differences in auditory discrimination	Experimental		Controlled		rek	Difference		
	ME	σM	MK	σK		(ME-MK)	σD M	Z
Initial status	28,897	2,709	30,428	2,913	0,15	-1,53	3,932	-0,389
Final status	78,020	2,539	37,653	2,973	-0,02	40,367	3,909	10,325
Progress M2-M1	49,122	2,76	7,224	0,427	-0,038	41,897	2,847	14,714
Z	17,793		16,886			14,715		

At the beginning, the groups E and K have a small variance of the average value that at the initial test, but the value for Z from for that – 0,389 variance so small that that cannot be significant at the level of 0.05, that is

$$Z = -0,389 < Z_{0,01} = 2,33$$

So, we can conclude that the both groups can be considered as not different at the start, but cannot say that they were the same. There can be a little or not at all doubt, that the both populations, from which the samples were, differ in a way of the average accomplishment in the final experiment check.

The value of Z is 10,325, which is significantly above the level 0,01 in a one way test (Z from 2,33), that is

Z=10,325 > Z 0,01=2,33

The difference between the final ME-MK and the conclusion based on her seem final enough, and the fact that the group E showed statistically significant progress in the criteria test connected to the group K.

The average progression at the group E is 49,122, and at the group K is 7, 224. When we take under consideration the small correlation $r_{EK} = -0,038$ and calculate the standard error in the progress, we find the Z from 14,715 which represents the test of difference in the progress of these two samples which is satisfactory as in case of the final status, so the difference is significant above the level of 0,01, that is

Z=14,715 > Z 0,01=2,33

Based on the results we can conclude that there are statistically significant differences in progress between the experimental and the controlled group at the Gordon's test speaking of the auditory discrimination on behalf of applying the stimulative musical education program.

Gordon's test- differences in the rhythmic discrimination

After the Gordon's test, the appraising of the rhythmical abilities part, among the predictable population, by using Z- statistics, we got the results of the advancing differences, considering the auditory discrimination.

Chart 03- Gordon's test-the results of the advancing differences, considering the rhythmical discrimination (rhythmic subscale) between the experimental and the controlled group (shown in percentile ranges).

1. Gordon's test-differences in rhythmical discrimination	Experimental		Controlled		rek	Difference		
	ME	σM	MK	σK		(ME-MK)	$\sigma D M$	Z
Initial status	45,14 2	3,32 7	46,65 3	2,39 2	0,10 4	-1,510 5	4,07 5	-0,37
Final status	81,0	2,31 6	54,81 6	2,59 8	- 0,16 8	26,18 3	3,48 1	7,52 1
Progress M2-M1	35,85 7	3,09 8	8,163	6,41 0	0,24	27,69 3	6,20 6	4,46 1
Z	11,571		1,773			4,461		

At the beginning, the groups E and K have a small variance of the average value that at the initial test, but the value for Z from for that – 0,37 variance so small that that cannot be significant at the level of 0.05, that is

$$Z = -0,37 < Z_{0,01} = 2,33$$

So, we can conclude that the both groups can be considered as not different at the start, but cannot say that they were the same. There can be a little or not at all doubt, that the both populations, from which the samples were, differ in a way of the average accomplishment in the final experiment check. The value of Z is 7, 521, which is significantly above the level 0, 01 in a one way test (Z from 2, 33), that is

$$Z = 7,521 > Z_{0,01} = 2,33$$

The difference between the final ME-MK and the conclusion based on her seem final enough, and the fact that the group E showed statistically significant progress in the criteria test connected to the group K.

The average progression at the group E is 35, 857, and at the group K is 8, 163. When we take under consideration the small correlation $r_{EK} = 0, 24$ and calculate the standard error in the progress, we find the Z from 4, 461 which represents the test of difference in the progress of these two samples which is satisfactory as in case of the final status, so the difference is significant above the level of 0,01, that is

$$Z = 4,461 > Z_{0,01} = 2,33$$

Based on the results we can conclude that there are statistically significant differences in progress between the experimental and the controlled group at the Gordon's test speaking of the rhythmical discrimination on behalf of applying the stimulative musical education program.

Based on the results, it can also be concluded that the predicted hypothesis can be accepted, and it is:

Speaking of the auditory and rhythmical discrimination among the children that participated in the activities of the stimulative musical education program (experimental group) and the current musical education program in the preschool institution, we can presume the appearance of the statistically significant difference. There has been a significant progress in the group of children attending the activities of the stimulative musical education program for musical predisposition development, with regard to the children attending the activities of a current musical education program, speaking of the auditory and rhythmical discrimination, engaged by using the adequate programs and tests from this research.

Discussion

After being exposed to the activities of two different programs, there had been an success analysis speaking of the auditory and rhythmical discrimination at the initial Gordon`s test done on the whole sample. The results were:

At the beginning, the groups E and K have a small variance of the average value that at the initial test, but the value for Z from for that $-0,389$ variance so small that that cannot be significant at the level of 0.05, that is $Z = -0,389 < 3 \cdot 0,01 = 2,33$

Based on these results, we can see that the scores between the results at the initial testing for both groups with Gordon`s test, the difference is almost insignificant and can be totally statistically negligible. If we analyze the results, we can conclude that before implementing the activities of the current and stimulative musical program, the children were almost equal considering the level of musical abilities development.

Retesting the whole sample by Gordon`s test, we had the result:

The average progress in the group E is 49,122, and the group K is 7,224. The average progression at the group E is 52,734, and at the group K is 10,163. When we take under consideration the small correlation $r_{EK} = -0,038$ and calculate the standard error in the progress, we find the Z from 14, 715 which represents the test of difference in the progress of these two samples which is satisfactory as in case of the final status, so the difference is significant above the level of 0,01, that is $Z = 14,715 > 3 \cdot 0,01 = 2,33$.

Based on the results, we can conclude that there are statistically significant differences in progress between the experimental and the controlled group at the Gordon`s test speaking of the rhythmical and auditory discrimination on behalf of applying the stimulative musical education program.

Retesting the whole sample by Gordon`s test, we had the result:

Taking the significant experimental group`s results, connected to the auditory and rhythmical discrimination development, we can say that the progress is directly connected to the children`s participation in aims, tasks and the content of the stimulative musical education program. The benefits of the program show that:

- The stimulation of the elementary musical predispositions development, especially the auditory and rhythmical, can be seen in the diversity of the general goals that influenced the accomplishments;
- The stimulation of the auditory and rhythmical abilities depends on quality of the musical content, which affected, as well as the correlated tasks with the age of the children, the children`s accomplishment in this way;
- The possibility of individual engagement in musical activities, enables the systematicly and congruously tracking their development in this field;

- Applying the valid tests for tracking and appraising the children`s development, gives the continuum and the possibility of seeing the real results of the children`s musical development;
- By the continuum of everyday activities with singing, instruments, one stimulates the auditory predispositions development within the preschool age children;
- The continuum of everyday Orff`s instruments usage advanced the progress of rhythmical predispositions and great accomplishments of the experimental group.

The average progress in the group E is 49,122, and the group K is 7,224. The average progression at the group E is 52,734, and at the group K is 10,163. When we take under consideration the small correlation $r_{ek} = -0,038$ and calculate the standard error in the progress, we find the Z from 14,715 which represents the test of difference in the progress of these two samples which is satisfactory as in case of the final status, so the difference is significant above the level of 0,01, that is $Z = 14,715 > 3,01 = 2,33$.

Analyzing individually the height discrimination in the experimental and controlled group`s results, we can conclude that the singing, as a part of the stimulative musical program with its goals, tasks, definitely affected the shown accomplishments in a certain way:

We can conclude that the stimulation of the precise intonation was indeed better when being stimulated by everyday singing with the melodic instrument (piano, accordion), and that exactly that kind of support actually stimulated the more precisely singing.

We can conclude, that the children`s individual singing stimulation, with gradually implementation of the groups and a choir, also improved the preciseness in conservation of melody.

The conclusions of the teachers in musical activities are analogue to our research and show that the children who learn the certain song without the individual stimulation, mostly do the rhythm precisely as well as the song lyrics, but the melody is not precise in intonation, because of the fact that the children with the instable intonation "interfere" with the precise reproduction among connected to the children whose ability of precise intonation has been more developed.

We can conclude that the tasks of the discrimination in tone height, are supported by the children`s experience connected to the high-low relations (visually-environmental), presented in the experimental group, are also responsible for the accomplishments of the auditory discrimination in this group.

Analyzing this and the similar researches, we can presume that the explanation of the high-low relation and his applying and significance in music, is a very important because it makes it easy to children verbally

express themselves during the determination of a height discrimination, that is, the children's focus is on differing the auditory and not verbally expressing. This shows the reason for high results in height discrimination in retesting the experimental group.

The results, addressing the rhythmical discrimination that show the average progress, in the group E are 35,857, and the group K are 8,163, so when we consider the small correlation $r_{ek}=0,24$ and calculate the standard error in progress, we find Z from 4,461 which represents the difference test in progress of these two samples, which is also satisfactory as well as the final status, we get the significant difference above the level 0,01, that is $Z=4,461 > Z_{0,01}=2,33$.

Analyzing the rhythmical discrimination individually in the results of the experimental and controlled group, we can conclude that almost each and every part of the stimulative musical program with its goals and tasks, as well the proper content, very much influenced the shown accomplishments of the experimental group in a way:

- Continuum is secured by repetition of rhymes accompanied by the rhythmical Orff's instruments;
- It was insisted on rhythmical Orff's instruments usage as the backup of the singing activities, and rhythmical tasks in each song;
- Applying the innovative methodical aspects, considering the realization of the preciseness of the rhythmical tasks;
- Applying the activities that secure the exact performing of the rhythmical models and their correlation with the given tempo;
- The adoption of the two-part and three-part has been achieved throughout the rhymes and musical games;
- The adequate musical activities have been realized in order to form and keep the continuous rhythmical pulsation.

The current musical program seems to be responsible for the controlled group's result in retesting by Gordon's test, which shows a certain improvement, but not statistically significant, and this program does not have enough stimulative component considering the ones in the experimental group. Even though the differences between the initial and retesting the controlled group are not statistically significant, they do exist, so in the current musical program one can talk about the importance of children's musical stimulation at the preschool institutions, considering the difference between them and children without the contact to music.

Based on everything already being said, we could state the hypothesis confirmed, so we could conclude that the auditory and rhythmical progress depends, not only on exposure to different musical programs, but also on quality of the goals, tasks and the content of musical programs.

Conclusion

The results, their analysis and the discussion, secured the conclusions based on which was possible to judge the adequacy of the hypotheses from this research, as well as the basic stating points. The criteria for its legitimate prevailing, is the level of the accomplished goals and tasks during the research.

Analyzing the results of the musical programs, we can conclude that the current musical education program does not stimulate enough the auditory and rhythmical predisposition development. We can, also conclude that the stimulative musical education program, leaning to the cotemporary pedagogical postulates, has the influence of creating and developing the elementary musical predispositions (auditory and rhythmical), as confirmed in this research. Based on this, there is an opinion that the concept of the stimulative musical program, with all its components, is extremely significant in stimulating the auditory and rhythmical abilities at the preschool age children, and the hypothesis is confirmed with all the research results.

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ROLE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE INDIA

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Abstract: *Vocational education and trainings are the driving forces of economic growth and social development for any country. India has largest technical manpower in the world. In India, the emphasis has been given on vocational education. India is expected to be home to a skilled workforce of 500 million by 2022. About 12 million persons are expected to join the workforce every year. This talent pool needs to be adequately skilled.*

The system is also failed to fulfill market needs, resulting in a curriculum that is of low relevance to employment needs. Various steps are being taken towards meeting the above objectives. As India moves progressively towards becoming a knowledge economy, it becomes increasingly important that the country should focus on advancement of vocational education and trainings, relevant to the emerging economic environment.

Key words: *Human Development, Vocational Education and training.*

1. Introduction

Education serves as capital for a society. The educational journey of India during the last six decades after independence has been quite exciting. Countries with higher and better levels of skills adjust more effectively to the challenges and opportunities of world of work. Vocational Education has faced immense challenges by Individuals, Institutions, Systems and Societies due to ample of problems, in the context of various other factors that are simultaneously operating on the current education system.

The main agencies of Government of India involved in Vocational education and trainings policy formulation and its implementation include:

- National Skills Development Council
- Ministry of Human Resource Development
- Department of School Education and Literacy
- Department of Higher / Technical Education
- Ministry of Labour and Employment

These agencies involved in to make policy to aim at empowering all individuals through improved skills, knowledge and internationally recognised qualifications to enable them to access decent employment, to promote inclusive national growth and to ensure India's competitiveness in the global market.

2. Vocational Education and Training Scenario of India

The National Council on Vocation Training plays a key role in the formation of training curriculum, policies, standards, as well as in certification by means of the trade test. The National Skill Development Corporation has been set up under Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode as a Section-25 Company under the Ministry of Finance to provide viability gap funding and coordinate private sector initiatives. The Prime Minister's National Council on Skill Development has been formulated to coordinate action on skill development.

3. Major Challenges

Various Reasons for Low Performance of vocational education and training are as follows:

- Low priority for Vocational Education and Shortage of trained teachers.
- Inadequate linkages with Industries and Lack of infrastructure.
- Absence of a National Competency Testing and Accreditation system
- Inadequate or non-coverage of trades in service sector which has higher employment potential and Inflexible curriculum.
- Lack of equivalence for employment purposes and vertical mobility.
- Lack of convergence between various agencies and social recognition.

4. Human Development and Technical Skills with Global competition

Modern Indian system face similar contemporary challenges, resulting from the advancement of science and technology, economic growth, social changes, and the internationalization and globalization of the world economy. Human development seems to be imperative for long-term sustainable growth as it exhibits threshold effects in the sense that nations must attain a certain human development level before future economic growth becomes sustainable and this transition has led to a series of profound socioeconomic changes and has had a strong impact on society.

Vocational education is thus challenged from the grassroots and by the indigenous culture, it is also relentlessly pressed to keep pace with global advances, in the development of both manpower and research.

India is now facing problem of how to satisfy its local needs and it is close to compete the regional as well as global markets. A lot of effort is required to strengthen the education system are imperative to bring the development of skilled manpower at par with the international standard. The role of R&D in this context is highly significant and needs special attention.

Need of overspecialized and departmentalized higher educated technocrats and labour forces based on the rationale of a planned education system suitable for future developing market context.

5. Projected Demand and Demand-Supply Gap

For an economy to sustain increasing growth rate, it is essential that the workforce be exposed to some form of skilling. Thus it is expected that India will have to be home of a skilled workforce of 500 million persons by 2022. It is expected that this 15 million would be the required skill development capacity in vocational training in itself as a large portion of the employment would occur in the lower portions of the skill pyramid.

To achieve more skill development capacity as specified in the National Skill Development Policy, need of more autonomy required for faculties to direct control and management to one of regulating training centres within a infrastructure and financing higher education with priorities, providing policy guidance and coordination, and monitoring and evaluating higher education institutions.

6. Initiatives under the National Skill Development Policy to achieve sustainable growth

The Initiatives of the National Skill Development Policy is as follows:

1. Institution based skill development programme conducted by ITIs/ITCs/vocational schools/technical schools/ polytechnics/ professional colleges, etc.
2. Learning initiatives of sectoral skill development organised by different ministries/departments.
3. Formal and informal apprenticeships and other types of training by enterprises
4. Training for self-employment/entrepreneurial development
5. Adult learning, retraining of retired or retiring employees and lifelong learning
6. Non-formal training including training by civil society organisations
7. E-learning, web-based learning and distance learning.

The strong impact of advances in information technology on the people to equalize access, the bottom line of the government's policy is to provide opportunities for vocational education to all those who aspire to it. To serve this commitment, facilities have been massively expanded. Fees have been kept low. Several universities offer fee waivers to incapable students.

7. Need for Implementing Quality in vocational trainings

In India populations increased but facilities fall short of demand, various professional programs generate huge number of graduates with unemployment; lack of competition. There is a need for an independent system to assess quality, comprising all elements of the skill development value chain, right from need assessment and student mobilisation up to training and placement.

Current systems are primarily oriented towards quality checks during the phase of assessment and certification. The Government must, in all seriousness, draw up a plan and programme of action, allot the necessary funds under the various government plans.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

Strong need of Public/Private Partnership in vocational Education, Governance of Education, advancement of knowledge and technology, Access, Equity and Export of Higher Education, Update globalized planning for vocational Education is required with full awareness of societal realities and needs.

The findings reveal that the performance of Vocational Education and training in India is considerable, therefore its development sector is facing lower skills gap. There is an immediate need of reforms in education system with reference to development of skilled manpower. In the context of achieving the necessary 'scale' and 'speed', the following solutions could be the way ahead in providing a conducive environment for India to meet its skill development goals:

- Implementing Vocational Education in schools and Ensuring quality in delivery
- Creating a large talent pool through Modular employable skills and Formulation of institutional mechanisms for content formation, delivery, and assessment.
- Employing technology to achieve scale
- Setting up of a National Human Resource Market Information System.

To match these requirements, the centres of higher learning should be prepared by regularly changing/ updating their curriculum to the market/society requirements to boost the employability of workers.

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THE USE OF ICT BY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE FAMILY. MODELS AND OPTIONS FOR THE WEEKEND

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Abstract:*The use of ICT by high school students in the family. Models and options for the weekend. The development of the technology lying at the base of ITC led to changes not only in society and education, but in the case of family, it brought about challenges hard to anticipate a few decades before. The present study aims at identifying the main elements that define the use of ITC in the family, at the weekend. We analyzed data collected from a sample of high school students, concerning the preference for various activities that include or take advantage of means of communication. Due to the complexity of the issue, we made analyses based on gender, in relation to the age of the respondents, to their residence, to the family extension, starting from their religious affiliation or confession, as well as to their education level.*

Keywords: *ICT, family structure, communication, high school students, education*

Preliminaries

Any analysis connected to the importance of using the new technologies in order to improve the quality of education also represents a reconfirmation of the need to make educational research meant to offer diagnosis and solutions in order to valorize in a proper pedagogical way, on the one hand, the opportunities offered by these modern means, and on the other hand, the preoccupation of the children, starting from an early age, for everything that means digital area.

In this paper we present the data collected from an investigation based on questionnaires, which aimed at identifying answers to a few questions regarding the presence and the possible impact of information and communication technology on the life of adolescents. Thus, we intend to discover the place occupied by communication with friends using the

Internet and phone in the preferences of high school students during the weekend, respectively the amount of time spent with modern information means.

The sample of the research included 802 high school students, divided in four age groups, between 15 and 18, balanced from the point of view of gender (50,37% girls and 49,63% boys), from the point of view of residence (50,62% from the urban area and 49,38% from the rural area). As for the religious affiliation of the students' families, the sample respects the distribution at a national level in Romania of the religions and cults recognized legally. We also had in mind the education level of students, following a structure with three levels: 5-6,99 (11,48%), 7-8,99 (55,23%), 9-10 (33,29%). Starting from the fact that spending free time depends on the extension of the family, in the sample we chose we have the following data: a single child in the family, (23,19%), two children in the family (46,99%), three children in the family (12,59%), respectively more than three children in the family (10,34%), the percentage up to 100% being non-answers.

The preference for activities that involve means of communication

In the questionnaire we offered, the students were asked to choose from a list of ten activities they can do at the weekend three they prefer, without making a hierarchy. Among the ten activities, three were in direct relation to the means of communication (television and the Internet), being chosen by students in different percentages: watching a show on TV (27,41%), communicating with friends online (37%), respectively reading/documenting Internet resources for current school activities (8,51%). These values indicate the fact that almost half of the students choose to spend the weekend using at least one of the means of communication we suggested in the administered questionnaire.

In table 1 we presented the situation of the multiple, respectively single choices for the three actions.

Watching a TV show / Communicating with friends online / Documenting Internet resources for current school activities (%)

Table 1

Documenting Internet resources for current school activities	Communicating with friends online		Total
	did not choose	chose	

did not choose	Watching a TV show	did not choose	48,73	23,39	72,13
		chose	14,18	13,59	27,77
	Total		63,01	37	100
chose	Watching a TV show	did not choose	50	26,04	76,04
		chose	12,5	11,46	23,96
	Total		62,5	37,5	100

Data shows that out of the total of those who chose reading/documenting Internet resources, 11,46% also chose the other two variants, and 12,5% of the students chose only watching TV shows. 13,59% of the students chose the combination between watching TV shows and communicating with friends online, and 14,18% only watching TV shows.

These results indicate that students prefer to spend the weekend at home using several means of communication. We did not have in mind communication using the phone, which can also occur in an area different from home. Due to the fact that nonformal and informal education through the TV channels was preferred by approximately a quarter of the respondents, we present their options for certain TV shows, in table 2.

Students' option for certain TV shows

Table 2

Types of TV shows	%
films	73,1
entertainment shows	55,1
music	54,7
news	23,8
cultural shows	16,1
documentaries	7,1
other shows	1,86

Data analysis according to different variables

According to **gender**, the reference was made to the whole sample, given its structure. In table 2 we synthesized the research results in percentages, referring to the three aspects analyzed. We also calculated the amplitude (A), through the difference between the highest and the lowest

percentage for the three activities, as well as the percentage difference girls-boys for each of the three activities.

The preference for different activities at the weekend, according to gender (%) *Table 3*

Activities Gender	Watching TV shows	Communicating with friends online	Documenting Internet resources for school activities	A
Total of choices	27,41%	37%	8,51%	
Feminine	53,37	47,65	57,27	9,62
Masculine	46,63	52,03	42,73	9,3
Difference (G-B)	6,74	- 4,38	14,54	

The data in table 3 reveal differences according to gender in the preferences of high school students. In the case of girls, the highest percentages are connected with school activities, as for boys, communicating with friends online (52,03%) predominates. The amplitude close to 10 percentage points shows the existence of a hierarchy of students' preferences for certain activities. If as concerns watching TV shows, respectively communicating with friends online, the differences are not significant, we notice a difference greater than 10 percentage points as concerns reading/documenting Internet resources for school activities. This difference can be attributed to the well-known meticulousness of girls regarding school activity.

In order to analyze the data according to the students' age, we will make distribution curves for the percentages of the three activities (TV - watching TV shows, Netf - communicating with friends online; Nets - documenting Internet resources for school activities), present in figure 1.

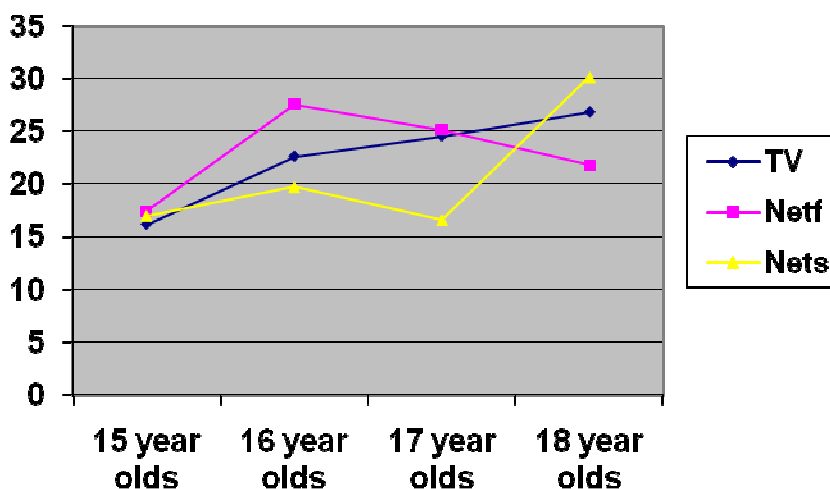


Fig.1. Distribution curves of percentages for students' choices, according to age

The data collected indicate different distributions of the students' choices according to their age. For the first option (TV) we notice an almost lineal rising curve, the amplitude being $A_{TV} = 26,86\% - 16,48\% = 10,38\%$, which indicates significant changes between the students' preoccupations in their free time at the beginning of high school compared to the end of it. The same rising tendency is found in the case of the third option (Nets), with an insignificant decrease in the case of 17 year olds. In the case of 18 year olds, who prepare for the final exam we find an increase with almost 16 percentage points. As for the second option (Netf), we notice that the 16-year old students have a tendency 10 percentage points greater to communicate with friends on the Internet, compared to the 15 year olds. Towards the end of school years one notices a decrease in this preoccupation, being surpassed by the one referring to watching TV shows, respectively documenting for school activities.

If we were to characterize the students according to categories, we can say that, when they are 15, they are equally preoccupied by television, the dialogue with their friends and documenting Internet resources for school activities, but these preoccupations are not very present in their lives (percentages below 20%). When they are 16, age which corresponds to the eleventh grade, marked by the crisis of adolescence at multiple levels, there is an increase of the desire to communicate with friends, not necessarily face to face, in the case of more than a quarter of the respondents. The 17 year olds have preoccupations similar to those of 16 year olds, a little diminished, so that when they are 18, the Internet has a more important role in their

school education. The growingly important place occupied by television in the life of high school students, as they grow up, can also be a consequence of the fact that the weekend is considered by many as a period of relaxation, and the offer made through the multitude of TV stations is very generous in this respect. On the other hand, in some families, spending many hours a day with the TV on represents a fact, and for the students a fact of life.

Another important variable in identifying some aspects linked to spending the weekend is represented by **the residence milieu** of the respondents. As we have already mentioned, in the sample we selected the percentage of students in the urban area is almost equal. We related to the total number of students in each category, the data being presented in table 4.

The preference for certain activities at the weekend, according to the residence milieu (%)

Table 4

Activities	Watching TV shows	Communication with friends online	Documenting Internet resources for school activities	A
The residence milieu				
Total choices	27,41%	37%	8,51%	
Urban	50,09	56,59	51,04	6,5
Rural	49,91	43,41	49,96	6,55
Difference (U–R)	0,81	13,18	1,08	

The analysis of the data in table indicates, in the case of two of the three activities of spending free time at the weekend we observed in our research, the tendency to a diminution of the differences urban-rural. Besides, this fact is to be found in a growing number of aspects of life, highlighted by the pedagogical research of recent years¹⁴.

¹⁴For example, the research of recent years show a decrease of the percentage of participation with a monthly frequency at the services of one's own religious confession in the rural area and an increase in the urban area, which led to the attenuation of the differences according to this variable, in the case of Romanians. One also notices that the population for which religious effectivity is a main element of life is younger. (Mălina Voicu ed., *Credință și practică religioasă în România (Religious faith and practice in Romania)*, Institutul de Cercetare a Calității Vieții, Grupul românesc pentru studiul valorilor sociale, "Valorile românilor", Newsletter, nr. 2, February, 2009, pp. 1-2).

The option for communicating with friends differs according to the residence milieu in a significant percentage from a statistical point of view (over 10 percentage points.) This fact shows the tendency, more reduced in the case of towns compared to the case of villages, to be in communion, to meet friends face to face. The virtual reality tends to make people lonely, especially in towns. The advantages offered by life in the rural area, such as observing traditions, feasts, valorizing family and friends are highlighted by the results of the present research, too.

The options regarding the way of spending free time are strongly influenced by the **extension of the family**, this being one of the variables taken into consideration when analyzing the data. Table 5 presents the results obtained by relating to the total number of respondents in each category. We also calculated the amplitude for each type of activity.

The preference for certain activities at the weekend, according to the extension of the family (%)

Table 5

Activities Number of children	Watching TV shows	Communication with friends online	Documenting Internet resources for school activities
Total choices	27,41%	37%	8,51%
a single child	32	41,52	11,03
two children	28,5	36,98	7,43
three children	21,01	36,95	7,97
more than three children	16,27	26,35	8,57
Amplitude	15,73	14,17	3,7

Based on the data in table 5, we made distribution curves of the data for each of the three actions analyzed (fig. 2), which facilitates the interpretation of results.

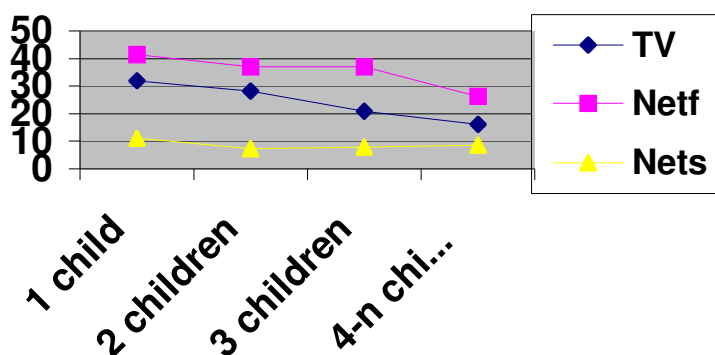


Fig. 2. Distribution curves for the data regarding the preference for spending free time at the weekend, according to the extension of the family

The data of the research reveal the influences exerted by the extension of the family on the options and preferences for spending free time at the weekend. The data indicate significant differences from a statistical point of view between the percentages of the choices made by the students who are single children and those coming from a large family, for two of the activities presented: watching a TV show ($A_{TV} = 15,73\%$), respectively communicating with friends online ($A_{Netp} = 14,17$). Using the Internet for current school activities is not significantly influenced by the extension of the family, the differences being under four percentage points.

The almost lineal decreasing curve for (Netf) indicates the great need of single children or those having a brother/sister, to communicate with someone out of the family. Even if the weekend, especially Sundays, generally represents a time for family reunion, more than a third of the students coming from small families look for the company of friends. This fact reflects the crisis of the family, which becomes less capable of finding solutions to sustain the interrelations between its members and of identifying various ways in which a child can wish to be around his parents as much as possible.

Watching TV shows is something done together with the other members of the family, but in this case one notices significantly greater values for families less extended, too. The option for such an activity can also derive from a convenience of the family or from a lack of creativity in identifying diversified ways of spending together the time at the weekend.

Starting from the fact that in Romania approximately 93% of the students at the pre-university levels opted for the study of the subject Religion and from the results of some sociological research indicating the fact that religiosity constitutes an important element in Romania and it is over the average of the central and Eastern European countries¹⁵, we made an analysis of the data according to the religious affiliation of the respondents. The analysis of the data starting from the students' **religious denomination** allows us to formulate some conclusions regarding the activities they choose for the weekend, a period which includes Sunday, a feast day for Christians. In this context, we consider the data collected from the respondents as being an average for the whole weekend, thus also for Sundays (table 6)¹⁶.

The preference for using ITC at the weekend, according to the religious denomination(%)

Table 6

Confesiunea	Watching TV shows	Communication with friends online	Documenting Internet resources for school activities
Orthodox	28,22	37,76	8,58
Roman-Catholic	36,36	18,18	9,09
Greek-Catholic	29,41	47,08	5,88
Reformed Church	33,33	35,89	12,82
Baptist	13	53,33	0
Pentecostal	12,5	17,5	5

In table 6 we presented the data offered by the respondents belonging to the religious denominations that had higher percentages than 1 % of the total (with a sum of percentages of approximately 98 %, in relation with the whole sample), distribution similar to the official one, at a national level. The data show the preference of the Orthodox, Greek-Catholic, Reformed, Baptist and Pentecostal students for communicating with friends online. The highest values were recorded in the case of the Baptist students (53,33%),

¹⁵ <http://www.pewforum.org/2017/05/10/religious-belief-and-national-belonging-in-central-and-eastern-europe/>

¹⁶ As the data of the present research have been collected during the school year, when students preoccupied by increasing their school performance appeal to extra preparation, often with a private teacher, including Sundays, we consider that the data recorded by us present greater values compared to the whole level of the year.

and the lowest in the case of the Roman-Catholic and Pentecostal students (about 18%). On the other hand, Roman-Catholic students prefer watching TV shows in greater percentages (almost 6-8, respectively 23 percentage points) than the Orthodox and Greek-Catholic, respectively Baptist and Pentecostal students. The low percentage of the students belonging to neo-Protestant cults interested in computer-assisted education at the weekend can be due to the fact this activity is often considered work, current duty of the student, which can be translated in not respecting the day of rest or weekly feast.

The analysis of the data according to the level of education reveals significant differences concerning one aspect. This is documenting Internet resources, chosen mainly by high school students whose grades for the previous year had been between 9 and 10 (on a scale from 1 to 10, 10 being the highest one): 13,05%, compared to 3,03%, in the case of the high school students with a minimum level of education. The results indicate a greater preoccupation for studying and the use of free time for education. This must be corroborated with other aspects, such as, for example, the time these young people spend in the company of education means and the extent in which this activity draws them away from possible destructuring activities.

Another aspect taken into consideration by the present research refers to the number of hours students spent in front of the TV, respectively on the Internet. The only significant differences are found in the case of the students that prefer watching TV shows. In their case, one sees an increase of the percentage values for a growing number of watching hours, the maximum being for the interval 4-6 hours, according to the data in figure 3.

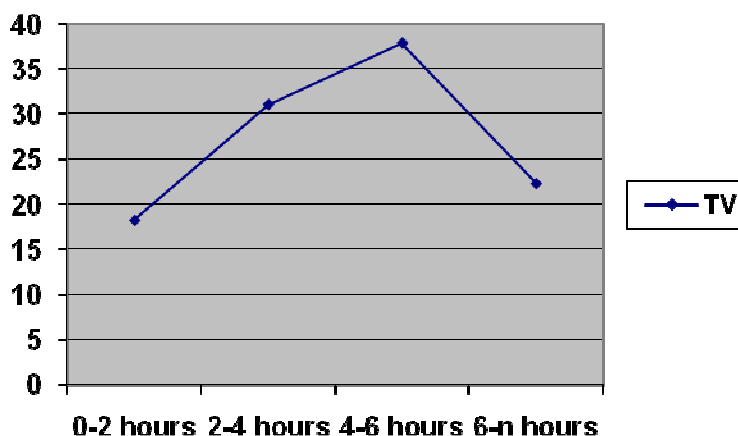


Fig. 3. Distribution curve for the data concerning the number of hours spent in front of the TV by the students who opted for this activity

Conclusions

The profile of the high school students who choose to spend part of their weekend in the company of the means offered by the technology of information and communications presents a series of particular aspects: 18-year old girls, irrespective of their residence, single children or having a brother or sister prefer to watch TV; 16-year old boys or girls in the urban area, with a small number of family members prefer communication with friends online; irrespective of the number of children in the family or the residence, 18-year old girls choose documenting Internet resources for current school activities.

From our point of view, the essential questions the family should ask itself are: What does the weekend (still) represent for us? Why do children prefer to spend their weekend with friends not with the family? The fact that a great part of high school students tend to draw away from the activities specific to their own family for the weekend also show a crisis of the family, even a devalorization of it, but also the lack of a preoccupation to identify actions which meet better the expectations of these young people. Even in the undeniable context of the need for communication of young people today with friends or of the supplementary school activity and professional performance, the support high school students need in this important stage in their life from the family remains a central one.

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INVESTIGATING UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF STUDYING POETRY

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Abstract: *The present paper aims at identifying philology undergraduates' perceptions of the courses and seminars during which they study poetry as part of their literature classes. By means of a questionnaire, whose data are both quantitatively and qualitatively interpreted, the study tries to answer questions such as: to what extent do students appreciate the study of poetry, do they consider the study of poetry useful for their own development and for their future career and if their teachers apply active learning strategies during their poetry classes.*

Keywords: *poetry, perception, undergraduates, teaching*

1. Introduction

To turn poetry into a basic part of students' reading habits is an ideal of any language teacher, no matter the level of instruction he/she is involved in, primary school, high school or higher education. What makes poetry unique, and consequently the teaching of it, is that it "can make us feel more in tune with ourselves" (Naylor, Wood, 2012: 9) as well as with others. If taught properly and systematically, poetry offers numerous formative advantages as it has the power to stimulate imagination and creativity in students, to cultivate their empathy with the experiences of others, and to develop more positive attitudes towards life (Williams, 2012). The experience of a lyrical text results in personal renewal and self-awareness, which are the prerequisites for developing social responsibility and a proactive relationship to the world in general (Williams, 2012). Other researchers emphasize the idea that the teaching of poetry, which is a form of education through emotion, can mould students' consciousness by developing "aesthetic appreciation and the ability to communicate and value – beauty (or its absence) in our lives" (Quinlan, 2016: 263).

As the educational potential of poetry is widely recognized, poetry is studied at all key stages of the instructional process offering teachers limitless classroom practices, or, as Sedgwick asserts, “each poem presents itself differently and introduces its own vast array of teaching possibilities” (2003: 51). Classroom practices may be based on various approaches to teaching poetry. For instance, Naylor and Wood identify a traditional model of teaching poetry, which focuses more on the text and less on the historical and cultural context that determined its creation (2012: 12-13), and the personal growth model, which lays emphasis on the development of the individual’s imaginative and aesthetic life (2012: 13). They also mention the important contribution of Louise Rosenblatt who brings to the fore the reader’s experience of a literary work showing that “the interpretation of texts is an active process, [and] that the reader is of equal importance in the creation of meaning as the work itself” (2012: 15). Other researchers speak of a holistic view of literature teaching that associates the subjective level of the personal growth model with an objective one consisting in the development of knowledge of the cultural heritage that poetry and literature in general encapsulate (Atherton et al.). In such a view, the concepts of personal growth and cultural heritage are interrelated with the concept of cultural analysis, which requires students “to place their experience of the texts in the context of broader ideas about history, meaning and function of literature in society, the values associated with it, and the roles it plays in their own lives” (2013: 6). Nevertheless, many teachers lay great stress on students’ personal response to the text and pay little attention to cultural analysis. As this approach is “under-theorised” and does not aim to develop students’ ability “to locate their subjective responses critically in contemporary socio-cultural contexts” (2013: 5), it has been argued that a more theorised teaching style able to engage students in more objective and critical discussions of canonical texts would be necessary (2013: 5). As a matter of fact, a successful study of poetry requires an integrated approach in which attention should be equally paid to textuality, language and culture. It is a student-centred approach that values students’ personal and critical response to poetry, actively engaging them in analysing the meaning and significance of the text both in discussion and in writing. Implicitly, such an approach aims to develop students’ awareness of the theoretical aspects related to the taught subject and the complex relationships among text, language and culture, or reader, writer and text.

In a poetry class, the teacher should play the role of “a guide to the art of poetry” and not of a “guardian of meanings” (Wormser and Cappella, 2009: 339). In this quality, the teacher-facilitator encourages students to explore the style of the poem and take part in intelligent critical discussions. As Wormser and Cappella rightly show, “style is meaning in poetry” (2009:

346), which implies the idea that any discussion of meaning is simultaneously a discussion of form. In other words, content and form are inseparable in poetry, or, as the same authors put it, by discovering “rhythm, words choice, form and metaphor, you are going to be talking about meanings” (2009: 346). It has often been argued that a poem is difficult to understand and analyse, but the key to a successful approach is to work through its form to discover its meaning. In this sense, Stephen Burt specifies that “All poetry is difficult if you don’t have a way in, a sense of what’s represented how (which allows you to ask why)” (2010: 20). The study of poetry, which is always based on a movement from the outside towards the inside, means, therefore, “Starting with words and forms and working toward the students’ felt experience” (Duke and Jacobson, 1992: 107). Used as a playground for intellectual, emotional and cultural exploration, poetry becomes an effective “way of developing personal values, understanding multicultural heritage, and broadening experience” (Ruurs, 2000: 8).

2. Methodology

2.1. Research questions

The purpose of the research is to evaluate undergraduate students’ perceptions of the study of poetry during their literature courses and seminars, as well as outside the classroom. The following questions lay at the basis of the research:

1. To what extent do students appreciate the study of poetry?
2. Do teachers apply active learning strategies during their poetry classes?
3. Do students consider the study of poetry useful for their own development and for their future career?

2.2. Participants in the study

As the study of poetry is a major component of the Philology curriculum, 69 students were invited to participate in the research. They are final year students specialising in Romanian and English language and literature at the Petroleum – Gas University of Ploiesti. All of them studied poetry in the first, the second and the third year of study.

2.3. Research instrument

The research used quantitative methods, the main research instrument being a questionnaire that consisted of 10 items. It included 3 closed questions, 1 semi-open question and 6 open questions. The information offered by students’ answers to these items was analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively in order to get a general image of the way in which poetry is taught and perceived at university level. Instructors interested in teaching

poetry may find in the collected data useful suggestions for the improvement of their own courses and seminars.

3. Data Analysis

Students' answers to the questionnaire offered relevant information that was analysed as follows. As shown in the table below and in figure 1, a large proportion of the respondents (82.61 %) have a favourable opinion of their poetry courses and seminars. Such a high percentage is not surprising as they have the opportunity to study a variety of poems belonging to all periods of time and corresponding to all interests or literary tastes. Their positive perception of poetry may also be explained by the fact that, alongside canonical texts and authors, they study particular poets and texts during their optional courses and seminars. In some cases, the syllabus of optional poetry classes is based on students' preferences in terms of authors and poems.

Q1. Do you appreciate your poetry classes?		
	No.	%
Yes	57	82.61 %
No	12	17.39 %

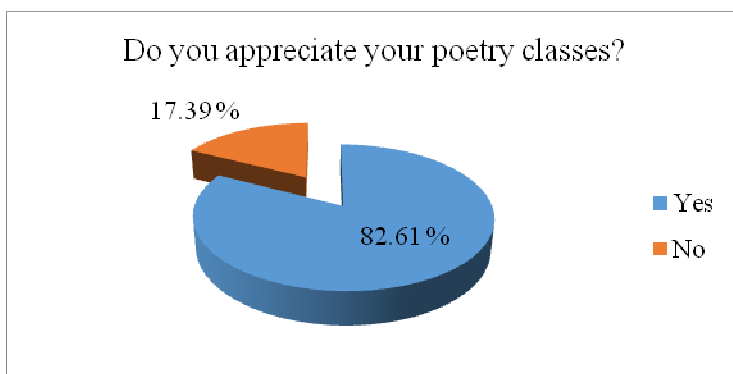


Figure 1. Students' opinions of poetry classes

According to question two (What teaching strategies does your teacher use? Enumerate some of them.), students' answers showed that they appreciate poetry courses or seminars because their instructors use a variety of teaching strategies and methods, which have a great motivating potential. As far as courses are concerned, students generally identified active learning strategies such as brainstorming, free discussion, debate, problem-solving, etc., which demonstrates that teachers have implemented the student-centred

model of learning in the lectures. As regards the seminars, respondents pointed out their interactive quality by mentioning the frequent use of pair or group work. They also appreciate the fact that their teachers clarify and explain the meaning of difficult poems, and that the textual analysis performed in pairs or groups helps them to better understand the significance of a poem.

As regards question three (What teaching aids does the teacher use? Enumerate some and explain why they are necessary.) students' responses confirm that most teachers bring works of critics into the classroom to illustrate or comment on various theoretical aspects related to poetry and textual analysis. They find these books extremely useful because they help them to understand long intricate poems, especially symbols and imagery that are hard to decipher. At the same time, they are dissatisfied with the fact that video projectors, power point presentations and handouts are rarely used. They are of the opinion that these teaching aids help them to better understand teachers' explanations and complicated critical theory.

The questionnaire also aimed to find out students' opinions about their poetry syllabus. According to the table below and figure 2, a high percentage of the respondents (79.71%) appreciate the content of their poetry courses and seminars, most of them considering the syllabus very interesting and interesting. It should be noted that these views reinforce the responses to question 1, discussed above.

Q4. How do you find your poetry syllabus?		
	No.	%
Very interesting	21	30.43%
Interesting	34	49.28%
Boring	14	20.29%

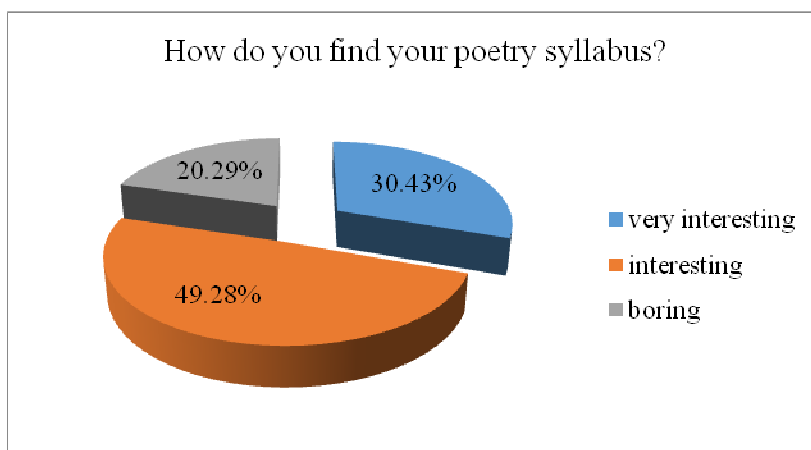


Figure 2. Students' opinions of the poetry syllabus

The answers to question five (What are the benefits of poetry classes? Specify some of them.) show that students are aware of the instructional advantages of the study of poetry. Most of them believe that such classes help them to enrich their knowledge and culture, increase their understanding of the world, develop their thinking and language skills, etc. Apart from the intellectual aspects that poetry entails, respondents appreciate it for its emotional and affective qualities, as shown by answers such as: “poetry teaches us how to live, to love and feel”, “poetry helps you when you are sad, lonely or misunderstood”, “we discover the beauty of literature in an enjoyable way”, etc.

The questionnaire also included a question (Q 6. Which are the weaknesses of poetry classes? Enumerate some of them.) meant to identify the negative aspects related to poetry classes. Students’ answers reveal that, although they like the content of their syllabus, they do not have enough time for reading all the materials required by teachers (poems or literary criticism) or for finishing the projects required within such classes. Among the factors that hinder them to complete their assigned tasks are the great number of poets and poems they have to read, their overloaded timetable in general and the bibliography they must study for other disciplines of the curriculum. Others dislike long and difficult poems whose meaning remain obscure in spite of their efforts to decipher it. Another problem mentioned by respondents is that some students, especially when they cannot understand the teacher’s explanations, get bored and noisy disturbing the flow of the lesson. According to them, such events happen when lectures are too theoretical and the information presented by teachers is too dense.

As to question seven referring to the measures that instructors should take to improve these courses and seminars, the majority of the students agree that teachers should simplify and synthesize the theoretical aspects related to the study of poetry. They believe that unimportant details and complicated information should be avoided during poetry classes. It is notable that some respondents consider the use of humour to be the best way to engage students in the learning process. Some respondents also believe that poetry classes would be more effective if teachers chose short poems instead of long unattractive texts that are time-consuming and more difficult to read.

The answers to question eight revealed students’ perceptions of poetry compared to novel and drama. As indicated in the following table and in figure 3, the majority (65.22%) considers that the study of poetry is not as interesting as the study of the novel and drama. This attitude may be explained by the fact that students believe that poetry is more difficult to understand and interpret than prose and plays. Moreover, they tend to identify themselves with the characters in novels and plays much easier than with an abstract voice in a poem.

Q. 8. Do you find studying poetry as interesting as studying the novel and drama?		
	No.	%
Yes	24	34.78%
No	45	65.22%

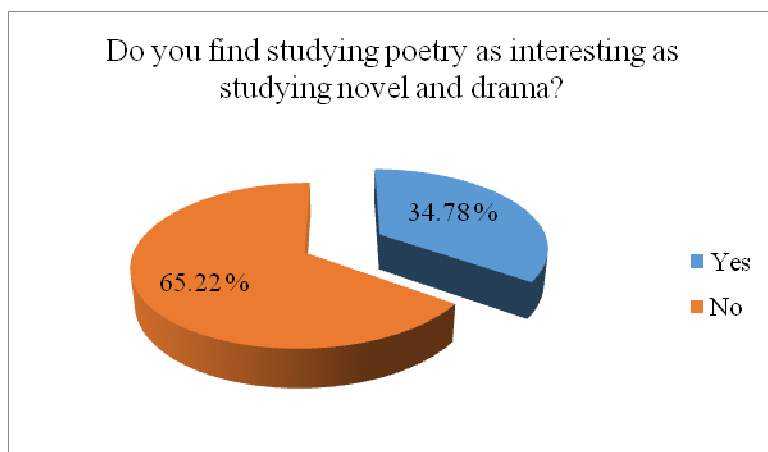


Figure 3. Students' perceptions of poetry vs. the novel and drama

Although the majority of the respondents enjoy poetry classes and are aware of their formative quality, their answers to question nine (How much time do you spend on reading poetry outside the classroom?) show that they rarely read poetry during their spare time. Most of them admit that they read only the poems included in the bibliography required for courses and seminars. It should be stressed that very few students like reading poems for pleasure and on a regular basis. In general, students' lack of interest in reading poetry outside the classroom can be explained by the fact that they prefer reading novels or plays. On the other hand, a low number of respondents never read poetry in their spare time on the grounds that they "dislike it" or they „don't feel attracted to it".

With respect to question ten, the authors of the present study intended to find out students' opinions about the educational potential of poetry classes in relation to the career they will choose in the future. The findings are shown in the table below and in figure 4.

Q10. Do you think that poetry classes will help you in your future career? Justify your point of view.		
	No.	%
Yes	42	60.87%
No	27	39.13%

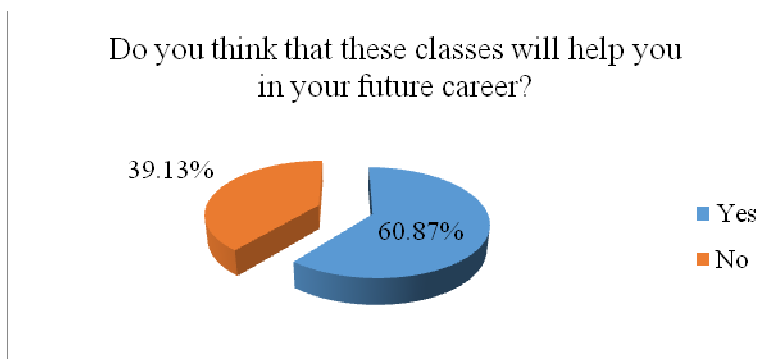


Figure 4. Students' views on the usefulness of poetry classes

As indicated above, the majority of the respondents (60.87%) believe that poetry classes are very useful because “they prepare you for your future career”. As most of them will become English or Romanian language and literature teachers, it is important for them to have solid knowledge about canonical texts, modern and contemporary poetry. In addition, they believe that the textual analyses performed during the poetry classes, particularly the seminars, are of great help because they develop their ability to analyse and reflect critically on various poetic texts. In this way, they “will know how to deal with a text and explain it to the pupils”. As to the proportion of students (39.13%) who consider that poetry classes are not necessary for their future career, their opinions are justified by the fact that they dislike the teaching career and prefer being employed in a different field. They consider that the study of poetry is useful only for those who want to work in education and not for those who will choose other career paths.

4. Conclusions

The findings of the present study provided positive answers to the three research questions. A large majority of the students (82.61 %) enjoy their poetry courses and seminars, and a high percentage of them (60.87%) believe in the formative and lasting influence of poetry in their professional development as future teachers. They also appreciate that poetry classes are student-centred and based on active learning strategies that motivate their participation in the instructional process.

On the other hand, the fact that most learners rarely read poetry for pleasure outside the classroom demonstrates that they have not fully internalized the benefits of poetry. In such a context, it may be argued that one of the priorities of poetry classes is to cultivate a lifelong habit of reading poetry in students. To achieve this purpose, as learners themselves suggested, teachers should rethink their poetry classes by adapting theoretical information to students' needs, laying more emphasis on in-depth

studies and less on comprehensive topics, including in the syllabus not only canonical poets but also what students prefer reading, avoiding overloaded assignments, etc. Moreover, to change learners' perception that poetry is a difficult genre, creative writing classes may be a good option as they enable them to study poetry starting from their own writing experiences. If poetry is appropriately taught and students are motivated, they may rediscover its beauty and enjoy it in the same way as they enjoy prose and drama. No matter what career they choose, students that have a more practical view on life may come to value poetry and read it for pleasure.

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"CHILD SOCIAL PROTECTION" RECODED. THE CARE DROP-OUTS.

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Abstract:*The report presents some challenging issues regarding the drop-out of social care of institutionalised children leaving the residential (specialised institutions) or non-residential (assisted loggings for instance) care system. The situation and the major difficulties of the children, teenagers and youngsters having to leave the formal social care system were not sufficiently investigated, mostly because of the huge heterogeneity of the individual social trajectories, because of the diversity of cultural, political, financial and subjective factors operating simultaneously and of numerous social actors not always acting converging. The “traditional” social care (that assures for the beneficiaries a certain specific “safety”) finishes in some cases in the moment the young adult has to leave an institution and has to face the realities of the labour market. The assessments of the drop-outs (and sometimes also the official statistics) are only sporadic and with less relevance for an objective social cartography. The aim of the present study was to identify some of the most relevant risk factors and the most frequent scenarios associated with dropping out of contacts with community-based social care services and also to analyse some of the possible strategies in order to avoid the rapid deterioration of the status of the young people leaving the “safe formal care system”.*

Key-words:*dropping out of social care, care drop-out, inappropriate terminations of contact with community-based services, episodes of social care, risk-scenarios, social child care recoded, risk factors*

Premises

Few studies have investigated factors which predict inappropriate terminations (drop-out) of contact with social care services.

The most common models and thinking patterns are based on the presumption that some dysfunctionalities must occur almost inevitably

- between the child expectations (desires) and those of the institution (formal care takers) and responsible bodies
- because of the age of the child (in many cases the social protection finishes abruptly at the moment the youngster reaches the age of 18); a further care will be, in the best cases, provided by another “authority” (institution, formal body).
- because of some “incompatibilities” at the level of the interaction child-institution (behavioural problems, recurrent conflicts with the staff, psychological major problems, etc.)

Coherent and relevant risk-factors analyses are rather occasionally but there are indications that some factors influencing the drop-outs and their negative consequences depend on structural elements of the care system itself – like the way the institutions are really functioning, the intra- and inter-institutional cooperation, a certain institutional opacity, some limitations of the staff competencies and practical skills (Diagram 1).

There are also some opinions considering that the passage from one care form to another – especially the transfer from the full-time assistance to a part-time social care – is not always sufficiently planned, designed and not carefully enough implemented.

Some youngsters having to leave the institutions are exposed to more risks than usually accepted. The most well-known and largely recognised drop-out scenarios are:

- the negative influence of some informal peer-groups (sometimes delinquents) - leading to an “undesirable and unacceptable behaviour”
- the insufficient incomes – leading to “desperate” search of a way to get an improvement of the financial situation (begging, stealing, borrowing, etc.)
- the pressure of the family – leading among others to overloading and daily stress
- the belonging to a gang – leading to aggression, over dimensioned self-confidence, unselective taking over of behavioural and axiological models
- the missing of a well-developed care-infrastructure, respectively of some adequate nets of therapeutic services and altogether of supporting (consulting) services for adolescents and young adults – leading for instance to insufficient specialised assistance for young people with disabilities.

This sort of scenarios are generally trusted (accepted), despite of the fact that they are constructed using certain common thinking “clichés” (like for instance “a family is better than any institution”).

Methodology

In order to identify the target-groups and the characteristics of the scenarios associated with dropping out of contact with community-based social care services (SCS) we analysed the evolution of a two years' cohort of young people that leaved the child social care system (specialised care units and supported loggings) and the in between occurred "drop-outs" or non-integration situations (for instance school/ professional training/ job drop-out).

The study focused on the specific influence and impact of the most relevant risk-factors, identified at the level of the formal bodies (county care offices, institutions, schools), foster families and informal groups.

The aim was to identify some of the risk factors and care settings characteristics associated with the likelihood of dropping out of contact with local care services, so that the services involved can identify the appropriate measures necessary to reduce the inappropriate terminations.

"Episodes" of social care

A social care measure designed and progressing in a specialised institution and supported by professional staff, therapists, educators, psychologists and care takers should be considered as a "**safe social care episode**". The children, the adolescents or the young people are beneficiaries of a

- coherent structure (organisation) and of a
- professional pedagogical setting.

It is reasonable to assume that such an "episode of care" should usually end when an episode of "acute social care need" finishes, respectively when a person has reached a reasonable level of personal autonomy and independence and a large quantum of knowledge and practical skills making possible the own management of an independent life.

When those two end-points do not coincide, we have to face a possible situation of drop-out and we have to reconsider the decision of breaking-off the care measure and to decode the scenarios that might follow when by the end of a care period not all the "main problems" have been solved.

An "episode of care" can be defined as a time frame between an "intake" in a care institution and the time point of leaving (termination of contact with the community-based social protection services).

But we defined an "episode" as **an interval between the onset of a social care setting** because of a "problem" (behavioural, social-interactional, mental health problem etc..) **and the resolution(reasonable remission)** of the problem.

In the practice and in the traditional social pedagogy the interval (the extend) of an episode is commonly defined in terms of "age", "school end", "return to the family", "gaining independence and personal autonomy" and, despite

the generous perspectives promoted by the classical pedagogy is not intrinsically depending on the degree of solving the initial “problem” (or “problems”). And under these circumstances the most plausible scenario is based on a sooner or later recurrence (“relapse”).

The over-dimensioning of some official components (like formal rules and laws, financial aspects and established customs) is in this context one of the risk-factors with a high impact on the future evolution of the child. The impact is commonly minimised or simply ignored, mostly in order to protect the existing structures.

Following these arguments, scenarios could be developed mostly by considering two kinds of terminations to care service:

- Appropriate terminations – those which occur when a reasonable “resolution” of the “identified problems” has taken place or in those cases when, for some reasons, the staff, the beneficiary (the child and/or the family) and the legal representatives, respectively the child care formal body (like the county social care office for instance) agree that the care measure should be stopped.
- Inappropriate terminations – those which occur when an obvious “resolution” is not identifiable or when an agreed termination did not take place. They are referred to, in this report, as “drop-out” cases.

Risk-factors influencing the drop-out:

- Socio-demographic factors – such as age, status and living situation¹⁷ of the family of origins, etc....
- Individual criteria - such as the personal satisfaction, the perception of its own situation and its own social status
- Group situations – such as the position in the institution and in the formal and/or informal groups (captatio benevolentiae, leadership, conflicts, isolation).

It is commonly accepted that over 40% of the drop-outs take place in the first year after leaving a care centre (a specialised institution). Despite the fact that this is even considered as a main indicator of a low quality of care, until now only a very few studies have investigated exhaustively these dropping outs of social care from an integrated community care service (which main aim is as a matter of fact to optimise the continuity of care) and even less studies have used a comprehensive catchment area case register to ascertain cases and to evaluate their patterns of care.

¹⁷ Young, A., Grusky, O., Jordan, D., et al - Routine outcome monitoring in a public mental health system: the impact of patients who leave care. *Psychiatric Services*, 2000, 51, 85-91.

Results

The following analysis is based on the risk-analysis diagrams¹⁸ developed between 2013 and 2017 (see annexed diagrams,¹⁹).

- Only 19% of the investigated young people had inappropriate terminations of contact (drop-out) with the specialised social child care institutions (child care centres)
 - The drop-out rates increase rapidly in the phase of transition to another care-form (social help for instance) – over 40%
 - The transferring from residential care to part-time assisted units (day care centres for instance) or supported loggings implicates a scenario including a high risk of drop-out. The planning and the implementations of such “changes” are extremely important to prevent some “boomerang-effects” like resilience and stagnation in the general psychological, social and behavioural development.
 - The opinion that the drop-outs are more likely in the case of the teenagers must be interpreted with caution. These two variables cannot be associated in the social care datasets.
 - Our results show that there is a significant difference on the level of disability between young people that drop-out and young people remaining in contact with community-based care services.
 - The young people which are less satisfied with the professional skills and behaviour of staff are also more likely to drop out of care. This also indicates the importance of interrelationships between the specific processes (as they are running in the daily life in a certain institution) and the outcomes of social care. The ideal assessment should be a rating from a beneficiary perspective. But this is rarely the case.

Limitations

- The report does not include follow-up details of young people that came after more than a year after leaving a care unit under the care of some other services or the young people that have been included in the evidence of formal county care offices in some other areas (counties) or of different NGOs.
- The self-assessment that had to be partially included in scoring the impact of certain risk factors might distort some of the results. The

¹⁸ Calder, M. C., - *Risk in child protection. Assessment, challenges and frameworks for practice* – Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London, 2016, p. 47 – 56.

¹⁹ Dragoi, C., - *An analytical approach for assessing risk factors in the implementation of childcare measures* in *Protectia sociala a copilului, FICE Romania*, Anul XVII nr. 2 – 3 (57) 2015, p. 3 - 11

subjective, individual perspective could not be omitted, especially because of the significant role in pre-decisional processes of dropping out.

- The generalisability may be limited. The study was conducted on a single site.

Conclusions

The traditional perspective of a child or an adolescent coming and remaining in an institution that seems to be “safe” for a relatively long-time (“safe social care”), especially because of cohorts of specialists and staff implementing various and competently designed “social protection measures” is obsolete.

The new care sets have to be more and more

- “flexible”,
- less “residential”,
- oriented toward the client (beneficiary),
- limited in time (short- and mid-time protection) and
- less expensive (e.g. involving less staff).

The care-scenarios became also more diversified and objective. Some of the beloved scenarios like “return into the family” or “integration (find a job) on the labour market” are less applicable (and credible) as before. The tendency is to elaborate scenarios

- individually
- focused on more realistic, respectively “modest”, unpretentious goals (less generously formulated), that might have real chances to be reached
- based on a multitude of possible versions, including the “negative” ones.

The drop-out rate has been higher in the last years. In order to compensate this tendency, one of the possible action strategies consists of a stronger long-term intra- and inter-institutional cooperation. This is not only a desire but became in the last decades a necessity. It is imperiously necessary to develop not only new concepts but also an innovative vision, focused on the direct beneficiaries of the services provided by the existing community-based social care system.

Diagram 1 – The analysis of the impact of some risk factors at the level of the care institution

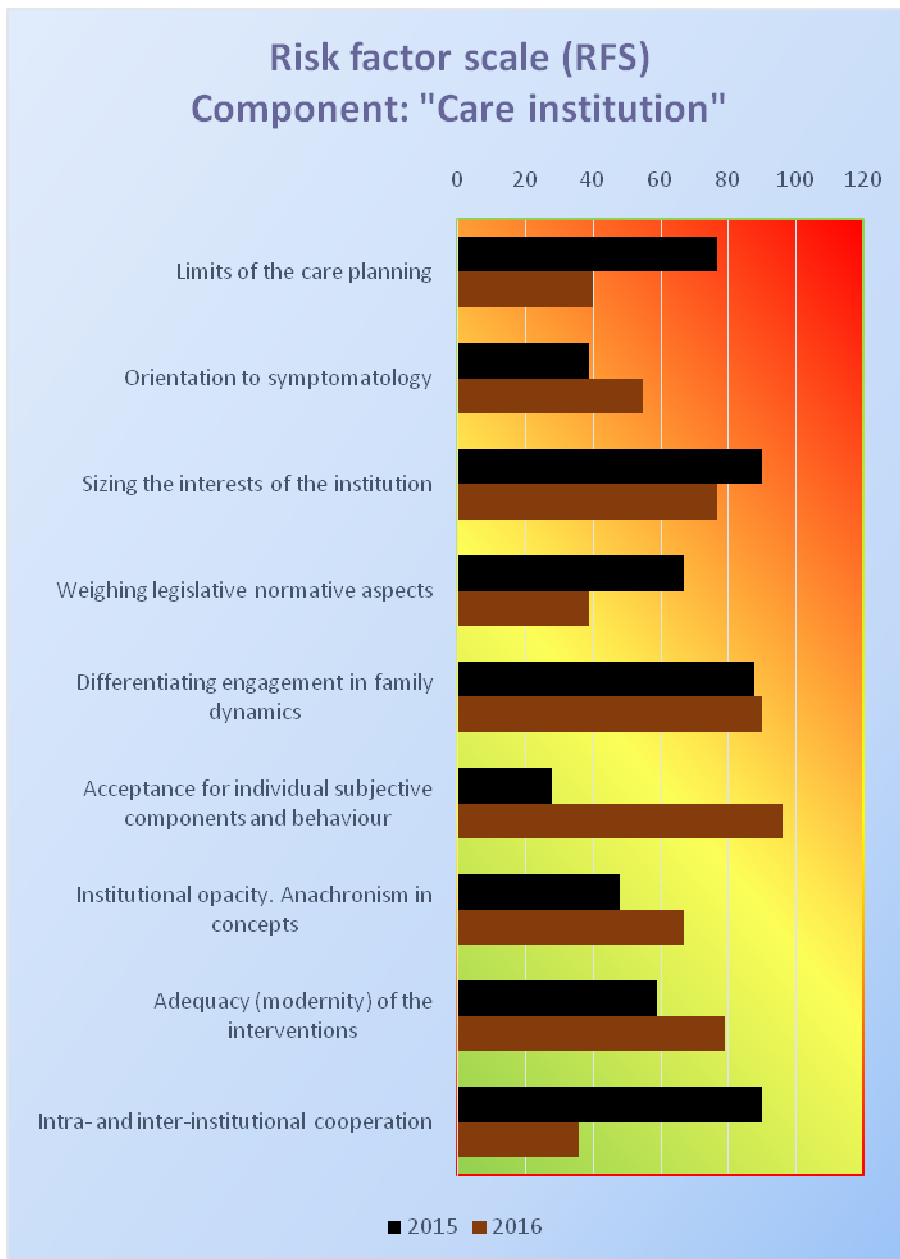
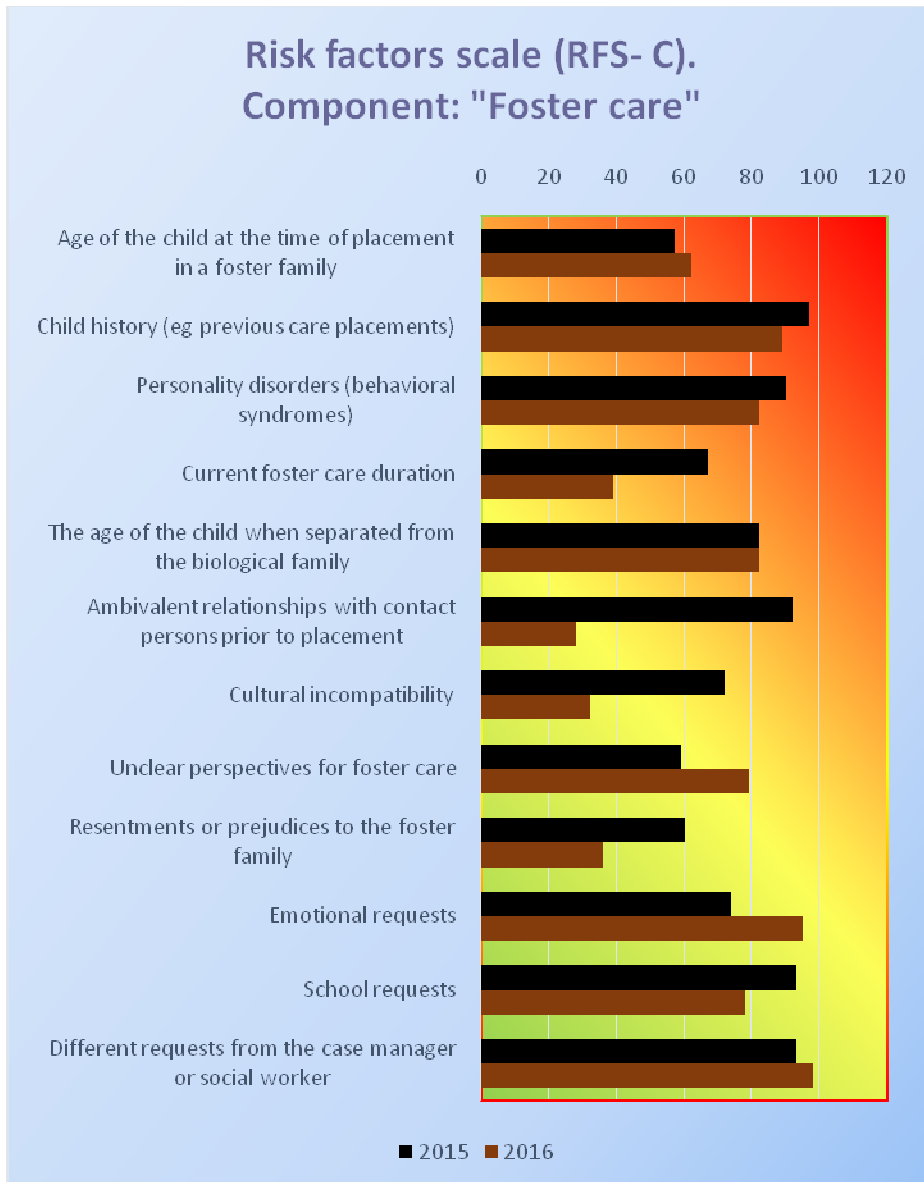


Diagram 2 – Identified risk factors to be taken into consideration previously to a changeover from residential care to foster care.



HOW CAN ONE POSSIBLY DETERMINE THE MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES?

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Abstract: *Measuring the multiple intelligences proves to be a very sensitive subject since Howard Gardner has always stated very clearly his position against the psychometric approach of the intelligence. This article aims to present some tools in the frame of the psychometric approach that could still be used in the every day practice of teaching and learning in order to identify and foster one`s different types of intelligence. These are: Thomas Armstrong`s Multiple Intelligences Inventory, Multiple Intelligences Development Assessment Scale (MIDAS) for Children by Branton Shearer and McClellan &Conti`s Multiple Intelligences Inventory. They had been adapted for Romanian population for research purpose and the factor analysis was used. A discussion about the main findings and their limits will be presented.*

Keywords: *multiple intelligences, Gardner, MIDAS, factor analysis*

1. Theory of Multiple Intelligences in a Nutshell

Theory of Multiple Intelligences was first presented by its author , Professor Howard Gardner, în 1983 in his book called Frames of Mind. The main assumption is that the intelligence is not seen as a single, static , monolythic construct but as a multiple and evolving one and very much depending on the social and cultural environment. Gardner defines it as a "bio-psychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture" (Gardner, 2004, pp.60-61). So far he has identified and described eight types of intelligences: Linguistic, Logical-Mathematical, Spatial, Bodily-Kinesthetic, Musical, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal and Naturalistic and is still investigating the ninth one which would be the Existential Intelligence. Davis, Christodoulou., Seider &Gardner(2011) offer the following short descriptions for each of them: "The Linguistic Intelligence represents the ability to analyze information and create products involving oral and written language such as speeches and books; Logical-Mathematical

Intelligence is the ability to develop equations and proofs, make calculations, and solve abstract problems; Spatial Intelligence is the ability to recognize and manipulate large-scale and fine-grained spatial images; Bodily-Kinesthetic is the ability to use one's own body to create products or solve problems; Musical Intelligence is the ability to produce, remember, and make meaning of different patterns of sound; Interpersonal Intelligence is the ability to recognize and understand other people's moods, desires, motivations, and intentions; Intrapersonal Intelligence is the ability to recognize and understand his or her own moods, desires, motivations, and intentions and Naturalistic Intelligence is the ability to identify and distinguish among different types of plants, animals, and weather formations that are found in the natural world".

Gardner's studies proved that these intelligences are separately located in the brain, but they can be noticed to act together in the real life. And this is the reason why sometimes identifying them might result very challenging. For instance, graphs designing involves both spatial and logical-mathematical intelligence; or a pianist has a very well developed kinesthetic intelligence but also interpersonal and intrapersonal ones. As we know, Gardner declared himself completely against the psychometric approach of intelligence, arguing that the concept of IQ is very simplistic and far from reality as it is strongly de-contextualized and that besides the IQ defines only some of the intelligences, namely logical-mathematical, linguistic and spatial ones but has nothing to do with the others. And this is in fact the main or key attribute of his theory. Instead he supports the *observation* as the most powerful and appropriate method for establishing the cognitive profile as only watching somebody acting in various situations in the real life can provide the best information about the different levels of development of his/her intelligences at a certain moment. In the famous project Spectrum which first tested the multiple intelligences theory with 2 groups of kindergarten children, observation was the only one method used to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the cognitive profiles of the kids at a certain moment. The experimenters got very interesting results as they discovered many children who had various intelligences above average and neither their parents nor their teachers had succeeded in being aware of them before the project. We consider that this is the best proof for supporting the observation as the best approach in identifying the multiple intelligences, but at the same time we cannot stop remarking that the Spectrum project took place in very special conditions which would be ideal to find in the real world of education but which in practice still remain very rare, unfortunately. And that because the two experimental groups had a small number of kids each – up to 20, usually at least two adults who worked together with them , a friendly space

full of various attractive didactic materials and no pressure at all regarding a fixed curriculum.

That is why although Gardner firmly stated his dislike for the psychometric approach, the pressure from teachers, parents and pupils determined various researchers to try to create some psychometric tools for identifying the multiple intelligences. The main reason is that on one hand as the observation is a very time consuming method, in the real life it is very difficult to be implemented on a large scale in schools or other formal and non-formal educational contexts and on the other hand because people tend to trust more this kind of tools than the "mere" observation. Besides, the large number of pupils in a classroom, the lack of diverse tools and appropriate materials to add value to the lessons, an unfriendly space full of barriers and the short time of a class prevent also the teachers from being able to observe their pupils in order to discover their cognitive profile so eventually a psychometric tool is needed to help them doing that.

At first glance, the great advantage of such a tool, if appropriate and scientifically built, would be that it would help the teachers, counselors and/or parents to be able to identify in very short time and with minimum of effort the cognitive profiles of their pupils. But at the same time the big challenge and even danger is that unconsciously people will tend to label once more the children as in their minds the questionnaire as a tool is closely connected with some label or categorization. In fact we could notice many times that people usually forget the core of Gardner's theory and make statements such as "this kid is musical or kinesthetic etc", completely forgetting that we all have more or less from all the 8 types of intelligences in our cognitive profile and, even more important, we are able to develop them all if we are determined and have or find a friendly environment. So we perfectly understand and support this need for having a tool in order to measure the multiple intelligences, but at the same time we consider that it is crucial how we introduce this tool and how people are taught to use it in order to be in line with the ideas of Howard Gardner.

2. Some Practical Aspects about Measuring the Multiple Intelligences

We will present and discuss further in this article three different tools we have found so far that are used on a large scale to measure the multiple intelligences: the first one we will talk about is Thomas Armstrong's Multiple Intelligences Inventory, the second one is the Multiple Intelligences Development Assessment Scale (MIDAS) for Children created by Branton Shearer and the third one is McClellan & Conti's Multiple Intelligences Inventory. After a short description of each of them we will then run some factor analysis in order to check whether they present an appropriate factor structure in line with Gardner's theory.

2.1 *Thomas Armstrong`s Multiple Intelligences Inventory*

We chose to talk first about this tool as it seems to be very popular in the Romanian schools but also in various trainings of non-formal education such as one for Youthworkers we took part in several years ago. It is presented as a questionnaire with 79 dichotomic items which describe various daily life activities (e.g. *I often like to spend my free time outdoors; Books are very important to me; I can easily compute numbers in my head* etc.). The items in groups of 9 or 10 are being thought to underlie each of the 8 intelligences. In the end there is a specification to give one point for each "yes" answer and then to add them and find out the scores for each of the 8 intelligences and the biggest one indicates the dominant intelligence.

We were intrigued from the very beginning that we could not find any mention about its author nor about its basic psychometric properties such as validity and reliability. Then we started to check the Romanian literature related to Gardner`s theory and finally we identified the source of this questionnaire as a teachers`s training for differentiated instruction from the beginning of 2000 (for more details one can see Gliga&Spiro,2001).

A real surprise came later when we found out by chance that in fact this tool had been translated from English and the source was Armstrong (1994), without being explicitly cited nowhere. But between the original and the translation there was one big difference the Romanian authors seemed to have completely neglected, namely that in the original source the tool **was not meant to be a questionnaire**, as Armstrong explicitly mentioned, but an *inventory of activities*, a kind of a checklist with the aim to be only a *starting point for discussion and reflection for growth and development* and not at all for labelling! So the Romanian authors missed the essential and spread a tool which is not proper used at all and in fact collides with the core of Gardner`s theory itself! So it is that the starting point of the misusing of this tool which unfortunately spread very much up to the point that nowadays it became a very common instrument used to measure the multiple intelligences in our school.

We ran some factor analysis to check its factor structure on a database of 261 subjects but no interesting results could be found since from the very beginning the author`s intention was not at all to propose a psychometric tool, as he clearly states in his book (Armstrong, 1994). The exploratory factor analysis was run using a tetrachoric correlation matrix since the answers are dichotomous. In order to generate the matrix we used the syntax code program TETRA-COM for estimation of the tetrachoric correlations (Lorenzo-Seva & Ferrando, 2012). The results of the tetrachoric factor analysis run with this program showed $KMO=.133$, Approx. Chi-Square=3309.085, $df.=3828$, $sig.=1.000$, which means that the model is not a stable

one. That is why we decided to do a tetrachoric factor analysis for each of the 8 intelligences separately as if they were independent factors. We then repeatedly excluded the items with low loadings on the factor and in the end we have got the following results:

✓ For the spatial intelligence we have got $KMO=.582$, Approx. Chi-Square= 312.594, $df.=36$, $sig.=.000$, which means that the model is a stable one. The loadings of the items on factor are as follows: it17: .251, it.26: .387, it.32: .245, it.39: .129, it.44: .131, it.47: .139, it.52: .382, it.58: .178 and it.63: .143. We have got three items with eigenvalues over 1 as follows: 2.051, 1.748 and 1.134, which explain 54.809% of the variance of the spatial intelligence.

✓ For the logical-mathematical intelligence we have got $KMO=.787$, Approx. Chi-Square= 477.372, $df.=21$, $sig.=.000$, which means that the model is a stable one. The loadings of the items on factor are as follows: it 11: .325, it 20: .325, it.34: .248, it.37: .392, it.55: .358, it.64: .415, it.68: .384. We have got two items with eigenvalues over 1 as follows: 3.016 and 1.317 which explain 61.895% of the variance of the logical-mathematical intelligence.

✓ For the linguistic intelligence we have got $KMO=.629$, Approx. Chi-Square= 200.714, $df.=21$, $sig.=.000$, which means that the model is a stable one. The loadings of the items on factor are as follows: it 15: .112, it22: .138, it.30: .207, it.40: .196, it.48: .175, it.65: .324, it.76: .125. We have got two items with eigenvalues over 1 as follows: 2.036 and 1.391, which explain 48.954% of the variance of the linguistic intelligence.

✓ For the interpersonal intelligence we have got $KMO=.660$, Approx. Chi-Square= 500.595, $df.=15$, $sig.=.000$, which means that the model is a stable one. The loadings of the items on factor are as follows: it 2: .324, it.25: .267, it.31: .348, it.56: .544, it.59: .535 and it.67: .551. We have got two items with eigenvalues over 1 as follows: 2.837 and 1.060, which explain 64.950% of the variance of the interpersonal intelligence.

✓ For the intrapersonal intelligence we have got $KMO=.209$, Approx. Chi-Square= 217.758, $df.=6$, $sig.=.000$, which means that the model is an unstable one. The loadings of the items on factor are as follows: it3: .400, it.36: .489, it.61: .383, it.77: .414. We have got three items with eigenvalues over 1 as follows: 1.482, 1.228 and 1.069, which explain 94.478% of the variance of the intrapersonal intelligence.

✓ For the bodily-kinesthetic intelligence we have got $KMO=.559$, Approx. Chi-Square= 252.891, $df.=45$, $sig.=.000$, which means that the model is a stable one. The loadings of the items on factor are as follows: it 9: .074, it13: .167, it.29: .228, it.33: .111, it.43: .234, it.50: .147, it.57: .229, it.70: .204, it.73: .227 and it.79: .088. We have got four items with

eigenvalues over 1 as follows: 1.972, 1.539, 1.274 and 1.062, which explain 58.467% of the variance of the bodily-kinesthetic intelligence.

✓ For the musical intelligence we have got KMO=.827, Approx. Chi-Square= 887.147, df.=36, sig.=.000, which means that the model is a stable one. The loadings of the items on factor are as follows: it 7: .449, it10: .357, it.14: .397, it.23: .438, it.27: .526, it.38: .462, it.46: .460, it.62: .452 and it.74: .523. We have got two items with eigenvalues over 1 as follows: 4.091 and 1.228, which explain 60.213% of the variance of the musical intelligence.

✓ As for the naturalistic intelligence, we could not run any factor analysis because of an error message which said the matrix was not a positive one.

As we can see from the figures above, most of the items have very poor loadings on their factors which means that the tool the way it is now cannot be trusted for measuring the multiple intelligences.

2.2 Multiple Intelligences Development Assessment Scale (MIDAS) for Children by Branton Shearer

Unlike the previous tool discussed, this questionnaire is a psychometric one, very rigorous tested and in fact fully approved by Gardner, as he "considers Branton Shearer's efforts to measure multiple intelligences to be among the well-founded ones" (Shearer, 2013, pp.9). And this is exactly because MIDAS™ has kept very well the meaning of a multiple cognitive profile. MIDAS™ does not mean at all another way of labeling persons but provides a useful image of how the cognitive profile of a person looks like at the moment of answering it and it is a very good start for in-depth analysis and personal development. The questionnaire has 93 self-reported items with Likert scale responses from A to F for kids from 10 to 14 years old. It is very easy to be filled in as the items are very practical and taken from the real life, being in fact a long enumeration of different activities one child is likely to do in his/her daily life. The tool proved to have good psychometric properties on a Romanian sample of 296 pupils from 6th grade from urban and rural areas. A detailed description of the method and the presentation of the results can be found in Bordei (2015). In brief, we have got 6 factors out of 8 expected, namely Factor 1 which gathered the Personal Intelligences (interpersonal intelligence and intrapersonal intelligence), Factor 2 which gathered the Academic intelligences (logical-mathematical intelligence and linguistic intelligence), Factor 3 – Spatial intelligence, Factor 4 – Kinesthetic Intelligence, Factor 5 – Naturalistic Intelligence and Factor 6 – Musical Intelligence. The internal consistency remained high for each factor, alpha Cronbach values being: .921 for Factor 1, .828 for Factor 2, .831 for Factor 3, .796 for Factor 4, .854 for Factor 5 and .740 for Factor 6. Although

this might seem not in line with the theory, until adulthood it is very normal to find the personal intelligences together as the Self is developing only inside of a social group and through the relationships with the others. Factor 2 needs indeed further research but still our findings are completely supported by the theory and the tool can be used in our culture.

The only problem with this tool might be that it is not free and even the cost per profile is only 1\$ it could be still not be accessible on a large scale.

2.3 *McClellan & Conti`s Multiple Intelligences Inventory*

In order to surpass the obstacle implied by the costs we checked the literature and found a free inventory to measure the multiple intelligences described by McClellan & Conti (2008) but with no input by part of Howard Gardner. The authors set 27 items underlying 9 types of intelligences as they included also the Existential one. But since this intelligence has not been yet officially recognized by Gardner, we preferred to do an analysis on only the 24 items describing the 8 intelligences officially recognized by Gardner so far. The original tool was designed for adult learners but we chose to check it on a sample of 366 pupils from secondary school. So far we ran an exploratory factor analysis with Polymat-C program since the answers implied ranking (Lorenzo-Seva & Ferrando, 2015). In order to extract the factors we used the unweighted least squares method and for the rotation matrix we used "Varimax" orthogonal method.

We have got $KMO=.689$, Approx. Chi-Square= 2662,158, $df.=276$, $sig.=.000$ which means that the data are good for the exploratory factor analysis.

We have got 12 factors with eigenvalues over 1 out of which the first 8 factors explain 53,41% din varianță. But when we took a closer look at the grouping of the items on each type of intelligence we noticed the following factor structure: F1= Interpersonal intelligence (only the item 10 has a very good loading of .976, while item 18 has .064 and item 2 has .002) , F2 = Intrapersonal intelligence (item 3=.385 and item 19=.085) , F3= Musical Intelligence (item 5=.378, item 13=.243 and item 21=.479), F4= Spatial Intelligence (item 8=.321, item 16=.635 and item 24=.502), F5= Linguistic Intelligence (item 7=.374, item 15=.442 and item 23=.003), F6= Logical-mathematical Intelligence has no items with proper loading and that is why this factor could not be identified, F7 = Naturalistic Intelligence (only item 6 =.250, the other two have low and negative loadings) and F8 = Bodily-kinesthetic Intelligence (only item 9=.385, the other two have low loadings).

3. Discussion

Midas- Kids and McClellan&Conti questionnaires have been translated and then back translated as the procedure says by persons who knew English

very well. The questionnaire inspired by Armstrong`s work has been taken as such from Gliga & Spiro (2001) and 10 new items for the naturalistic intelligences have been added from an updated edition of Armstrong`s book. We mention that the first items for the naturalistic intelligence were most probably invented by the two authors and just added without any psychometric research beyond.

As we expected, we have found that the questionnaire inspired by Armstrong`s work cannot be trusted as a tool for measuring the multiple intelligences since the loadings on factors are in general very low. This is simply because this tool has never been meant to play such a role, which means that its use in our schools is completely wrong and without any foundation. The problem is that in our culture there is not any strong scientific culture developed yet and people just take everything they are given without checking by themselves the credibility of that source first before using it. That is why at this point we would kindly recommend a general statistics course at least for future teachers but also we appreciate it as being very valuable to start as soon as possible, even from the primary school. Among the benefits on one hand would be a shaping of the mind and on the other hand it would help everybody become more inquisitive and therefore active and independent.

As for the tool designed by McClellan and Conti, we were quite surprised to get such low loadings too. We can state that at this moment it cannot be used either in our culture for measuring the multiple intelligences. That is why for the moment we can recommend only Sharer`s Midas –Kids as truly attaining its goal of identifying the multiple cognitive profile of a child between 10 and 14 years old. But in the near future we believe that it would be very interesting and also worthy to continue the research in this respect in order to create an appropriate tool that could be used safely in our schools. For this purpose we could also use the findings we have got so far and we can keep some items with good loadings as a starting point for this endeavor.

4. Conclusions

Measuring the multiple intelligences proves to be a very sensitive subject and the main danger is not to replace a label (IQ) with another (eight!) labels! As long as it is possible, the observation remains the best method to identify the multiple intelligences, ideally offering the subject (the pupils in our case) the chance to act in various sets and having at hand a lot of materials and stimuli. The practice proved that this is difficult to be obtained on a large scale and that is why various tools were created in order to measure the multiple intelligences even if this comes in contradiction with Howard Gardner`s view against the psychometric approach because it is too rigid and de-contextualized. Since there is a understandable need for this

kind of tools for the reasons we have already explained (time and trust) we believe that is extremely important to bear in mind that unlike the other psychometric tools (questionnaires, surveys and tests) in this case it is completely forbidden to label, since an intelligence that may be dominant at a certain moment in time may be replaced by other(s) that can become dominant if proper conditions are put in place. All we have to do with such an instrument is to use it as a starting point for further reflection and analysis, to transform its items as long as possible into in-depth interviews and to triangulate the data with other sources (products of the activity, impressions of important people for the subject who know him/her well etc). A research effort is also required for the future in order to adapt on the Romanian population or to create a reliable tool for identifying the multiple intelligences following of course the spirit of this fascinating theory.

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THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL CONTEXT OF EVALUATION ACCORDING TO ACADEMIC PROFESSORS. CASE STUDY

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Abstract: *Lately, the timing and process of evaluation seem to have become very important for the dynamics and regulation of the education system and in determining the quality of its performance. In achieving pupils'/ students' quantitative and statistical performance, but also qualitative, more spiritual (less targeted by the administrators of the system and by researchers in formal education), a decisive role is played not only by the level of the results obtained in tests/ exams but also by the psychosocial atmosphere in which evaluative situations take place. The study captures and presents some of the options of a group of teachers from UPG Ploiești regarding several dimensions of the psychosocial context of evaluation and draws attention to the fact that the evaluative act is not confined - as we tend to believe - only on the technical, quantitative, standardized aspects, but includes, on the one hand, the evaluator's vision of the state of the evaluated individual before, during and after the exam and, on the other hand, the attitude of the teacher-evaluator in view of creating an atmosphere conducive to the best performance of that student in the exam.*

Keywords: *evaluation, academic professor, student, professor-student relationship, psycho-social implications of evaluation*

1. Introduction

Looking more closely, it seems that the administrators of the education system have been and are more concerned with the moment and the process of evaluation than with the moment and the process of teaching or the moment and the process of learning. It gives the impression that, in relation to the other fundamental steps of the education process, evaluation has been given priority. Professors are increasingly filling in the role of evaluators.

This tendency requires that - as theoreticians and/ or practitioners of education - we pay more attention to the design and implementation of evaluation, we understand - as realistically as possible - what is its impact, not only on the general state of the education system, but also on the overall (psychosocial) context of the training and shaping of new generations, in general, and of future intellectuals/ specialists in different fields of activity, in particular. It is about the influence assessment has on the working atmosphere created between professor and student.

In this sensitive context, it becomes important: (a) to understand to what extent can evaluation shape or, conversely, distort students' attitude to learning; (b) to understand the atmosphere that can create between the professor - evaluator and the student - evaluated, in anticipation, during, and after the completion of the evaluation (respectively, either one of tension, fear, estrangement, animosity, adversity, or one of trust, encouragement, closeness, free/ creative expression).

From this perspective, the vast majority of specialists in the theory and methodology of evaluation (Bocoş, Jucan, 2008; Clipa, 2008; Cuceş, 2008; Jinga *and colab.*, 1999; Lisievici, 2002; Manolescu, 2010, 2006; Meyer, 2000; Pachef, 2008; Stoica, Mihail, 2007; Vogler, coord., 2000) dealt marginally, in passing, implicitly with such dimension of (formal) education. In this approach, we assume that evaluation (whether academic or at secondary/ tertiary level) is not (and cannot be) reduced to its simple technical mechanism but it also includes the psychosocial context in which it is carried out and which, it (re-)creates it, more or less deeply.

Qualitative-spiritual performances (and not just the quantitative-statistical ones) occur if we ensure (as professors - evaluators) the correctness, equidistance, and professionalism of the evaluation, as well as the psychosocial context in which this is carried out. Thus, a warm, humane, hospitable, safe and encouraging, understanding and emotionally balanced context can facilitate the establishment of an atmosphere conducive to the best performance the student is capable of (in an exam).

2. Research methodology

The purpose of our practical-investigative study was to research academic professors' perception upon the psycho-social context of evaluation. For this, we used the questionnaire based survey method, which we applied between March and May 2016, to a group of 55 subjects, university professors at the Petroleum-Gas University of Ploiesti. According to their seniority in education, the experimental group had the following structure:

Table no. 1. The structure of the experimental sample composed of university professor subjects

Seniority in education range	Number	Percentage
0-5 Years	-	-
6-10 Years	1	2%
11-15 Years	13	23,5%
16-20 Years	14	25,5%
21-25 Years	7	12,5%
26-30 Years	11	20%
More than 31 years	9	16,5%
Total	55	100%

3. Data and results

Table no. 2. The most important feature of the student - professor relationship during evaluation in the opinion of university professors*

Feature	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i
Percentage	4	42	-	15	2	-	15	-	22%
ge	%	%		%	%		%		**

* a. courtesy; b. exigency; c. compassion; d. understanding students; e. attachment; f. authority/ imposition; g. firmness; h. detachment/ indifference; i. other answer.

** Subjects also proposed: correctness - 41,5%, objectivity - 33%.

Table no. 3. The most important feature of the student - professor relationship during evaluation in the opinion of university professors, according to seniority in education*

Seniority in education	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i
0-5 Years	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6-10 Years	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
11-15 Years	-	35,5%	-	15%	-	-	15%	-	38,5%

16-20 Years	7	43%	-	21,5	7	-	21,5	-	-
	%			%	%		%		
21-25 Years	-	58%	-	-	14	-	14%	-	14%
					%				
26-30 Years	9	55%	-	18%	-	-	-	-	18%
	%								
More than 31 years	-	34%	-	-	-	-	22%	-	44%

*a. courtesy; b. exigency; c. compassion; d. understanding students; e. attachment; f. authority/ imposition; g. firmness; h. detachment/ indifference; i. other answer.

Table no. 4. The first thought that (almost) automatically/ instantly comes to mind for university professors during evaluation*

Option	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k
Percentage	-	-	36	31	2	-	11	2	4	7	7
			%	%	%		%	%	%	%	%

*a. not to damage students' image in front of their colleagues; b. to indulge students during their evaluation; c. be true to their own criteria; d. appreciate students' performance during the evaluation as they know best, irrespective of their previous performances; e. appreciate students' performance during the evaluation as they know best, irrespective of the (psychological) effect evaluation has on their state of mind; f. parents' reaction towards their children's evaluation; g. the potential university professors assume evaluated students have in terms of further development; h. that students do not commit fraud/ cheat; i. the emotional tension students undergo during evaluation; j. the future prospects of the student currently subjected to evaluation; k. another answer.

Table no. 5. The first thought that (almost) automatically/ instantly comes to mind for university professors during evaluation, based on seniority in education*

Seniority in education	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k
0-5 Years	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6-10 Years	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
11-15 Years	-	-	15%	55%	-	-	-	7,5%	7,5%	7,5%	7,5%
16-20 Years	-	-	28,5%	21,5%	7%	-	28,5%	-	-	14,5%	-
21-25 Years	-	-	58%	28%	-	-	-	-	-	14%	-
26-30 Years	-	-	55%	27%	-	-	18%	-	-	-	-
More than 31 years	-	-	45%	22%	-	-	-	-	-	-	33%

*a. not to damage students' image in front of their colleagues; b. to indulge students during their evaluation; c. be true to their own criteria; d. appreciate students' performance during the evaluation as they know best, irrespective of their previous performances; e. appreciate students' performance during the evaluation as they know best, irrespective of the (psychological) effect evaluation has on their state of mind; f. parents' reaction towards their children's evaluation; g. the potential university professors assume evaluated students have in terms of further development; h. that students do not commit fraud/ cheat; i. the emotional tension students undergo during evaluation; j. the future prospects of the student currently subjected to evaluation; k. another answer.

Table no. 6. Professor's understanding of students during evaluation, as perceived by university professors*

Option	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k
Percentage	43	7	-	4	2	2	-	-	31	4	7
	%	%		%	%	%			%	%	%

* a. ask students for everything they know, all they are capable of presenting on the subject they are being evaluated on; b. postponing the moment of the evaluation until students are capable of satisfactory performance; c. postponing the evaluation until students offer an adequate performance in relation to professor's expectations; d. postponing the evaluation until students perform according to the evaluator's criteria; e. postponing the evaluation until students perform according to the requirements of the learning plan; f. making concessions/ overlooking the ambiguities, confusions, errors, hesitations students manifest during evaluation; g. (always) being lenient with students during their evaluation; h. evaluating students whenever they offer for it; i. taking into consideration students' emotions at the time of their evaluation and put into their account the confusions, gaps, and errors found in their performance; j. there is no understanding for students under evaluation, they must always learn; k. another answer.

Table no. 7. Understanding students during evaluation in the opinion of university professors, based on seniority in education*

Seniority in education	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k
0-5 Years	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6-10 Years	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
11-15 Years	54%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	46%	-	-
16-20 Years	35,5%	15%	-	-	-	7%	-	-	35,5%	7%	-
21-25 Years	58%	-	-	14%	-	-	-	-	14%	1%	-
26-30 Years	55%	9%	-	-	9%	-	-	-	27%	-	-
More than 31 years	22,5%	11%	-	11%	-	-	-	-	22,5%	-	3%

*a. ask students for everything they know, all they are capable of presenting on the subject they are being evaluated on; b. postponing the moment of the evaluation until students are capable of satisfactory performance; c. postponing the evaluation until students offer an adequate performance in relation to professor's expectations; d. postponing the evaluation until students perform according to the evaluator's criteria; e.

postponing the evaluation until students perform according to the requirements of the learning plan; f. making concessions/ overlooking the ambiguities, confusions, errors, hesitations students manifest during evaluation; g. (always) being lenient with students during their evaluation; h. evaluating students whenever they offer for it; i. taking into consideration students' emotions at the time of their evaluation and put into their account the confusions, gaps, and errors found in their performance; j. there is no understanding for students under evaluation, they must always learn; k. another answer.

4. Findings, comments and interpretations

1. The evaluation situation involves a lot of precaution, a state of tension, of possible break from the course of the professor-student relationship that unfolded during the semester; it is an important act and a significant moment in the evolution of the student, of his/ her relationship with himself/ herself, friends/ colleagues, parents, but also with the teacher himself/ herself. Given this specificity, the professor-student relationship can get different (psychological) nuances as compared to those during the academic year.

Thus, regarding *the most important feature of the professor-student relationship during evaluation* was, for 42% of respondents, *exigency*. Being exigent, i.e. (very) careful, rigorous, impartial, cool-headed and as detached as possible from (previous) personal experience with students (in an assessment situation), is for these subjects the priority in their profession. On the next place, with 22 points, there were professors who formulated *other answers*. Among these, 41.5% referred to *correctness* and 33% to *objectivity*. For those, during evaluation their relationship with students is manifested as a priority and preponderantly either on the coordinates of correctness or those of objectivity.

15% of respondents considered the most important feature of their relationship with students during the evaluation is *firmness*, and other 15% considered that *understanding* remains the defining (behavioural) note.

Insignificant percentages were obtained by subjects who considered *kindness* is the most important feature (4%) or *attachment* (2%). Also, we notice that options such as *compassion*, *authority/ power* and *detachment/ indifference* were not chosen. We can understand from this proximate account that professors-evaluators have excluded from their attitude compassion, the arrogant act of authority or detachment/ indifference. Therefore, even if in their relationship with students, during the evaluation, there cannot be compassion or the narrow, rigid and excessive imposing of their own information, perspectives and/ or conclusions, neither can it be detachment/ indifference. In the crucial moments of the assessment, the

subjects eliminated not only compassion, rigidity, but also detachment. For them, evaluation, a valid and honest evaluation, cannot take place under the conditions of cold detachment or the indifference of the evaluator. We believe that these are elements demonstrating the professional but also psychological maturity of the respondents.

Concerning the same complex but also exciting issue, but analysing it from the point of view subjects' seniority in education, the situation is as follows:

- the highest percentage (58%) was obtained by those with a seniority between 21-25 years for the option *exigency*. For them, the most important thing is to be demanding when evaluating; it follows, with 55%, for the same answer option, those with 26-30 years seniority. Third place - 43% - is subjects with 16-20 years seniority. The lowest percentage (31.5%) was obtained by the respondents with the lowest seniority included in the research group (i.e. those with 11-15 years seniority).
- the highest percentage for the option *firmness* (22%) was obtained by subjects with the highest seniority (over 31 years of teaching career); they were followed, by 21.5%, by those with 16 to 20 years seniority.
- the group that did not get any percentage for the option *firmness* is the category of university professors with 26 to 30 years seniority.
- instead, it is interesting to note that 14% of those with 21 to 25 years seniority chose the option *attachment* at the time of assessment (be it oral, written or by projects or portfolios). There are subjects who, having reached such seniority in higher education, believe that *attachment* is beneficial in making an assessment that does not demoralize, confuse or overwhelm the evaluated. It seems to them that attachment is a constant feature of their relationship with students, whether it is in the course/ seminar/ laboratory activity or in the context of academic assessment.
- in their turn, 21.5% of those with 16 to 20 years seniority believe that the most important feature of their relationship with students during tests is their *understanding*; they are followed by those with 26 to 30 years seniority, with a score of 18% and 11-15 years seniority respectively, with a score of 15%. No subjects with 21-25 years and over 31 years seniority have opted for *understanding*. For them, the moment of the evaluation excludes the evaluator's understanding.

2. In any life situation, we can either have learned, reflected, acquired, agreed upon attitudes (coming from the outside, from the social environment), or immediate, spontaneous, unreflected, (almost) automatic reactions, coming from within (pre-dating decisions and conscious acts), defined in most cases by the desire to do good, not to be mistaken, not to

bring troubles, to avoid regrettable behaviours, to revive, invigorate and rejuvenate.

In particular, the same is the case with the professor - evaluator. They can have both learned, acquired, and self-controlled attitudes, but also unfiltered, poorly controlled, and temper-related tendencies, that pertain to an *implicit* way of understanding life, people, the world, their role among peers, or human development. We therefore considered important to know *the (almost) automatic way they react when it comes to assessing students*, quantifying their performance and assigning value to their cognitive, axiological and/ or practically-applicative abilities.

Faced with such a requirement, 36% of respondents - university professors - mentioned that *the first thought that comes (almost) automatically to mind* is *to be faithful to their own evaluation criteria*. Therefore, the benchmark they envision is fidelity to their own standards and criteria, regardless of how involved the student was in previous coursework or of the value of their contributions to the didactic process, or their motivation to learn.

The next place is occupied by 31% of the subjects who mentioned that the first thought that comes to mind, during an evaluation, is to appreciate as they best know the student's performance *at the time*, regardless of her previous performance. This category of subjects does not correlate the present moment with the past in student's activity. They believe that the past of their activity in the discipline they coordinate (and control) should not be involved in the final/ summative evaluation. The skills and knowledge proven at the time of the exam are the moment of truth.

These are the two main options for university teachers participating in the research. As a result, at a great distance, there are the following options in order:

- 11% say that the first thought that comes (almost) automatically to mind when evaluating is *the potential they assume in terms of the later development of the student who, at some point, undergoes an evaluation*. We note that there are professors who consider not only, or at least not primarily, what is exhibited or demonstrated by the evaluated student at a given time in their presentation but what they promise as work potential, in terms of commitment, development, innovation, in a more or less near future. In their case, the moment of evaluation is perceived as a given point in a continuum, as a test in a process, as an illustration of what might be - in a later stage of professional maturity.
- 7% of subjects have an attitude close to the one previously analyzed; they answer that the first thought that comes (almost) automatically to mind when evaluating is *the future of the student who was at one point in the*

situation of evaluation. This category of respondents also correlates the present moment of the evaluation act with the evaluated student's future.

Such an approach seems welcome when the evaluator gives a positive connotation to the future of the student in question; it may have a beneficial psychological impact; more specifically, to give the student confidence and courage, to motivate him to persevere, research, follow up on their ideas and projects, imagine and propose new ones.

On the contrary, if the evaluator gives a negative connotation to the future evolution of the student, then the psychological impact may be destructive, demobilizing, leading to loss of self-confidence and to the discouragement of the student, causing them to drop out or look for other opportunities.

Table no. 5 also shows that 4% of the professors – evaluators are thinking, in the first instance, of *the emotional tension that students experience before, during and after the exam*. We can understand from this that very few evaluators consider the emotional impact of the evaluation, even if they themselves - when they were students - have experienced the same emotional tension during exams. It seems that, in their opinion, such issues should not concern them. Nevertheless, only 2% of respondents mentioned that the first thought that automatically comes to mind when evaluating students is *to appreciate as best they know students' performance at that time, regardless of the (psychological) effect an evaluation has on their inner, spiritual state*. Hence, it may appear that, however, the higher education professors are not indifferent to the (psychological) effect caused by the tension and the results of the examination. It is, we think, an aspect that can and should be investigated later on.

From the data obtained in this item, it appears that only 2% of respondents think of frauds from the part of their students in a test situation. This may reflect the fact that professors have a (high) trust in their students or that, throughout their own teaching career, they have not been confronted with situations that would lead them to focus on possible misbehaviours. It seems that putting their trust in students and giving them all the assistance they need creates an atmosphere of respect and honour, which, in one way or another, discourages the thought and/ or temptation of fraud during the examination.

Finally, we would like to point out that no one chose the options that stipulated that the evaluation *should not be prejudicial to the student's prestige in front of colleagues, to humour the student during the assessment* or the option *to take into account the parents' reaction regarding the evaluation of their child*. There are data which, we believe, prove the balance, discernment and responsibility with which higher education professors regard their evaluative practice.

Regarding the same requirement, but analyzed in terms of seniority in education, we can see (and note) the following:

- the highest percentage (58%) was obtained by professors with 21-25 years seniority, who noted that their first thought, when evaluating, is *to be faithful to their own criteria*. They were closely followed, with 55%, by those in the next seniority range (26-30 years) and, with 45%, by those over 31 years of seniority. We could, – cautiously, of course – draw the conclusion (which requires further verification) that long periods of seniority lead the university evaluators *to respect their own criteria*, in order to get the conviction that they were correct, equidistant, impartial, rigorous. For this option, those with a seniority of 16 to 20 years (28.5%) and between 11-15 years (only 15%) obtained low percentages. These results may indicate that, as the number of years in education increases, professors – evaluators tend to become true to their own criteria that they apply during exams.

- instead, the lowest seniority in the research sample group (11-15 years) reached the highest percentage (over half: 55%) in the option that suggested that, in evaluation conditions, *they appreciate as they know best the student's performance, irrespective of his past performances*. We note the fact that they give priority to the *present* moment. They understand that this is the only time relevant, the others - the past and the future – being under risk of altering the examination results. All other seniority categories did not score over 28% (21-25 years), 27% (26-30 years), 22% (over 30 years) or 21.5% (16- 20 years).

- we note that only those with 16 to 20 years seniority (28.5%) and 26-30 years seniority (18%) mentioned that their first thought that comes to mind when they are in the evaluation situation is the one about the potential they suspect in *the later development of the student who is currently in the position to be evaluated*. We understand that there are also concerns about the future evolution of students, which depends to a greater or lesser extent on the results of each examination; it is known the fact that in most cases a young man's vision of themselves is outlined by the successes and/ or failures during each event or fragment of their life. These categories of professors therefore seem to understand that there is a significant, not to be neglected, relationship between the present and the future of an act of evaluation.

- looking closely, we can see that the same seniority category (16-20 years) scored the highest percentage (14.5%) for the option that invokes *the future of the student who at a certain moment in time is under evaluation*. Thus, together (28.5% + 14.5% =), 43% of those who are in the first stage of their professional career (as compared to those who near its end) correlate, or tend to correlate, the moment of the evaluation with the potential that the

evaluated person might later display in the future - near or more distant - of their professional development, of their professional performances.

- the only category of seniority that achieved a certain percentage (even if small: 7.5%) for the options referring to *the fear of fraud* (that the student would be willing to engage in) and *the emotional tension* they experience before, during and after an evaluation, were subjects with 11 to 15 years of seniority. All other categories of seniority did not mention these variants.

As we can see, the vast majority of evaluators are not concerned about the psychological, emotional states evaluation triggers. They do not think that taking these experiences into account would improve their evaluation or motivate students to learn more.

3. As a human being, the professor – evaluator is always in the situation of understanding his/ her student, not only during activities such as teaching, learning, debate, applications, design, but also during oral and/ or written tests. Understanding the students is a priority in the process of attracting and motivating them, and encourage an invigorating relationship with themselves.

For example, with regard to how they conceive understanding the students in the particular context of the evaluation, most respondents (43%) consider that this means *asking for (everything) they know, (everything) they are able to present in relation to the subject/ topic under evaluation*. For them, when they are willing to understand the student under evaluation, they assume it means that they would no longer take into account the strict and sufficient requirements in allowing them to pass the exam, but leave them aside and be willing to listen and record what students can offer - whether or not it fits the evaluation standard - in relation to the subject(s) under examination. It is assumed that the evaluator is also willing to consider data, knowledge, secondary demonstrations, less related to the subject under consideration, that they take into account elements indirectly related to the exam requirements. Therefore, understanding a student in the oral exam requires not to reject him/her the moment we realize that he/ she has no precise knowledge, that he/ she is confused or that they improvise upon the subject; it is to listen to him/ her further, to help him/ her explain their ideas, arguments, operations, the answer. And when it comes to a written examination, understanding would involve reading with the utmost attention and extracting from the text all the ideas, arguments supporting the solution.

Therefore, it seems that for these 43% of the respondents, understanding the student during the exam means to give him/ her wider circumstances in view of analyzing and appreciating the answer, whether oral or written.

Next, with 31%, are the respondents who think that understanding the student means *taking into account the emotions that he or she is experiencing under evaluation and blaming on them the confusions, the gaps, the errors observed in their presentation / performance*. Whether we like to recognize it or not, we know that always - depending on the emotion of the evaluator - the evaluation activity involves an increased emotional load. We also know that an intense emotional state can have negative, dissipative, disturbing repercussions on the functioning of their thinking at its full capacity. Or, there are evaluators who take these aspects into consideration when evaluating students, but also evaluators who do not take them into consideration (and thus even contributing to the disturbing, inhibiting effect of emotional states - such as embarrassment, fear, guilt, shame, etc.).

Those who understand that emotional states always accompany any exam situation take them into account when judging, evaluating, weighting students' knowledge, abilities, and skills.

From the data we obtained, we found that the respondents were divided into these two main categories: some who believe that understanding students is to accept everything the student knows, everything he/ she is able to present, without taking into account the requirements/ the strict constraints of the initially imposed standards, others who believe that understanding implies blaming the imperfection, ambiguities, and imprecisions of their response on their negative-inhibitive emotions.

With even smaller percentages there are also respondents who:

- in a percentage of 7, believe that understanding the student means *postponing the evaluation until such time he/ she is capable of a satisfactory performance* (in relation to the criteria of passing the exams); we note, as a consequence, that for the vast majority of the participants in the research such an attitude is unacceptable;

- 4% of respondents rejected the fact that it might be about understanding the student when he/ she displays doubts, superficiality, when he/ she tends to improvise or get the information mixed up. On the other hand, the fact that only 4% rejects the evaluator's understanding can lead us to the conclusion that the vast majority of higher education professors agree that *understanding is part of the evaluation practice*.

We also have to mention that the subjects did not choose the options that suggested as understanding of the student to:

- postpone the moment of evaluation until such time as they are capable of a proper performance;
- always be lenient with the student about to undergo evaluation;
- evaluating the student every time they put themselves up for it (but only they decide to do so).

These seem to be the limits within which the professor-evaluator agrees to be understanding towards the student undergoing an exam/evaluation.

Next, we develop the analysis taking into account the seniority of the respondents in education:

- those with a seniority of 16 to 20 years consider, equally, that understanding the student during their evaluation means: for 35.5%, *asking them for everything they know, and are able to present on the topic under evaluation*; and for a further 35.5%, *taking into account the student's emotions at the time of their evaluation, and blame the confusion, gaps, and errors in their performance on their emotions*. It seems like a coherent attitude. In fact, subjects belonging to this category of seniority have scored, in relation to the other categories, the highest percentage when it comes to taking into account the emotional burden assumed by any evaluation context.

- looking at table no. 7, we can see that even the group of professors with the highest educational seniority (over 31 years) had the same equal percentage distribution (22.5%) between the same types of options as those with 16 to 20 years seniority.

- among those who have opted in their majority to identify understanding during evaluation with *asking the student everything they know and/ or is able to do/ present* were also those with a seniority between 26-30 years (55%), and respectively, those with 11-15 years seniority (54%).

- however surprising, there are also respondents who have agreed that understanding the student in an evaluation situation means *postponing the time of the evaluation until he/ she has a performance that meets the requirements of the school curriculum*. These are the ones who have seniority in education between 21 and 25 years (14%) and those over 31 (11%).

- it should also be mentioned that respondents with the lowest seniority in the experimental group, namely 11-15 years, obtained the highest percentage (46%) in terms of understanding the student in the sense of *taking into account the emotions they experience under examination*. Whatever happens - to a greater or lesser extent - it seems that such a way to consider understanding the situation of the student in the role of the evaluated is encountered across the entire university career of a professor.

5. Possible conclusions and recommendations

School evaluation is a much more complex process and with far deeper implications in the (solid or fragile) shaping of the young individual's personality and in the evolution of his/ her relations with the professor (who is at some point in the role of the evaluator) and with the others in his life, than it seems at first glance. It consists not only of the simple and mechanical

gesture of grading a performance, but also of a psychosocial context created (more or less voluntarily) before the examination, during its course and persisting (more or less intense) after its completion.

The performance of higher education refers not only to the (high) level of grades obtained by students, but also to their human quality, to their relational, pro-social traits. Therefore, the professor will not only pursue the quality of the specialty training of the students with whom he/ she works during a stage of their career but also the atmosphere that he/ she creates so that students can achieve the highest culmination of their training.

In this broader context, the vision of the examining professor (in higher education) is significant when referring to: (a) his/ her relationship with students (during examination); (b) his/ her mental background preceding the examination - established and internalized throughout his/ her teaching experience - which prompts him/ her to automatically adopt a certain attitude when assessing; (c) how the professors understands *tounderstand* the student during an examination.

As a result of the processing and interpretation of our micro-research data, we came with the following recommendations:

- expanding the concept of school evaluation by integrating the psychosocial aspect; tracking not only quantitative-statistical performance but also qualitative-spiritual performance;
- the examining professor should be more preoccupied with creating a stimulative, encouraging psychosocial context for the creative expression of ideas and solutions found by a student during the examination;
- attention paid to the emotional impact involved in any exam situation in order to trigger and encourage stimulative, invigorating emotional states favourable to the fullest possible expression of the student's mental, cognitive and aptitude potential;
- continuing research to test the effectiveness of this concept of evaluation with the aim of applying it and increasing the performance of those in an assessment situation.

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SIMULTANEOUS CLASSES, A PEDAGOGICAL ALTERNATIVE

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Abstract: *In the Romanian educational system still exists simultaneous classes in which, on the grounds of a small number of pupils on a level of study, in the same classroom under the guidance of one teacher, operates more classes. If the teacher can make teaching an art, this way of organizing learning can be an opportunity for students. In this paper we suggest a few ideas that may enhance the effectiveness of school learning, under simultaneous classes.*

Keywords: *simultaneous classes, collaborative learning, interactivity, communication, problem solving*

Introduction

The idea of this work was born out of the need to share, on the one hand, the personal experience gained as a teacher in a Step by Step class, as a student in a simultaneous classroom, with students of grades I to IV, under the guidance of the same teacher, a class where there weren't any non-promoted pupils, the experience as a school inspector for primary education and the experience of a pedagogy teacher with a constructive orientation in terms of school education.

Simultaneous education is an alternative to creating learning opportunities in school environment with small a number of pupils. The creation of simultaneous teaching classes is a solution, a pedagogical alternative, in response to problems recorded in recent years, from the perspective of pupils, in decreasing order, through a constructivist approach to school learning.

According to the annex to the MECTS Order no. 3062 / 19.01.2012 on the approval of the methodology for the organization of the pre-university education classes in simultaneous education, the simultaneous teaching is specific to the areas where the number of pupils is very small. Because of this, students learn in classes of two, three or even four age groups. We can

consider the Montessori pedagogy, in which in the same class learn children between 6-9 years and 9-12 years and the Step by Step classes, in which, at the same time, in the classroom, the activities are totally different, as pedagogical realities which sustain efficiency and encourage learning at the same time.

In order to offer children who attend simultaneous education, according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, art. 29 equal opportunities for development with the others, as things are now in Romania, we should intervene with changes, so that the didactic approach is organized according to their needs and interests, which means good knowledge of children, a careful surveillance of each person's progress, combining optimally the types of teaching strategies, constantly harmonizing the didactic strategies used, to the reality of the classroom, and the time spent at school to be used extremely efficiently.

A short research

We started from the hypothesis that teachers do not feel ready to work in simultaneous classes.

Through google drive, we submitted a questionnaire, completed by 38 teachers teaching in simultaneous classes, a questionnaire consisting of 10 questions. We also used direct observation as a research method.

The results are as follows:

Most of the teachers, 80%, think that they use much and very much individual work in their school activity;

Most of the respondents estimate that they use little and very little group work of 3,4 or 5 pupils;

80% of the questioned teachers appreciate that they use little and very little activity in pairs;

80% think they are using a lot of frontal activity;

70% appreciate that they feel a little and very little prepared to work in simultaneous classes using differentiated learning;

60% are ready to work in simultaneous classes using cooperative learning;

60% are ready to work in simultaneous classes using student self-evaluation;

70% feel ready to use tutors from students;

80% of teachers appreciate that they feel very little and little prepared to organize student-centered school activity.

Observing the assistance for obtaining the didactic degrees, evaluating activities as an ARACIP evaluator, the pedagogic practice, gave me the opportunity to appreciate that in most of the situations where the class activity is organized in small groups or in pairs, each student works his own

worksheet, his own product or exercise, even if they are grouped. Very rarely, genuine cooperation activities are organized.

Both individual and group and frontal work, student tutoring, learning differentiation, self-evaluation are teaching practices that, at the same time, have a peculiarity in education that would be appropriate to practice in guided training.

100% of teachers consider necessary a professional development course on the subject of simultaneous education.

In addition to individual study, methodical activities prepared in the spirit of student-centered education, the teachers from the simultaneous classes need training courses on the specific subject in which to practice to form psycho-pedagogical skills specific to the simultaneous activity.

Following the results of the short research, we will try to bring argued examples, which the teacher can use in didactic activity, by mastering independent work with the frontal and group work (through collaboration and cooperation), turning to account the potential of the students, turning to account the differences of age, using didactic means, appropriately and carefully selecting the exercises and the contents used. This is the decisive factor in achieving performance in such classes.

Frontal activity in simultaneous education

The activity in which the main actors' action areas are clearly delimited: the teacher and the pupils, is called frontal (Hubbard et al, 1984). The teacher is at the heart of the activity and has full control over any interaction: teacher-student; student-student, student-teacher.

The teacher is the only person with the power to decide what is happening in the classroom. The role of the pupils is to listen to and perform the tasks required by the teacher. In the same frontal activity, which is indispensable to school learning, in a student-centered approach, the teacher is no longer the only person in the classroom but is the one who turns to account the experience and the potential of students, them becoming the resource and the builders of their own knowledge.

A group of students, or a representative of them, can address the classroom when presenting the results of the group activity. Depending on the didactic task they had to fulfill, the group can ask questions for the class, can demonstrate or answer their colleagues' questions.

The frontline organization of the simultaneous class is also the situation where all students in one year of study work with the teacher: they participate in the explanation that the teacher offers for understanding new knowledge or for accomplishing the task or students of all the years, attends the morning meeting, watch a movie, a play, they sing, they play a role, etc.

In order to focus their attention on the important aspects of learning, it is always good to remember that at the beginning of watching a movie or listening to a story, students are clearly communicated the task, for example:

Task 1. Watch the movie so you can name the characters who participated in the action. Task 2. Identify a quality for each character.

Tasks may be different, for different classes. More effective would be the stating and the explanation of the tasks, they should also be written so that students can return to them during the course of their work and at the time of evaluation.

The morning meeting can become a daily practice, as in the *Step by Step* alternative, on a topic chosen by the teacher or proposed by students. Stating a problem from the thematic unit that they study, during the morning meeting we focus on developing oral communication. In the first part of the class, the content may be the same for all pupils, but the tasks and products to be done are differentiated according to age and individual peculiarities. We suggest that students should be the ones who choose which tasks they want to accomplish. We may have the surprise that the younger ones may want to achieve performance-enhancing tasks designed for higher grades. In this way, we are in line with one of the principles of human psychology - children must be allowed to take as many decisions as possible.

In the morning meeting, communication exercises are made, depending on the topic chosen, through an integrated approach. They can talk about a community event, about a historical event that happened on that day, about a story lived by a character from literature, history, a literary work, about a meteorological phenomenon, about significant experiences / events that have happened at the end of the week, they can read fragments of the texts studied in the ongoing topic unit, articles in newspapers, magazines, they can talk about what may be more important and current in the life of the community. Pupils ask questions from each other by the message, organize didactic games aimed at the development of the vocabulary and it is encouraged the participation of all.

This is a way to allow children to use the experiences they acquire within school, and on the other hand they can apply what they learn at school in their daily lives so that school becomes the place where learning takes place for life, a principle characteristic to the Montessori, Freinet, Waldorf and Step by Step alternatives.

Given that the number of students is not too high in relation to the size of the classroom and the furniture is not fixed, spaces can be organized in which the two or three groups of pupils in different classes can perform front-end activities without disturbing their own spaces to each group. In such a classroom, frontal activity will be deployed in the space where chairs or

benches are arranged in the form of a horseshoe. This arrangement is best, because visibility is better, the teacher can see all students, who in turn see most of their colleagues without the need to return. All frontal, but interactive, for a thematic unit, for example: Let's get together with colleagues, work can start with exercise Find quality, walk through the classroom, wearing a ticket on the back, each participant writes to colleagues who He knows a good enough quality on the ticket he wears on his back. Those small who can not write yet, draw a symbol or appeal to the greatest. At the end of the activity, each reads the qualities he / she has written on the ticket and makes an analysis: identifies those he / she would have attributed. The following day you can write recommendations for changing behavior to better relate to others. This activity was regarded not only as an exercise of communication, but also as knowledge and self-knowledge. The simultaneous class offers even an advantage: the age difference and training among students make the interaction more closely related to the actual situation faced by students beyond the walls of the school. In these games he participates directly, carrying his own ticket and making notes on students' and teacher's tickets. His involvement aligns with the primacy we learn together, we learn from each other, we are a community specific to the Step by Step alternative.

Other examples of frontal activities that are also suitable for simultaneous classes are: teaching new knowledge, checking understanding of new knowledge, consolidating exercises, reading out loud, solving some blackboard exercises, classroom training and reading and discussing newspaper extracts, magazines, books, commenting on local or national events of students' interest, didactic games, to which all students participate. The activities to which all students participate are very important in simultaneous teaching as they contribute to the welding of the group of students, which will make them communicate freely, without fear of being "denounced" to parents or other children in town. Frontal work is characterized by a rigorous control of the teacher who determines the content, interaction, rhythm, duration of activity. The teacher also corrects students' mistakes and assesses the level of achievement of the didactic task. I have already mentioned that especially in the context of simultaneous education, the teacher is not the only person who can interact with the class. However, this type of organization of the class has advantages and disadvantages that require alternation with individual and group activities.

Independent activity in simultaneous education

By independent activity we understand the way of organizing the training - educational activity, which consists in the activity of enriching knowledge

and skills, without the help of others, according to the instructions given by the teacher.

The content of the independent activity must have a clearly specified purpose, dimensioned in such a way as to occupy all the time affected by this activity with well understood tasks. Here, differentiated and individualized treatment will be used. Copying or transcribing texts is recommended only in the 1st grade, with the aim of practicing the calligraphic writing of letters.

The tasks in working independently should require the pupil in the vicinity of the development, according to Vagotsky's theory; complex enough to be stimulating, but at the child's level of understanding and processing, in order to be able to be stimulated and motivated. The content of self-employed exercises must be attractive to capture the students' attention, to stimulate their creativity, thus enabling them to solve the tasks they receive without distracting their attention to other activities in the classroom.

Depending on the specifics of the didactic task, the teacher must assign tasks so that students can not copy from one another, even if they do the same type exercise. For example, if the students have to summarize a text, the task is identical, but the texts must be different. It is recommended that students be given the opportunity to ask for support from their colleagues for understanding, but the work itself should be done by themselves. This is also a practice that has been verified in the *Step by Step* class and from which everyone has to learn: the one who explains consolidates his knowledge, and the other can explain his confusing things.

Examples of activities pertaining to individual work: reading a text and filling in a reading sheet prepared in advance by the teacher, searching for information or words in dictionaries, encyclopedias, extracting the main ideas, summarizing or commenting on a text, writing letters, texts, telegrams, announcements, various mathematical calculations, to find out the size of a surface, drawings, objects, games, teaching materials etc.

Activity in groups, in the context of simultaneous education

Group work involves working with someone, active participation in the pursuit of a common goal in learning.

Collaborative learning involves offering mutual support in accomplishing tasks, by ensuring understanding through dialogue, through exchange of ideas, through mutual learning.

Cooperative activity requires different tasks to be accomplished, but by assembling they lead to getting a common product.

Both cooperative learning and collaborative learning imply taking responsibility for both learning and others.

The group of pupils in the case of simultaneous teaching is composed of two, three or even four age groups and training levels. There is no point in dividing these groups into subgroups unless there are more than five children in a class.

The advantages of working in a group are multiple: time is gained by multiplying work points, increasing the active participation of each student; students learn from each other, the source of knowledge is not only the teacher; social facilitation is achieved by stimulating the individual due to the presence of others; the group achieves the collection of resources; they also cumulate skills, contributions, information; more minds do better than one; it reduces the number of errors, it increases the accuracy of the solution; "blind spots" are corrected; it is easier to see the mistakes of others than personal ones; the group develops the ability to think critically, and last but not least, children learn to work together, which is a great gain for their training for life.

Group work is an absolutely necessary way in simultaneous classes where pupils are required to learn to solve the problems they have raised, alone or with the help of their colleagues. The disadvantage of group work in simultaneous education is the inevitable noise when more students speak at the same time. In a simultaneous class this may be an impediment to the other group's activity. It is also possible to have indiscipline problems. It is necessary to draw up a worksheet for each group explaining the steps, the stages needed to solve the tasks and the place where support materials can be found; we can compare it with the programmed learning as a method of education.

Through the cooperation work, posters can be made in which the contents of a lesson, the relationships between different concepts are drawn through drawings, tables or schemes. Through collaborative work, joint products can be made by contributing to the fabrication of a component of the fruit basket or a step in the making a product: one can shape, another cuts, one sticks into a common product - Spring garden.

Working in pairs, which is also a group work, is the easiest way to be organized, even in classrooms with fixed furniture, because students are usually two in desks. Another advantage of working in pairs is the active participation rate of students. Virtually half of the students are permanently active. Advantages of working in pairs, applicable in simultaneous education: increases the percentage of active participation of students, encourages students' collaboration, the two can correct each other, without fear of being ridiculed, can explain the less clear aspects of the didactic task, it can be organized at any stage of the lesson to achieve different goals: oral or written exercises, understanding of written messages, exercises and

problem solving, self-correction assessment of individual work, each correcting with the help of Colleague who oversees and helps him.

Ways of combining frontal, individual and group activity

When we do the teaching of new knowledge and we want the formation of some skills, for example - performing the multiplication of two numbers, it is important to follow some stages. First, the teacher demonstrates and at the same time explains an exercise. The second stage, one of the high-potential students, does blackboard exercise, explaining out loud what he is doing under the teacher's supervision. Stage three, in pairs, the students solve each other's supervision, one exercise. The next step, each student solves two multiples alone and in the last step, on the board, under the supervision of the teacher, the students with low potential solve another exercise. This approach is recommended to be used whenever the purpose is to train working skills, where, starting from the maximum help received from the teacher and then from colleagues, the pupils are getting more and more out of support and get to solve by themselves, in a controlled form, in order to avoid errors.

We engage in group activity almost involuntarily with the concept of interactive learning.

Activity under simultaneous conditions does not constitute an impediment to using interactive methods.

Snowball, is one of the interactive methods that can be used successfully in the simultaneous class, combining the individual activity with the group activity.

The method involves reducing the number of elements, aspects, facets of a problem / situation and focusing on the essentials. It can be used in preparation for starting a thematic unit, if it is not entirely new, or for argumentation or fixation, at the end of the thematic unit. The method can be used at the end of *The Field* Thematic Unit, for the topic - Advantages of the inhabitants in the field areas.

Steps needed to complete the method:

- Divide the class into groups of 4-5 students!
- Tell the topic!
- Each member writes his / her ideas in response to the given topic and puts the card in the center of the table.
- Each member reads all the ideas and hierarchies them through individual activity.
- Students are discussing at the group level and will retain the first 2-3 more relevant ideas

Another method that can be used is the *Double Entry Journal*. It is a method by which readers establish a close connection between text, film, painting, drawing, musical piece and their own curiosity and experience. The method can be used at the beginning of the *Water* theme unit – The water, starting from tokens that represent different forms of water existence in nature.

Steps needed to complete the method:

- Each divides a page into two columns, pulling a vertical line in the middle.
- On the left side they will note passages, elements that particularly impressed them, which surprised them. On the right they will comment on that passage.
 - Why did they note it?
 - What made them think of?
 - Why did it intrigue them?
 - They read at the level of the group what they wrote.
 - The teacher makes his own comments.

A method through which the student with the support of his colleague and under the guidance of the teacher learns how to learn is *I Know / I want to know / I have learned*.

In small groups, preferably in pairs, students remember what they already know about a particular topic and then ask questions.

Steps required to complete the method:

1. Students build a table of the kind

I Know	I want to know.	I have learned.

2. For 5 minutes, teacher asks students to form pairs and write in the first column everything they know about the topic that is going to be discussed.

3. Within the group, by mutual reading, each reads the others in each column.

4. Teacher asks students to read the lesson in the textbook or a training sheet prepared by him, and fill in the *I have learned* section with the answers to the questions asked and other interesting and important ideas found in the record or lesson.

5. Through a frontal activity within the group, questions are left unanswered, they are discussed, solutions are found, and sources are provided where they can look for this information. Every child completes the heading *I have learned*, with the missing ideas.

Beware!

It is a method that is suitable only for lessons that really stir curiosity in the mind of the child.

With the same success, the ICSRTE method - The Interactive Classification System for Reading and Thinking Efficiency can be used

- It is a way of encoding the text that allows the learner to read and understand, to actively and pragmatically read some content.
- It is a method that can be used to teach students how to learn.
- It is a method with a strong formative character.

Steps required to complete the method:

During the reading, students mark in the text using the following notations:

The knowledge confirmed by the text \surd

New knowledge not yet encountered +

Uncertain, confused knowledge that deserves to be investigated ?

The knowledge that was denied / contradicted by the text -

The information obtained individually is discussed in the group;

After the discussion, the information is entered individually in a table:

\surd	+	?	-

Careful!

- The columns ‘?’ And ‘-’ are the teacher's center of interest. The information in these headings needs to be clarified, firstly, through a pair / group discussion. If they can not be clarified, at the pair / group level, they are discussed with the whole class and with the teacher's support.

- Problems that can not be elucidated on the spot can be set as homework, the teacher indicating the source from which students can get information. Thus, they will be material for the next lesson.

For the development of creativity, the *Free Texting* method, which is specific to the Freinet alternative, can be used successfully.

- It is a method that increases student's interest in written composition.

Stages:

1. Students are divided into groups of 4.
2. Each student writes the headings of three texts on a file, which would like to write them on half a page.
3. Everyone communicates titles to colleagues in the group.
4. They choose the text that they would like to listen to.
5. Each student develops a draft, a plan of ideas, key words, feelings, thoughts, without a logical, chronological order. The correct writing problems can be ignored.

6. Each student then draws up a draft with reorganizations, in which one line is written, in order to make corrections, additions, individually or in consultation with a colleague or teacher.
7. Rewrite and correct the text, each with a colleague.
8. Read each text within the group.
9. At home the text is prepared for presentation: calligraphic rewriting, filling in with drawings, computer writing, page layout is also an element of creativity the student should be aware of.
10. It is possible to create a book of the class, with texts made on various occasions.

Beware!

It takes an hour for such an activity.

It is recommended to allow the necessary time.

The teacher has to teach his students how to present their creation: voice tone, nonverbal language, visual contact.

Under the conditions of simultaneous education, there is always the problem of time, the time gap between the required time and the estimated activities simultaneously proposed. The surplus of time is also used in favor of the student who can: check the humidity of plants in the Green Corner, fill in the Journal of the class, look for information about the author of the text they are going to study at Romanian language, in the Class Library books or on the Internet , to create figurines with TANGRAM squares or the ORIGAMI technique, to help students of the lower class to complete the collective work, to prepare the materials for the next hour of practical skills, to respond in writing to the partners of the European School project, to sort out or pack the donated toys for Placement Center children, to uncover the logic and perspicacity of the existing library or in the basket with extra problems, to consult the reading list with colleagues, to name as many objects where the picture can be found. These tasks can be put down somewhere and students can choose to do what they want.

In order to integrate and interdisciplinary approach to school learning, subjects for Art and practical abilities will be directly related to the literary texts studied: - Autumn Carpet, made by varied techniques, according to the curriculum.

Works can be obtained by group work and can be used as interior design elements in the classroom.

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In order to integrate and interdisciplinary approach to school learning, subjects for plastic education and practical abilities will be directly related to the literary texts studied: - Autumn Carpet, made by varied techniques, depending on the program.

Works can be obtained by group work and can be used as interior design elements in the classroom.

Conclusions

The complexity of didactic activity in simultaneous classes brings many difficulties, which can contribute to poor performance, to school failure of students if these difficulties are not overcome. One drawback is the fact that in these classes, many times, do not arrive teachers capable of making education an art, a condition in which simultaneous education could be a success story. The fact that the teacher guides the activity of several classes, being only partially involved in the life of each age group, puts the students in the situation to build their personal knowledge, individual activity and intercourse with their colleagues and at the same time exercise extremely useful socio-emotional skills. Also in the real way, it is created the opportunity, born of obligativity, that students acquire much more independence in the organization and monitoring of school activity, making it a valuable attitude to life, which is lacking in the mass education; pupils in primary education often become overly addicted to the teacher.

Under the conditions of the simultaneous class, the focus is mainly on how and what is happening in the classroom. The teacher's dismay, his major concern is the learning process, the involvement of both the students and the teacher. These observations do not necessarily describe a method, especially an educational philosophy characterized by an interactive, communicative approach of cooperation between pupils as well as between pupils and teachers. The teacher is part of the process, not only conductor and external

observer. In simultaneous education in particular, the essence is the use of what they already know and can do by supporting one another, sharing each other's experiences, knowledge, way of working to learn something new. Children easily learn from each other all kinds of things, they can learn useful things as they learn how to use the merry pranks, how to use the sling, how to make paper ships, and intellectual work skills.

We only need to create favorable conditions, a well-prepared environment, but leaving a degree of freedom.

In order to have teachers ready to successfully achieve simultaneous classroom learning, besides individual study and training through methodological activities, it is absolutely necessary to train them through a systematic program.

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WORKING ON TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCIES OUT OF DOORS

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Abstract: *This article has two important aspects of modern education in the spotlight. First, it discusses the need for the development of transversal competencies, as it is required from our modern society. Secondly, it gathers all the modern methods, in which this is possible in schools, mostly considering outdoor education a great way of putting it all into practice. It also gives practical suggestions on how to practically develop transversal competencies through outdoor education, and presents a brief research and its results on the changes that were brought to everyday education, regarding the development of transversal competencies on children aged 6 to 8 years old.*

Key words: *transversal competencies, skills, outdoor learning, education, method*

1. Introduction

One of the greatest challenges of contemporary education worldwide is to develop strong individuals, ready to face everyday situations in their personal and social life. Society represents reality, and educational systems should prepare students to be able to face reality. Reality is represented by the demands that the society is lifting up daily, the rapid changes which require fast adaptability, being able to communicate and be understood, the capability to take decisions as fast as it is required, autonomy, team work and so on. Education, as it was before, wasn't able to respond promptly to all these demands, because it was based mostly on transmitting, listening, assimilation and refunding information with all its aspects. It was also based on the teacher and its authority. Students and pupils had a passive role, their activity was mostly based on listening, recording and reproducing everything they heard. A contemporary education, is different, we could even say it is the opposite of the first one. Today, education is based on the pupil, but not

individually but as part of a group, and mostly on the learning experiences elaborated by teachers but starting from the needs of the group. (Chiş, 2002)

We can also say that from the education of listening, it had developed to the education of activity, and now we are at the interactive pedagogy stage. Being interactive means being curious, researching, searching, experiencing. According to Higgins, (Higgins, Loynes, 1997), a good and qualitative learning based on experience should include the following stages:

- experiencing experience,
- reflection on experience,
- applying new knowledge to new situations
- generalizing the principles so that they can be applied to future situations,
- considering the value of the whole process as learning.

How to put experiential learning into practice and also get the expected results in the development of transversal competencies? Well the answer comes right as outdoor learning activities. There had always been the question on how can educational programs be refreshed? A single person could not be able to respond to that, and even a group of experts would need lots of time to find the optimal solution. (Ilica, 2016)

2. Theoretical foundation

A competence is defined as a specific configuration of knowledge, attitude, skill that lead to new behaviors and which allow an individual to perform an action / task given, in a given context, in a particular role and having view specific criteria.

Transversal competences are value acquisitions and attitudes that go beyond a specific field / program of study and are expressed through the following descriptors: autonomy and responsibility, social interaction, personal and professional development.

Transversal competencies, without enumeration being limiting, provide: teamwork skills, oral and written communication skills in native / foreign languages; skills of reasoning and argumentation and critical thinking; the use of information and communication technology - ICT; problem solving and decision making; recognition and respect for diversity and multiculturalism; learning autonomy; initiative and entrepreneurship; opening up to lifelong learning; respecting and developing professional values and ethics; skills to operate in an interdisciplinary manner with methodologies and concepts from the real sciences, social sciences and artistic creation, etc. Key competences are a multifunctional, transferable knowledge, skills and attitudes that all individuals need for personal fulfillment and development, social inclusion and job creation. They must

have developed at the end of compulsory education and should act as a foundation for learning as part of lifelong learning.

Key competences are learning acquisitions that allow flexible and quick adaptation of the graduate, enabling them to (re) learn a field if the job is on the labor market. If in the past there was enough reading and writing as the basis of learning, these fundamentals are no longer sufficient, as the pace of social development, new technologies, and the globalized economy (including the economic crisis) implies acquiring and deepening skills that until yesterday only the field specialist was interested. Today, these purchases must be taught at the table by graduates - both to ensure the progress of a dynamic society and to personal prosperity (material and spiritual). Key competences are combinations of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context. These acquired acquisitions can be transferred to other, more general contexts, but with the basic characteristics of the ones they have formed. They overlap and intersect, and basically the component elements can be reconfigured in the mosaic, being crossed by a number of themes that apply transversely: critical thinking, creativity, problem solving, risk assessment, decision-making, constructive management of emotions.

Human society is constantly changing, so education is required to keep up with the demands of society. Pedagogy should be a forward-looking science able to identify the premises of an innovative learning, to prepare the new generation to deal with new situations, unexpected events. Integrated or modular learning, trans- disciplinarily and new methods based on information techniques, learning for a knowledge society, learning centered on aspirations and aspirations of young people can be topics for this science of education. At the same time, pedagogy must retain its status of science, with persevering care to preserve its core, its terminological coherence, as well as the fundamental science status, capable of theorizing human aspects into the general evolution of the individual, the organizations and humanity (Anton Ilica 2013)

3. Directions

Outdoor education usually refers to organized learning that takes place in the outer environment. Outdoor education programs often involve experiences based on wildlife travelers or the near environment where students participate in a variety of challenging adventures and outdoor activities such as hiking, climbing, canoeing, rope racing or games group. The John Muir Award is an organization that encourages and provides opportunities for outdoor education. Outdoor learning is based on the philosophy, theory and practice of experimental education and environmental education. Forest school is an approach to outdoor education

that supports the development of self-confidence, self-esteem in a natural environment.

There have been some specialists who reacted to the above definition, saying that outdoor learning is based on relationships. Connections in terms of people and those related to natural resources. Julian W. Smith described outdoor education as a learning environment for things that can be learned best outside the classroom (Smith, 1955). Some describe it as a concept that takes into account an entire education program based on the experience and practical activity that takes place outside the classroom in the natural environment. It is based on theory and philosophy, on the practice of experiential education, ecological education and environmental education. It helps people to understand better, understand the world, and especially to gain a better understanding of the people around them. It is considered a modern method of learning, a type of relatively new education, often called experimental education; produces strong educational effects and, as a benefit, it is mentioned especially those involving innovation, leadership, communication and many other aspects of modern life.

The term outdoor education is widely used with reference to a multitude of outdoor activities that take place in a variety of ways, but predominantly outdoor environments or spaces. Common or common definitions of outdoor education are difficult to determine because interpretations vary according to culture, philosophy, or local conditions. Outdoor education is often associated with adventure education, adventure programs, outdoor schooling, adventure therapy, recreation or tourism, expedition learning, challenging education, learning by experience, environmental education, forestry school and wildlife education.

Outdoor education is not time spent outside, as it was once thought, and no relaxation or play, nor does it refer to leisure activities as it is still believed. As its name implies, it is about learning and involves learning activities, it is a way of education, it can often involve residential or travel experiences in which students participate in a variety of adventurous challenges but must have as their primary purpose: learning. The purpose of outdoor education is therefore not external activity but multilateral learning. For example, an educator can learn how to overcome adversity, work with others, develop a deeper relationship with nature, with peers, and with themselves. Some specialists say education for adventures is outdoor education. I would say that it is just a component of outdoor education as well as ecological education. Indeed, it helps to develop interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, but they do not represent outdoor education, but it complements it. To end all the definitions discussed here, outdoor education is a cultural construction that addresses and applies differently

from one system to another. It is a type of education for social, personal and environmental development (Higgins, 2002).

4. Recent perspectives

Recent research shows that the best way of developing competencies or getting to the expected results in learning is giving maximum freedom in the teaching learning activities. This does not mean that the role of teacher disappears completely, but it gets a hidden role. Teachers prepare and conduct the whole teaching experience, children get involved actively in the whole process and they are the main actors of the process.

Outdoor education can be defined as a learning experience in, for or outside (Donaldson, 1958). This definition describes outdoor education as a form of learning in the natural environment, learning about nature, animals and plants, and nature, which means that we need to think in the future and take care of the resources of our planet. As usual, there have been many reactions to this definition, from education specialists, pedagogues and teachers as well. Many have said that outdoor education and many of its aspects can be done indoors as well. There can be many activities that do not require an outdoor environment. Others, on the other hand, say that the learning process can not only be about the outdoor environment. Socialization and personal involvement could be as important as the environmental aspect. However, previous studies show that socialization can be made easier in an open, free, constrained environment. Learning situations are also important. There are some experts who believe that the main purpose of outdoor learning should be independent learning, free thinking and independent problem solving. The aforementioned definition was a solid basis for considering learning outwardly a new learning method (Priest, 1990).

5. Study case

For example, a research has been done on a number of 80 pupils, aged 6 to 8. They were selected from different schools, some of them belonging to schools from different countries, Hungary and Romania. They were all monolingual; they only spoke Romanian and Hungarian, depending on the school they came from. There was a workshop organized, for three consecutive days, where pupils were directly involved in outdoor learning activities. Each day, pupils had to participate into four different workshop activities. After each day, Hungarian pupils went back to their countries, according to the fact that they lived close to the border.

The outdoor learning program was developed by a teacher who has outdoor learning competencies. Some university students, after long meetings and preparations, helped with the good practice of the activity.

The program, in which these pupils were included, started with the observation of their behavior for several days in different moments of a day, both inside the classroom, during teaching learning activities and even in breaks. The research process started from the *hypothesis* that if some outdoor learning activities were introduced in their daily activity, there will be positive progress in their behavior, regarding the development of the transversal competencies. There were 2 *variables* included. First, the independent one, which was the use of outdoor learning activities included in the outdoor workshops. The second one was the dependent variable, the behavioral changes, the development of some transversal competencies. The main *instrument* used to gradually check the results was the observation. There were phases of observation during outdoor activities, and after workshops, in the classroom. The last phase of observation was in the classroom, where behavior of pupils was observed, mostly competencies such as: collaboration, self-discipline, resourcefulness, and respect for the environment. These competencies are also encompassing skills, values, and attitudes required for the holistic development of learners.

6. Intervention

The intervention program contained an intensive three day activity based on outdoor workshops. These workshops were developed in order to test if transversal competences can be developed, but also in order to maintain and develop inter cultural relationships between pupil from different countries, in this case, Hungary and Romania. The 6 to 8 years old pupil participated to 4 different workshops per day, totally a number of 12 controlled outdoor activities. Besides these, pupils had time to experience, to play, to visit around the city. There were activities developed from all areas and subjects, meaning that pupils had real interdisciplinary, holistic learning experiences.

For example, subjects involving math, developed critical thinking and decisional competences. Pupils had to stay in a row, one behind the other, and to run 500 meters where there was a supervisor with a mathematical exercise. Pupils had to listen carefully to the operation, decide on the result, and from a batch of different posters containing numbers, they had to choose the one containing the correct answer. Physical competencies were also developed and fresh air and spending time out of doors, helped a lot in thinking and solving all these simple but so handful exercises.

There were also activities involving arts and communication, which helped pupils develop healthy relationship with one another. For example, pupils were required to collect wild fruits and branches, also grass and different herbs, which they later on used to paint n groups on a given theme.

There were physical activities too where pupils got into a sack, jumped for 300 meters, took a balloon, popped it, took out a paper containing a question, went back to the group, answered the question, switched places and the next pupil went on track. This learning activity continued until one of the group finished the race first. Questions from the balloons were from all areas and were proper for the ages involved.

Orienteering activities developed autonomy and independent thinking, also experiencing and learning in new areas, and discovering new places in a controlled environment. Orienteering in the city was a great activity of discovering new places and learning to rely on a map and ask for directions. The use of city room is a great way to integrate outdoor activities in the weekly teaching learning program of children. All these activities served to develop new competencies and new relationships between students.

7. Analyses of the results

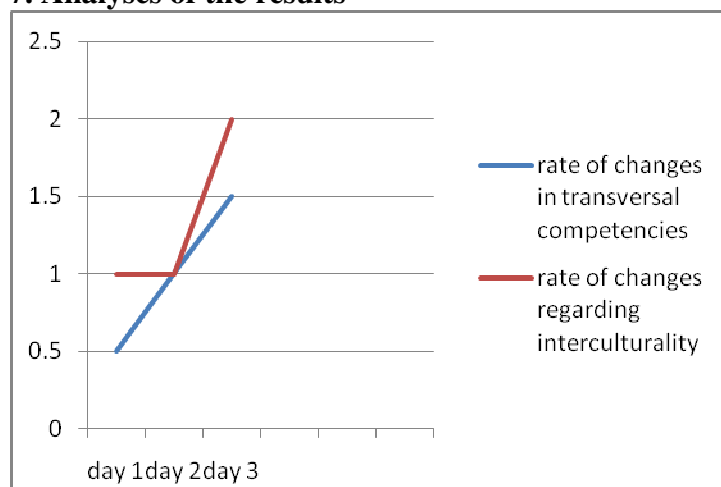


Table 1. Rate of changes regarding transversal competencies and intercultural features within the group

There are visible raises in the level of group cohesion, even if on the first and second day, intercultural levels remained the same. There are visible signs that children need a time, even if it is short, to develop communication and friendships, to cooperate in order to resolve problems.

Within classes following this outdoor education program, feedback from teachers hasn't delayed to appear. In the following two weeks students continuously talked about their experience demanding similar actions in their own schools. Group cohesion grew, and follow-up lessons showed willingness to cooperate and communicate, to share and to be opened to new situations. It was noticed that pupils from both countries became opened to try to learn the same contents in different contexts.

8. Conclusions

The more and more enhanced preoccupations for permanent education determines an extension of teaching learning methods, lifelong available. This thing prefigures the placement of non-formal education on new, higher positions. Based on the world wide educational crisis, the whole educational system needs refreshment. School is not the only place where you can learn and activities besides formal educational system come to help out people who desire to learn and to permanently form themselves. Until not a long time ago formal and non-formal education completed each other regarding objectives, contain and organizational ways when today non-formal educational activities are worth of getting degrees such as formal ones. The main role of every educational activity, developed in school or outside of it, represents a pedagogical intentionality (Ionescu, 2005) and it expresses all political and educational orientations regarding the development of human personality according to social and cultural values of the society with the purpose of completely integrating in the social life but most of all in order to develop a useful activity in the social, economic area. (Kelemen, 2014)

Enriching the educational area with activities that develop transversal competences is a must have of the 21st century. If this can be reached in a pleasant way, such as outdoor learning then why not open our doors and let children explore and grow as naturally as possible?

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THE SPECIFIC OF HOMESCHOOLING AS EDUCATIONAL ALTERNATIVE

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Abstract: *More and more parents consider education at home, homeschooling, as a solution to the crisis of the educational system from Romania. In our country, there are few scientific studies analysis of the impact of this alternative on cognitive acquisitions and the development of personality traits of children. The study proposed by us, carried out in the spring 2017, had as its primary objective the analysis of how homeschooling is practiced and carried out in families in our country, especially due to the fact that, in Romania, this educational alternative is not legalized. One of the methods of data collection were the online questionnaire. We have noticed that parents who already practice this system education face the prejudices of those around, most of the time, not even supporting the family or close friends. Sometimes due to this system of thinking, parents do not even dare to say they are educating themselves their own children, fearing that they will be judged. The legalization of this system and putting it "in the light" of the scientific approach would be just for the benefit of the children.*

Keywords: *home schooling, educational alternative, questionnaire, learning program*

Theoretical premises

Noah Webster claimed that all governments originated in families and, if we had neglecting this, it would hardly be believed that they would still exist in society. He said that the foundation of all free governance and of all social order must be put on the family and on discipline of young people. (Noah Webster, 1828)

Education at home started in the 1600s but we can not know exactly. But what we know for certain is that this education was done under the guidance of a parent or a tutor because there were no public schools. Later, when traditional schools appeared, the idea of education at home seemed something out of the ordinary, strange, unusual. In 2001, the notion of home education began to reach the ears of as many as possible Romanians and, in

2002, the Home-schooling Romania Association was initiating steps in order to legalize home education.

Parents practicing home-based education in Romania have enrolled their children at schools from abroad (umbrella schools), which sustain home schooling approach, from whom they can get enrolment number, curriculum and diplomas. These schools issue diplomas and enrolment sheets online or by mail, following tests, documents that are recognized by the Romanian state. They organize also the international baccalaureate that is approved and recognized in Romania as well. In Europe, centers have been set up where students can be examined for general knowledge in English language.

In addition, home education in Romania is legally supported, to a certain extent, by The Romanian Constitution, which states that "parents or guardians are entitled ensures, according to their own beliefs, the education of minors under their responsibility " (Romanian Constitution - Article 29 (6)) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - Art.26, the right to education, with the important specification in par. (3): "Parents are entitled priority in choosing the type of education for their minor children. "Also, in 2010, Deputy Minister Carmen Axenie, told HotNews that the solution for reform education would be home education.

"The great center of our education is that it has no social vision or no, it doesn't allow the family to act an important role in child's education. We need a profound reform of Romanian education and homeschooling is an opportunity." (HotNews.ro, 2014, March 18)

Concerning the adoption of a clear law on homeschooling as an alternative form of education public education, supporters and practitioners concerned have begun to address implementing and regulating this system so that it is at hand any family who would like to choose for this s approach.

Presently, the Chamber of Deputies has a draft law on the legalization of home education as a distinct form of education in the administrative system Romanian. The law proposal sets out the conditions for good organization and the operation in which home education is to take place, the responsibilities of individuals involved in educating children, social workers and how they could be supported Ministry of Education.

In our country homeschooling is not accredited, however, due to umbrella schools in other countries, this alternative functions in Romania and as the years go by, one is noticed increasing number of students who are withdrawn from the traditional system and are being enrolled at an umbrella school to be able to do homeschooling. This movement allows parents to educate themselves their children, trying to and to be creative by promoting a personalized education. Homeschooling can have a curriculum structure or the child can learn what he wants every day. No day is the same, because the children to work on different projects according to their interests. Because

homeschooling means more freedom, there are days when visiting a museum or zoo in order to learn about animals Preferred days are called school days because the child learns and develops their skills. There is an association called "Homeschooling Romania" where the founding president of this association is Gabriel Curcubet, who has 4 children and, together with his wife, has begun homeschooling in 2001, when their eldest son was 5 years old. He claims that through this alternative, children benefit of personalized and quality education, thanks to the advanced textbooks in the US. He sustains that the children benefit of the best educational programs and socialize more than in public schools. Costs are from \$ 1,000 per child for a school year. He also said that there are 200 families in Romania which enrolled their children in homeschooling. To have success in home education, there is no need for higher education, but rather a well-chosen curriculum and a well-motivated parent. The Homeschooling Romania Association supports this draft law, bringing it additions, modifications and constructive innovations to facilitate parents' involvement children in the educational-educational process. Experts in the field of education have made a comparison between the education received at the school public and home-based education, the results are shown in the table below:

Table no1. Adpated after Clay and Sally Clarkson, AHS România, (2004), "Educating the Whole Hearted Child"

Education in public school	Education at home
The child is part of a group.	The child is an individual.
Public education concentrates on helping the child according to the standards of the group so that he would learn certain things in a certain time, in certain ways without referring to capacity or maturity.	Education at home concentrates on developing the whole person of a child, is sensitive to his needs and his desires to learn individually and give guidance in growing in Christian maturity.
Learning structures are created with accent on order, conformation, regime and control. The formality is without motivation, stifling the curiosity, creativity and the desire for learning of the child.	Learning structures are created for the child, the home and for the family. The time and freedom unleash the curiosity, creativity and the natural desire for learning of the child.

<p>The level of teaching is low so that one wouldn't lose the lowest student of the class. The high level students are frustrated by the poor rhythm, the poor students by the high rhythm, the medium students by keeping the teacher's rhythm. The weak students are stigmatized and the high students are ostracized.</p>	<p>The teaching aims everybody within the homeschooling. The capacity of teaching can vary without connotation or subtle stigmatization. All the children are progressing in their own rhythm and according to their own level of learning and motivation. Each child is treated as individual without being compared to the others.</p>
<p>The teacher can give limited attention to each child in a class of 15-30 children and is incapable to respond to each child. The concentration is prevented by several factors of attention distraction in noisy large uncomfortable classrooms or outside.</p>	<p>The parent is capable to give to each child the unlimited individual attention in a one-to-one relationship and is capable to answer to each child's individual needs and interests. The concentration is strengthened by the ability of controlling and even be able to eliminate attention distraction.</p>
<p>The student has to learn how to please different teachers. The authority relationships are unnatural and formal.</p>	<p>Instinctively, the child desires to please his parents. The authority relationship is natural and loving.</p>
<p>The teacher is based on the manuals and notebooks which are without force and freshness. The teachers is the authority; the school will represent a necessary addiction and self-reinforced by the teacher.</p>	<p>The parent is free to choose the best books and lively and fresh school curriculum. The parents is an encourager who is also learning; the child is taught and it is expected from him to rely on his own capacities and abilities.</p>

2. Research design and results

The purpose of the research was to identify the extent to which homeschooling is known and spread as an educational alternative.

The main objective was to analyze how homeschooling takes place in families in our country, especially due to the fact that in Romania this alternative education is not legalized.

Another objective of the paper was to identify the advantages and disadvantages practicing homeschooling *for both the child and the parents*.

a. Hypotheses

Depending on the objectives we pursue, we formulated the following research assumptions:

Hypothesis 1: The children enrolled in homeschooling benefit of spending a good time with family, having a pleasant learning atmosphere, being protected from negative influences and studying topics according to their interests

Hypothesis 2: Children registered in the homeschooling system develop lesser extent socio-relational skills due to lower contact with teachers and children.

Hypothesis 3: The more familiar and widespread is homeschooling as an alternative education, the more parents who enroll children in this education system would be encouraged and supported by family and friends.

Hypothesis 4: Families with a higher social level (higher education level) are more open to educational alternatives, and more willing to enroll their children homeschooling.

We used the questionnaire to collect the research data. It comprises 42 the actual questions, which were formulated in such a way as to be consistent with the theme of the research and by the answers that have been obtained, it is possible to measure the objectives and assumptions proposed in the paper. The questioning clearly delineated the question of the researched, they are clearly and concisely formulated, using a language accessible to the subjects and targeting certain aspects of the practice of this educational alternative, not responding to the answers.

The first questions were the factual ones: age, family type, environment residence, graduate level, number of children, monthly income of the family, situation professional. They have helped achieve one of the proposed objectives, namely, observing the social level of homeschooling practitioners, thus being able to analysis and proposed hypothesis, these families being more open to this alternative educational.

Thus, through the questionnaire, 23 parental families were surveyed, with more than 78% residing in the urban area. Of those who participated in this poll 78.3% were aged between 31-50 years, 17.4% between 18-30 years, and 4.3% over 50 years. 95.7% of all these participants have higher education and 69.6% of the total the parents interviewed also have pedagogical or psycho-pedagogical training.

Most of the surveyed families, namely 43.5%, currently have only one child in their place two families with 3 children were present, reaching 30.4%. The last two places are equally occupied by families with 2 children and those with more than 3 children, these reaching 13%. From the poll, more than 52% of families were seen surveyed have monthly incomes of more than 4,000 ron, over 28% of income families monthly between 2000-4000 ron and 19% have between 1000-2000 ron monthly income per month.

The closed-ended question number 39 helped me to see which is their own opinion about the financial level they would need to have in order to practice homeschooling. Thus, 47.6% believe the financial level is a hindrance to parents who want to join this educational system, 33.3% disagree that it is an impediment, and 19% have provided other explanations for this. From the point of view respondents' professional status 8.7% work

part-time, around 39% work full-time and over 50% presents another professional situation.

To measure the goal of identifying the advantages and disadvantages of practicing homeschooling and analysis of the hypothesis of the benefits of homeschooling in the life of the child and his family and the disadvantages he has, we have used open and mixed, semi-open, semi-closed questions. The questionnaire helped me to see what the reasons for choosing homeschooling were like educational alternative for their children. Thus, the national education system, the quality and its inefficiency presents the underlying reason which determine the parents to switch to another alternative. The desire to create a pleasant learning atmosphere, to educate the child holistically, to impregnate a good character to the child, without the negative influence, from morally point of view, are other reasons underlying the choice to do education at home. Other reasons were the freedom to choose a flexible program, the great variety and resources used, investing in the child a lot more than the state can do in a qualitative way, studying the materials that fit it child's.

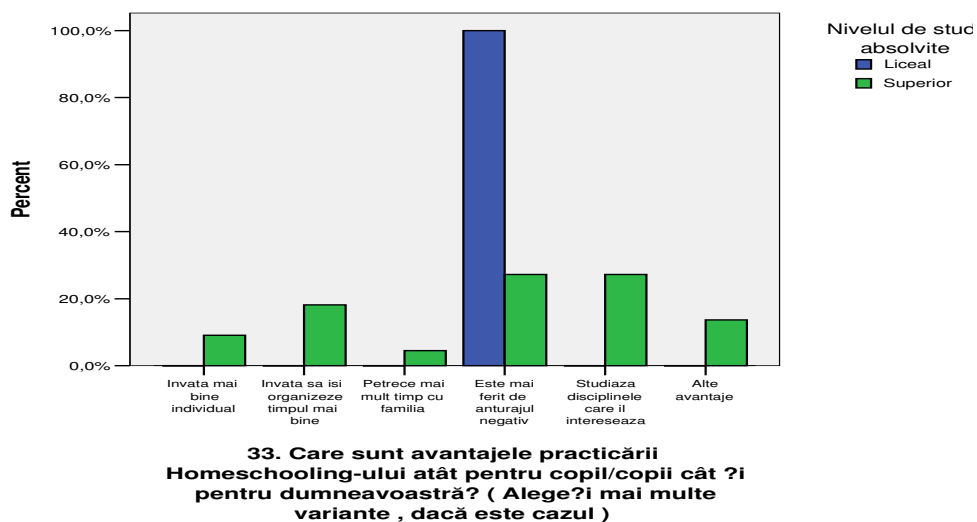


Figure no.1. Perceived Advantages of homeschooling

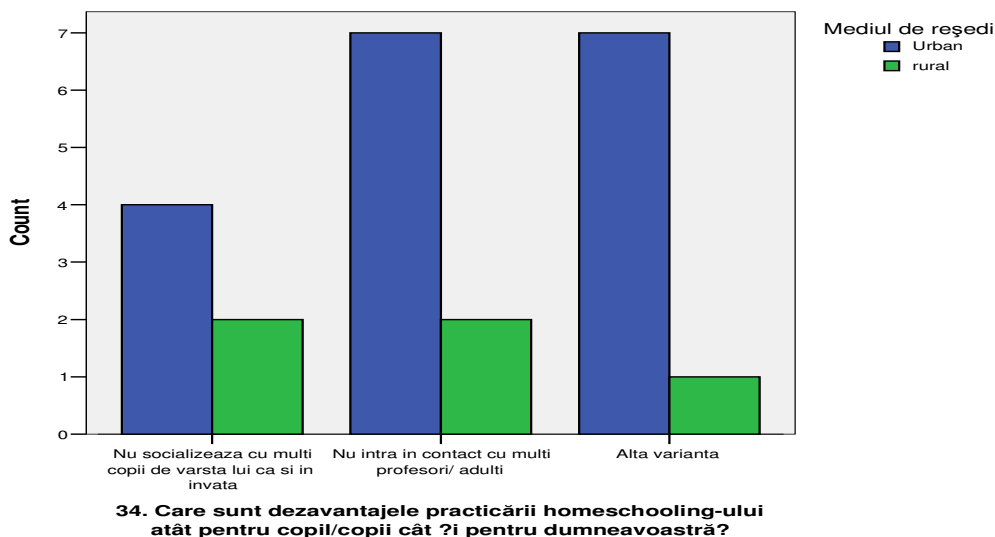


Figure no.2. Perceived disadvantages of homeschooling

As can be seen in Figures 1, the analysis of questions 33-34 helps to see how parents perceive the advantages and disadvantages of practicing homeschooling. Advantages:

- Spending a longer time with the family (71.4%),
- studying the subjects that interest the child (66.7%),
- safer towards the negative influences (61.9%),
- the child learns better individually

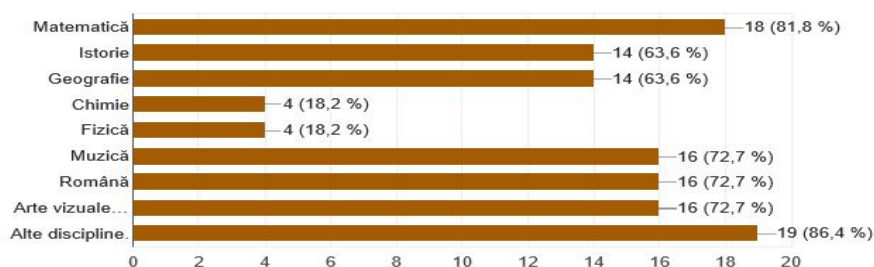
The opportunity to observe the socio-relational skills of the children involved in homeschooling revealed that 66.7% of parents thought their child was well related to others, 23.8% responded that the child interacts with a small group, and 9.5% said that the child relates well but conflicts with certain children. Most parents, 71.4% saw the children very sociable, and 28.6% consider their child sociable to a certain extent. The biggest perceived drawback of homeschooling is that the child does not come in contact with many teachers or adults and does not socialize with many children of his age, as would be the case in formal national education.

The question number 6, "To what extent have you been supported by the family and? Friends," reflects the small spread of homeschooling and little support in the country. Thus, the majority of over 33% were sustained to a small extent by the family and boyfriends to enroll the child in this system.

Over 27% were not supported at all, 22% received support from family and friends to some extent and only 16.7% have been strongly encouraged by the family and friends to enroll the child in the homeschooling system. Given the general situation in our country in terms of the system of thinking and opening up to the new, we can say the results to this question reflect with enough accuracy the level of the mentalities in our country. Question number 3 has helped us to find out how these families have learned about this educational alternative. Thus, it can be noticed that the majority of the families, 27.3%, learned of homeschooling through the internet and 22.7% were informed by parents who have children already enrolled in this education system. 18.2% learned about homeschooling from social media and 13.6% were informed of by other families and specialized books have informed. The same place, 13.6% occupy families that have been informed from other sources, such as the church. Questions 40 and 41 have reached the issue of legalization, 90.9% of interviewees wanting to legalize homeschooling in Romania. We mentioned some of the arguments in favor of the legalization of homeschooling as a viable option: Romania would benefit of better trained and educated youngsters, more parents would have the courage to do homeschooling with their children, so that our children can only study what is really important. In their opinion home education is the most effective and safest educational option, the child has the freedom to be focused on the subjects that passionate him/her and develop him/ herself better from an emotional point of view. As parents we do not have to deal with the "corruption system" that exists in our country's educational system. Here are some arguments for which the interviewed parents would promote homeschooling: practically-efficient-flexible, no one can educate your child with more dedication and interest than you, the education of the children is done according to their abilities, control freedom-economy, quality of teaching (by tutorial filter), child happiness (low level of stress, higher self-esteem), opportunities to grow in their own pace, balanced study-flexible program

17. Ce discipline studiază copilul dumneavoastră? Alegeți mai multe răspunsuri

22 de răspunsuri



18. La ce activități participa copilul dumneavoastră? Alegeți mai multe variante dacă e cazul

22 de răspunsuri

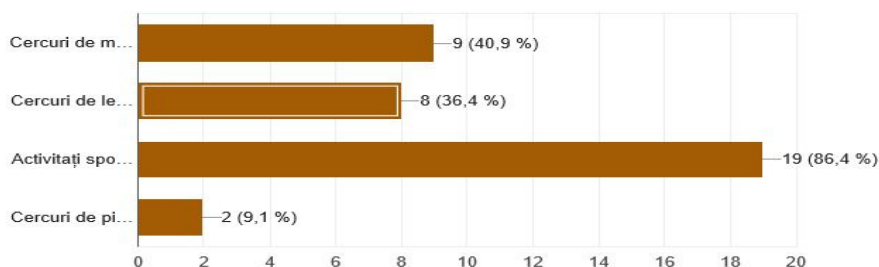


Figure no.3 - Topics and activities studied by the homeschooling enrolled children

As it can be seen from Figure 3, referring to the question about what subjects are studied, 86.4% of interviewed parents prefer for their children to study other disciplines than those we find in public school. But we noticed that 81.8% nevertheless focus on Math knowledge, and Romanian language. Music and the visuals arts rank at third place with a 72.7% share. We also noticed that the general knowledge of history and geography are considered important, reaching a percentage of 63.6%. Chemistry and physics occupied the last place in parents' preference with only 18.2%. Sport is by far the most preferred recreational activity (86.4%), followed by music (40.9%) and reading (36.4%), a small interest (9.1%) being given to the painting.

In the following rows, you can see the schedule of a child practicing homeschooling.

8:00 - 8:30 = morning routine
8: 30-9.00 = breakfast
9.00 - 10.00 = devotional time
10.00 -10.50 = English
10.50 - 11.00 = Break
11.00 - 11.50 = Mathematics
11.50 - 12.00 = Break
12:00 - 12:50 = English
12: 50 -13: 20 = Lunch / Lunch
13:20 - 14: 30 = Art activities
14:30 - 16:00 = PC games

We have noticed that the program of children educated at home is a flexible one, the subject matter studied are choose according to the interests of the child, the pace of learning is also choosing by the child. From the received answers, it could be noticed that there are not fixed hours for studying certain subjects as they exist in mass education, but there is a certain program on dedicated to intense study. Thus, in most of the programs presented, we have noticed that the time spent on studying disciplines is in the morning, with pauses, depending on the child's pace. Although, apparently, everything is left to the latitude of the child, we noticed that parents are concerned about maintaining a balance between the study of disciplines traditionally included in national curriculum (such as mathematics, Romanian and foreign languages) and between interests-based activities (such as the arts, sports, reading, walks, visits to various places). Biblical study is also very important for many families. Another important thing is the fact that these children are involved in household activities (such as cleaning, shopping, meal preparation, guest reception) and through which they are developing their food manners, abilities, skills, character.

3. Conclusions

According to the survey we have conducted we can say that homeschooling is still not well known spread as an educational alternative. We have noticed that parents who already practice this education system faces the prejudices of those around them, not benefitting by the support of family or close friends. Sometimes, due to this thinking system, parents do not even dare to say that they educate their own children because they are afraid that they will be judged. An explanation of the fact that homeschooling is not yet spread or accepted is the fact that there are few communities or associations of homeschooling families in our country or practitioners are unaware of the existence of such communities. Perhaps, if practicing parents from the same town would know and meet regularly for common activities, they would find the mental and soul support they need in

order to go forward with this educational alternative. Another big impediment for homeschooling to be practiced in our country is that it is not legally recognized, and therefore none is grantee kind of certificates for children who have been enrolled in this education system. The main benefit of practicing home schooling in parent's perception, is the fact that the children benefit from a safe place, a pleasant learning atmosphere, a quality time spent with parents who get involved both in child's education and leisure activities. The benefits of homeschooling also lie in the fact that these children are protected from negative influences, they are raised within the moral framework desired by their parents and they have the opportunity to study the disciplines they are more interested in. By being engaged in various domestic activities they develop their skills, talents and character. But, evaluating the results of questions about the relationship of children with other children and with adults, we found that a disadvantage of homeschooling is that exist the danger for these children to develop a lower level of socio-relational skills. In order to prevent that the parents should encourage the children to practice various socio-educational activities in the open air or in different locations.

We observed that families who have enrolled their children in homeschooling have higher education level, they are assuming a different kind of costs for their children 'education. That is why we believe that families of a higher social level are more open to alternatives and are more willing to enroll their children in homeschooling. We appreciate and respect the parents who practice this alternative, especially if the results are adequate. for the children We think that parents who educate their children at home need to have communication skills, management abilities and be a gentle, patient, creative and diligent person for this very important job: educating the child, developing a character that will reflect the received education.

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THE DYNAMIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED PARENTAL SUPPORT AND ONLINE BULLYING

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Abstract: *Bullying is defined as a hostile / exclusionary and deceptive behavior of humiliation. A child is labeled, teased, mocked in his circle of knowledge or by colleagues calling him in a certain way (referring to physical appearance or medical / family issues). The phenomenon of "bullying" is much more common than we would like to believe. It happens on school corridors, in the yard, on the streets and, unfortunately, sometimes in classrooms. Undetected on time, bullying may leave traumas and irreversible repercussions on the child's adaptability to society. Our research team has developed the project Keeping youth safe from Cyberbullying, ID 2016-3-TR01-KA205-036619 under Erasmus+, that aims to deeper understand the dynamics of cyberbullying in online environments among youth, to develop educational resources for professionals involved in youth activities in order to prevent these type behaviors, to develop youth skills to protect themselves from cyberbullying and to disseminate findings among educational professionals. One of our first interests was in analyzing the relationship between online bullying incidents and perceived parental support, due to the fact that psychological protection from any kind of harassment starts from home. Our conclusion is that there is a dynamic relationship between online bullying incidents and perceived parental support. Qualitative results and bullying prevention strategies are discussed.*

Key words: *bullying irreversible, repercussions, prevent, support*

Introduction

The schoolyard represents a social micro-universe in which children receive the first lessons of life outside the family. We are talking about validation, acceptance, empathy, but we are also talking about fear, shame, and rejection. In most cases, emotional negative charge from school reverbs and covers the positive emotions, ambition and inner potential of children.

Bullying is defined as a hostile / exclusionary and deceptive behavior of humiliation. A child is labeled, teased, mocked in his circle of knowledge or by colleagues calling him in a certain way (referring to physical appearance or medical / family issues). Sometimes these teasing changes into stinging or even, in some cases, physical attacks.

Bullying is a form of emotional and physical abuse that has three characteristics:

- Intentional - the aggressor intends to hurt someone;
- Repeated - the same person is always injured;
- The imbalance of forces - the aggressor chooses the victim who is perceived as vulnerable, weak and unable to defend himself.

The phenomenon of "bullying" is much more common than we would like to believe. It happens on school corridors, in the yard, on the streets and, unfortunately, sometimes in classrooms. Undetected on time, bullying may leave traumas and irreversible repercussions on the child's adaptability to society.

Cases of bullying involve at least one aggressor and a victim, and in some cases there are witnesses. The literature discusses about physical, verbal, sexual or psychological bullying.

Exposing a person to violence can lead to further, such as the "butterfly effect" (a small action at a certain place, at some point in time, can cause major exponentially amplified changes in other areas) bully phenomena, both from the aggressor and from the aggressed point of view.

Often, the aggressor adopts violence as the ultimate possibility of defamation and expression, being in turn abused or neglected. The most common causes of such aggressor behavior may be lack of empathy, egocentrism, pride, superficiality of human relationships, and, in particular, the exposure and assumption of similar patterns of behavior - most often the child reproduces with the fellow what he sees at home.

Thus, it is considered that those who cause "bullying" are those who do not receive enough attention, who want to stand out, act and act accordingly. Lack of affection, approval, guidance, positive feedback, lack of love, neglect, encouragement of new life styles, new ways of imposing, earning money (drugs, prostitution, gangs) are factors facilitating bullying. The need for power and domination make the victim a target, and the aggressors will physically, socially or emotionally harm others. Often, those

who harass, have been harassed or are themselves harassed by colleagues or family.

Children or persons that are aggressors, the bullies, are actually those who unfortunately want to show that they have a good self-esteem, that they have control and are superior to others. (Flores et. al., 2013). Families where corporal punishment is often used are a "welcome" environment for the development of deviant behavior such as bullying, inappropriate to adapt to social requirements, incapable of understanding positive discipline, and adherence to rules for proper functioning. Many studies conclude that envy and resentment may represent factors that cause bullying. There is evidence that a lack of self-esteem contributes significantly to bullying, as well as anxieties or guilt. Lack of social skills, use of force and dependence on aggressive behaviors, anger, status in the belonging group, existence of such antecedents in childhood are considered risk factors. None of the less, bullying often does not necessarily imply crime or physical violence, but acts as a psychological or verbal abuse.

Norwegian psychologist Dan Olweus (1993), recognized as a pioneer and founder of the concept, considers bullying the situation in which a person is repeatedly and in time exposed to negative, physical and psychological actions by one or more people. Intentional, direct or indirect damage is created by creating a state of discomfort in various ways: offensive words, humiliations, injuries, altercations, offenses, admonestation, constraints, scorning, screams, bangs, bruises, reproaches, inappropriate touches, obstructions, harassment, etc. Disposing of personal things (notebooks, backpacks, pens, lunch packs, etc.), hair pull, sleeve, scratches, pinching, breaking of dear objects, suffocating with various objects, exclusion, imitating and laughing are other manifestations of bullying (Ross, 2009).

In his book published in 1993 (Olweus, 1993), *School bullying: What do we need to know and what should we do?* the author identifies the characteristics of pupils who are more susceptible to being bullies, and those most likely to be victims of bullying. Here are the general characteristics of aggressors and victims:

- Aggressors: strongly manifests the need to lead, dominate and "subjugate" other colleagues; are impulsive, easily annoyed; are provocative, do not follow the rules; are aggressive with colleagues, parents, teachers; have no remorse and ability to understand the emotions of others (empathy); have a lack of attention: during classes they draw, throw paper, sleep, comment; have a very good, sometimes exaggerated opinion of themselves: they are considered bosses, tricks, princesses etc.; instigates school absenteeism and abuses those who do not obey the "new" rule; belong to

some dubious groups; perceive hostile actions where they do not exist, are antisocial.

- Victims: they are passive in behavior and communication, socially isolated; are cautious, sensitive, withdrawn, shy; manifest insecurity, anxiety, exacerbated sensitivity; have a low self-esteem; have little friends or not; are unable to develop social relationships; are perceived as incapable of defending themselves, of having personal views, of arguing; have different forms of disability: speech, locomotors, etc.; displays an attitude of defeat and depressive behavior; do not cope with the pressure of the group; shows that their rights do not matter, they are ignored; do not take action against acts of aggression.

1. Research methodology

Our research team has developed the project *Keeping youth safe from Cyberbullying*, ID 2016-3-TR01-KA205-036619 under Erasmus+, that aims to deeper understand the dynamics of cyberbullying in online environments among youth, to develop educational resources for professionals involved in youth activities in order to prevent these type behaviors, to develop youth skills to protect themselves from cyberbullying and to disseminate findings among educational professionals. One of our first objectives is to analyze the dynamics of online bullying incidents, starting from youth online posting behavior. In this regard, we have designed a 7 sections online questionnaire that aims to gather descriptive data, general perception about the frequency and typology of cyberbullying type incidents, perceptions about the safety of the educational environment and parental support and an auto evaluation scale centered on self-efficacy perceptions.

One of our first interests was in analyzing the relationship between online bullying incidents and perceived parental support, due to the fact that psychological from any kind of harassment starts from home.

The two items that measured youth online bullying incidents and perceived parental support were: Item 19 – *Have you ever been (online) harassed/bullied at school or in your social environment?* Item 47 – *My parents are always ready to listen to me or help me.* Our online respondents' instruction was to rate items on a 1 to 5 Likert type scale, where 1 stands for strong disagreement and 5 reflects strong agreement with the statement.

Present study aims to analyze the relationship between youth online bullying incidents and their perceived parental support. We start from the assumption that the two variables are in a dynamic relationship. In order to test our dynamical hypothesis, we have used a confirmatory factor analysis, based on multiple regression analysis for curvilinear effects, where youth online bullying incidents was the dependent variable.

The study was conducted on a random sample of 92 participants aged 18-30, of both sexes, 10,9% masculine and 89,1% feminine, from both rural and urban environmental origins, with qualification levels ranging from high-school – 63% – to bachelor’s and master’s degree – 22,8% and 14,2%, respectively.

While most participants – 68.2%, have between one and three years’ experience with social media platforms, only 42.4%, have the same amount of experience with messaging platforms and 43.9%, between no experience and one-year experience with social media platforms and messaging.

2. Results

In order to test our hypothesis that states that between youth online bullying incidents and youth perceived parental support there is a dynamic relationship, we have used a confirmatory factor analysis, based on multiple regression analysis for curvilinear effects.

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 youth online bullying incidents on the horizontal axis and youth perceived parental support, represented on the vertical axis. The sample consists of 92 youth from Arad, Romania.

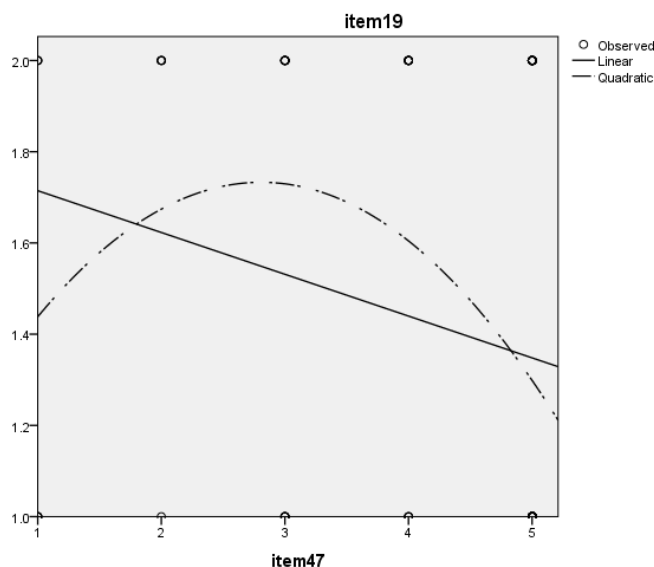


Fig. 1. The dynamic relationship between youth online bullying incidents (Item 19) and youth perceived parental support (Item 47)

There is a very high correlation between youth online bullying incidents – Item 19 (MD=1,42, SD=0,497) and youth perceived parental support – Item 47 (MD=4,12, SD=1,290) of $r = -0,237$ significant at a $p < 0,05$ which methodologically allows us to proceed with confirmatory factor analysis.

For curvilinear relationship testing, the present study proposes a hierarchical multiple regression analysis, the dependent variable being youth online bullying incidents, and the dependent variable in step 1 youth perceived parental support, and in step 2 squared youth perceived parental support.

Table 1 presents the fitting of the two models, linear – Model 1 and curvilinear/ quadratic – Model 2. As we can see in Model 1 the model that supposes linear relationship, youth online bullying incidents accounts for 4% of the variance in youth perceived parental support with an $F = 5.318$ significant at a $p < 0,05$. In Model 2, the model that supposes curvilinear relationship, youth online bullying incidents accounts for 10% of the variance in youth perceived parental support with an $F = 6.720$ significant at a $p < 0,05$.

Table 1. Linear and curvilinear regression models for youth online posting selectivity depending on youth perceived parental support.

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
item19	1.43	.498	92
item47	4.12	1.290	92
Item47sqrt	18.6264	8.66622	92

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	.237 ^a	.056	.046	.486	.056	5.318	1	89	.023
2	.351 ^b	.123	.103	.471	.067	6.720	1	89	.011

a. Predictors: (Constant), item47

b. Predictors: (Constant), item47, Item47sqrt

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	1.806	.171		10.533	.000
	item47	-.092	.040	-.237	-2.306	.023
2	(Constant)	1.022	.345		2.958	.004
	item47	.507	.234	1.314	2.166	.033
	Item47sqrt	-.090	.035	-1.573	-2.592	.011

a. Dependent Variable: item19

Legend:

Item 19 – *Have you ever been (online) harassed/bullied at school or in your social environment?*

Item 47 – *My parents are always ready to listen to me or help me.*

All standardized coefficients of Beta (B= -0,237; B= 1,314 and B= -1,573) are significant at p values < 0,05 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 demonstrates the curvilinear relationship between youth online bullying incidents and youth perceived parental support. The additional incremental predictive capacity of 6 percent, added by including the squared youth perceived parental support variable which is accounting for the band in the regression line, clearly prove that there is a dynamic relationship between youth online bullying incidents and youth perceived parental support.

This dynamic relationship demonstrates that extreme aspects (extremely reduced and extremely frequent bullying incidents) of youth reported bullying situations significantly is influenced by a imbalanced youth perceived parental support, while situating on the middle continuum between reduced and extremely frequent bullying incidents, meaning a normal online bullying incident situation is influenced by a balanced youth perceived parental support.

Thus, a balanced perceived parental support ensures youth not to engage in bullying behaviors in real environments and as well as in online environments.

Until now, we are not aware of any research proving this dynamic relationship between youth online bullying incidents and youth perceived parental support, thus, this study may help expanding the current body of knowledge on psychological reasons that stand behind bullying incidents. In some cases, youth extreme bullying reports could send some alarms to parents and other relevant figures in their lives that are connected through different social media platforms.

3. Conclusions and discussions

Most benefits in eliminating bullying would bring change of mentality from an early age. This is done through a longer-term plan that takes into account the following:

1. Non-formal anti-bullying education methods, such as role-playing games, where children understand the stance of each part of the bullying action and become aware of the serious consequences that neglect can have.

2. Addressing the topic at a depth level during counseling and orientation classes.

3. The organization of free seminars and debates, meetings with psychologists or persons who have been part of the bullying phenomenon and who have managed to overcome the situation as an example of good practice.

4. Adult notification by an adult (teacher, director, professor, school counselor, school mediator, supervisor / parent) whenever an act of bullying is reported by a colleague.

We all want schools where collaboration, collegiality and friendship is a priority. In essence, when we are talking about school, we refer to the place where children acquire essential skills and develop the defining relationships for their future. It is necessary for the school to remain a safe and friendly environment where children acquire essential knowledge and skills and develop relationships that are defining their future as adults.

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MANIFESTATIONS OF THE NEW PARADIGM OF EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ROMANIAN EDUCATION REFORM

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Abstract: *Among the lines taken into account in the reform of Romanian education, the reform of the curriculum is an essential segment and this is now a distinct theme in the sciences of education. The Curricular reform program represents a coherent approach to the educational national policy, designed and developed in line with current European trends and practices. The new approach to the National Curriculum has generated a different type of culture curriculum characterized by: centering the process of teaching on skills training objectives and skills; focusing on transforming the school teacher in a school by promoting student-centered interactive learning methods; cultivating students' creative skills and the creation of various learning situations; an inter and trans-disciplinary approach to school curriculum; the curriculum approach correlated with school performance and evaluation issues of initial and ongoing training of teachers. Following the major reform of education, adherence to the principles of the new educational paradigms – which appeared and were developed in answer to the need of adapting education to the challenges and changes of our contemporary world – is increasingly present in the educational process in Romania.*

Keywords: *education reform, curricular reform, constructivist paradigm, humanistic paradigm, postmodernist education*

1. Introduction

The evolution and development of society, of the contemporary world, depends on the way in which the educational system meets the socio-economic requirements, through their transformation into educational approaches, and the extent to which it produces competences and develops human resources, both from the perspective of professional formation and the perspective of the development of creative, self-formative abilities which

will allow the integration and continuous adaptation of the labor force to the scientific and technological evolution. The measure of a society's development can be rendered not only through economic indicators but also through those that refer to education, to its quality and to the way knowledge and learning are organized. The democratization of the Romanian education system, the improvement of the quality of education, the valorization of the social role of education, the development of Romanian cultural values, the promotion of Romanian cultural identity in world culture, the formation of active, responsible citizens, contributing to the development of a democratic society, are priority objectives of the Romanian education policy and these have been highlighted after 1990, being convergent with the objectives of the European dimension.

2. Current paradigms and orientations in education

The third millennium education projects aim at transforming traditional educational practices to practices based on new principles specific to the contemporary education and pedagogy: global education, lifelong learning, inclusive education, education for all, equal opportunities, partnership in education. In-depth learning, based on action and empowerment of the learner, vocational skills, integration of application knowledge structures, interactive teaching, inter-and transdisciplinary curriculum are just some concepts and ideas on which modern pedagogy has been based. These have been generated by switching European societies towards globalization and the knowledge society, by the need for synchronization between society and the development of education, by the new assessment results in the education systems, by the need of education integration and globalization.

In a comprehensive book that examines and presents the results of recent assessments in education systems, V. Chiş (2005, p. 32) summarizes the following characteristics and future trends in education: focus on performance, organization according to goals and results ; deep intense learning, special accent on the process of learning and on learning skills, learning problem solving, critical thinking, monitoring performance, success, design and management in school-community partnership; study at any time and any place at the recipients' option, education centered on students/adults; rhythms and varied learning styles, personalized instructional and educational activities, adapting school to the student's characteristics, inclusive education, integrated education for all. The author classifies and describes two categories of modern educational systems: educational systems hierarchically organized, following the principles of the centralized management and those organized on the network model, based on the principle of autonomy. The differences between the two great categories can

be found in the management, curriculum policy, and they reflect the principles of the companies and communities the school serves.

As such, hierarchically organized systems are characterized by the following: the vertical placement of the elements (the vertical succession of educational cycles, from elementary education to higher education, with the segregation of the components – preschool, primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary education); overloading the school programs; the uniformity of entries and exits in the system; the obligation to study a common curriculum; the need to ‘adapt the pupil to the requirements of the school’ and a strongly centralized management. All these characteristics generate countless dysfunctions or blockages that manifest as: an increase in the rate of learning difficulties, a gap between the requirements and students’ learning abilities, an increase in the dropout rate due to the imposed standard requirements, the lack of options when it comes to alternative schools or educational methods, and the implementation of decisions taken without consideration for the reality of education. In contrast to these characteristics we find the particularities of the education systems organized on the network model: the development of the system on the horizontal (by multiplying the types of school at each level/cycle of education) and, consequently, diversifying the entries and exits in the system; diversifying the curriculum by supplementing the compulsory curriculum with the school-based curriculum; the paradigm of ‘adapting school to the learning possibilities of the students’, manifested through a variation of learning experiences with the purpose of conforming to the principles of ‘inclusive education’, ‘education for all’, ‘integrated education’; decentralized management, based on the principle of autonomy (L. Tăușan, 2016, pp. 35-38).

The paradigm of postmodernism in education, materialized in new perspectives and solutions in educational theory and practice, developed according to the line of continuity and restructuring of the paradigm of modernity, has been designed taking into account new directions and educational projects, as a response to the need to adapt the school to changes and to the problems of the contemporary world.

E. Păun (2002) outlines the following characteristics of postmodernism in education, in a study dedicated to the analysis of the theoretical developments from the perspective of the paradigm of postmodernity: Learner-centred education, the student being seen as a person with individual, differentiating characteristics that should be valued and capitalized to the maximum (an idea situated at the centre of the existential-humanistic paradigm, subsumed under the postmodern perspective); The revalorization of the subjective-affective dimension in the educational relationship, of the actions and behaviours of subjects that have a unique,

situational, and contextualized character; Considering the educational relationship as an interaction where the teacher and student are engaged in a process of cognitive and emotional investment, and in which the teacher works alongside the students with the purpose of their development and the building of their status as students; Creating a balance between promoting competition and cooperation in school; Promoting new types of education, inter-disciplinary ones; Outgrowing the prescriptive, normative and formalized view on curricular theory and integrating it into the classroom (cultural space), with the purpose of analysing the cultural contexts in which the curriculum is structured and continuously developing and processing it.

In the context of post-modern vision on education, on pedagogy, constructivist approach to knowledge and learning has also its place, being considered a post-modern paradigm in education. Orientation towards the individual and his values, subjective way of individual knowledge, personality development in an authentic social context, his own construction of knowledge by developing various meanings and significances, by interpretation, by reasoning according to a cognitive own experience, are some of the constructivist dimensions that are also found in postmodernism.

N. Viñtanu (2001) identifies a number of constructivist openings in education: diversifying the sources of information, the ways of knowing; reengineering the curricula by giving up well-defined contents for the possibility of differently building concepts; focusing teaching and learning on stimulating students in building their own understanding of concepts, scientific truths, and then their generalization; using the new informational technologies.

Constructivist paradigm rehabilitates the student's role in learning, knowledge being specific to age, but also based on the own way in which the student integrates, explains and interprets reality, based on his own cognitive experience, in a first step, and then, moving toward objectification, based on collaboration, cooperation with the others (E. Joița, 2006). Constructivist approach of knowledge and learning aims to achieve two types of objectives: students' understanding of highly-abstract concepts from different areas, but also the implementation of formative and educational dimensions (learning abilities, motivations, interests, attitudes, will).

Adherence to the constructivist principles of instruction and learning is increasingly present in the Romanian education, after the major education reform, and it requires the knowledge and the implementation in educational practice of some basic dimensions of constructivist learning, which emphasize the student's central role and the structuring of teaching-learning-assessment, starting from the students' needs, abilities and experiences (E. Joița, 2006):

- It favours the organization of information in structures, systems, depending on the individual experience and particularities;
- It aims at building new knowledge through direct mental and action involvement and not their acquisition by hearing and receiving;
- It is a process of introspection of the way of knowledge, and the understanding is experiential, subjective, interactive;
- It is an active learning based on search, processing, prediction, critical analysis, interpretation, own argumentation, and then collaboration;
- The constructs resulted are based on the students' experience, facts and own interpretations;
- Adapting the goals and the different ways of supporting learning through differentiated treatment depending on the individual characteristics in learning;
- The constructivist theory practice places the student's learning in the centre and not the teacher's teaching;
- Students learn to organize and perform their own learning, knowledge, in a personalized way, reaching the goal of "learning to learn, to know, to experience";
- Experiences should facilitate addressing the problems from different angles and perspectives, allowing the exploitation and affirmation of the variability of students' features and learning styles;
- It is accompanied by emotionality, motivation, attitude, in order to support active participation, successes' experiencing, difficulties' overcoming;
- Students' interests, desires, needs are met.

Constructivist paradigm approaches school learning to humanistic approach, a series of constructivist principles being found as requirements of the humanistic theories of learning. Student-centred education, as a person of individual, differentiating characteristics, which have to be maximal valued and used in education, is a basic idea of existential-humanistic paradigm, subsumed to the post-modern perspective.

Humanistic education's purposes in accordance with the requirements of today's world are: "learning how to learn" and training individuals to effectively, intelligently, adaptively get involved in changing (I. Negreț-Dobridor, I.O. Pânișoară, 2005, p. 120).

The non-directive therapy system developed by Carl Rogers, called 'client-centered therapy', was the basis for building his learning theory – student-centered education. The educator, considered by Rogers to be a facilitator of learning, must provide a welcoming, positive climate where self-acceptance is encouraged, with the ultimate goal being that of preparing the pupil to learn on his own, without the help of others. Learning, founded

on situations that allow for a certain freedom to learn, must be based on an experience of discovery and not on the transmission of knowledge.

Roger's approach concerning the facilitation of learning is presented in the form of numerous rules, learning methods, and attitudes that must characterize the facilitator (educator) in his teaching profession (C. Rogers, 1969):

- The educator is responsible for creating a climate dominated by trust in the persons that constitute the group and who will be taking part in the learning experiences;

- The educator will help with establishing and clarifying the individual objectives of every member of the group and also the general objectives of the group. Some of these objectives may be conflicting, contradictory, or complementary, but the important thing is the manifestation of the pupils' sense of freedom through the unrestricted expression of what they would like to do.

- The educator will capitalize on each pupil's desire and motivation to achieve the goals that are important to them.

- The educator will organize and provide pupils with a broad range of pedagogical resources that will be used by the pupils for learning.

- The educator will consider himself to be a flexible resource that can be used by the group (teacher, counsellor, experienced person, etc.).

- The educator must be open to the requests of the class – both those of an intellectual nature and the affective or attitudinal ones – and recognize the importance that the requests have to each individual or the group as a whole and pay attention to them accordingly.

- The educator must become a member of the group and a participant in the learning process, expressing his own opinions.

- The educator must have the initiative to express his own feelings and thoughts in order to support the pupils, without imposing on them, thus the learners being able to freely choose whether they accept them or not.

- The educator must be mindful about manifestations of powerful feelings in class (which denote conflicts, anger, contempt, rivalry, pain, etc.) and approach them with understanding, respect, and trust.

- As a facilitator of learning, the educator must recognize and accept his own limits.

All these directions for the restructuring of the educational reality, which emerged and were developed as answers to the challenges of the contemporary world, are reflected in the principles of the new educational paradigm synthesized by Bruno Wurtz (as cited in C. Cucuș, 1999, pp.32-33): emphasis is placed on access to information, lifelong learning, establishing connections, receptivity to new concepts; learning is regarded as

a process; promoting anti-hierarchical and anti-authoritative principles and encouraging individual, alternative ways of thinking; the teachers and the students see each other as persons, not just as their roles; the structure of the instructive-educational process is flexible, with optional subjects and alternative teaching strategies; the learning pace of each student is respected; valuing the individual and placing emphasis on the development of his personality; engaging and developing the imagination is promoted, highlighting the importance of the inner experience; taking advantage of the entire intellectual potential by combining rational strategies with those based on intuition; labels are limited to an auxiliary, descriptive role; consideration towards the pupil's academic performances in relation to his own potential; combining theoretical and abstract knowledge with experiments undertaken in class and outside of it; consideration towards ergonomic criteria (the lighting, chromatic, physical comfort, the possibility of interaction between the pupils); the proposals put forward by the group are encouraged and taken into consideration; education is future-oriented, it is a lifelong endeavor; the flow of information is bidirectional, encouraging the reciprocity of learning.

3. Directions for adapting the Romanian education reform to the new educational paradigms

Education adequate to modern democratic societies must be based on the idea that school is not only a tool for transmitting knowledge, but also a social institution in which students build up their knowledge and social skills that will allow them to integrate and successfully adapt to changes in society. It is a place of social learning and personal development that take place in close contact with family, local community and society as a whole.

After 1990, there were a lot of changes within the Romanian education, which referred to the shift from an authoritarian and centralist education system to a democratic system and the connection to the European education. As a result, the reform priorities in school education, after 1990, focused on the following dimensions: Reforming the curriculum (focusing on skills, abilities, flexibility and individualization of educational paths, adapting the educational offer to individual needs, matching content with social and economic needs); Creation / development of continuing education for adults; Restoring links between school - community, school - the economic environment; Improving access and quality education for groups at risk; Increasing participation in education; Matching education in Romania with European standards and objectives; Development of guidance and counseling systems; Decentralization (L. Tăușan, 2010).

The compatibilization with the European structures and systems involves the following courses of action (Marga, 1999, p.10): Reducing the amount of information of the education programs in the European curriculum

and their compatibilization; Converting reproductive education into creative education; Improving infrastructure and widespread electronic communications; Creation of productive partnerships between the educational institutions and the economic, administrative and cultural environment; Educational management oriented towards competitiveness and performance.

In 2007, the *Report of the Presidential Commission for Analysis and Elaboration of Education and Research Policies* puts forward a diagnosis of the key problems concerning the education and research systems in Romania and offers several solutions to them. The four major issues identified within the *Report* are: inefficiency, irrelevancy, inequity, and the poor quality of the Romanian education system. The inefficiency is reflected in the poor performances of our students in international assessments, performances which are far below the international average. The irrelevancy of the education system is related to the economy and society of the future and reveals the incapacity of the system to ensure that Romania is in a competitive position in the knowledge economy. Inequity is another issue of the Romanian learning system, which is apparent in the failure to provide all students with the same learning opportunities, regardless of their social, economic, or cultural background. The victims in this case are generally students from a rural environment as well as other vulnerable minorities: Roma, children with special needs, etc. Concerning the poor quality of the infrastructure and the human resources, relevant are indicators such as: old edifices, lack of school facilities (basic facilities, Internet connection), the increase in the average age of the teaching staff and the decrease of the quality of teaching.

Based on their analysis and diagnosis, the Commission has identified a series of measures for restructuring pre-university education (L. Tăușan, 2012): A new organization of the educational cycles; Paying special attention to early childhood education; Implementing a flexible curriculum, centered on the competences necessary for personal development and knowledge economy; Accelerating the process of decentralization; Adopting a reform of human resources policies; Stimulating lifelong learning through tangible measures.

The need to reorganize the education cycles is justified by deficiencies such as: the disregard towards early childhood education, the fragmentation of compulsory education through an unnecessary examination after 8 years of study, a premature start to the pupil's professional training. Among the effects of the current structure is also the fact that Romania occupies the last place when it comes to the participation of youths between the ages of 15 and 24 in a form of organized education. As a method of solving these issues, a new structure of the education system is proposed, a

structure which would ensure a connection between the pre-university education levels and the *European Qualifications Framework*: the Fundamental Acquisitions curricular cycle (preparatory year, 1st grade, and 2nd grade); the Development curricular cycle (3rd through 6th year); the Observation and Orientation curricular cycle (7th through 9th year); the In-Depth curricular cycle (10th and 11th grade); the Specialized curricular cycle (12th/13th year).

Concerning the need to implement a new curriculum, in the aforementioned document several of the principles of the curricular reform are mentioned that would help counter the information overload, the low relevance of the current curriculum for the labor market and for adult life. One of the principles is aimed at centering the curriculum on key competences resulted from the analysis of *The Key Competences for Lifelong Learning – A European Framework*: communication skills in the native language and two foreign languages; fundamental mathematical, scientific, and technological competences; digital competence; axiological competence; cultural awareness and expression competence; lifelong learning competence.

Among the directions envisaged in the Romanian education reform, the curricular reform is an essential segment, which is now a distinct theme in the sciences of education. The Curricular reform program represents a coherent approach to the educational national policy, designed and developed in line with current European trends and practices.

The current curricular reforms are designed to optimize for a long-term the dynamics of society, the social development in general, accompanied by developing a theory of curriculum and curriculum reform, which allows structuring systematic empirical data and meanings based on their instructional activities and educational guidance. The curriculum reform must reflect the overall objectives of social development because the structures involved, beyond the education system and the medium and long term effects result in changes in all social subsystems.

4. Conclusions

Currently, the Ministry of Education is continuing the reform of the pre-university education, the policies promoted being focused on ensuring that each child or young person of school age is enrolled in a form of education, on the development of educational programs aimed at adults, on the acquisition of key competences that are necessary to the integration in an information or knowledge society, on basing the educational act on the pupils' needs for personal and professional growth, on improving the educational act in the classroom by increasing the quality of the teaching-learning processes.

The new approach to the National Curriculum has generated a different type of culture curriculum characterized by: centering the process of teaching on skills training objectives and skills, focusing on transforming the school teacher in a school by promoting student-centered interactive learning methods, cultivating students' creative skills and the creation of various learning situations (the teacher is responsible for the organization of the learning programs, student performance efficiency infirming or confirming the teaching activities) an inter and trans-disciplinary approach to school curriculum, the curriculum approach correlated with school performance and evaluation issues of initial and ongoing training of teachers (M. Korca, 2000, p. 35).

The modernity and the innovative character of the National Curriculum can be derived from the following defining features: placing learning in the center of educational approaches, orientating learning to capacity and skills, using interactive methods, development of critical spirit, questioning, stimulating creative thinking, structuring education according to flexible routes for each school by adapting content to the learning interests and to the students' abilities, empowering agents involved in the educational act.

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NEW PERSPECTIVES IN LEARNING ROMANIAN LANGUAGE IN SCHOOLS AND SECTIONS TAUGHT IN HUNGARIAN LANGUAGE

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Abstract: *Since September 2017, the new curricula for the 5th grade are valid (Annex 2 of OMEN no. 3393/28.02.2017), based on the framework plan approved by OMEN 3590/05.04.2016. For Romanian language and literature subject, there are two curricula: Romanian language and literature, 5th to 8th grades, and Romanian language and literature for schools and sections taught in Hungarian language, allowing pupils to use alternative textbooks. The secondary school curriculum, as well as alternative textbooks in order to study Romanian language and literature in schools and sections taught in Hungarian language continue the ones for primary school. This article highlights the importance of studying the Romanian language as the official and day-by-day communication language, by the students having a different mother tongue, and the opportunity which is offered to these students by the textbooks, through applying the communicative-functional model and through the pragmatic perspective of language study.*

Keywords: *curricula, communicative-functional model, textbook, language competence*

1. Introduction

Since September 2017, the new curricula for the 5th grade are valid (Annex 2 of OMEN no. 3393/28.02.2017), based on the framework plan approved by OMEN 3590/05.04.2016. For Romanian language and literature subject, there are two curricula: Romanian language and literature, 5th to 8th grades, and Romanian language and literature for schools and sections taught in Hungarian language. This led to creating different textbooks, for the two curricula.

The beginning of the 2017-2018 school year has been marked by numerous discussions regarding the textbooks, the time the students should

receive them, the necessity of either a unique textbook or alternative ones, the need to train teachers in order to implement the new curricula, and so on.

One of the few textbooks the children benefited from, since the first day of school, was *The Romanian Language and Literature for Schools and Sections Taught in Hungarian Language*. The teachers had two options to choose from: the Corint Publishing House textbook (authors: Maxim Andreia-Nicoleta, Kibédi Nemes Ildikó, Militar Adela, Bărbos Liana-Cecilia), and the textbook from Corvin Publishing House (author Bartolf Hedwig).

The opinions of the teachers and students, regarding the textbooks which were chosen and used for teaching, we will only find out about by the end of the 2017-2018 school year, but at this moment, with the start of the new curricula and textbooks, we are interested in the way these textbooks are complying with the valid curricula.

2. The study of Romanian language and literature in schools and sections taught in Hungarian language. An analysis of the alternative textbooks used for the 5th grade, in 2017-2018

The new alternative textbooks for teaching Romanian language and literature to the 5th grade children, in schools and sections taught in Hungarian language, generated various reactions in press, which led us to proceed to this study.

In order to complete the study on the new perspectives in learning Romanian language in schools and sections taught in Hungarian language, of great importance was the analysis of the curricular documents, as well as an opinion poll (by a self-managed questionnaire) applied, at this moment, only to the textbooks authors.

One of the new perspectives in teaching Romanian language and literature in schools and sections taught in Hungarian language comes from the *Learning Framework for the Secondary School*, approved in OMENCS no. 3590/05.04.2016, which „proposes a new approach to the subject Romanian language and literature in schools and section taught in national minorities languages. Therefore, if, to this date, the secondary school students were studying according to a sole Romanian language and literature curriculum, without concern to the school section they belonged to, the only difference being in terms of textbooks and auxiliary teaching materials, as well as teaching approaches, the new framework offers the possibility to elaborate Romanian language and literature curricula which are differentiated in accordance to the language children are being taught in, the mother tongue specific, as compared to the specific of the Romanian language.” (Norel, 2017)

Even in the *Presentation note of the School curriculum for the subject Romanian language and literature in schools and sections taught in*

Hungarian language. 5th to 8th grades there are highlights on the aspects we are considering important and relevant (Norel, 2017):

- emphasise the role of Romanian language as the second communication language for the Hungarian minority, as means of expressing thoughts, feelings, and personal experiences;
- substantiate the communicative-functional model, which targets the integrated study of the language, of the communication (oral or written), and of the literary/nonliterary text;
- covering, in an integrated manner, the three components: linguistic, interrelational, and esthetic and cultural;
- facilitate the learning approach from an inter- and trans-disciplinary perspective;
- promoting the personal development of the student in an enlarged socio-cultural environment;

Through the 5 general competences, the pillars of personal development are sustained – *to learn to know, to learn to do, to learn to live together with the others, to learn to be* (Delors, 2000):

1. Oral text reception in different communication situations;
2. Oral text production in different communication situations;
3. Written text reception, of different types;
4. Written text production, of different types;
5. Manifestation of the multi- and intercultural sensitivity, through values promoted in different cultural and social contexts.

According to the *Presentation note*, „this subject of study builds coherently the relation between culture, as an artifact, and school, as an instrument of transmitting it, by providing a secondary school curriculum which is rich, recursive, interconnected, and rigorous, valueing the theory of multiple intelligences and learning through cooperation, in an approach both intercultural and integrated into the curriculum” (*Programa...*, 2017, 3)

How should the curriculum provisions be found in the school textbooks? The answer is based on The Methodology of quality evaluation for the 5th grade textbooks projects (Annex no. 3 of OMEN no. 3411/03.03.2017, regarding the elaboration of the 5th grade textbooks, for 2017-2018). We emphasise here several relevant aspects, which fall, first of all, in the responsibility of textbooks authors:

- the school textbook respects strictly the domains and contents in the curriculum: there are no extra or less themes/contents as compared to the curriculum;
- the organisation of textbook themes/contents respects the inherent logic of the subject;
- the information transmitted through text is scientifically accurate;
- the presentation of contents is accomplished wholly and coherently;

- the textbook project must have an ethical, moral and not discriminatory character: to respect the principles which do not differentiate by race, nationality, ethnicity, language, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental challenge, chronic non-contagious disease, HIV, or belonging to a disadvantaged group;

- the textbook project should not contain information that might impede on the national values and identity, elements of racism, xenophobia, or promoting a nationalist-extremist ideology.

The permanent relation to the students, taking into account their linguistic background, their possibilities to use Romanian language outside institutional environment, the frequency of communicating with native Romanian speakers, is a major challenge for the textbooks authors, because the textbook should address all students belonging to the Hungarian minority. Tódor Erika Mária, in *Școala și alteritatea lingvistică. Contribuție la pedagogia limbii române ca limbă ne-maternă/School and linguistic alterity. Contribution to the pedagogy of Romanian language as second language* differentiate three bilingual categories within the Romanian education system, which „get an institutional context in types of specific school structures” (Tódor, 2005):

1. cultural bilingualism – in structures of first-language education;
2. cultural bilingualism, by natural learning, but predominantly organised and additive – in structures of partially first-language education;
3. predominantly natural bilingualism, accomplished also in an organised and subtractive way – in structures of Romanian-language education, with study also in Hungarian.

The alternative Romanian language and literature textbook for schools and sections taught in Hungarian language should be so created, as to form a quality and useful curricular document, regardless of the education structure which would make use of it, being instrumental for the students in the first two bilingual categories, while for the third one, there are Romanian language and literature textbooks, specific for teaching in Romanian language.

Table 1 presents an analysis of the two alternative Romanian language and literature textbooks presently in use in schools and sections taught in Hungarian language (in alphabetical order), proving the utility of both, as well as their formative-educative value, and their multiple ways of benefiting the teachers and students in curricular and extracurricular activities, while being a support for parents when following the development of their child's linguistic competences.

Table 1. Analysis of the alternative Romanian language and literature textbooks for schools and sections taught in Hungarian language

Analysis criteria	Corint Publishing House textbook	Corvin Publishing House textbook
Following the themes in the curriculum (three, compulsory, one, at choice)	The themes order: <i>Friends in the animal world</i> <i>Games and toys</i> <i>Personal identity</i> <i>My values</i>	Themes are included in the learning units titles: <i>Mountains, Păcală, The book, Visits, The child, The sparrow, Mother, Fairytales</i> , while the teachers decide how they classify them.
Application of the communicative-functional model	In order to develop the four themes, in two learning units, the following algorithm is followed: reading, oral communication (only first unit) written communication (only second unit), elements of communication construction, elements of interculturality. At the end of learning units, a lack of summarising and summative evaluation exercises is noticed.	The algorithm is as follows: oral communication, reading, written communication, elements of communication construction, elements of interculturality, summative evaluation, at the end of learning units. A lack of summarising and organising of aspects studied in the learning units.
The pragmatic perspective of studying the language	The given examples and proposed exercises contribute to approaching the language issues, using curriculum ways of working with the content: intuitive, applicative, and theoretical approach, in this order.	The given examples and proposed exercises contribute to approaching the language issues, using curriculum ways of working with the content: intuitive, applicative, and theoretical approach, in this order.
Comprising, in an integrated manner, of the three components: linguistic, interrelational and esthetic and cultural	The four themes, approached in two learning units, favours the integrated approach of the three components. The support texts (fictional/ nonfictional, literary/ nonliterary) respect the criteria of accessibility, attractiveness, formative character, adaptation to age particularities and linguistic specific of students with Romanian as second language.	By combining types of proposed learning activities, the integrated approach of the three components is favoured. The support texts (fictional/ nonfictional, literary/ nonliterary) respect the criteria of accessibility, attractiveness, formative character, adaptation to age particularities and linguistic specific of students with Romanian as second language.
Facilitating the approach to learning from an inter- and transdisciplinary perspective	The selected texts prove the preoccupation to approach to learning from an inter- and transdisciplinary perspective, e.g. <i>The Bicycles, The Legend of the North Wind</i> etc.	The selected texts prove the preoccupation to approach to learning from an inter- and transdisciplinary perspective, e.g. <i>The Ice Hotel in the Carpathians, The Book</i> etc.

Analysis criteria	Corint Publishing House textbook	Corvin Publishing House textbook
Promoting the student's personal development in an enlarged socio-cultural environment	The proposed learning tasks, for activities on groups, pairs or individual, support the pillars of personal development – <i>to learn to know, to learn to do, to learn to live together with the others, to learn to be</i> (Delors, 2000)	The proposed learning tasks, for activities on groups, pairs or individual, support the pillars of personal development – <i>to learn to know, to learn to do, to learn to live together with the others, to learn to be</i> (Delors, 2000)

3. The results of the opinion poll

In order to find out the point of view of the textbook authors, we used an opinion poll (by a self-managed questionnaire). There were five questions, transmitted by email to the authors of the two textbooks. The answers were transmitted back, also by email. To preserve the confidentiality of the answers, we consider useful mentioning them without indicating the respondents.

Question no. 1. What do you consider as being the strongest point of your textbook? Please bring arguments.

The strongest points of the two textbooks are: availability of the theoretical information, coherence and diversity of the exercises, which follow the principles of general and specific Didactics; the exercises and support texts target the formation of the oral and written communication skills; using oral and written communication to help students to achieve relatively easy new language knowledge, but also to strengthen the ones taught during primary school; the literary texts belong to Romanian, Hungarian and universal literature, selected by the principle of esthetic relevance in different literary times; the texts follow the specifics of age and psychopedagogy of bilingual students; the theoretical approach and exercises are relevant for the contrastive grammar (in one of the alternative textbooks), the theoretical explanations on grammar themes are missing, as they would have increase the difficulty of the textbook, on the other hand, it offers grammatical models and different paradigms, to ease the use of the textbook by the students, by creating the impression they have nothing new to learn, but only to apply models/paradigms (in the other alternative textbook).

Question no. 2. If you had the possibility to improve the textbook, which aspects would you target? Please, detail.

The answers highlight the same topic: choosing more varied, more attractive and accesible texts, using a range of contemporary literary texts, close to the students' interest, should the publishing house solve the copyright issues, to publish selected texts proposed by the authors.

Question no. 3. In case you worked in teams, how did you set the work strategy, how did you assign the personal input?

Each team member focused on a part of the curriculum, according to their professional experience and graduated post-universitary studies, continuous teachers' training through teaching levels. In the same time, offered feedback to the colleagues over the proposed materials. This way, the integrated teaching, the teaching coherence, and the wholly character of the requests were insured – this was the answer given by the team of four textbook authors.

Question no. 4. What would you recommend for the alternative textbooks authors?

The recommendations for the authors of the alternative textbooks: teamwork, because extra-specialisation in a certain field of curriculum results in a balanced product; enough time allocated to write the textbook; not to go over the requests of the curriculum; to try and think from curricula evaluators and authors perspective; if working in teams, to build a team of teachers from different country areas, representing different types of bilingualism.

Question no.5. Give three competences/qualities, in order of their importance (1 – the most important) which you consider indispensable for an author of Romanian language and literature alternative textbooks for students with another first language.

Teaching competence – classroom experience with the focus-group; knowing, from inside the system, the problems/difficulties encountered by the students; offering viable solutions to gradually eliminate these problems – is considered the most important competence, essential for an author of Romanian language and literature alternative textbooks for students with another first language. The second place is taken by creativity, respectively by empathy towards students when new notions are introduced, when creating each request/task, exercise, test, etc, always taking into account the students's reaction when solving them. Cultural and intercultural empathy, respectively exploitation/application of the school curriculum in student's favour, takes the third place in the questioned authors' opinions. We consider that the point of view exposed by the textbooks authors offers an image from the inside of alternative textbooks conception, justify the choices made by the authors for ordering the themes and learning contents, to form/develop specific competences, valueing examples of learning activities and methodological suggestions offered by the curriculum.

3. Conclusions

The results of curricular documents analysis show that both the curriculum and the 5th grade alternative textbooks create opportunities to apply the communicativ-functional model and to value the pragmatic perspective on language study, contributes to a complex education, and promotes the student's personal development.

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PSYCHOPEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE STUDENT, A GOAL OF THE SCHOOL ORIENTED TO THE STUDENT

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Abstract: *In a questionnaire handed out to 79 teachers, participants in the two-tier training courses and in a focus group with 12 participants of university student's practitioners and mentors, we aimed to identify the causes that lead to the lagging behind of students. Situated on the third place, as a importance, one of the reasons was considered to be the lack of differentiation of learning due to the lack of knowledge of individual pupils' peculiarities. The pupil's psychic life is extremely rich, complex, making study and knowledge difficult, lasting and of utmost importance. This responsibility of producing and using these documents lies with the teacher, the tutor, the instructor, or the student's mentor. In the present paper we try to present some tools and methods, the way in which the actors of education can use the psycho-pedagogical sheet, in order to contribute to the balanced development of the personality of the student.*

Key words: *Psychopedagogical knowledge, differentiation of learning, psycho-pedagogical sheet, methods, techniques*

Introduction

The psychic life of the child, is extremely rich, complex, which makes studying and knowing him to be a difficult, lengthy and critical. This forces the teacher to call on a variety of methods and procedures: biographic data analysis, observation, analysis products business, talking, testing, interviewing.

The collected material is going to be processed thoroughly and systematically. Such systematization that secures processing results collected factual material, related to a student, is called psychopedagogical characterization.

Psychopedagogical characterization is made by filling a form, which contains the essential aspects of the child's personality and pedagogical recommendations on its evolution.

Although it requires an effort from the educator, achieving such a paper is a real gain, because it highlights a number of issues that could be causes of a certain behavior, it can make a new student be almost as known as one who has been in school for some time.

To characterize does not mean to make a list and to describe all physical and psychological peculiarities, essential and non-essential. To characterize means to find the basic features of the personality and the development prospects. It results that the composition of the characterization should take into account not only the various psychological traits, but also the stability of their manifestation in the child's behaviour and work. Any child can be, under certain conditions, impulsive, irrepensible, but these are characteristic features of certain situations. Therefore, the main psychological traits of personality traits are relatively stable, which manifests themselves with a certain constancy in the conduct and child's activity.

It should be noted however that although these traits are relatively stable, they are not immutable, especially at an early age, but they are formed, they develop and change depending on education and environmental conditions. Knowing the child is important for his training especially for his education, a neglected aspect in school activities.

1. Psycho-pedagogical sheet of knowledge and characterizing student

Psycho-pedagogical sheet knowledge and characterization of the student is a practical tool that allows such actions programmed in each student, systematization of information on his person.

From a functional perspective, it is an auxiliary plug pedagogical teacher / tutor / diriginteleui, the class teacher or the teacher toturelui year. Through a responsible attitude towards the knowledge of the student and filling in pedagogical tutor can use this tool, both for the students and to the parents and teachers from the classroom in order to create a family environment and school conducive to the development proximate e of each student.

Organizing plug into chapters and subchapters is a plan to systematize information and an indicator of problems to be addressed. The characteristics of the pedagogical sheet allows qualitative assessment of the child's personality traits and the factors that influence on its formation (Holban Ion, 1972). The data obtained by different methods of investigation plug is inserted into chapters, assessing the extent to which they express a medium characteristic or behavior of the child. The assessments will be made taking into account the intensity (quantitative aspect) and permanence in time (consistency) of the aspects evaluated.

Making a psychopedagogical paper claims, firstly, a rich informative material and secondly an intensive work in processing and interpreting the data.

To conduct the educational work with efficiency, the knowledge of the child's personality is as important as knowledge of the group's syntality. Therefore it is quite important for the educator, knowledge of the relationship between group members.

To investigate and research school groups, there can be used the so-called sociometric techniques, made by the American psychologist of Romnian origin, J.L.Moreno.

2. Who can use the psycho-pedagogical sheet and how it can be harnessed?

In a not so distant past, preschool teacher used to complete psycho-pedagogical sheet for each child, contained in the kindergarten program. The rules for entering primary school child, among the documents required there was also this sheet. So the child went to school with a 'passport', a psycho-pedagogical profile. Since the first day, the class teacher had information about the behaviour, about the characteristics of each student, nothing like starting off in terms of total ignorance. Teachers continued this systematic observation and filling in and at the end of the 4th grade the primary school teacher handed 'the passport' to the formteacher.

I think it is worthwhile to ask: Who would consider useless such a document which accompanies the student throughout the educational path? Nobody, that's for sure. On the contrary, it would be really useful. What else do we have to do as educators? To facilitate the transfer sheets once a student transferring from one cycle to another or from one school to another, which is not at all difficult. It's a simple procedure as possible: to annex the document to the transcript.

What we propose further are some ways in which these cards can become authentic instruments of the student's knowledge, available to all those involved in raising and educating his parents, head teachers, teachers and not least the student himself.

Of course the information inherited from the teacher under whose guidance the student formed the previous cycle are helpful but these should be constantly updated and sheet is good to become a tool in which to operate frequently.

Using one of the many forms of pedagogical sheet, the teacher will complete one at the beginning of each cycle, using information sheet completed in the previous cycle and adding new ones obtained through its own investigation.

Valuable sources from which we call the masters are themselves students and their parents.

Within an hour of tutoring, both the students and parents will receive files, they will read a statement and annex will make their own additions, comments, likes. Teacher / tutor / tutor will select, process, will collate the information gathered from other sources and experience and will continue filling in.

Especially helpful may be continuous operation under the heading Recommendations pedagogical (specifying educational goals concrete and interventions educational timely. Instead replenish memory as teachers / masters with all behaviors student, wishing to bring forward their parents and then pedagogical recommendations designed to regulate the emerging aspect we can fill this box with the date, behavior and recommendation, the proposed intervention.

The first few minutes of each meeting with parents will be dedicated meeting each parent with their child sheet.

Pedagogical sheet can be consulted by the class teachers. It's not very difficult to establish a timetable and conducted meeting of all teachers in the classroom, during which each student consult records and may make recommendations to fill them, depending on the student's behavior at times held together.

May be useful as this sheet and the transfer student from one class to another or from one school to another.

Anyway transfer involves a period of adjustment and adaptation to new conditions of the school, class, group of teachers. A informing teachers and teacher / tutor / student diriginteleui with reference to the specific roughness can only facilitate this period.

In this way:

- Father kept informed and genuine without distortion caused by the passage of time and the emergence of forgetfulness child's behavior;
- Teacher recommendations are parent / tutor / diriginteleui;
- Father is behavior - answered student's educational intervention;
- The parent can add your own opinion and intervention;
- The parent becomes a real collaborator teacher / tutor in the education of the child;
- The child is no longer able speculation lack of communication between school and home;
- Teacher / tutor / tutor no longer appears in the position of that memorial services for parents;
- Class teachers formed a team responsible for the student receives education in schools;
- Education has a certain unity, consistency and transparency.

3. Methods and techniques used for student knowledge

To achieve an understanding of the child's personality and the evolution of his rhythm and how to develop a number of methods and techniques, but to get a picture of how deep and objective recommended combining them in various ways, for painting information to be varied.

Biography

For parents and students participation should be based on honesty necessary to provide biographical data, the teacher should enjoy their confidence. Also school doctor or doctor are those who can participate in the anamnesis.

Psychopedagogical observation:

- It consists of the systematic tracking of psycho-behavioral manifestations of the child's activity in natural conditions.
- To achieve scientific observations that lead to capturing the essential, significant relationships between observed phenomena, it is necessary:
 - Establish the purpose of observation;
 - To make use of parts of control arising from previous observations, from personal experience or from the literature;

- To resort to some means and ancillary technical tools;
- Make use of ways to assess the comments made to allow easy data recording and then comparing them is better to use observation units (the amount of observed elements equal time intervals). It may also determine the estimates of mental qualities. They can be converted into figures by granting points. The middle is easy to harvest data and their systematic observation grid based on several criteria.
- Put in place steps to combat the obstacles that may hinder an appropriate observations.

The call

At younger ages, it is recommended not to use it as a method but to be integrated with other methods. At older ages, both the way the conversation is done and the themes are widely diversified.

Survey

Children use the questionnaire survey and interview interview, which often takes the form of a dialogue, a conversation. Through her are searched the opinions, desires, aspirations, students' vocational interests. It is practiced in times of change, engagement in new types of activity or school orientation.

Case study

There are two concepts in pediatric psychology and pedagogical psychology:

- As a method of research and knowledge of some collectives
- As a method of researching an ins in a particular situation. Not every situation is a case. Studying his own child as a "support" of a development-related theory became famous thanks to personalities such as Charles Darwin, who in 1877 published his notes on his own son William Erasmus "Doddy" and a century later thanks to Jean Piaget, who he actually built the entire theoretical vision from the observation of his three children.

Even if such exceptional observers were able to capture information useful for developing psychological theories further their studies are more or less attacked, putting problems to generalize the results to other situations or other individuals.

However, the case study is used fairly frequently when there are exceptional cases (eg "scholar idiots") that can not be merged into a statistical study.

Analysis of the products of the activity

It is one of the most commonly used methods of psychological knowledge, along with observation and testing. Any product made by a child or pupil may become subject to psychological investigation.

We can obtain information about mental capabilities available to children (the mental coherence, power of imagination, scale interests, quality of knowledge, skills, skills, skills) to achieve style, the endowment, progress in learning.

It is of great importance to set criteria to appreciate these products (fairness, originality, complexity, expressiveness).

Tests

They have the widest spread. There are relatively short and standardized evidence that allows the rapid investigation of childhood psychological traits.

There are tests for each psychic capacity in part (perception, attention, memory, imagination, intelligence tests), differentiated by particular characteristics (distributive attention, concentrated attention, theoretical, practical, verbal, numerical, technical).

Their application serves to determine the child's level of psychological development for school and professional selection and orientation. These are relatively simple, both as application and interpretation.

Knowing the methods of investigation should not be an end in itself but the necessary tools for knowing the pupils, in order to identify the educational paths optimal to the development of the individual.

A good knowledge of the individual can be achieved in the conditions of a consistent knowledge of the age peculiarities for each category and of the natural evolution of the development, the periods of crisis and the way of their manifestation, the factors that can generate problems in different age categories.

This is an important role for teachers, for their own information and training, and for informing and educating their parents.

The characterization of a child must also notice the tendencies of personality development. We must also capture both the positive aspects that we support and which we promote, as well as the negative aspects of the personalities that we are going to remove.

The socio-metric test

For the efficient development of educational activity, knowing the individuality of the child is as important as knowing the group in its sentiment. That is why it is important for the educator and the knowledge of the existing relationships among the members of the group. For the investigation and research of the school groups, so-called sociometric techniques, produced by the American psycho-sociologist of Romanian origin, J. L. Moreno, can be used. They propose measuring the affective-sympathetic relations between members of a group.

It addresses questions such as:

"Who would you like to sit with in the bank?"

"Who would you like to spend your free time with?"

To capture affective relationships preferably or

"who would not you like to stay in the bank?"

"who would not like to spend your free time?"

In order to capture the emotional rejection, an additional question can be formulated to get an incentive for choices and rejections. This test is called the sociometric test.

For a better understanding, we assume the use of the data obtained by applying the sociometric test to a group of 17 pupils coming from two classes who are going to spend classes together at an optional discipline.

The following steps are taken:

- The sociometric drawing, a double entry table, in which the members of the group are marked both vertically and horizontally with the relations between them, noting with (+) preference relations and (-) rejection relationships. It reads as follows: Student "a" preferred "e" and "f" and rejected "c" and "g".

- Calculating the sociometric indices, to know where the position is, the position occupied by each individual in the group. The number of choices and rejections issued by each individual is summed horizontally, and there is the affective expansiveness index. If the sums and rejections received by each one are vertically summed up and the formula $(s) - r$ (rejections) received / $n-1$, where n is the number of subjects within the group, we find the preferential status index of the subjects. The statutes may be positive, negative or zero, which indicates the presence of popular, rejected or isolated subjects within the group.

- Drawing up a sociogram, that is, a graphical figure that reflects the type and meaning of the existing relationships between the members of the group:

- a mutual preference
- a unilateral preference
- a mutual rejection
- a unilateral rejection
- a preference for rejection.

- Calculation of the cohesion coefficient of the group by the formula: $gr = \text{sum of reciprocal choices} \times 2 / n(n-1)$.

The information provided by the sociometric test is extremely important for the educator.

Based on these we can:

- it achieves the positive orientation of the relations between the members of a group, explain the latent or manifest tensions between them;
- convert negative relationships into positive relationships with educational-formative valences.

Reading the sociogram from the sociometric data reveals the following phenomena:

- dividing the group into two subgroups;
- the existence of reciprocal rejection relationships; between the two subgroups;
- the subgroup's tendency to promote its own leaders;
- no coincidence between formal and informal leaders;
- the presence of rejection relationships between the two leaders;
- the undefined or linking position of b in relation to the two subgroups, but its ignoring by both;

- the coefficient of cohesion is extremely low (0,28), there being a subgroup cohesion, not a group.
- the presence / absence of rejection relationships between the two leaders;
- the significance of the cohesion index.

Conclusions

The drawing up of a psycho-pedagogical card requires, first of all, a rich informative material, and secondly, an intense work of processing and interpreting data.

The psycho-pedagogical record made with the responsibility of each of the teachers: from kindergarten, primary school, middle school, high school master, can be used as a "PASSPORT" that accompanies the pupil throughout the schooling and helps the ensemble of participating actors to education in knowing the individual particularities of each student.

This would be a prerequisite for approaching a differentiated learner oriented to the needs and interests of the pupil, differentiating to the best possible use of the potential of each pupil by means of educational interventions appropriate to the student's development needs.

In this way we could meet one of the identified problems, both at the level of the research sample group and at the level of the educational community in Romania: respecting the individual peculiarities of the pupils, differentiating the learning according to the needs of each one.

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THE IMPACT OF FAMILY EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES ON ABNORMAL PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: *This paper presents the most relevant parenting strategies and their impact on personality development. Abnormal personality follows the same type of evolution as the normal personality, in terms of the nature of the determinants factors of development. The quality of these factors and their actions makes the difference. We have presented some factors: (1) family educational practices, (2) parental education strategies (3) dimensions of parental behavior (4) alienated family behaviors and their impact on the the development of abnormal personality. All these inadequate educational strategies will disrupt the normal process of personality development, alter the child's self-image, his cognitive schemas, relational modalities, and increase the risk of building a rigid, defensive personality. Early identification of such risks and intervention on the child and family may have real prophylactic and curative effects.*

Keyword: *Personality, abnormal personality, parental education strategies, dimensions of parental behavior, alienated family behaviors*

Introduction

Personality, also called "the keystone of psychology and psychopathology" (Ionescu, 1997) is a concept of maximum generality that knows dozens of definitions and hundreds of meanings. In this paper, we consider the personality as a stable, but flexible pattern of beliefs, ideas, feelings, attitudes and behaviors that express the psychological identity and uniqueness of a person in relation to the existential context in which she evolve, and with the concrete life events. Personality exhibits o great variability of manifestations. But, despite its diversity of expression in different people, on a more detailed analysis, we can see that personality presents an ensemble of specific characteristics such as constancy and stability, organization and hierarchy, uniqueness and originality as well as

the predictive potential of the behavior. In certain situations, however, the traits are persistently, durably and rigidly anchored in the extreme area of a psychological dimension and express themselves with extreme intensity and inflexibility in relation to situational variability. This maladaptive behavior differs significantly from that expected by the culture in which the individual evolves and can create family and social dysfunctions, which leads to significant distress for that person and those around him. In the extreme, these people can be diagnosed as having a personality disorder. (Seligman et al., 2001, p.371)

Abnormal personality development

We can represent Abnormal Personality as a "non-Euclidean" building, that is placed on an unstable foundation, which puts it at risk of a possible collapse at the slightest shock. On this more or less unstable foundation, the building rises further, in the absence of an initial project, following spontaneous decisions and using improvised building materials. A building whose structure is affected, which lacks the harmony between elements and the functionality is what results from this demarche. In this non-Euclidean house, the host itself feels pressed, without psychological comfort and often terrified by the possibility of collapse. Those close to the house feel the discomfort created by the tightened angles, inclined planes and dark corners. Those passing by the front of the house are amazed by these strange forms and often cross to the other sidewalk, fearing not to be hurt by a possible downfall.

„A *personality disorder* is an enduring pattern of inner experience and behavior that deviates markedly from the expectations of the individual's culture, is pervasive and inflexible, has an onset in adolescence or early adulthood, is stable over time, and leads to distress or impairment.” (DSM-5, p. 645) Personality is abnormal, either in terms of the quality and expression of its behaviour, or in terms of its overall appearance. For this reason, the patient suffers or causes others to suffer, generating adverse effects on the individual and society.

The DSM-5 includes ten personality disorders whose portrait we will present in the follow.

Schizoid personality	Apathetic, unconcerned, insensitive distant, solitary. He has no desires, no need of human attachment. Minimum degree of awareness of one's own or others' feelings. Few impulses or ambitions, if any.
Paranoid personality	Defensive, distrustful and suspicious. Hypervigilant to the motives of others to undermine or hurt them. He's always looking for evidence to confirm the hidden schemas. He feels persecuted

Schizotypal personality	Eccentric, self-alienated, bizarre, absent. Specific manners and behaviors. He thinks he can read the others' thoughts. Strange dreams and beliefs. Instable boundaries between reality and fantasy
Histrionic personality	Dramatic, seductive, superficial, seeking of stimuli. Excessive reaction to minor events. His exhibitionism is manifested as a means of ensuring attention and favors. He sees himself as attractive and charming.
Narcissic personality	Egoist, arrogant, grandiose. Fantasies about his own success, beauty or achievements. He sees himself as admirable and superior and therefore considers himself entitled to special treatment.
Borderline personality	Unpredictable, manipulative, unstable. Fear of abandonment and isolation. They experience fast fluctuations. Rapid changes between love and hate. He sees himself and the others as being all good or bad.
Dissocial personality	Impulsive, irresponsible, deviant, undisciplined. He respect social obligations only when that serving them. Lack of respect for social habits, rules and standards. He sees himself as free and independent.
Dependent personality	Helpless, incompetent, obedient, immature. Do not assume adult responsibilities. He sees himself as weak or fragile. He constantly search reassurance from strong figures.
Obsessive compulsive personality	Conscientious, respectful, rigid. Maintains a lifestyle respecting the rules. He adheres closely to social conventions. He respects the regulations and hierarchies. He sees himself as devoted, trustworthy, efficient, and productive
Avoidant personality	Self-conscious, embarrassed, impatient. Tense in social situations because of fear of rejection. Constantly tormented by performance anxiety. He sees himself as inept, inferior, or unattractive. He feels alone and empty inside.

Tabel 1. Personality disorders (adapted from Milon, 2004)

Abnormal personality development

Personality development or personogenesis is a progressive process of building operational operational, instrumental and regulatory structures which will allow to a good adaptation in a social context, an optimal use of individual resources and a permanent self-actualization.

Abnormal personality follows the same type of evolution as the normal personality, in terms of the nature of the determinants factors of development. The quality of these factors and their actions makes the difference. In order to distinguish between normal and abnormal personality

development, Millon (2004) proposes „*developmental pathogenesis*”, a concept closer to a dimensional approach and having deeper roots in the psychology of personality. In the pathogenesis of personality, Millon differentiates predisposing factors and precipitating factors. Predisposing factors, such as heredity, socioeconomic status, family atmosphere, and habits learned in response to early traumatic experiences serve as a foundation for the development of a personality disorder. Precipitating factors (eg. the death of a parent) refer to clearly demarcated events which evoke or trigger the expression of already existing, but latent and hidden, dispositional factors.

Lăzărescu & Nireștean (2007, p. 117) introduce a very relevant concept to understand the processuality of the development of personality disorders, „*pathological personogenesis*”, which includes the action of hereditary / constitutional factors, childhood experiences and peculiarities, interpersonal relationships and social factors.

The family is the main socializing agent that will accompany the development of the child throughout it. The quality of the organization and functioning of the family depends fundamentally on how the dynamic process of personogenesis will take place. We will briefly present some socialization theories that highlight the role of the family in the normal development of personality.

The Social Mold Model, Hartup (1978), specifically developed in order to explain the deviant behavior, compares family's socialization processes with a mold in which the child is placed, its behavior being the result of the action of various parental, positive or negative educational strategies. The most important educational strategies are the parental support and the parental control. (Huh et al. 2006) Significant parental support and monitoring help child development, encourage initiatives and autonomy, stimulate information processing and decision-making and thus reduce the incidence of deviant and antisocial behaviors (Durbin et al., 1993

Reciprocal Effects Model suggests the reciprocity between parental behavior and child behavior. Parental strategies will influence the behavior of the child, but in turn, the child's behavior will influence the parent's reaction. An irritable child, with a high level of reactivity and a constantly negative emotional state, will more likely generate aversive behaviors from parents. Equally, a harsh discipline from the parent will produce different responses to children with different temperaments.

Coercion Theory (Patterson, 1992, 2002, Dishion & Patterson, 1997) is a prototypical example of reciprocal influences between parents and children: Inappropriate or antisocial behavior of a child provokes aversive reactions from parents; these aversive reactions, in turn, escalate aggressive behavior of the child.

The Bronfenbrenner's ecological model analyzes five socially organized subsystems that support and guide the child's development process. The family, which in the first years of life is the most important part of the care environment, is the child's microsystem. Parents or family characteristics, educational strategies and practices can contribute to the development of a personality disorders.

Inadequate educational strategies and the impact on personality development

Family education proves to be one of the most important factors influencing the development of both normal and abnormal personality.

The constellation of family education is extremely complex. We will briefly develop only a few aspects: (1) family educational practices, (2) parental education strategies (3) dimensions of parental behavior (4) alienated family behaviors and their impact on the the development of abnormal personality.

Parental educational practices are concrete behaviors, which are manifested in specific situational contexts. Stormshak et al (2000) analyzes five parental practices associated with the development of behavioral problems: (a) punitive discipline (screaming, teasing, threats),(b) lack of consistency of parental behavior, (c) lack of warmth and positive involvement, (d) physical aggression (hitting, beating), (e) corporal punishment.

Educational strategies include several congruent parental practices and are used in relation to a child's specific behavior (eg. effective discipline strategies based on explanation, communication, appropriate punishment in relation to the guilt, negotiation and rule setting, behavioral evaluation etc. versus harsh disciplining strategies, based on reproaches, quarrels, admonishment, violence). Depending on their positive or negative character, on their nature and quality, certain educational strategies generate appropriate or inappropriate behaviors of the child, being integrated into the personality structure if they are constantly manifested. Low affection, lack of parental love, reduced time spent with the child, poor communication, inappropriate childcare, low aspirations for the child have been associated with the characteristic symptoms of conduct disorders, such as feelings of insecurity, emotional regulation difficulties, the child's anger, stubbornness and non-compliance. The absence of positive reinforcements, an invalidating developmental context, where the child's feelings are denied generates the internalizing disorders, which involve social withdrawal, and a high level of anxiety (Cole & Rehm, 1986). The avoidant personality or borderline personality develops in this "fertile" environment.

Parenting dimensions include parenting practices, placed on a continuum, which express a certain behavior. Support and control are the two dimensions widely used to assess the quality of parental behavior. (Moitra & Mukherjee, 2010)

Parental support (warmth, affection and acceptance versus hostility, neglect and rejection) defines how the parent responds to the needs of the child and supports his development.

Parental control is the second dimension of parenting. The literature contains many attempts to conceptualize control, but data are inconsistent and equivocal (Barber 2006). Amato (1990) has defined „parental control”, as being „the degree of parental monitoring of children, the decisions which the parents make regarding children's activities and friends, and the rules which the parents set for their children”. (apud Suchman, 2077)

Barber (1996) has differentiate the psychological control from the behavioral control.

Psychological control is defined as "socializing pressure that does not respond to the emotional and psychological needs of the child, but, on the contrary, it inhibits the expression of independence and autonomy" (p. 3299). More specifically, psychological control refers to "parental behaviors that are intrusive and are based on the manipulation of children's thoughts and feelings and their attachment to parents" (Barber & Harmon, 2002, p. 15)

Psychological control includes a variety of maladaptive parental strategies, such as: (1) Inducing the feeling of culpability - the manipulation of feelings of guilt to put pressure on children in order to comply in accord with parents' requirements; ("That's why your mother is sick, because you never listen to her.") (2) *Conditional love or withdrawal of love* - manipulation of the attention, concern and affection in order to the child respond to certain requirements and reach parental standards; ("If you do not learn very well, Mommy will not love you anymore.") (3) Inducing anxiety - to make children feel inferior, to make them feel shame, to induce a sense of incompetence in order to compel children to follow the parents' demands; ("The professor told me that, instead to draw, you play with another child, nothing good will happen to you."); (4) Invalidating the child's perspective - the obstruction of the spontaneous expression of thoughts and feelings of children, the denial of their ideas, emotions, and experiences. ("Well, it hurts your stomach! You say this just to avoid making lessons.")

Behavioral control refers to the parental attempts to regulate and structure the behavior of the child (activities and participation in joint actions with colleagues), by communicating behavioral rules and monitoring the proper child behavior (Dishion & McMahon, 1998)

Psychological control has detrimental effects on children functioning, on their academic performances, and on their relationships with the family

and peers. Psychological control disturbs the positive sense of self (Barber, 2014), increases the risks of internalization disorders, affects the need of autonomy, children being forced to act, feel, or think exclusively in accord with their parents requirements and expectations. While behavioral control provides children with a clear set of guidelines for proper behavior, by contrast, psychological control interferes with normal personality development, disturbing the needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness.

Alienated parenting strategies are complex behaviors, with a strong negative educational impact, which cause severe harm to the child, in the process of personality development. These alienated behaviors occur, either in the context of a parent's personality disorder or other psychiatric disorder, or in certain existential contexts that present a severe psychological risk to a vulnerable parent, such as divorce. The alienated parental behaviors are parentification, adultification and infantilisation.

Parentification means to reverse the roles between the parent and the child, especially in the context of divorce. The child's needs are sacrificed to meet the emotional needs of one or other of the parents or of other family members. Parentification is a form of child abuse. In the context of divorce, the parentified child is called to comfort his parents about adult distress, instead of living their own suffering"(Peris et al., 2008, p.634).

Adultification supposes that a child assume some roles that traditionally belong to the adult. In the context of divorce, the adultificated child becomes friend and confidant of the parent with whom he usually remains, sharing his physical and emotional responsibilities with him.

Infantilization is due to, either the inability of the parent to accept the growth and maturation of his or her own child, or the fearing of the parent to be left by the child who was fulfilled all his emotional needs. Consequently, the parent prevents the child from making friends, forbids him to participate in age-specific activities, and makes him guilty of any attempt to assert his independence. In the extreme, the parent will induce and maintain the idea that the child is very ill and needs permanent care of its part.

Conclusion

In conclusion, all these inadequate educational strategies will disrupt the normal process of personality development, alter the child's self-image, his cognitive schemas, relational modalities, and increase the risk of building a rigid, defensive personality.

Early identification of such risks and intervention on the child and family may have real prophylactic and curative effects.

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