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FROM PAIDEIA TO PANSOPHIA

A. Ilica

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Abstract: First of all, The Curriculum contains affective, rational, behavioural, physical, aesthetical, moral components capable of being amplified in a harmonious personality. Thus taking into consideration the fact that mathematical abilities are compulsory for fulfilling cognitive intelligence, this subject is represented from kindergarten till high school graduation, in a certain percentage.

Keywords: curriculum, educational, universal wisdom, global curriculum, paideia and pansophia.

1. The Curriculum and the educational ideal. From a curricular point of view, the main question stated by pedagogues and didacticians is: *how can a person be educated so as to be useful to the society, without diminishing too much the personal satisfactions of his / her existence?* Each society has “ennobled” its requests towards child / teenager education by identifying a curricular perspective synthesized in the educational ideal. *The educational ideal* is the reflection of a personality project (ideal, so virtual) that society (by its social interests) desires for the individuals, so as to serve its concerns for identity protection and existential security. An *educational ideal* – as a fulfilled abstraction for a personality – becomes a fundamental prerogative of the educational institutions. In schools and universities the type of personality – aimed by ideal – is configured by means of two “curricular” documents: basic and normative.

If we aim at the formation and the development of patriotic feelings, the subject *history* is contained in the *Curriculum* for so many years and hours as to configure their quality (and quantity). The diminution in the number of hours for a certain subject / its absence

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from the *Curriculum* is the consequence of an educational policy. For example, the lack of art education in high school education derives from the perspective of the educational policy due to which teenagers can reach the ideal aimed by the society without art education. The diminution in the number of hours of physical education expresses the perception of social and political decision-makers regarding the configuration of youth personality. This situation is represented in the number of hours assigned for psycho-motorical and physical development.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disciplines</th>
<th>European Union</th>
<th>Romania</th>
<th>+/- for our country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother tongue</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>+ 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern languages</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>- 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>- 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature sciences and humanities</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>- 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artistic activities</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>- 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion and ethics</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>- 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>+ 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of hours per study year</td>
<td>826, 7 hours</td>
<td>652 hours</td>
<td>- 174 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The comparative relation between the average number of hours per study year from our country and the European Union countries is represented in the following chart:

![Diagram showing the number of hours per year for European Union and Romania](chart)

Second of all, *School Curricula* or *The Syllabus* detail the part of the pupil or student personality formation – development project that ensures competences suitable for the targeted domain as well as some transversal competences (computer usage, acquisition of mother tongue and modern languages, acquisition of a learning style, and if such the case of a research style). The sum of all didactic operationing effects in the *School Curriculum* represents the acquisition that fulfils the aimed personality profile. Unfortunately, knowledge distilled in the subjects of school curricula has representation in prefabricated products (through the so-called alternative textbooks) with a strong hue and cognitive expressivity. Simultaneously the designers of *Curricular Programmes* do not take into account the correlation of the fields of knowledge for an integrated learning. Knowledge and abilities are autonomous, as identified by the famous “streets metaphor” (each field of knowledge walks on its own street and when it comes to a crossroad no one knows anyone) used by the pedagogue, Emil Păun.

The other curricular designs derive from the authority of the *Curriculum and Syllabus* considered absolutely compulsory.
Together, they develop a *Paideic Programme of Human Development*\(^2\). They all are carried out under the auspices of an educational ideal that is the effluence of educational policies and of the configuration of social mentalities.

Historically speaking, the ideal of Greek fortresses was represented by *Kalokagathia*, meaning that a young man was educated in the spirit of *truth, goodness* and *beauty*, namely education aims at developing a tender heart, a mind oriented toward discovering the truth and a beautiful body capable of admiring the aesthetics of reality. This harmony was named *paideia*. In ancient republican Rome, the educational ideal was represented by the apophthegm „Mens sana in corpore sano”, linking the mind and the body through health. In other words, only in a healthy body can exist a healthy thinking. “Health” for the body and thought contains the Greek *Kalokagathia*, namely, the adjective “*healthy*” refers to the health of the relation between truth and mind, moral behaviour and respect for the body, environmental and natural beauty. The educational ideal of the Middle Ages involved formation of young virtuous people with knight dignity and respect for faith. The educational ideal of the Renaissance is represented by the universal man, by developing absolute personalities all these by rethinking the educational ideals of Latin and Greek Antiquity. Modernity motivates its educational ideal by encouraging the assimilation of eternal values (goodness, truth, beauty), of specific values (freedom, equality, legality), of personal values (courage, dignity, fraternity) as well as of certain collective views (faith and nation)\(^3\).

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

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

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

- Paradigm of a future society;
- Paradigm of an educational ideal;
- Curricular paradigm\(^4\).

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

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

The idea of creating a European environment of superior education, by the regulation of Bologna, would be the first step in promoting pansophia for the time being, only on a formal, organizational level. Harmonizing education stages, as well as promoting unitary requirements for a set of curricular programmes confirm the option for a pansophic curriculum. Its consequence upon national societies (for now) will lead to the development of a unitary contemporary society with loose identity borders. Border cultures – so strongly encouraged to develop under the protection of intercultural manifestations – will lead to premises for their dilution into a single, multicultural civilization (as a stage), that builds a world without

national, cultural, religious differences, to a world independent of race, history, geographic area or cultural authority.

Such a pansophic “curricular project” (encouraged by the UNO, UNESCO, Amnesty International, Universal Masonic Organization) would benefit of a worldwide, unitary educational curricula standardized at the level of globality (the idea of “globalization” and “universal village” are part of those conceptual tools that maintain such a project). It is difficult to predict communities’ reactions - even from a demi-millenial perspective – just as unpredictable as the development of a Babylonia that would divide again “languages” and nations. As a remarkable Romanian pedagogue used to say “ideas never die forever”\(^5\) (Ion Negreț), humanity is too agitated for one to anticipate a long term evolution. Human condition evolves as “a interconnection between the psychological structure and the biological structure in the social overstructure”\(^6\), as a close relationship between all three variables (psycho logic, biologic and social).

### 4. Global Curriculum

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

---

\(^5\) In the volume „Teoria generală a curriculumului educațional” (2008), I. Negreț-Dobridor develops in comments and updates the opinions of several specialists, especially Americans, regarding the promotin of a „global curriculum that would guide and assure a global education”. He brings arguments for the (ideal) opportunity of global education „to change the individual into kosmopolites and papaideumenos, namely into a citizen that possesses the huge world culture and warmlynd respectfully embraces all national cultures of this world” (p. 350).

\(^6\) N. Mărgineanu, (1973), Condiția umană, Editura Științifică, București, p. 34.
A global curriculum that would eliminate educational differences between people remains an aspiration of humanity itself. The metaphor of Christian sacrifice is allegorical. In those times when in the Terrestrial garden - so carefully taken care of by God – wickedness appeared, god sent His Son to give people a model of educational sacrifice. The supreme sacrifice, the homicide and then the Ascension created the premises for a change. Christianity would spread, would become global paideia, promoting love instead of vendetta, love instead of hatred and fraternity instead of selfishness. When human condition is threatened, a global, pansophic curriculum would resettle human dignity, totally or like E. Fauré says, „tout homme et tout l’homme” („whole humanity and whole man”).

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

Bibliography:

TWO APPROACHES OF INVESTMENTS IN EDUCATION

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Abstract: The relationship between human capital and investments in education is a theme which preoccupies not only researchers in economy and political sciences, but also those from the fields of sociology or educational sciences. This paper aims at comparatively analyzing G. Becker’s economical approaches and R. Boudon's sociological one.

The first part presents the main hypotheses of the theory of human capital, developed on a larger scale in the economical analysis of human behavior. The next part is an analysis of the decision of individuals belonging to different social categories and the reasoning which lies at the basis of the decisions they take. The whole analysis and the conclusions that follow highlight the individual and social consequences of investments in human capital, and they also formulate a few suggestions for the future development of the aspects taken into consideration.

Keywords: human capital, educational system, the cost of education, the effects of investments in education.

1. Human capital and the investment in education

Known especially though the works of Becker (1997), the investment in human capital aims to estimate the economical costs of the different types and levels of education, as well as the way in which education can contribute to the increase of work productivity. At the same time, the theory of investments in human capital is connected to the term rate of investment recovery or the effectiveness of educational investments, as reflected in the optimization of social and individual benefits.

Becker’s thesis is, on the one hand, the disclosure of the contribution of the school house period on the economical advantages...
Two approaches of investments in education

anticipated by the individual and, on the other hand, the fact that the school title appears as an economic good acquired with a cost. Hence, the demonstration proposed by the author focuses on certain ideas which can be summed up as follows:

a) The analysis of the incomes anticipated to be obtained in the future based on the investment in human capital illustrates a series of differences between the individuals regarding the perspectives of the actual realization of these incomes. The individual’s concentration on the development of the skills necessary to obtain a certain level of incomes along the whole active life reveals the reciprocity of the relationship between the profession and human learning, in the way of their adaptation to optimal requirements.

b) The investment in education has the possibility to obtain a certain social and professional status as its main motivation, but it can also explain the processes connected to salary differences, professional mobility, the search for working positions adequate to the training level and individual aspirations. Consequently, the relationship between work and education manifests itself under a double aspect: the educational value of productive experience and the economical value of the knowledge experience guided though the educational system.

c) The decision to invest in education is grounded mainly on a comparative analysis shaped as the balance between costs and benefits, where the expenses include direct and indirect costs. The latter are expressed in the terms of opportunity costs, namely as incomes which could be obtained if one chose the option of employment and not that of continuation of studies.

d) The employees who cash in a part of the income which comes from the specialization will be less interested than others to find a job when he is temporarily unemployed, because he doesn’t wish to lose the investment made in his own training. Such a behavior affects, on the other hand, the future situation, because, if he doesn’t look for a new job, the firm can fire him without the fear of loosing his investment.

e) When the new job requires geographic movement, new resources of time and money will be spent. These investments represent an investment in the information regarding the favorable chances of obtaining a job which will lead to obtaining a profit and higher earnings than those in other parts.
G. Becker’s analysis highlights a long series of empirical phenomena, such as (1997, p. 32):

- Wages usually increase with age, but with a decreasing rate; increasing and delay rates tend to be positively connected to the level of professional qualification.
- Unemployment rates tend to be disproportional with the qualification level of the individuals.
- Income distribution is positively inclined especially in the case of specialists and other categories of qualified workers.
- Younger people, who possess more educational training than older people, are inclined to change their jobs more frequently.
- Work division is limited by market dimensions, the offer and the demand on the workforce market being less competitive than the competition on the segments of the market.
- The typical investor in human capital is more prone to fail in his decisions than the typical investor in tangible capital.

Summing up the argumentation developed by the author, the investment in education may be regarded as a decision of the individual as opposed to the opportunity cost, namely the decision to integrate himself in work at a certain age or to continue his studies in the situation when his income will increase once he obtains a title of superior education. In order to represent the factors which intervene in this cost of choice, G. Becker suggests the following graphic construction:

Fig. 1. The relationship between earnings and age (G. Becker, 1997, p. 40)

- The line $UU$ refers to the assumption that people obtain the same income regardless of their age;
Two approaches of investments in education

- The curb $TT$ illustrates the idea that qualified people will obtain lower income during the training period because the training courses are also paid and, respectively, higher incomes at older ages, since this is when they cash in the envisaged profit;
- The dotted line $T'T'$ suggests the income obtained by people who decide to start working, but who are not willing to make investments in superior forms of professional training.

It is important to notice that the choice between the continuation of studies and integration in work in order to obtain immediate income involves not only a simple analysis of the cost-benefit type, but also one which regards the cost of time in the life cycle of the individual. In Becker’s opinion, “the actual value of the marginal cost of the investment in human capital is equal to the actual value of the future benefits”, which means that “the time spent on investing in human capital tends to decrease with age…” (1998, p.130). In other words, the number of periods left in a man’s life makes the actual value of the future benefits to decrease with age because the earnings given up increase.

The problem that emerges regarding these aspects is that of grounding a rational decision through the comparison of costs with the anticipated benefits.

Formally, this situation could be represented in the following relation: 

$$V_p = \frac{E_1}{1+r} + \frac{E_2}{(1+r)^2} + ... + \frac{E_n}{(1+r)^n},$$

where $V_p$ is the presented value; $E_1$, $E_2$, ..., $E_n$ represent the income increase anticipated to be earned in the first year, the second, the nth year of active life from an economical point of view; $r$ is the internal rate of recuperating human capital (Suciu, 2000, p.71).

In order to make a rational choice, the principle of the cost of opportunity involves either the maximization of the use or of the satisfaction of obtaining a certain income, or the minimization of the costs or of the renouncements regarding the chosen alternative. Regarding these aspects, we can mention a multitude of suppositions or factors which intervene when one makes a choice, as well as the
means in which one appreciates the income through the “loss” of the best option one has given up.

Becker gives a special attention to the relationship between the anticipated earnings of the investor in human capital, the costs involved and the recuperation rates or the economical efficaciousness of this kind of investments. Consequently, adopting a rational decision involves comparing the interest rate (marked with $i$), with the rate of recuperating the investment in human capital (marked with $r$). In cases when $r > i$, the investment is profitable, and the auxiliary income on which the given person relies with each new year of training or university studies can be regarded as an indicator of the marginal inclination to invest in education.

Since human capital can’t be entirely assimilated in an active liquid, for instance, the real recuperation from human capital varies around the anticipated recuperations, due to the uncertainty connected to factors such as: life length, unpredictable events, the reduction of the information available due to the much too long period of cashing the recuperations from the investments in education, the risk of the choices made between activities “with a future” and those “without perspective”.

On the other hand, every analysis of maximized behavior in the field of human capital involves a correlation of the basic hypotheses of the economical theory with the action of different institutional factors such as: the law system which regulates social relationships and the redistribution of the incomes among the members of society, the differences in social status and the income obtained from inheritances, subventions for education and other types of investments in human capital, the means of distributing personal skills and abilities, unequal favorable chances etc, which each have a significant role in investments in education.

In order to get a realistic picture, we must know that the analysis of human capital and the reasoning connected to the decision of investing in education must be regarded on the larger background of Becker’s preoccupations for the economical approach of human behavior. As he states, this type of approach offers a better
understanding of the different human actions, their reference to the criteria of maximizing utility, the possibility to explain the functioning of social structures by referring to the market mechanisms, as well as extending the economical thinking to the study of non-economical variables which affect human behavior.

Even if he states that “the economical approach offers a favorable background for the understanding of the whole human behavior”, the author doesn’t minimize the contributions of other researchers and doesn’t try to suggest that “economists are more important: than sociologists, psychologists, historians and researchers from the sphere of political sciences (1998, p.14). On the contrary, he admits that “a great part of behavior isn’t yet understood and that non-economical and technical variables as well as discoveries from other fields contribute significantly to the understanding of human behavior: (1998, p.15).

This situation led, on the one hand, to numerous controversies regarding the lack of operationality of the concepts of the human capital theory, the fact that this model contains multiple sociological and psychological variables which are difficult to measure, the tendency to over evaluate the role of education in the increase of productivity and incomes, the incapacity of the theory of human capital to highlight the non-economical benefits of education or the “image effect” transmitted by the diploma as opposed to the real skills of their owner.

On the other hand, one has admitted the importance of the role of receding of the investments in education, especially connected to the grounding of decisions regarding public programs and policies, the fact that the theory of human capital explains the impact of education upon productivity through its capacity to produce knowledge, qualification, creativity and thinking flexibility, as well as the idea that the level of education is a source of signals on the work force market regarding the acquired qualification of the graduates, the prestige of the learning institution he graduates from or the potential status conferred by the diploma.
Looking at things from this perspective, the decision to invest in human capital depends upon numerous factors, whose list can be extended according to the object of the analysis or the approach had in view. Consequently, Becker’s studies refer, for instance, to the added value obtained after the educational process as opposed to the performance of the work force and the extra earnings, at the intersection point between the demand for education (wich represents marginal benefits) and the educational offer (associated to the marginal costs of financing a monetary unit additional to human capital) the cost of the time analyzed in terms which are similar to market goods, to the problem of substituting the time allocated to education with activities which bring material earnings, to the raport between the productivity of working time and the consumption time or the rate of changes in one own capital seen as a raport between the input of time and goods, respectively the output of human capital in a limited period of time.

If this is the way things look from Becker’s perspective, it is quite different in the sociological analysis of the human capital developed by Raymond-Boudon in the extended context of the relationship between educational & social opportunities.

2. The individual and social consequences of investments in education

Inspired by the economical analysis of the coherence costs benefits and by the strategies of social actors in taking the decision to invest in education, Raymond – Boudon develops a theoretical model structured around the idea of rationality and human behaviour. Firstly, the French sociologist notices the existence of a disequilibrium between the social and educational structure, that is between the two structures there is a discrepancy because the educational structure changes more than the social one.

He also reaches similar conclusions concerning the influence of the educational level upon the distribution of incomes, the increase of educational inventory or the extension of the school duration not being associated to a reduction of economical inequality. “The
Two approaches of investments in education
devancement of the educational system, writes Bound, doesn’t
necessarily include an attention of economical inequality, but quite
the contrary. Similarly, we can prove that there is no reason to carry
forward an increase of mobility, even if it involves an attention of the
inequality of school opportunities” (1998, p.43).

To prove the coexistence of the phenomena mentioned,
Boudon employs a simulating procedure by using a “typological” or
“structural” model, as he calls it, which consists in 3 tightly
connected moments. In the first moment, one starts from the thesis
that school success varies according to the social class of the
individuals. Therefore, if we consider, for instance, the existence of 3
social classes C1 (superior), C2 (medium) and C3 (inferior), than
each class is associated to a social class and having a certain level of
school success to follow a different educational trajectory. Because
the educational system is structured on hierarchical levels, with each
level involving a certain type of decision so that from a period T1 to
the following period T2, an individual can go to highschool or
professional school, he can continue his studies in the superior
system or get a job.

The conclusion reached by Boudon is that the number of
youth coming from different social class who graduate from different
levels of learning isn’t proportional with the effectives of these social
class of origin. Althogh the number of pupils and students increases
as a consequence of the sustainance of education through buget
allocation, almost always all the descendents of the “superior” social
classes succeed in finishing a school of higher level, as opposed to
those coming from the “inferior” social classes.

Boudon makes a few statements regarding the reasons which
lead to the decision to choose a certain type of education, which are:
since values are socially stratified, it is very possible for the members
of the “inferior” classes to offer a more reduced importance to
education as a means of social success, than those belonging to the
“superior” classes; having an economical and cultural disadvantage
from the members of the “superior” classes, those who belong to the
“inferior” classes have the tendency to over-estimate the costs of
education and to underappreciate its long-term benefits; in the analysis of the cost and benefit proportion, the members of the inferior classes tend to over-estimate the risks of investments in education and to underestimate the future advantages of this type of investments.

The second moment concerns the elaboration of tables whos reproduce the structural priorities noticed at the level of school statistics. These permit the study of the phenomena mentioned in their dynamics that is the evolution in time of the effectives corresponding to different school levels and the evolution in time of “the social composition of the effectives belonging to each school level. Even if from one level to another the possibility to reach higher if the social origin is lower, we notice however that the auxiliary number of people who get to graudae from higher learning is much smaller at “inferior” classes, than in case of the other social classes.

Boudon concludes that, although at each educational level we witness a significant increase of the effectives, at superior levels of the educational system, the increase of the number of students between to different periods is higher in the case of people who belong to the superior classes. Consequently, regardless of the fact that social research highlights a compensation of chances at all the levels of school selection, inequalities are maintained especially in the case of the superior levels of school and of the learning institutions wich offer more prestigious diplomas.

The third moment regards the problem of the influence on social mobility of the increase of the education percentage and educational inequality. In other words, this moment defines the mechanism through wich individuals with increased training have the possibility to accede to certain professional careers and a certain social status. Regarding this last moment, Boudon formulates 2 hypotheses: the first, the meritocratic one, wich says that those who have higher training have the tendency to have higher social status; the second, that of dominance, which says that those with higher social origin tend to obtain a social status which is at least the same level.
Following his analysis, Boudon concludes that the school title doesn’t succeed in neutralizing integrally an individual’s pertaining to a certain social class or category, the individual being only able to determine a fluidization of the individual’s mobility between social layers. This is why the possession of a school or university diploma isn’t sufficient on its own to acced a superior economical & social standard. Among others, this phenomenon draws attention upon the fact that social mobility owed to school training doesn’t have the necessary consequence of the economical differences between individuals and different social groups.

Boudon’s conclusion is that the value loss of the school title isn’t only relative, but also absolute. In other words, the value of the school and university diploma decreases, not only due to the slow increase of the number of superior social position as opposed to the number of graduates with an education fitting these positions, but also as a consequence of the absolute increase of the number of school diploma owners. The main idea suggested by the French sociologist is the following: the depreciation of study diplomas come as an effect of the increase of the educational offer, but also as a consequence of the discrepancy between educational and social structures.

The depreciation of the diplomas is also proportional with the diversification of the means of social selection, different from those in schools, as in the case of recommendations, the testing of professional experience, trial periods etc. Moreover, the author says that the thesis in education summed up in the formula *the more, the better*, “was justified by the idea that individual deficits are necessarily compensated by the collective benefits resulted from the increase of school demands” (1998, p.88), a thesis which is and will be the object of controversies in social research and at the level of the factors of political decision.
Conclusions

Far from being mere sociological or economical analyses, Becker’s and Boudon’s ideas have multiple convergences, which lead to a more profound understanding of the two approaching perspectives of investments in human capital and education. In order to illustrate this situation, I will employ four examples:

- The first example refers to the factors connected to the moments when the investment in education is made and the general state of economy. Consequently, M. Ch. Suciu (2008) identifies two significant aspects: the effect of discouraged workers, an effect which manifests itself in situations of economical recession or when there is a lack of available work places, a fact which determines those involved to return to the educational system or to professional conversion; the effect of additional workers which appears when, due to a precarious situation in the family, young people have the tendency to interrupt their studies to look for work.

- The second example is connected to income differences which exist between different social categories and the possibility to invest in education. In this case, a paradoxical situation appears: the unequal distribution of resources, the inequality of chances among the members of society and the meritocratic structure of allocating social positions lead to the exploitation of the educational system exactly by those with resources, whose studies are grant-aided by the more numerous social categories from the basis of society through taxes, fees and other contributions to the state budget. The natural consequence is that the decision to invest in education can’t be left only at the level of the individual; it should be taken into consideration by the functional structures of the contemporary state.

- The third example, also signaled by Boudon, is the fact that educational mobility isn’t connected to a social mobility in the same way. Thus, the increase of the chances of access to
superior education of the disadvantaged social categories doesn’t lead to higher social equitableness, or to the diminution of the differences between the social layers. In these conditions, social mobility tends to conserve the social structure despite the increase of educational mobility, the costs of this paradox being higher if the class of origin of the graduate is closer to the peak of the social hierarchy.

- The last example concerns the investment in education in the context of a society based on knowledge, an aspect to which our country tends. From this point of view, O. Giarini and M. Malita (2005, p. 42-44) draw the attention upon certain aspects which are connected to the increase in the rhythm of society’s transformation, to the necessity that the instruction rhythm should be superior to the change rhythm, as well as to the need to cultivate anticipative attitudes, education along the entire active life, to assimilate practices of interactive communication and computer technologies typical to “knowledge society”.

Bibliography:


BEING A TEACHER – A PROFESSION OF FAITH

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Abstract: The unprecedented transformations which took place in the last few decades in contemporary society impose a permanent revision of the training methods of the future teachers. On the European and international level, we notice a change in the perception of the teaching profession. There is a greater focus on their qualifications to higher quality standards by preparing them through the key competences. From this point of view, the institutions of higher learning have great responsibility in the training of professionals in the didactic field, so that they can accumulate the skills which are sufficient and necessary to continuous training, according to the principle of lifelong learning.

The orientations towards the professionalization of the teaching profession impose a training level of the learners which can adapt to social changes, and to the transformations at the level of the profession through permanent accumulation in lifelong learning.

Keywords: education, competences, teaching, critical thinking, reforming.

1. Competences and professionalization
The educational ideal is regulated at the level of educational politics so that the personality profile formed through the educational process can coincide with that solicited by society in a given historical period. The educational ideal of the contemporary Romanian school, according to the regulations of the ministry of resort, is: “the free, integral and harmonious development of human individuality, in the formation of an autonomous personality and in assuming a system of values which are necessary for personal fulfillment, through the development of the entrepreneurial spirit through active participation of the citizen in society, social inclusion and employment on the work force market”.

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In order to reach these standards formulated as necessary and compulsory percepts, the protagonists of the educational act, as main actors, must themselves be prepared in a way in which they can put in practice these regulations at high standards. This aspect imposes the professionalization of the teaching profession through rigorous initial and continuous, responsible and competent training. Such training involves forming general and specialty skills. But what does a competence involve? According to the regulations of the Law of National Education, we have a few definitions:

- A “multifunctional and transferable complex of knowledge, abilities and aptitudes”;
- “the proven capacity to select, combine, and adequately use knowledge or other abilities, consisting in values and attitudes, in order to solve successfully a category of work or learning situations, as well as the personal or professional development in conditions of efficacy and efficiency”.

At a closer look, we notice that the didactic profession involves a complex of competences:

- specialty and general knowledge;
- capacities, aptitudes and availability;
- didactic experience;
- professional reflection and attitude;
- Personal values and qualities.

The concept of competence demands the existence of performative knowledge converted in savoir-dire, savoir-faire, savoir-etre. That is why the accumulation of professional competences involves going longitudinally and transversally through the disciplines which contribute to the general training of the future teachers for the primary and secondary school. The educative process involves a holistic approach of the object and subject of education. Given the age level and the human resource he will be working with, one firstly needs psychological competences. Knowing the child’s psychology is self-imposed. One can’t work with a human material without the thorough knowledge of human psychology. As psychology approaches vast subjects, the future teachers will have to acquire knowledge about child psychology, the development according to age levels, without neglecting the individual particularities that differentiate them. How

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necessary is this scientific knowledge of the psychological development of a child? It is as necessary as the statement that the child isn’t a miniature adult, he is a human being with his own needs and rights, and with a vast potential that the adult has to develop. The Convention of United Nations approaches the situation and rights of children: “The children of this world are innocent, vulnerable and dependent. They are also curious, active and full of hope. Their life should be one of joy and peace, playing, learning and growing. Their future should be modeled in harmony and cooperation. They should shape themselves through horizon enlargement and acquirement of experience.”

If we talk about early childhood, or the pre-school period, we can characterize it through the children’s capacity to use the language to express their ideas and feelings, to interpret events and phenomena close to them in order to understand the world they live in and to adapt it to their level of understanding. Late childhood, which begins after 5 years of continuous schooling is characterized by low cognitive skills that allow children to reflect on everyday occurrences and events in a more impersonal way, the ability to adapt to the realities of concrete also increases, and, under the sphere of education influences, the ability to regulate emotions and personality nuances in the child becomes more structured. R.B.Cattel considers personality as a “factorial and dynamic design, expressed in the responses to situations.”

H. J. Eysenck 'the algorithm of mixing intellectual, energetic anf attitude at the level of an individual.”

In addition to thorough knowledge of child psychology, teaching skills involve acquiring knowledge of the profession of general pedagogy, teaching methodology and deepening of didactic methodology. General pedagogy clarifies the concept of the role of education as a training process and human transformation. This training is based on the aims of philosophical, religious, cultural, social aims imposed by the learning process. Planchard Emile said on pedagogy that "it deals with what is, what should be and what is done." Preschool Pedagogy and small schooling deals with specific education and the schooling of preschool age children. In addition to the acquisition of skills as a basic theoretical level we notice the implementation of this

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5 Emile Planchard, Contemporary School Pedagogy, EDP, 1992, p. 32.
knowledge and teaching skills. A first class of skills that future teachers are required to assimilate regarding the instructional design is:

- The skill of didactic design;
- The capacity to build basic tools implemented in information and communication technologies;
- The capacity to apply modern methods;
- Skills to develop educational models;
- The adaptability of learning techniques to the needs of learners;
- Skills in building educational learning environments;
- Assessment skills.

Gaining professional competence is a difficult and important task in the preparation and training of future teachers. It is known that the teaching profession is a vocation requiring certain specific skills, such as passion for the teaching profession, love for children, empathy, patience, etc. tactical sense. In addition to these, the teaching profession is acquired by accumulation of skills and experience.

Prospective teachers to be well prepared from the theoretical and practical point of view must:

- be able to achieve a teaching design;
- be able to make a lesson plan;
- be able to work with curriculum documents;
- be able to conduct a practical activity in the classroom;
- apply techniques and interactive methods of learning;
- provide feedback to the learning activities of learners.

We notice that future teachers must know and apply elements of design education in classroom practice, and this requires not only theoretical knowledge on design development education, but more than that, it involves their application in classroom practice so that the circuit of the teaching process is complete: teaching, learning, evaluation.

2. The learning activity and optimization methods

The educational process is based on direct and indirect learning activities based on motivation, especially on the intrinsic. Leontiev (1991), considers activities as basic units of a human being, which can be classified according to the motivation behind them. The learning activity should be seen as a specifically human activity involved in the acquisition of knowledge for knowledge and understanding of the world. Before proceeding to the learning activities, the teacher must
realize the aspect that each child, in his uniqueness, perceives the world surrounding him based on personal experience and his individual way of processing information. This requires the teacher to learn to differentiate between these factors. Each student has specific preferences and learning styles and a good teacher will adapt their teaching performance in order to satisfy all these requirements. In the teaching practice, learning must be differentiated. If understanding is better accomplished, the learning will be more effective. The learning activity must be transformed from a dependent activity into an independent, self-conscious, well-organized activity. The personal experience of learners, the learning styles and preferences must be taken into account in encouraging learning situations so that the students are involved in their learning. In order to meet the variety of personal needs of learners within a class one must offer appropriate education, and effective assessment to enhance school performance. How can the teacher achieve these goals? By differentiating learning in several directions, to change the balance of teacher-student activities in the classroom, the content taught should represent only a pretext for the formative development of learners and the teacher becomes the facilitator of learning experiences, not only the resource, and the learning experiences should turn into real purchases. The differentiation of learning can be achieved on many levels:

**The differentiation of learning though resource materials** that provide the optimization of learning, the same content can be taught by using multiple teaching aids;

**The differentiation of learning through different tasks** applied to learners in groups or even individually to facilitate learning tasks at their own pace through personal and intellectual applied effort, with:

- an appropriate range of tasks;
- the adaptation of the theme to the abilities, skills and interests of learners;
- a variety of topics to be chosen from.

**The differentiation of learning activities through support**, because some learners have more need of help than others to perform certain tasks. This assistance is provided in different ways:

- individual support from the teacher
- support through technology
- the reward of achievements
➢ fostering teamwork
➢ guidance for small groups.

The differentiation of tasks according to skills, preferences and the disposition of learners so that:
➢ objectives can be achievable;
➢ evaluation criteria are presented;
➢ developing individual action plans;
➢ support of those in need;
➢ meeting individual needs
➢ use support materials.

The differentiation of content can be achieved by careful selection in accordance with the recommendations of the curriculum by eliminating unnecessary duplication, and widening the curriculum according to learners' interests.

The differentiation of the educational process so as to contribute to the development of thinking by calling for flexible activities to arouse the interests of learners, to develop the skills which are already formed, to help develop their skills.

The differentiation of the results of the evaluation process of the learners so as to give learners the opportunity to express themselves differently. The learning outcome should demonstrate abstract thinking, complexity, depth of understanding and the application of key skills and abilities to different learning situations. Students participate in learning situations, but they perceive them differently, the rapidity of the response differs, as well as the approach, so the tasks should be challenging, exciting the students’ desire for knowledge and be consistent with their beliefs and their culture. Therefore in order to support students in learning, the teacher should:
➢ work permanently with students as a mediator in the learning process;
➢ balance individual and group tasks;
➢ maintain relationships with all educational factors: parents, guardians, community.

The differentiation of learning through independent projects, which should be applied to learners with special skills to a field or another, to increase interest and to develop these skills through independent work. The idea is to facilitate differentiated learning at their own pace and in their area of interest by individual study, with the teacher have only the role of a mentor and facilitator.
3. Creating the educational environment

It is very important for the teacher to create an educational environment conducive to learning. The classroom must first meet some ergonomic rules. In addition to this, the educational area should be a pleasant environment for study, to stimulate learners to focus their interests and creativity. An ideal classroom should be divided into areas of interest with particular spaces for different activities: reading, writing, practical skills, clothing and construction, creative play and audio-video and Internet browsing. Somewhere in the center of the room it would be necessary to have a large common area for whole-class activities. All learning activities, those with the whole class and those with individual groups, and are led by the teacher who becomes a facilitator, a partner and a mentor of learners in the labyrinth of knowledge. Such a good education area offers many opportunities for differentiated learning and individualized practice.

4. Techniques of critical thinking in learning activization

In order to assist a thorough understanding of learning differences, the teacher must act in a professional manner by using a support methodology. He should apply classical and modern teaching methods in a manner tailored to the individual and class level.

By using techniques based on critical thinking⁶, teachers can employ the Socratic technique to determine students to think deeply on a subject. Using the techniques of developing critical thinking proposes a framework that guides thinking and learning to a deeper understanding, as a well-structured strategy. This structure starts from the idea that learning should always start from the life experience and knowledge of learners, and on this knowledge we should thus build durable and reliable new knowledge. The stages of the learning framework proposed by the techniques of critical thinking comprise three stages:

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⁶ Charles Temple, Jeannie L. Steele, Kurtis S. Meredith, Applying the techniques of developing critical thinking, Supliment la Revista Didactica Pro, nr.2 (8), 2008, Bucuresti.
1. **Evocation** - *E*, is carried out by means of a preparatory conversation regarding the subject and topic under discussion. The stages are the following:

- identification of problem / subject;
- making notes on the blackboard;
- discussions regarding what should be known about the subject / problem
- making notes on the blackboard;
- discussions regarding the usefulness of the subject / problem

2. **Meaning achievement** - *R*, understanding the learning situation is fulfilled progressively, while trainees acquire new information and their expectations are confirmed. Now, the teacher is the facilitator that professionally conducts the thinking process of his/her trainees towards discovering knowledge.

3. **Reflection – R**, involves a prior discussion that contributes to practicing and fixing new information while the cognitive transfer is understood and accomplished. It is carried out based on a set of questions that would lead trainees to the awareness of the novelty regarding the topic under discussion. The teacher will guide them through questions toward etracting relevant information that has not been mentioned in the evocation stage.
Critical thinking is a mechanism of change, but the support that makes it work is the teacher with his/her personality, abilities, teaching style and charisma. No matter how modern a method or techniques is, it is still plain talk if the teacher does not properly and skilfully integrate it among other didactic strategies.

5. Practical research
In our effort to undergo the most effective training for our students at the Faculty of Educational Sciences and Social, domain Pedagogy of School and Pre-school Education we have decided to do an experiment on two parallel groups of students. For one discipline, Pedagogy of School and Pre-school Education we have taught the lectures as rectories and at the discipline Methodology of cultural, civic and recreational Activities we have used techniques of critical thinking as teaching method. We took into consideration the following premises:
Self – motivation in the process of student formation.
Developing self – evaluation strategies of self performances by students related to pre-established objectives.
Establishing seminar objectives in accordance with the identified, perceived formation needs – new competences.
Application of active and reflexive methods for the formation of adults as extrinsic motivators,
Operations within the student focused formation process (group discussions, problem situations, case studies, empathic communication, untraditional school environment, non-school environment)
Creation of “living the success” situations.
Taking into consideration psycho-pedagogical particularities of adults (has a high concentration degree, easily carries out more difficult tasks, can do individual work)
Establishing a favourable climate for learning.
Valuing students’ intellectual and practical thesaurus.
Creating equal opportunities for all students, so as all of them to benefit of multiple learning resources.
Balancing intellectual and emotional components of the lecture.
Creating premises for a direct confrontation with practical, social and research problems.
Favouring students’ openness toward change, personal and professional improvement.

I have been working in this system for a semester. Then I have assessed students’ performances. By comparing students’ results at both disciplines, I have noticed that they had better results at the discipline thought with critical thinking techniques.

The results of our experiment are the following: the difference between the two groups is not very big. The general level of assessed performance has improved as revealed by the chart below (Chart no 1).
**Rezultatele evaluării inițiale și finale**

![Bar chart showing students' results at evaluation](chart.png)

*Chart no. 1 Students’ results at evaluation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial</td>
<td>58.83%</td>
<td>28.91%</td>
<td>12.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>69.98%</td>
<td>18.64%</td>
<td>10.38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table no 1. Results of initial and final evaluation*
Result of initial and final evaluation

Chart no. 2. Results of initial and final evaluation

The level of self – evaluation has increased by one point at the end of the semester and corresponds to the balance between initial and final evaluation (Table no 1). The decrease in the average value of the satisfaction level is explained by negative evaluation of some students’ own work as a consequence of frustration registered at the interference of cognitive lineal – unlinial system.

Conclusions

We consider that a well prepared teacher has to acquire along with pedagogical and didactical knowledge also a certain attitude toward his/her profession and toward the trainees. Therefore we strongly emphasize that a well prepared teacher has first of all to be a dedicated one. Profession is learnt by acquiring information that is turned into knowledge and that has to be put in practice with vocation, strictness and critical sense. Self – criticism should be present in every moment of didactic activity in the class, being aware of the fact that the
Being a teacher – a profession of faith

trainees’ unfulfilment is partly the teacher’s unfulfilment because most of the times trainees’ results depend on the teacher’s involvement in the didactic process.

We strongly support the idea that didactic profession is a vocational profession.

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TEACHERS’ DEVELOPMENT IN RELATION TO EVALUATION - LEARNING TEAMS AS A POSSIBILITY FOR MORE EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS’ ACHIEVEMENTS

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Abstract:
The answers at many questions connected with the teaching process lie in the professional development of teachers, and it represents the most important segment of a comprehensive and systemic reform. The number of experts who examined the factors that influence the success and achievements of students is big and they all agree that teacher has a key role. Therefore, schools in their development plans must take into account the necessity of continuous professional development of teachers, especially in the very complex process of assessment, and the need to create a stimulating environment for both teachers and students.

Learning teams as a form of professional training of the teachers have a great contribution for improving the assessment and the overall educational process, and therefore this issue needs also to be paid attention.

Teachers need to be continually professionally trained in order to promote and objectivize the process of assessing the students. The aim of this paper is to highlight the characteristics of learning teams and to indicate their importance for the professional development of teachers, having the goal to enhance the assessment and achievement of set standards i.e. the implementation of the objectives.

The justification of the analysis and the criteria justification of the capabilities for forming the learning teams through which the skilled competencies of the teachers will develop in a more positive way comes from our long term experience and work practice that is connected with this type of problem, and from the direct involvement in workshops with programs for professional development and reaching better competencies of the teachers in connection to the assessment of the achievements of the students through the learning teams. In relation to
this, there are some deep considerations from some relevant institutions like the Bureau for Education Development, results from surveys and interviews realized with the teaching staff, as with other relevant factors in the educational process.

Keywords: assessment, professional development, learning teams

1. Introduction

Professional development of teachers is of great importance for the overall educational process and the work of schools in general. It is an indisputable fact that the teacher faces the challenge of continuing professional development as an imperative of modern times. Once the teacher has completed his education and is included in the teaching process, he/she must not neglect his own professional development and he must be included in all activities related to professional development.

The care for all involved and the competent factors for the development of the permanent professional development are evident (Bureau for Development of the Education, Ministry of Education and Science, management of the nine year elementary school, high schools and gymnasiums \(^1\)). That shows that the professional development slowly but securely gains all of the characteristics of an organized form of teachers’ development.

Our long practice suggests that management puts a lot of efforts for the continuous professional development of teachers, but it is still not able alone without the support of the relevant factors of education, to care for the professional development of teachers, primarily due to the insufficient financial incentives, insufficient knowledge about the role and importance of professional development, etc.

Teachers that have completed the training should be put into schools as relevant factors that will organize and lead professional development through learning teams. Namely, within the learning teams, teachers can find answers to many questions related to the process of assessing students’ achievements, such as answering the question which strategy is better suited to improve certain procedural

\(^1\) The Ministry of Education in the Republic of Macedonia in cooperation with the Bureau of Education makes efforts for continuous professional development of teachers. In 2009/2010 the project Modernization of the education was realized in order to satisfy the need to improve the professional work of teachers and enhance the overall quality of the education system as a whole, and in that sense to meet the standards for quality of programs for professional development of teachers and management staff.
skills and how to assess this skill, answering the question which strategy is appropriate for students to understand better the concept the teacher teaches, the answer to the question how to increase motivation of students to advance their knowledge and achievements, answer the question how to promote themselves in order to assess students’ achievements, objectively etc.

Starting from the indisputable fact that teachers need to deepen their knowledge about the assessment of students’ achievements which is a continuous process that must permanently be planned and to occur, and in that direction that they permanently have to improve themselves, we understand the learning teams as necessary environment through which this professional development of teachers in each segment of the teaching process will take place, especially in a complex area such as assessment. In this sense, professional development of teachers through learning teams happens in order to ensure effectiveness in assessing students’ achievements.

1.1. Effective Professional Development of the Teachers for Assessing Students’ Assessments - Learning Teams

Professional development of teachers is a continuous process that should never stop. In the professional literature, there are many terms that refer to the concept of professional development of teachers\(^2\), such as training of teachers, professional learning, training of school staff, and education of the teaching staff within the workplace and so on. The term professional development of teachers involves all learning experiences and all planned learning activities which are beneficial to the teachers and which contribute to improvement of students’ achievements, improvement of the quality of the work of teachers and the overall atmosphere in schools.

When it comes to professional development of teachers in the Republic of Macedonia in the last ten years, the numerous projects\(^3\) must be mentioned, which, to a large extent, changed the physiognomy of the educational system and besides the new techniques, strategies


\(^3\) The rush of projects, often undertaken with financial support from foreign foundations, offer a rich repertoire of techniques, strategies and various activities for the active involvement of students in classes and reduce the dominant role of the teacher in the classroom, to enhance the learning process and the results of that process, and to promote the assessment through evaluation techniques for formative assessment and summative assessment.
and activities for the movement of reflective capacities of students and for increasing their active role during the lesson, they offered series of models and approaches for professional development of teachers in almost all areas of the teaching process.\textsuperscript{4}

New approaches for professional development of teachers in terms of assessment are a great opportunity to connect the system and individual needs in this complex and very relevant area. They involve the vision of the challenges in themselves those teachers, students and schools are faced with. In addition, we stress several different features of the new type of effective professional development:
- Professional development has individual and organizational character;
- Professional development is focused on the needs of students and the results of their learning;
- Professional development is a continuous process;
- Professional development is implemented in the workplace;
- Professional development is implemented by teachers, etc.

A single list of characteristics of effective professional development does not exist, although many authors dealing with this issue are trying to discover the final list of features. The model for the professional development of teachers in terms of assessment - learning groups or learning teams contains within itself all the characteristics of effective professional development.

Above all, learning teams are concentrated in the working environment of teachers. The teams are an opportunity for continuous professional training directly related to the different needs for teachers and students. The needs for teachers and students give direction to the goal of the work of the learning teams. They have the potential to provide sustainable development because with them a culture of mutual research is built which is transferred to the new teachers.

\textsuperscript{4} Teachers from 50 secondary vocational schools were involved in workshops with different contents, in various forms of professional training in order to improve the competence of teachers in terms of assessment, and thus students’ achievements. Recent studies show that a small number of teachers can impose themselves in their schools and create learning teams as a form of professional development. Upon completion of the financial stimulus the sustainability of professional development has been questioned, cf. Richardson, Janusheva (2008): When the Dance is Over (in manuscript)
\textsuperscript{5} Characteristics of professional development of teachers before: the individual character, focus on one area, discontinuance carrying out of the workplace, implementation of experts, mostly from abroad, etc.
Professional development through learning teams is a continuous and virtually endless process of analyzing, planning and assessing. In addition, we illustrate the work of a learning team:

Suppose that the learning team in a school recognizes the importance of assessment as a complex process and that the team members through informal discussions among themselves establish generally observed weaknesses and difficulties in assessing students while working in groups, and the contribution of the individual in the group. The activities undertaken by the team learning are as follows:

I. Analysis
- At the beginning of the school year the frequency of meetings is determined (e.g. twice a month);
- At the beginning of the school year the problem that will be taken into consideration (in this case, difficulties in assessing the group work of students and the contribution of the individual in the group is identified);
- The identified problem is generated by teachers (that is, there is self-initiative to form a learning team to solve the problem);
- Problem identified is recorded with evidence (for example, lists of analytical assessment of the group and the individual in the group, is shared between themselves and it is realized that difficulties are present and that the lists are not sufficient);
- A variable specific strategy or intervention is planned (in this case teachers can allocate roles so that someone will consult existing national literature, others will analyze the current foreign literature, the third will analyze the strategies or interventions that will help in solving this problem etc.). The question for intervention can be set as follows: How can ________________ (certain strategy) be used in order to improve (for ________________)?

II - At the arranged meeting teachers analyze that data they came across / collect and share them with team members to discuss and analyze.

About the difficulties in assessing the work of groups of students, as well as evaluating the individual contribution of the student in the group, cf. Janusheva, Tabakovska (2009)
The analysis focuses on solving the problem identified and discussion moves towards indication of the data for the identified problem;
- Some solutions that surprise are discussed (for example, solutions that some teachers are coming across the opportunity to apply their views in the actual situation, success of the implementation, etc.);
- The data obtained are being categorized in groups (for example, one group refers to possible solutions offered by the domestic literature, another group to possible solutions offered by foreign literature, a third group refers to specific activities, strategies, techniques for solving the problem identified etc.);

III - Once the data will be analyzed, the learning team can see that the data collected are sufficient to plan and implement specific strategy; may perceive that they need more data (in this case teachers re-focus the literature search for the next meeting); can be seen that it is satisfactory to use a certain strategy, technique, etc. (Suppose that in this case teachers make decisions to intervene with some strategy: How will the structured academic discussion\(^7\) be used to improve the way of assessing the group work and the contribution of the individual in the group?);

IV. Planning
- Team members provide clarification on what would be improved with the application of this strategy (it is expected, largely, this strategy (to) overcome the weaknesses of the assessment of work of the group, and to assess and evaluate the contribution of the individual in the group);
- The ways of implementation of this strategy in the classroom are discussed (whether all teachers would use the same strategy with some modifications, if certain teachers implement another type of strategy to improve group work, whether there will be comparison of results between two approaches or not, etc.);
- Assessment and data collection are planned.

\(^7\) Structured academic debate is one of the strategies or techniques for improving the assessment of group work of students, ext. Module 1, 2, 3, 4: SEA - Component for professional development of teachers from vocational schools
V. Assessment

- In the classroom the solution that is agreed upon is implemented, information about the work that should be adopted at the next meeting is gathered - recorded classes, lists of assessing group work, that is gathering evidence for assessment, the evidence is discussed thus determined whether the concrete strategy after its implementation, leads to improved success and achievements of students and the cycle starts from the beginning again: analysis - planning - assessment.

In this regard, we should mention that members of learning teams must learn to develop communicative skills in order to successfully lead the discussion, and to constantly work on their skills to manage the dynamics of the team in order to maintain focus on the problem, friendship and so on.

The model of learning teams is a high quality model for professional development of teachers. It can encompass all involved in the teaching process and it is model which approaches to solving certain problems in assessment, as well as other issues relevant to the teaching process.

Through learning teams we are getting professional and effective professional development that has all of the features of the new approach to professional development:
- Learning teams introduce comprehensive process of changes in the school;
- Learning teams include all teachers in the planning of the professional development in this way and in its implementation;
- The teams are organized type of professional development;
- Teams concentrate on cooperative and collaborative problem solving;
- Learning teams should receive adequate institutional support;
- Teams must learn to concentrate on many sources of data on the processes of learning, students outcomes, as well as data sources for the knowledge of teachers;
- Teams must learn to impose;
- Teams must continually learn to evaluate their job and so on.

This model of professional development offers a great measure of effectiveness and efficiency. Professional development in this way is realized in the working environment of teachers. Professional development of this kind requires, above all, a strong internal motivation of teachers, a desire and need for improvement in order to
improve students’ achievements and meet the requirements of the new market society. Learning teams are organized on a voluntary basis.

It remains once again to point out to the necessary institutional support that learning teams should get to learn to become effective centers of learning as well to point out to a change of awareness among teachers on ways of continuous improvement and adoption of the model of learning teams.

Action plans are the basis of the teacher professional development. It is important to include action plans of learning teams in the annual programs of schools in order to provide effective professional development and improve teaching quality in general. Action plans themselves include possible activities to be undertaken for effective professional development, the reason why these activities are undertaken, the manner in which these activities are undertaken, appropriate allocation of roles among team members regarding the activities and time frame.

1.2. Standards, Criteria and Indicators for Professional Development of the Teacher in Relation to the Assessment Through the Learning Teams

Learning teams as a form of professional training of teachers in terms of assessment, largely promote the whole work of the school. Without an effective professional development, school reforms cannot justify their purpose. The teacher must understand the reforms and to dedicate to them. Teams must learn to include standards in their work, criteria and indicators for success in their work.

Suppose that in a school the need for professional development through learning teams is recognized. In addition, we give a list of standards, criteria and indicators for the success of work of the learning teams. This list is only of an illustrative character and can be changed according to the needs of the members of learning teams, as well as the needs of the school in general and so on.

**Standard 1**: The school has established an organizational and managerial structure (body) which will coordinate activities for professional development of teachers in relation to assessment

**Criterion 1**: Maintenance of the meetings of the learning teams and planning activities in relation to assessment

**Criterion 2**: Activities that are planned for the assessment are implemented
Criterion 3: The realized activities are constantly analyzed and based on the insights (on new observations are planned

**Indicators:** Record of meetings, notes, records, observations of classes

**Standard 2:** Among the members of the learning teams team members to learn that there is coordination and cooperation

**Criterion 1:** Roles and responsibilities of among the members of learning teams team members to learn how to be effectively allocated

**Criterion 2:** Among the learning team members there is a sense of self-initiative and autonomy in work

**Criterion 3:** The work of the team learning is transparent

**Indicators:** Records of meetings, notes, records, conversations with teachers, surveys and interviews with teachers.

**Standard 3:** Learning teams have the necessary competence and professionalism to face difficulties in promoting the professional development

**Criterion 1:** The teams identify the learning difficulties

**Criterion 2:** Overcoming difficulties within the school

**Criterion 3:** Advanced anticipate ways to overcome difficulties

**Indicators:** Record of meetings, records, notes, surveys and interviews with teachers, informal conversations with teachers, specific activities undertaken for a specific problem in terms of assessing

**Standard 4:** Team learning involves all teachers in professional development activities in relation to assessment

**Criterion 1:** Teachers attend meetings organized by the team for learning

**Criterion 2:** Teachers demonstrate responsibility and interest

**Criterion 3:** Teachers develop action plans for their own professional development and related analytical and reflexive diary.

**Indicators:** Record of meetings, minutes, memos, conversations with teachers, surveys and interviews with teachers, their own action plans for their own professional development and analytical and reflexive journals.¹⁸

¹⁸ Analytical-reflexive journal is a powerful tool for organizing thoughts and to enhance the learning process. Regardless of what the technical appearance of analytical-
Standard 5: Team learning develops strategies for the sustainability of this type of vocational training

Criterion 1: The learning team recognizes the importance of professional development through learning teams

Criterion 2: The learning team with other learning teams develops plans for sustainability of this type of vocational training

Criterion 3: The learning team takes concrete steps for the sustainability of this type of vocational training

Indicators: Record of meetings, notes, minutes, very specific plans and actions

Standard 6: Teachers apply techniques and summative and formative assessment\(^9\) in everyday teaching practice.

Criterion 1: Teachers include some techniques and summative formative assessment in some subjects

Criterion 2: Teachers include techniques for formative assessment and summative almost all topics

Criterion 3: Teachers include various techniques of formative assessment in summative and more instructional content of each topic

Indicators: annual and thematic plans of teachers, the daily preparation of teachers, observing classes, talking with teachers and students, surveys and interviews with teachers and students

Standard 7: Teachers take action for improving the assessment, to improve the way they teach, and activities to improve the way students learn

reflexive diary, he always contain fields like: the most important I learned from this topic, How will I use the learned, as of today I learned will help me later in life, which concepts can relate what I learned today, this reminds me of ... For this I can say that ... aspects that must be detained, comments and suggestions, most I liked ... Do not I found it quite good ... and so on. This kind of diary is a kind of reflection. The teacher can use to work with students, their notes may greatly help to plan the assessment, to monitor what students learned and how and so on. This kind of diary teacher can use it for yourself, because the information that it receives every day students can quickly be forgotten

\(^9\) Formative assessment is any assessment which helps the student to improve their achievement, or any assessment which directs, promotes and encourages student to improve achievement. This assessment is known as the assessment of the learning process and not a specific test situation but it happens while students are still in the learning process. It is characterized by continuity and consistency of feedback
Criterion 1: Teachers evaluate the progress of students
Criterion 2: Teachers bring analytical lists for assessment of students
Criterion 3: Teachers in evaluating include effective feedback
Criterion 4: Teachers take account of the learning processes of students

Indicators: Various notes, reports, surveys and interviews with teachers and students, analytical lists for assessment, monitoring of the hour and so on.

Standard 8: Teachers involve students in self assessment and evaluation of peers
Criterion 1: Teachers involve students in activities to assess their own learning
Criterion 2: Teachers involve students in making the criteria for evaluation and self assessment
Criterion 3: Teachers ask students to reflect on their own learning and ways it can improve
Criterion 4: Teachers involve students in activities to assess learning with the students

Indicators: Lists for self-assessment and evaluating classmates, annual and thematic plans of teachers, surveys and interviews with teachers and students, the teachers’ daily lesson plans

Standard 9: Students demonstrate progress and improvement of their achievements
Criterion 1: The application of techniques for formative assessment and summative positively affect the greater number of students
Criterion 2: The application of techniques for formative and summative assessment increases the motivation of students during class
Criterion 3: The application of techniques and summative formative assessment to improve achievement of a greater number of students

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Feedback is an essential part of formative assessment. Through her teacher recognizes the effect of his teaching among students and can better plan their own work, students gain insight into their achievements, their strengths and weaknesses and based on that, alone or with the teacher, plan their learning in the direction of its further improvement
Criterion 4: The application of techniques and summative formative assessment encourages students to think about their own learning.

Indicators: surveys and interviews with teachers and students, observation time, notes, etc.

The above parameters are illustrative and may vary depending on the needs of the school, teachers and students. The purpose of establishing standards, criteria and indicators in the work of teams for learning teaching is primarily promoting the school in all segments, especially in the most sensitive part - the assessment. Studies show that the work of learning teams focused on issues related to the assessment, in a great extent improves students’ achievements, and develops awareness of their own learning processes.

Conclusion

Professional development of teachers is a continuous process that should never stop and efforts for an effective, efficient and quality professional development of teachers should be imperative of the activities of all involved in the teaching process.

Professional development of teachers in the Republic of Macedonia in the last ten years, is accomplished through numerous projects, which, to a large extent, changed the physiognomy of the educational system and beside the new techniques, strategies and activities for the movement of reflective capacities of students and to increase their active role during the lesson, have offered a range of models and approaches to professional development of teachers in all areas of the teaching process.

But despite the serious efforts of the relevant factors in the education system in everyday practice teachers are still facing difficulties in terms of lack of clear standards, criteria and indicators for assessing students’ achievements. The assessment of students’ achievements is still one of the crucial problems in the educational process, and taking into account the complexity of this problem, a serious approach is needed towards continuous training of teachers through professional development. In this sense learning teams emerge as a revolutionary opportunity to overcome this situation. With the learning teams we can set and check the appropriate criteria and parameters for assessing student achievement. Namely, through learning teams it is needed to achieve a stimulating environment to meet the
diverse needs of all participants in teaching and also get to answer the numerous questions that affect the assessment of student achievement and to overcome difficulties associated with complex processes assessment of the knowledge of students, evaluation of procedural skills, etc..

But in practice, solving problems does not stop at solving the problems related to assessment. As already mentioned, projects that deal with issues of assessing the achievements, realized to date models and offered them gave only a framework, guidelines and practical examples that often after the completion of the training cycle undisseminated remain forgotten, and in educational institutions, and in that sense as a more serious problem arises the problem of lack of motivation and non-initiative staff after completion of training for vocational training. Learning teams require a strong internal motivation and need full self-determination and pledging the resources of teachers with evident support from the management to improve their own practice, going out to meet the needs of students and improving the process of assessing the achievement of student’s complex as a specific problem. When these assumptions are taken into account, the prospects to come to an environment that is conducive to resolving issues and problems in the assessment process will be much larger.

Bibliography:


Teachers’ development in relation to evaluation …


THE INDIVIDUAL AND DIFFERENTIATED APPROACH AS A METHOD FOR IMPROVEMENT OF PRESCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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Abstract: In physical education classes with preschool children it is necessary to provide certain conditions that will enable the development of physical and spiritual expression of the children.

The individual approach in working with children is characterized like a complex of medical-pedagogical influences aimed at the choice of methods, devices, forms of working and learning, coupled with physical preparedness and level of development of children’s abilities.

For the fundamental educational system, realization of a given principle is possible on the basis of the systematization and grouping of children according to their individual abilities. It is, in fact, a differentiated approach which includes the form of learning organisation at which children are split into equal groups with the same or similar individual abilities, allowing to the teacher to apply appropriate ways of working and various grades of complexity.

This paper describes two models:

1. In the first model, the group formation is based on criteria like: children’s health, physical preparedness and moving abilities.
2. In the second model, the group formation is based on four levels of physical skills of the children (talented children, good children, average children and the group of children with retardation at physical development and/or general development.

Keywords: Individual and differentiated approach, children health, physical preparedness, motoric abilities, the level of difficulty
The individual and differentiated approach …

**Introduction**

The one of vary important question in organization and realization of modern physical activities is the question how to make children activities more efficient, how, respecting the age differences to make the content of activities more closer to children and how to increase moving activity and provide equal promotion and development of all children. The part of this answer lies certainly in study and application of both individual and differential approach in organization and implementation of activities in physical education. This kind of the work organization could fulfill and eliminate many defects of the traditional view of practices keeping in mind the fact that activities in physical education were being mostly organised and implemented by application of often-used forms of performance. There were no serious efforts to introduce and apply the individual and differentiated model of physical activities, thus enabling each child for the best development according to its individual abilities, aptitudes and preferences. The lack of awareness and enough education of teachers about possibilities and benefits of differentiated teaching, low teacher’s knowleadge to provide timely professional selection of children on the one precious way to certain categories of progression, weak ability of teacher to organize such activities and manage them, reuire:

- the innovations in organisation and realisation of physical activities of preschool child (methodology focused on the child is based and recognizes its individual abilities and needs, stimulates its independance, the creativity and development of skills);
- particularly different metodological approach (the individual and differentiated model including encouraging of children);
- meeting and the cultivation of motion and cognitive interests of children using the games;
- the methods of cooperative (active) gaining of knowleadge and practices;
- activity with partner, in small group, individual approach, etc.

The efficiency and quality of differentiated approach in the organisation and implementation of activities in physical trainings depend on proffesional competence of teachers, knowleadge and appreciation of physical development and individual characteristics and abilities of the child, a good teacher’s knowleadge and understanding of the program, as well as on the selection of appropriate contents, methods and means for working, and the type of working as well.
Thus, the modern organisation of physical activities of preschool children requires markedly higher level of teacher knowledge, more fundamental, that must be novel and more actual then those that teacher possess. The roles of teacher and child change. The teacher become carrier of reformic changes, their active creator and researcher. The teacher is organizer, demonstrator and a sole source of information. For realisation of so high expectations and creation of favourable conditions, the teacher must be professionally educated, to posses methodic abilities and to be ready for innovation acceptance and their application in practice at properly way.

The knowledge gaining about children individual characteristics and their abilities within a group is being setted as the main task in an effort to individualize and differentiate the activities. In our methodological practise this task is accepted as an important, but remained rarely applied. It is common to direct the activities according to possibilities and capabilities of the average child within each group, so that a large number of children that are above or below the average in their abilities and skills can not progress in skills, knowledge and practices, actually at all aspects of development. Therefore, there is emergency to understand and respect individual characteristics and differences of children within a group, and adjust goals, objectives, program contents, forms and methods of educational work according to age characteristics of each child.

Latest Fundamentals of pre-school and preparatory school programs in physical education are in line with contemporary trends and needs of the modern nursery. Bearing in mind that physical education is very broad and complex field, that the program contents of this subject is very rich and modern, and that this program would be successfully realized it must be adapted to individual abilities and needs of each child.

The diversity of physical activities and thematic units, tools and requisites for practice offer equal possibilities to teachers for realization of all kind of physical activities with children, hence for their organisation and realisation following directives must be be achieved:

- to adapt of physical activities contents according to children age and possibilities,
- to allow free choice of themes, motives, tools and actions in process of solving tasks of physical activities, respecting the desires and needs of children,
Individual and differentiated approach for physical education of preschool children

Working models

MODEL I (the groups should be created according to children health, physical preparedness of children and their motoric abilities)

During physical education of preschool children it is necessary to secure such appropriate conditions in which physical and spiritual development of children should be manifest fully. In the scientific literature, to the east by the west, an individual approach in working with children is characterized as a large complex of medical-pedagogical influences aimed at the choice of methods, devices, forms of working and learning coupled with the degree of physical preparedness and level of development of children’s abilities.

In this regard, in terms of fundamental education system, realization of a given principle can be based on the systematization and grouping children based on their individual abilities. It is, in the fact, a differentiated approach which includes the form of learning organisation at which the children are divided into equal groups with the same or similar individual abilities, making the teacher as possible to apply appropriate mode of working and the various methods graded by complexity. The groups can be made on the basis of further parameters:

- children health (concerning on the degree of functioning of all organs and organic systems, the ill absence, ability for adaptation for environmental conditions, high working ability).
- the degree of physical preparedness of children referring adopted moving activities and achieved degree of physical abilities.
- degree of child moving activities referring duration, intensity and content of moving.
Health of children

If the group’s formation is based on children health, then the first group should include the children with normal level of physical development and basic functions. The second group includes healthy children, but with morphological and functional deviation (sleeping disorder, slower development of some functions, disorder of proper body posture, higher predisposition for diseases). The third group includes children with chronic disease symptoms (allergic, chronic bronchitis, tonsillitis, chronic pneumonia). The necessity for individual approach application for conductivity of physical activities is particularly pronounced for these children; actually, the physical effort should be elevated gradually by professional inspection.

The gradually elevation of efforts enables the adaptation of cardio-vascular system for heart-failure increasing, improving the blood supplementation of organs that are included in the activity. Often excessive physical effort can induce the pathological processes on the heart muscle and heart valve. Hence, it is very important that effort be gradually dosed, including the exercises for loosening and the dynamic breathing exercises. During these exercises, the appearance of breathing arhythmia is possible due to more often heart muscle contractions during inhalation, and this phenomenon is functional indicator without necessity for medical treatment. It is necessary to conduct physical exercise on proper and dosed manner in order to establish the normal heart rhythm. In contrast, the child needs the medical treatment. If child continually performs physical activities, its organism will be adapted for muscle work, while the children with cardio-vascular disorders should not be treated with exercises with static efforts, the exercises with breath keeping, the exercises with fast tempo exchanging and body position. For the achievement of physical conditions and adaptation of the children organism to increased muscle efforts, it is recommended for walking on flat terrain, uniform and slow running, swimming, the shape exercises, the exercise for strengthening and relaxation of all group of muscles, the breathing exercises, playgames and the games with song and round, and dancing. During all mentioned situations the children must not be emotionally overloaded.

Diseases of upper respiratory tract has particular range among diseases of preschool children. Thus, during physical activities that are unusual for coordination, rhythmic breathing should be impairs. The
special attention should be given to breathing exercises and complex of preventive exercises; except for breathing, it should be supplemented by exercises for development of muscular shoulders and by various types of walking and running. The disease gets worse after a cold, so swimming exercises and activities (mobile game) in the air should be avoided. Exercises are useful for the muscles of the abdominal belt, pelvis, lower extremities, back, thus improving the flow of blood through the spinal cord in waist. Exercises are best done in the initial position lying on back, side, and stomach and standing on all fours. In preschool children with an unfavorable prognosis, the measures for strengthening should be individually implemented, and systematically applied in the case of mild disease in children, but just with poor methods of action. The monitoring of such children is necessary during their transition from the one to other activities. It is not allowed to give long run to children, the game with great mobility and all activities that cause great physical efforts and fatigue. This does not mean that slow game should be practiced and games that are associated with prolonged sitting, because they lead to colds and even more so health of already weakened body makes worse.

**Physical fitness (preparedness) of children**

In the system of individual work with children and in process of their physical education, children physical ability is also being studied. According to physical training children are divided into three groups: children with high, medium and low indicators of basic forms of motoric, physical and moral skills. The preventive work with these children is reduced to studying the individual characteristics of their moving progress. In children with high indicators of physical abilities, the competence tasks are focused on perfect moving skills and knowledge. Movement is expressed in new combinations, from the unusual start position, and under unusual circumstances. Some elements of acrobatics and esthetic gymnastics are available to children. All these elements can be made available to children with medium indicators of physical abilities, except that instead of the perfect technique of basic types of movement the special tasks aimed at the promotion of voluntary and physical abilities are recommended.

The tasks for general physical development going to be applied to children from the third group. For this purpose, the well known
physical exercise, moving and sport games recommended inside of program of education are intended for children. Special attention is paid for development of basic forms of movement, thus creating the conditions for implementation of moving games.

**The moving abilities of children**

According to moving abilities of children, children are very different, so they can be classified on the children with good, moderate and low mobility.

Children with high mobility are almost always observed. Their behavior is characterized by imbalances, so they come more often into conflict situations than other children.

Due to the intensiveness of movement they fail to perceive the essence of their movement and can not control his movements. From the spectrum of existing forms of movement they are more often oriented to and choose for running, jumping, climbing and avoid the movement accuracy and precision. Their movement are quick, sharp and without any goal.

Concerning methods, it is important to know that such children should not be restricted in their movements, in terms of performing peaceful movement. Their movement must be allowed but controlled. For the application of the motion activities for such children is necessery to concentrate attention on the content of movement, alertness during movement and creativity of their management, and do not limite them.

All aspects of throwing, running, moving the ball (to hit the target, to move the ball through the enclosed area), walking and running in a limited and narrowed the surface, the effect of activity between two children with one requisite (perfrm movment in order), employing children in carrying of devices and requisites are desirable.

Children characterized by moderate mobility have balanced and peaceful behavior, with uniform agility throughout the day. Approximately an half or slightly more than an half of such children belongs to this group. If the conditions in the group are good, they are independently active. Their movements are safe, clear and with a purpose. Trends them safe, clear and with a purpose. In most cases these children alone create good working conditions (place, time, games,
equipment, and requisites). The self-regulation of these children is at high levels.

Children of low mobility are characterized by passivity, weak knowledge for movement and skills, and are torpor. Thus, low moving activity in these children is a bad sign. Factors contributing to this can be the various. Such children are almost always pulling to the side, avoiding activities, fearful in communication do not trust either in themselves or in others, not like a game in which the motion is present. It is necessary to create interest in the movement at these children. Particular attention should be paid to the overall development of all forms of movement, particularly of intensive forms.

A good method of the teacher in the management of the child is the once pedagogical way that a child who is shy and insecure to enter the game, although it does not know to play, to practice even though he does not wish to exercise. The teacher creates conditions for games with the movement, trying to cause in children desire for mobility.

The teacher always starts with a showing of simple movements, with a proposal that offered activity repeat again in an area with other children, with some requisite, in another place, therefore it moves with simple motion which do not require precision and accuracy.

**MODEL II** (groups are formed according to four levels: the group of talented children, the group of better children, the group of average children and the group of children retarded with physical development and development in general).

Great opportunities in the implementation of certain contents on the physical education, except the above mentioned model are provided by the model for four levels of difficulty. Application of this model requires separation, differentiation, measurement of the physical activity, topic or thematic area and dosing of them on four levels. Since each group of children has individuals that go with faster and slower rate of development, one of the strategies of individualization is work in small groups and the introduction of various contents. The educator, in fact, offers facilities to each group of children which vary by weight, of generality, the nature, dynamic and opportunities for individual participation, so that the entire selected physical activity is differentiated by the scope and level of content complexity, method and rate of implementation.
On the basis of, primarily, assessment and testing motor skills and obtained results of this, the children are divided into four groups within their age groups according to differentiated levels of contents.

1. The talented children group, consisting of healthy children being above average motion capability and natural physical fitness, children with the faster progressing at the activities of physical education and who have the greatest motivation for exercise.

2. The better children group, made up of children with developed physical fitness and good moving abilities. Children that can easily solve the tasks of physical education.

3. The average children group, which consists of children with an average of the developed physical fitness and the average motion and that achieve their average results by exercise.

4. A group of children with retardation in physical and general development, which consists of children with poorly developed physical abilities of the practice, children that achieve poor results and have no interest and motivation for exercise.

For these groups of children it should be program tasks in the implementation of physical activities of different optimal levels of difficulty, to choose the methods and procedures in solving the tasks set. In preparation tasks, attention must be taken to enable each child movement from one group to another if the child in the process of solving tasks by its activities and operationt achieves the success provided for enter to the advanced group. Children of these groups and levels will practice the same topic in physical education, but the tasks of the same themes were differentiated to different degrees of difficulty, adjusted to the group of children with approximately the same health status, motoric abilities, physical preparedness, motivation and rate of progress. Realisation of activities is carried out in accordance with the phases of an exercise process. In the initial stage of activity the children are introduced to theme of activity, aim and objectives as well as tools used during overall activities. The exercise warming and the exercise shaping are carried out with the entire group of children. The primary, the main, part of the activity concerning the realisation and implementation of idea, includes working inside groups (the better children group, the average children group and the group of children with physical difficulties) with particular attention paid to the group of children with disabilities (if there are these children). The final part of the activity is realised with the entire group of children. Theacher
The individual and differentiated approach analyzes the complete activity with children together, so that children become aware what was happening during this activity. During discussion the teacher gets information about follow things: who is playing where, what kind of work group performed, what they learnt, what was important to children and how they feel. The teacher is required to allocate its pulses to the rhythm of the dismissal of certain phases of an exercise, to give alternately and equally instructions to all groups and demonstrate specific content, develop motoric abilities, knowledge and skills. The child motoric abilities, in this regard, determine the type and manner of physical activity from the initial stage through the preparatory stage to stage of results assessment.

**Conclusion**

Based on the above mentioned attitudes and given model analysis it can be concluded that the more quality realisation of quality of physical education content from the prechool level, the positive achievements of the development and implementation of skills into a permanent feature of each child to enable replacing of the traditional model by individual and differentiated model of working. In this sense, it is necessary to do the modernization of educational contents, to compute tasks of varying levels of difficulty, to make task more modern in the methodical and methodological senses, to apply modern equipment and requisites, professionally to train educators for application of modern working methods, to access to the continuous and permanent training of teachers and so on.

By using the models of individual and differentiated approach, the needs, desires, interests and opportunities for all children should be meet and conditions for their optimal mental and physical development should be created. The teacher should be allowed to release often-used modes of working, to develop their pedagogical creativity and meet the individual abilities of each child and thus adapt methods, actually differentiated approach to each child, to its abilities and its needs. Individualization does not mean that the teacher will work with each child individually. The central idea of individual and differentiated process in improving pre-school physical education is adaptation of the physical educationaly-teaching program to features of group.
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MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION THROUGH EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS/PARTNERSHIPS

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Abstract: A pressing problem for Romania is the local responsibility for the quality of education and school success, which requires different ways of establishing relations of cooperation between schools, families and communities. Partnerships between schools, families and communities could help teachers in their work; could enhance students' academic skills; could improve study programmes and school climate; could improve parents' educational skills; could develop parents’ leadership skills; could connect families to school and to community members; could encourage community services for the schools’ benefit; could provide services and support for families; could create a safer environment in schools.

Keywords: partnerships, schools, families, communities, multicultural education, cooperation, work together, responsibility

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A pressing problem for Romania is the local responsibility for the quality of education and school success, which requires different ways of establishing relations of cooperation between schools, families and communities. We consider that schools of all levels are organizations responsible for the formal education of children and adolescents. Schools that accomplish this responsibility more efficiently consider themselves and their students as part of the social system that includes families and communities. Research conducted in the United States and some European countries show that when schools, families and communities work together as partners, the beneficiaries are the students. Partnerships between schools, families and communities can:
- assist teachers in their work;
- enhance students' academic skills;

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- improve study programmes and school climate;
- improve parents' educational skills;
- develop parents’ leadership skills;
- connect families to school and community members;
- encourage community service for the schools’ benefit;
- provide services and support for families;
- create a safer environment in schools.

The main reason for creating such partnerships is the desire to help students succeed in school and, later, in life. When parents, students and the other community members consider each other partners in education, a community of support is created around students, which begins to function. Partnerships should be seen as an essential component in organizing school and student class. They have not been considered for a while now just simple optional activities or problems for public relations. In developed countries, especially on the North American continent, school-family-community partnerships are essential in the education of students and for their success in school. The proof is the fact that the U.S. Department of Education has an undersecretary of state for community services and partnerships and a director for educational partnerships and family involvement. Also, at each state and district level of American administrative organization there are officials in charge of community education services. In every country of the European Union there are organised formal structures for the participation of parents in the educational system. Legislation and educational reform projects of the ‘90s have defined in most countries new laws on parental participation in educational systems. School autonomy and parental participation in their management is at the heart of current debates and laws.

The institution of school is meant to implement the policies at the macro level, in a student-friendly environment, while also promoting the values upon which these policies are based. Regarding the role of the school, it can be analyzed more closely in terms of intercultural education. Batelaan thus suggests that the school's most important role is to promote dialogue, and within that function, the school must take certain missions in applying the principles of intercultural education. These refer essentially to the preparation of students to participate in dialogue, through practicing it as a pedagogical method in itself, but also as independent objective of education.
Dialogue should be applied not only in the classroom between students or between teachers and students, but also between school and community.

At the border between the average level of the educational institution and the micro level, that of the student’s thinking, there is one of the key factors in the implementation of intercultural education, namely the teacher. The teacher's role in the internalisation of the principles of intercultural education by the students is crucial, but its definition depends on the type of pedagogy assumed by the teacher. Traditional pedagogy imposes the omniscient teacher attitude, situated above the pupil. The latter remains quartered in the role of passive recipient of knowledge that can not be questioned. This type of interaction teacher - student happens especially in the traditional pedagogy of transmission. As highlighted by Anca Nedelcu, the competent teacher in terms of interculturality, the person preparing students for tomorrow, can not work with "yesterday" pedagogy.

Thus, the type of pedagogy that fits the objectives and principles of intercultural education is constructivist pedagogy. In the constructivist pedagogy, the teacher is rather a “facilitator of learning”, a “cultural mediator”, a “moderator of dialogue”. This role brings to mind the Socratic maieutics, pedagogical method by which the student is guided towards the object of learning through his own reflection, by means of dialogue and communication. Constructivist pedagogy shapes the teacher’s tasks, so that he no longer constitutes the main source of information, but only one of the resources that students can use in the learning process, to stimulate dialogue among students, encourage students’ autonomy in the sense of empowering them and to develop their critical thinking skills.

On a final analytical level of the factors involved in intercultural education, but of course a very important one, there is the student. The theory referring to intercultural education only marginally addresses this point. However, it seems important to underline the need for clarification regarding the student's role in intercultural education activities. As the teacher's role is shaped by the principles of constructivist pedagogy so, in a mirror, the role of student in the same frame is determined. He should therefore be encouraged to take an active, reflective, constructive but also critical role, in the interaction with the teacher and in the dialogue with other students. Also, in order to effectively participate in the activities of intercultural education, the
students must feel valued in their own cultural, ethnic and religious identity. It is clear that if the student is subjected to discriminatory attitudes, his response to the reflection on his own culture can give adverse results, because of inferiority complexes internalised under the suffered discrimination.

Final factors that may crucially intervene in intercultural education are the parents. They play a decisive role in generating beliefs and attitudes in children, and as such can influence - positively or negatively – the skills that the student acquires in intercultural education courses. The stereotypes of parents are transmitted to children, and may prove difficult to remove if, once destroyed in intercultural education courses, they are restored in the family. An internal conflict may occur then in the student who receives one set of guidelines and criteria for assessment of the surrounding reality at home, but school and intercultural education courses try to uproot precisely these images and stereotypes received. Then, the role of intercultural education is made much more difficult, and it becomes apparent that the processes of intercultural education are strongly influenced by the social environment in which they occur.

In fact, all the factors reviewed in this paragraph are subject to the influences of the social environment to which they belong. It is indeed hard to imagine an effective intercultural education, which attains its goals, in a society which is missing - or in which we rarely find - precisely the values which sustain it.

Conceptual analysis of the term multicultural education is based on the following three terms: multiculturalism, interculturality, intercultural education.

a) multiculturalism reflects the natural state of society, which is diverse, multilingual, multiethnic, and multi-religious. This concept emphasizes the comparative dimension, the coexistence of different cultures which manifest themselves in a society. Representatives of different cultures come into contact by chance or when necessary. The tolerance of groups towards one another is passive. Each is self-centred; others may be regarded as a threat to group identity. Cultures coexist without conflict, but also without any consistent relationship and cooperation.

b) Interculturality emphasizes the interactive dimension of cultural, ethnic, religious groups who live in the same space, maintain open relationships of interaction, exchange and mutual recognition. This
brings along a superior understanding of their own culture in light of the different reference systems.

c) Intercultural education could be, and is, close from a variety of perspectives, as follows:

1. C. Cucos specifies, globally, that intercultural education aims at a pedagogical approach of cultural differences, strategy through which spiritual and gender specificities are taken into account, avoiding, as much as possible, the risks arising from unequal changes between cultures or, worse still, the trend of atomization of cultures. Therefore, intercultural education aims at the development of education for all, in the spirit of recognition of the differences within the same society.

2. The same author nuances these views on the existence of cultural education, arguing that this education turns into a dialectical project of structuring an open cultural identity, aiming to:
   - guide young people to assimilate a culture from an anthropological perspective;
   - understanding the others’ point of view, through smart-relativistic positioning;
   - legitimating cultural identity, preventing sacralisation, protection of trade, helping without blame personalistic positioning;
   - ensuring respect for differences, but within a system of mutual attitudes.

3. In C. Bennett’ opinion intercultural education is an approach to the teaching-learning process based on democratic values and beliefs, which attempts to promote cultural pluralism in the context of a diverse society and an interdependent world. Analysis of this type of education includes a four corner approach: intercultural movement; intercultural curriculum; the intercultural education process and intercultural commitment.

4. A necessary national clarification is introduced by Jennifer Kerzil si Genevieve Vinsonneau when they conclude that intercultural education is not an educational discipline, but the impregnation of a cultural philosophy throughout school life.

5. Indicating the beneficiaries of this approach, P. Dasen shows that intercultural education addresses all students, native or immigrant, and seeks to raise awareness for respecting diversity, tolerance and solidarity. This choice is determinant in preparing future citizens for a harmonious life in a multicultural society. Schools that implement the principles of interculturality will actually benefit from the presence of
students with different backgrounds, to put to value their cultures of origin and at the same time, raise the awareness of others towards cultural diversity, but avoiding stereotypes or presenting the cultures in a static way.

6. Noting the convergence of previous arguments, we agree with M. Rey’s argument that intercultural education is the compulsory way for human rights education, which aims to overcome ethnocentrism.

7. According to the conception of J. Banks, intercultural education requires at least three angles of approach:
   a) an idea - that all students, regardless of ethnicity and culture, should enjoy equal opportunities to learn;
   b) an educational reform movement, designed to cause major changes in school and other educational institutions;
   c) a continuously ongoing process, which includes ideas like equity and constant cultural concern for the stimulation of academic achievement.

8. The concept’s most applied specification is the one that makes intercultural education an ensemble of appropriate management activities of cultural diversity in school.
Given the multitude of perspectives opened earlier, we consider much more useful to our approach that, instead of a series of partial conclusions, we should present the view of M. Page on the seven complementary perspectives on intercultural education, option which can compensate successfully for any personal attempt:
   1) countervailing perspectives, which aim “to ensure the best chance of school success for minority students who constitute a risk clientele from linguistic and socio-economic reasons”. In school practice, it is materialized in the development of integration and adaptation classes;
   2) culture knowledge perspectives, which supposes the development of harmonious relations between members of different ethnic groups;
   3) hetero-centrist perspective, regarding the reconstruction of the knowledge gained through science and culture, by destroying stereotypes about the supremacy of certain cultures;
   4) isolationist perspective, which targets “valuing minority languages and cultures in school through separate activities”;
   5) antiracist perspective, which has as objective “promoting education for the criticism of discrimination in institutions and society”;
6) civic education perspective, which promotes a practical education for human rights and the values of democracy;

7) cooperation perspective, which seeks “to promote cooperation in education between heterogeneous school groups, focused on the equalization of statuses”.

The concept of culture actually involves the coexistence of several cultures, and should therefore be understood in terms of relativism, as cultural tendency. Cultural relativism strengthens the idea of equality of different cultures in terms of intrinsic value, and discourages any attempt to proclaim a particular culture as superior or inferior to others. The values, norms, symbols of a culture should be evaluated in their context and functionality, and not according to the criteria of another culture. The coexistence of different cultures in the same area gave rise to a set of related concepts: multicultural, intercultural, as well as multiculturalism, interculturality. Despite a superficial understanding which could conceive the two terms as synonymous, the binomial concepts multicultural / intercultural show some key differences. Thus, “multicultural” is a descriptive term relating to a state of fact, to the coexistence of several groups in the same society. The concept tends to highlight the difference or even clear separation between cultures and groups perceived as different, and it is used primarily in post-colonial societies (Great Britain, The Netherlands), where not infrequently there is the case of parallel coexistence of ethnic groups, without a true relationship to one another. By contrast, the concept of “intercultural” focuses on the interaction of groups perceived as distinct in society, referring rather to a dynamic process of exchange, dialogue, negotiation between the groups, as well as of identification of a common language and a common space in which to carry out communication. The cultural character of a fact is precisely the emphasis on the mutual relationship between the constitutive elements of exchanges.

Accepting the diversity of cultures leads to accepting the idea of coexistence of different cultures, to the adoption of multiculturalism as diversity management policy. The term, equivalent to cultural, political, religious, etc. pluralism, predominates in the Anglo-Saxon countries, where the emphasis
falls on acknowledging the existence of several ethnic groups, as national policy. Beyond the political aspect of acknowledging the coexistence of multiple ethnic groups within the same state entity, multiculturalism stops only briefly on the way of interaction between these groups, as well as on the permeability of the groups in mutual influences.

Consciousness of the possession of a certain culture involves, at least indirectly, reporting to a different culture from which the individual delimits himself. From this perspective, there can only be intercultural awareness, namely of the fact that a culture is perceived as being different in relation to another. Thus, the concept of “interculturality” refers to the space between two or more cultures, which is essentially a dynamic one, constantly subject to negotiation processes between two groups perceived as belonging to different cultures. Intercultural communication arises in this space, a dialogue between subjectivities, an identity negotiation, an interaction between individuals and groups perceived as culturally different.

The focus on the dynamic nature of intercultural communication processes, on the continuous construction and reconstruction side, favours a dynamic conception of culture as defined in the above. When identity negotiation and own culture building processes became apparent, among others by reference to other cultural entities, it is impossible to perceive culture as a rigid and static block. On the contrary, it becomes malleable, a continuous flow of influences in perpetual restructuring and reinterpretation. Beyond the descriptive nature of the definition of interculturality, the normative character of the concept is foreseen, which assumes that a better understanding between individuals of apparently different groups is possible and desirable. Intercultural approach materialises primarily through education, as an antidote to racism, xenophobia, exclusion and marginalization.

As Micheline Rey argues, the prefix inter- suggests a series of dynamic and reciprocal processes: exchanges, interaction, reciprocity, removal of barriers and solidarity among groups.
EDUCATIONAL PROJECT
Multicultural education
„DEAR ARE TO ME THE PEOPLE IN MY VILLAGE”

MOTTO:
“Ethnography is simply proof that the forms and objects of antiquity have been preserved to date, making proof of continuity, adaptation and influence of a nation over another.”
(Aurel Filimon)

Argument:
In a village in Alba county Romanians, Hungarians, Rromani live together. In the nursery school children are enrolled from these three nationalities, some families being mixed. In general, Rromani families integrated themselves into village life by taking some of the traditions and customs of the Romanians, others of the Hungarians, but they do not represent a separate community. However, a small part of the Rromani customs and traditions is preserved even today. In the nursery school the Hungarian section has a separate group, performing their activity in the mother tongue. Rromani children are integrated in general, in the groups of the Romanian section. Desiring to facilitate a better understanding among the children, but also to familiarize them with the traditions and customs of each ethnic group, we proposed ourselves to realise this educational project. The project will carry out extra-curricular activities to promote the traditions of the village, in the form of meetings of all children in the nursery school. Children are eager to engage in such activities in which to highlight their artistic talent. So they feel important, knowing that they can contribute to the preservation and appreciation of these national treasures.

Project goal: Promoting cultural values specific to co-inhabiting nationalities, developing children's interest for local customs and traditions.

General objectives:
1. Developing the knowledge and understanding of ethno-cultural traditions and customs of the area.
2. Presenting traditional literary texts, songs and dances, specific to the village.
3. Developing artistic and aesthetic sense.
4. Developing the recognition, acceptance and respect of diversity.

PERIOD: December 2009 – April 2010
**Target group:**
Direct beneficiaries: preschool children and teachers involved in the project;
Indirect beneficiaries: parents, local community.

**Resources:**
- human: preschool children, teachers, parents, guests
- materials: folk costumes, handicraft objects, beads, computer, printer, photo camera
- financial: self-financing

**Project content:**
* Who are we and what do we desire to accomplish?
* Grandparents’ story, my story…
* Song and wear are dear to me!
* I am proud that I can dance!
* Together on stage!

**Expected results:**
- Organising shows
- Making an album with pictures of the activities
- Developing a positive attitude towards children from a different ethnic group.

**Examples of activities:**

TITLE OF ACTIVITY: My story, Grandparents’ story
TYPE OF ACTIVITY: Presenting literary folkloric texts
PERIOD: January 2010
PLACE: classroom
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 79 preschool children, 60 parents and grandparents, local community
BENEFICIARIES: preschool children, parents, teachers
MATERIALS: books, leaflets, computer, illustrated layouts.
MEANS OF EVALUATION: role-play, communication exercises, oral feedback
DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY: This activity aims to familiarize participants with the elements that make up folkloric literary text (use of regionalisms, archaisms). Working groups will present the following literary texts:
Romanian Group: „Pipelca”, „Fata săracului cea isteată” (“The poor peasant’s smart daughter”), „Basmul cu soarele şi luna” (“The story of the Sun and Moon”)

Hungarian Group: „Crăiasa cu păr de aur” (“The princess with golden hair”), „Țăranul și vulpea” (“The peasant and the fox”), „Vulpea și cașcavalul” (“The fox and the cheese”)

Rromani Group: „Cei doi frați cu părul de aur” (“The two brothers with golden hair”), „Țiganca și privighetoarea” (“The gipsy and the nightingale”), „Hai-Hai”

**ACTIVITY**
**TITLE OF ACTIVITY:** Song and wear are dear to me!
**TYPE OF ACTIVITY:** Performing traditional songs
**PERIOD:** February 2010
**PLACE:** classroom
**NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:** 79 preschool children, 60 parents and grandparents, local community
**BENEFICIARIES:** preschool children, parents, teachers
**MATERIALS:** computer, D.V.D., C.D., folk costumes, handicraft objects
**MEANS OF EVALUATION:** oral feedback
**DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY:** During this activity the participants will hear and recognize Romanian, Hungarian and Rromani treasured folk songs. At the same time each group will present specific folk costumes for both women and men. Thus the following songs will be learnt and then performed:

Romanian Group: „Bade, pălărie nouă” (“New hat”), „Înflorit-a ruguțu”

Hungarian Group: „Az a szep, az a szep” (The pretty one), „Zsebkondom negy sarka” (Cornered handkerchief)

Rromani Group: „Șatra” (“Tribe”), „Florăresele” (“Flower girls”)

**ACTIVITY**
**TITLE OF ACTIVITY:** I am proud that I can dance!
**TYPE OF ACTIVITY:** Learning folkloric dances
**PERIOD:** March 2010
**PLACE:** classroom
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 79 preschool children, 60 parents and grandparents, local community
BENEFICIARIES: preschool children, parents, teachers
MATERIALS: folk costumes, handicraft objects, computer, D.V.D., C.D.
MEANS OF EVALUATION: oral feedback
DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY: Through this activity we aim to familiarize the participants with a series of ethnic-specific folk dances, as follows:
   Romanian Group: ”Hațegana Dance”, “Alunelul”, “Dance of the girls from Căpâlna”
   Hungarian Group: “Csardas”, “Hungarian men dance”
   Rromani Group: “Gipsy dance”

ACTIVITY
TITLE OF ACTIVITY: Together on stage!
TYPE OF ACTIVITY: show
PERIOD: April 2010
PLACE: classroom
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 79 preschool children, 60 parents and grandparents, local community
BENEFICIARIES: preschool children, parents, teachers
MATERIALS: folk costumes, handicraft objects, decoration materials, computer, D.V.D., digital photo camera, making an album with pictures of the activities during the project
MEANS OF EVALUATION: oral feedback, analysis of the participants’ behaviour during the project, making an album with pictures of the activities during the project
DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY: Through this activity we aim to make a performance in which all nursery school children, parents, grandparents, community can participate. The show will have the format of a meeting between ethnic groups and will include as main moments: stories and fairy tales dramatizations, then the presentation of folk songs and dances learned during the project. The photo album containing representative photographs will be completed. The project coordinator will present the final report on the entire activity.
Multicultural education through educational projects/partnerships

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Trif, L., (2008), Pedagogia învățământului preșcolar și primar. Timișoara: Eurostampa
Abstract: Educational structure in the sense of classes, subjects and lessons has existed as a pedagogical concept for more than 350 years, i.e. since Jan Komensky. The structure of such a system has been disputed by many due to an elementary question: what will achieve through schooling? Nowadays, when information as a fact is completely relativized due to its fast changeability, a thought is imposed that education according to information is not a primary task of schooling, it is rather education of how to get to information, how to evaluate and use it. A modern man does not experience his own world and it is obvious that he needs a different model of education putting an emphasis on affective experience of what he has learnt.

Keywords: arts, school, pedagogic concept, pluralism.

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The first Waldorf’s school was founded by Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) in 1919 in Stuttgart. It was established after the factory of cigarettes Waldorf-Astoria (after which the pedagogy was named) had been handed over to its workers with the help of the factory owner Emil Molt who provided his own means for the children of factory workers.

Around 1980 Mr Steiner participated in the publication of a writing of Johan Wolfgang von Goethe and in 1893 he published “The Basic Guidelines of Cognitive Theory on Goethe’s Worldview”. Goethe was a versatile researcher of nature, arts and philosophy who continued his studies dealing with colours and light according to esoteric-physical
Pluralist approach to art teaching from the angle of Waldorf’s School theories of Isaac Newton. Esotery strives for a comprehensive unification of human cognitive abilities through what we would nowadays call interdisciplinary correlation: numbers are added on sounds, colours on numbers, movements on colours, etc. Using formulas values are harmonized in search for physical and spiritual cosmos, gnostic insight into interconnectedness of both worlds – material and spiritual. Steiner was well familiar with all this and it can be seen according to his afterword to Goethe’s “Fairytale on the Green Snake and Beautiful Lily”. Speaking about Goethe’s friend Schiller, in the text “Goethe’s Spirituality and its Expression in the Fairytale on the Green Snake and Beautiful Lily” Steiner states his “Letters upon aesthetic education of man” dating from 1794, in which Schiller wants to make a bridge connecting a man of everyday reality with an ideal man, trying to make a difference between sensual (body) and metaphysical (reason) nature. “Free personality would be a man who in his sensuality reflects spirituality of reason and who in his reason reads elementary power of passion (Steiner, 2003). Can human soul be liberated from the bias created by sensual perceptions, so that he could grasp the metaphysical world through purely spiritual perception? There is a power whose task is fulfilled on the way of the soul to the condition of free personality; if this state was reached, the power would lose its importance and would have to be sacrificed; it would suspend its action. Goethe’s spirituality was absorbed by this power, as it was pointed out by Steiner. The word “way” is of special importance; Steiner uses it in alchemic manner of Grand Way, meaning a research way of life an individual chooses to grasp the Soul of the World (cosmos, universal order, to put it in Pythagoras’s terms). Referring to this is not arbitrarily, as it was confirmed by Steiner’s (it seems quite correct) interpretation of the characters of three kings of copper, silver and gold in the fairytale “In a man who develops free personality, three spiritual powers work together: will (copper), sensuality (silver) and cognition (gold)” (Steiner, 2003).

In arts a man connects sensual with metaphysical and through arts he proves himself to be a free creative soul. The river in the fairytale separates the two words; the world of freedom of the metaphysical and the world of necessity of the sensual. Goethe used to repeat a saying of an old mystic: “If an eye was not sunny, it would never be able to see the Sun; if there was not strength of the God itself in all of us, it would never be possible for the divine to bring us to
exhilaration.” The analogy was used by Goethe as a key of his theory of colours. Understanding the relations in material world, and thus the relations between colours, since “colours are sufferings of light” we shall grasp the relations in spiritual world, having in mind the antique analogy of Hermes Trismegistos: “that which is above is like that which is below and that which is below is like that which is above”.

Such an approach is similar to the one of Theosophical society whose foundations were established by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky in New York in 1875. Blavatsky is the first person from the West who had an access to Tibet, its temples and heritage. Having spent seven years there she is coming back with the teaching of the “Voice of Silence” through which she tries to renew ancient knowledge. It is probable that Steiner owes here a lot, although the literature does not state that. It is reflected in Steiner’s concept of tripartite structure of a man: a body (sensual), a soul (connection) and a spirit (metaphysical). There is another interesting issue regarding Steiner and Goethe: in his work “Theory of colours” Goethe discusses with Newton’s objectivism of light and insists on the standpoint that a colour is a subjective experience of an individual. This brings him to a discovery and dealing with the psychology of perception, pointing to the laws of successive contrast, as well as associative symbolism of colours. Steiner will refer emphasize this, taking into account the colours to surround children at various age.

As far back into the history as in 17th century, it was thought that insects, worms as well as fish can develop in sludge. Francesco Redi (1627-1697) was the first to establish a law according to which something live can arise out only from life. The statement was a forerunner of another law: social-spiritual arises out of social-spiritual. Steiner uses it to explain reincarnation, return for spiritual world. Having lived in spiritual world in different forms of existence, a person is searching for parental couple (Steiner, 2003). This is similar to Tibetan Bardo-Thödol and “The Book of the Dead” (Evans-Wentz, 1998), confirming theosophical influence. Every man brings with himself from his former life certain features of his present life, the inner core of his/her being. This would be individuality in real terms and it would be opposed to heritage.

A temper is mediation, what has been inserted in between genetic lineage and our individuality, just like the blue and the yellow are united in green colour (Steiner, 2003). A man as a whole consists of
a physical body, ethereal body, astral body and Self (Steiner, 2003). Ethereal body is the body of glands, a fighter against the decomposition of physical body, visible only to the eyes of spirits; like astral body, the body of nerves is responsible for senses and biases. The most sublime part of a man is the Self, the bloodstream, the background of consciousness. Tempers appear in the interaction of these elements. When a man is predominated by the powers of the Self, choleric temper is created; if the powers of astral body prevail, sanguine temper appears; ethereal conditions phlegmatic temper, while melancholic temper is conditioned by physical body. Thinking is linked with nerve-sensual composition, feelings with rhythmic composition and wish with limbs. Astral body consists of colour motion pictures. A man is born with physical body. Having changed his teeth, at the age of seven, physical body is developed in ethereal body; after the age of fourteen a man gets astral body, and after the age of twenty-one, a man becomes a “Self”. It is in the management and guidance of tempers where the task of life practice, as well as teaching practice is.

Continuing the above mentioned influences, Steiner’s intention was to unite arts, science and religion. Pre-religiousness of a human being appeared from the need for comprehensive order. For the higher, structural order more refined feelings were necessary, since they are the door through which the world enters a man. Steiner talks about twelve senses: extern senses: the sense of self, thinking sense, sense for words and hearing sense; extern-inner senses: the sense for heat, eye-sight, the senses of smell and taste; inner-senses: the sense of balance, movement, the sense of life and the sense of touch; these senses do not want to live in art reserves, they want to be nurtured and fed every day. Sense training is achieved through manual and artistic work.

The beginning of every school day is dedicated to the same subjects for a longer period of time (three to four weeks); it is the so called epoch. Every day the contents of an epoch are dealt with in the first two lessons in the duration of 100 minutes; it is the so called “main” teaching. Epochs last for several weeks. Only twice a year the epoch deal with the same subject, so that the children have the time to forget the contents in order to encounter again what has long ago been forgotten. This is a good way of work, having in mind that the acquisition of contents as a whole provides an individual with a possibility to live with the acquired information, to internalize it affectively. Work rhythm established in such a way is empowered by
the last two lessons dedicated to practical (manual) and art activities at daily basis. In lower school grades, each subject teaching is permeated by painting, drawing, modelling, playing musical instrument, role-play and drama activities.

Art teaching involves drawing, painting, modelling and building. Related activities are handiwork and craftwork, which are close to design. This is how each student sooner or later gets to his important experience: each material has its own will and it should be respected. Kitsch is created through imitation of a material, for example, plastics can be honed like crystal, plaster imitating marble, etc. At the same time the level of social education is essential in order to achieve the desired: “to achieve something we do not need only dedicated experts – we also enough laymen who have such an interest in an idea that they are willing to bear all the costs related to the realization of the idea. Through artistically oriented teaching of a craft a school can give significant contribution to creating a new view on social effects of art” (Carlgren, 1990).

For art teaching methodology itself some other sound insights are also important. For example, there are not contour lines in nature, there are only colours encountering one another and coloured areas touching one another; furthermore, a line is not an imitation of shapes from nature, it is rather that lines are experienced as movements put down on paper. As a consequence, within the first epoch of art teaching in the first grade drawing of forms (shapes) begins with straight and curved lines, so that children run in circles or spirals and draw these shapes in their sketchbooks. Forms are an epoch carried out as teaching of drawing which develops in the following way: in the first grade the students draw horizontal, vertical and diagonal lines, sharp and blunt angles, multiangular forms, waves and curves. In the second grade the students draw mirror symmetries, i.e. a teacher can give half of a drawing on a table and the students should make a whole image on papers. In the third grade forms suitable for given shapes and balances are requested. In the fourth grade rhythms are complicated into ornaments and interwoven motives.

Within Waldorf pedagogy attention is paid to the so called Jung’s archetype images (Jung, 1964). The task of Waldorf pedagogy is the following: “We have to educate in such a way that we remove physical and spiritual obstacles for all that descends into the world from one real world order in any period of time, in order to create a setting
Pluralist approach to art teaching from the angle of Waldorf’s School

for the educated according to which (s)he completely liberated can enter life.” This is connecting sensual with above-sensual world, having in mind that it is necessary to provide a child with images through fairytales and myths. In a word, great merit of the Waldorf pedagogy is an appropriate evaluation of art contents and their liberating and uniting possibilities in education of a child as a whole.

Nevertheless, along with all the mentioned positive features of using artistic contents in Waldorf education, it seems that some points are noticed to be subjected to criticism. In regard to preschool age (first seven years of life) there are certain limitations introduced into art teaching not supported by artistic theory and practice. For example, the materials a small child plays with have to have geometrical pre-shapes: circle, rectangle, triangle, etc. The choice of the shapes seems pretty arbitrarily and without support. Equally unjustified seems the limitation in the colours of materials to be used: they have to be only of basic colours (red, blue and yellow). Steiner’s explanation of the need for these colours and shapes is that they have to be such so that children’s soul, according to certain impulses acquired before birth, can perceive them through memory. However, this statement seems rather arbitrary.

Painting is based on three basic colours; however, only one colour is given to a child at the beginning, to mix it with others only at later stages. This is justified by the standpoint that a child should adopt pure colours at first and that derived colours should be adopted subsequently. This is beyond dispute, but it is not clear why a child should be protected from the black colour which could be used to reach light range. Furthermore, the space is also coloured according to the instructions given by Rudolf Steiner: “What prevails in a kindergarten is the colour of peach which is transparently applied on a wall, so that the wall could “live””. It is not clear why it should be peach colour and not any other colour, or what does it mean that a wall “lives” (breathes?). This becomes clearer at school; here the wall colours are also established according to age, i.e. grade. In the first grade the wall colour is powerful red (probably intensive, bright, pure); from the fourth grade on the walls are in gentle red tones (rather ambiguous terminology, having in mind that the term of “gentle” colour is not theoretically determined, in a word, it does not mean anything), to be followed by orange colour, increasingly more and more mixed with yellow colour, to become completely yellow in the seventh grade. In the eight grade the wall colour changes to green and in the ninth and tenth grade it is blue,
while in the eleventh and twelfth grade the walls become purple. We are dealing with a spectral range here probably grounded on human energetic whirls: Steiner’s explanation is that in such a way children follow their progress, which certainly is not the reason why they should not follow it according to any other colours.

Furthermore, the problem of independent colour choice continues at school. Children do not use black colour until seventh grade, when they turn exclusively to black and white techniques. They will encounter colours in the tenth grade again; as a consequence, a question is raised: why should they abstain from enjoying colours for three years? Namely, drawing as artistic field does not exist until seventh grade; until fifth grade it is substituted by drawing of forms and after the fifth grade it is replaced by drawing of geometrical forms. The forms themselves at some point become too firm and strict, and the demand for communication through suitable forms will soon turn into patterns.

The rules of harmony are made so banal and it is often simply enough to offer a curve line as a response to a curve line, to provide an angle as a response to an angle, or to provide a cold colour as a response to a cold colour or a warm colour as a reaction to a warm colour. Furthermore, it is suggested to children when to use which colour: it is true that horizontal and vertical moves may seem static and therefore even cold maybe, while diagonal and broken line seem dynamic and therefore even warm maybe, but it is far from a rule or final truth. It is good when teachers suggest filling the space between moves with colours in order to perceive a whole, but of what setting. The exercises of shapes are as a rule done without a format; it is rather that a whole is understood as a surface of a sketchbook paper; however it is a casual frame that sometimes divides several form sketches. In this way children do not understand composing; instead, drawing becomes a semantic exercise of distribution of signs according to a rigid key.

The fact that all the children use the same material, i.e. block-pastels in a similar way does not help. Visitors casually viewing the exhibitions of Waldorf schools or the works of Waldorf’s students often ask the following question: why do all these paintings look alike? (Calgren, 1990). This can be noticed according to the following example: an excited child should be surrounded by red or red-yellow colours and clothes should be done for him in the same colours, while a weak child should be surrounded by blue and blue-green colours. (It
seems that Rudolf Steiner thinks of sanguine and choleric children, on one, and melancholic and phlegmatic children, on the other hand.

Steiner used to talk about a “school for senses”. In accordance with it, impressions should be harmonized; if something looks like a tree, it should be a tree when we touch it. As a consequence, he reaches another extreme: parents of children who attend a Waldorf school should be obliged that they will give up using the media, especially television, since television shows false images. Comic books are criticized with the same reason. However, how should we accept figuration in visual art expression? According to the same argument it also belongs to false images, which is known since the iconoclastic episode of Byzantine art in 6th century, when it was forbidden to figuratively show a saint (icons). Steiner’s example goes further into extreme: “Until a child can stand up, he or she should not be given animal shapes not to disrupt the principle of human upright walk through the imitation of animals”. This does not need further comment.

**Conclusion:**

The terms visual art and artistic are often non-critically used in Waldorf’s pedagogy. We would refer to the following quotation: “In the end of the eight and twelfth grade the pupils show great class recitals of significant artistic value” which devalues the sentence, having in mind that children ARE NOT artists, just like they are not scientists. However, the feature of art is a sensitive balance in the dichotomy between freedom and limitedness by rules, due to which it arises out of understanding the world of an individual and of a time. The balance is significantly disrupted by directive guidance in a way this pedagogy has stated it.

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THE MENTORS’ PERCEPTION ON THE TEACHING PRACTICE.
A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

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Abstract: This article is based on a qualitative research on students’ teaching practice. The focus group method has been used with the objective of capturing the perception of mentors for the teaching practice; of identifying their opinions on the organization and the ongoing of teaching practice and issues regarding the design, organization, conduct and evaluation of teaching practice. The instrument used was a semi-structured interview guide with 13 open questions.

Keywords: mentor, teaching practice, focus group

1. Introduction
The concept of "mentorship" is as old as education itself and represents the activity carried out by a mentor with the students in an educational institution for the benefit of the latter in order to enhance their self-confidence, during teaching practice, and, according to the latest theories, even during the exam for becoming a full teacher. Mentoring is the activity performed by specialists with expertise and efficiency in educational praxis, specifically chosen to guide the teaching practice for students in secondary schools. Mentorship is not new, it is not a modernism, it is the re-settlement on different coordinates of what the educational community worldwide referred to until yesterday as the: "leadership" of pedagogical practice by methodical experts.

The document entitled "Training teachers - Research Report" (MEN, 2000), recommends "the reconsideration of the period of internship as a continuation of the teaching practice, the initial training
thus ending with the definitive exam" for all teachers. The same document suggests that this period should be organized and conducted under the guidance of mentors. The position of “mentor” is thus introduced in the organization and supervising of teaching practice, as being occupied by a person with postgraduate training and selected based on relevant criteria (complex methodological and practical training). In the complex process of developing their teaching experience, the students receive advice and assistance from the mentors and teaching practice coordinators.

In addition to a theoretical training, it is important for practitioner students to have a practical preparation. Moreover, the two aspects should be integrated. Thus, students must go to schools to observe and practice teaching. For this part of their training to be effective, the students are to be guided by trained mentors, who are chosen from more experienced teachers. For that purpose, mentors need to know and understand how their students are trained by the didactics trainers for teaching practice and didactics trainers must know and understand how practitioners work with their mentors during teaching practice. Mentorship is trying to balance, to increase the practical aspect of initial training, through the contribution of specialist teachers-mentors who can assist with their experience (methodical, extracurricular and general education) and who have a say in the coordination of teaching practice, preparation and analysis of lessons and student assessment, in partnership with the didactics specialists from the university.

The practitioners are the college students taking a teaching practice internship in a primary or secondary institution of application. As for the mentors, performance descriptors can be offered for the practitioner students. Thus, the students have an appropriate scientific language, the ability to communicate in a group, have an agreeable presence, practice active listening both with the mentors and their students, respectively, with co-practice colleagues, develop their teaching design capability, being directed in their enterprise, apply participatory strategies that support their activities, propose alternative methods for students’ assessment, make relevant and supported assessments over assisted lessons, emphasizing the positive aspects first, self-evaluate, etc.
2. Method
The focus group method was used in order to identify the facts regarding the perception of teaching practice mentors on issues such as: planning, organizing, conducting and evaluating teaching practice activities. The main purpose of the focus group is to capture the attitudes, emotions, beliefs, experiences and reactions of the participants in a way that would not be possible through other methods such as observation, individual interview or questionnaire (Gibbs, 1997). The tool used to accomplish the focus groups was the Interview guide for mentors. These are openly seeking to hear participants’ opinions on the mentoring of students in pedagogical practice. The number of questions requiring answers is optimal – 13 questions chosen and clearly stated in advance.

Teaching practice mentors who participated in the focus group were 12 and they were mentors in the schools of application recommended by the County School Inspectorate, mentors under whose guidance students of the University "Aurel Vlaicu" of Arad carry out their teaching practice.

3. Results
The purpose of this research was to try to get an insight on the conduct of teaching practice from the mentors’ perspective, hoping to highlight both the issues that they face in organizing these activities and also note any positive aspects. The selected focus group as a tool was aimed at the general issues through which we sought to discover the importance of mentors and the place of practical training in teacher training.

The study began with a general question: "What does the word mentoring mean to you?" on which we wanted an answer that reflected the mentors’ vision on this activity, on the goals and importance of mentoring. Most of the respondents understood the question as a test of their knowledge, providing a definition of the term and not their own perception and understanding of the term. There were also answers on this question which were within our expectations, at least with regard to the wording used. We could see from the vision of some of the participants a trend likely to worry us. Thus, a part of the mentors do not see the teaching practice period as a way of enhancing the theoretical knowledge acquired during years of study, of implementation of this stock of information, but rather as a period in which the student can
"copy" or imitate the mentor’s way of teaching. In our opinion the mentors should not be limited to this role. Otherwise, theoretical training would have only symbolic value as long as the learnt aspects will not be implemented in practice and the experienced teachers’ practices will only be copied. In addition, this approach has the disadvantage that mentors generally do not benefit, as we shall see further, from a selection or a specific training for this activity.

The next question was also trying to shape their own vision on the mentoring activity, being in close relation with the first. Here again all the answers were on the same trend as in the case of the first question, meaning responses that give a quantification of the proportion of the advantages and disadvantages for the teacher who "choose" to carry out this activity. But it is pleasing that this time we had results that made us conclude that some mentors have an accurate vision and perception on the mentoring activity. Thus, some respondents indicated that this activity consists mainly of involvement and responsibility. Indeed, it is necessary for the mentors to be involved in what they do, to develop a spirit of responsibility on the effects of their work and this may not be possible in the absence of specialized training for this profession. We also received responses indicating that a term that can be used to define the mentoring for some people in the group is "guidance". We appreciate this position, in contrast to some answers to the previous question, where the teaching practice was seen as an act of imitation by the practitioner students. In the end, we would like to point out that some people see the involvement and responsibility in close connection with a continuous training. We consider this view as the correct one and the one to be encouraged, because with the lack of continuous training for mentors there is a risk of theoretical knowledge to be overtaken by recent discoveries in this field, leading to a situation in which students’ knowledge is more updated than that of the mentors, which is unacceptable.

The third question of the focus group aimed at creating the image regarding the ways in which teaching practice mentors have participated in specific training in order to carry out this activity. Unfortunately, the answers were the ones that we expected, namely that people in the working group did not receive any special training to become mentors. Most of them recalled training courses offered by the House of Teachers, but none of these courses are exclusively focused on
the particularities and specific organization, implementation and teaching practice guidance.

Naturally, the following question concerned the selection of mentors. Their answer was simple, because the interviewed mentors were chosen for this activity by direct selection on a proposal from the specialty inspector, provided that they hold a second degree in teaching. In our opinion, this method of selection allows a large dose of subjectivity, and the so-called criterion of professional experience can be a “double-edged sword” if the extensive experience is not backed by continuous and advanced training for the future mentors.

The next question in the focus group was aimed at obtaining an image of the mentor-student collaboration during teaching practice. Without being specifically highlighted, some responses show a tendency of “collaboration” from positions of authority from the mentors, with some respondents seeing collaboration strictly as a monitoring activity and evaluation of students. Fortunately, these answers were found to be isolated. Most people see collaboration with the students as the base of understanding and mutual respect. Indeed, this must be the starting point of any effective collaboration in the teaching practice. Another feature of collaboration in the view of participants is reliability. We agree with them and we would also add seriousness that must come from both the students and the mentors.

A negative effect of the lack of specialized training for teachers who wish to conduct a teaching practice mentor activity was also found partially in some answers to the question: "What are their specific needs in teaching practice?" Unfortunately some answers show ignorance towards the needs of students. And yet, perhaps not surprisingly, the same people who give such responses are the same ones that are able "to provide solutions." This trend, however, cannot be generalized, because from the analysis of the responses we also found subjects that have been able to clearly identify the needs of students. The students’ difficulties lie, from the perception of mentors, in the lack of confidence in personal abilities, fear of failure and fear of the fact that they could not make themselves understood by the classroom. We subscribe to these assessments, which is why we will focus on them further on.

Another specific need for the students is to make personal contacts and experiment new teaching methods. Indeed, it is not
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sufficient that the students only know the new theories on teaching methodology, it is necessary that they also implement them in a controlled environment during teaching practice activities, because the effectiveness and results of using these modern methods can be further analyzed. As previously stated, the mentors’ continuous training now proves its worth.

The next question focused on how these mentors meet these needs of partitioning students. Unfortunately, the answers were mostly abstract, aimed more on generally applicable principles on educational practice. In the case of the lack of self-confidence of the student respondents dealt with the previous question, the answer lies in the mentors’ “praise and encouragement”. This attitude seems ineffective. The students can overcome this distrust by gaining practical experience, which cannot be achieved unless they observe the mentors who lead the lesson. Also a way of overcoming the tract is the safety of knowing that they posses tools, effective methods that will allow them to conclude the didactic approach. The mentors’ role, in our view, is to provide these methods combined with the support of their application.

The next issue on which we focused was the students’ activity analysis by the mentors or, in other words, assessment. We also addressed a question regarding to what extend the mentors are using self-evaluation. In this regard we note that mentors are working to ensure an objective evaluation, aiming at a wide range of issues which all combined give an accurate picture of how the students have prepared both theoretically and in terms of putting into practice the acquired knowledge. We found that mentors follow especially the practitioner's particular way of teaching, with emphasis on the conduct of the teaching activity, on the selection of teaching strategy, organization and capture the attention of students and on maintaining classroom discipline. We found that mentors pay special attention to the teaching design, rightfully considering that thorough preparation for the lesson plays an important role in the successful completion of educational activities, being also one of the essential conditions to overcome emotions and stress caused by the first contact with the classroom. Finally, mentors said that they carefully observe the students' nonverbal behaviour, including for example, their gestures and tone, all of this behaviour providing a hard to disguise clue on their self-confidence. Any fear, insecurity or uncertainty about the
students who lead a lesson, noticed by the mentors, is more than likely also noticed by the class, the latter in turn reacting according to the practicing students’ behaviour.

The eighth question of the focus group sought to identify the categories of criteria used by mentors in order to evaluate the activity of teaching practice. The results should be analyzed according to certain distinct aspects. As shown in the previous paragraph, we found that mentors have a clear understanding of the categories of criteria to be used when evaluating the activity of teaching practice. Mentors can easily identify such matters relating to: professional and personal qualities of the assessed students, lesson planning, lesson development and classroom management. Unfortunately, mentors do not know or can’t specifically identify the criteria followed in either category. Of course, the one category mentioned as "personal and professional qualities" could form an objective criterion for evaluation. But as long as the follow-up sub-criteria are not known or are not quantified, the effect obtained is below expectations, and leads to subjectivity in the evaluation.

Another concerning issue that arises both from the answers to this question and the following one ("What are the elements / aspects that students need to consider for didactical self-evaluation?"), is a lack of standardization of these evaluation criteria. In this respect, determining clear criteria for assessing the students’ teaching activity during teaching practice would lead to a more accurate representation of the students’ results in front of a classroom compared for example to other students who are under the guidance of another mentor.

The next question wanted to get a picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the student’s activity from the mentors’ perspective. All responses painted a not so nice picture of the students these days. Mentors complain primarily about the lack of seriousness from the practitioners, this being associated with indifference and superficial preparation and also a lack of interest in their didactical work. If this state of affairs corresponds to reality, it comes only to confirm those found by us during the research related on human resource policies and the need for improvement by establishing more stringent selection criteria when entering a teaching career.

In contrast, the "strengths" noticed refer only to the proper preparation of the didactic project and varied teaching and learning material. In other words, students' strengths are related to their
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Theoretical training. Maybe it is normal that students do not excel at putting into practice their theoretical knowledge, this being exactly the purpose of teaching practice. We appreciate, however, that a solid theoretical basis is an excellent starting point for a successful teaching career.

We then tried to identify the main challenges that confront mentors in the conduct of the teaching practice. We found that the overwhelming majority of responses identified as the main "deficiency" the quality of the students and their attitude related to teaching practice. In other words, responsibilities for any failures or shortcomings of the teaching practice lie exclusively with the practitioners. It is hard for us to share this vision, more so as it is in some aspects in clear contradiction with the answers to the previous questions. For example, early on, the mentors appreciated the quality of the theoretical training of students when they were asked to highlight their strengths, so the answer to that question suggests otherwise. Of course, we could accept that students show little interest in preparing their teaching practice activities. But to conclude that they are at the root of the lack of efficiency in teaching practice seems more an attempt by the mentors to decline their responsibility. In our view, some of the blame for lack of interest of students is clearly found in mentor’s conduct, in not founding the resources to make this activity more attractive. In addition to these answers, we find actual deficiencies faced by mentors, the main problem aroused from the discussion being the lack of correlation between the worksheet of mentors and students.

We tried to see which the solutions are proposed by mentors to overcome identified deficiencies. Perhaps not surprisingly, viewing our conclusions from the immediately preceding paragraph, at the question "What can you do to overcome these difficulties?" there were answers like "Me ... nothing." from the mentors, which comes to reinforce the belief that mentors are not at all willing to be fully involved, nor willing to assume serious responsibilities in relation to teaching practice.

An explanation for this situation could be that a mentor retributition is not in accordance with their work and the payment (by the Universities) is made late and discretionary (the University decides the amount to be paid and number of hours remunerated). Also, the amount of pay is directly proportional with the number of students and that is at the expense of quality and even though we previously stated that the teaching practice is organized into groups
of 10-12 students, unfortunately there are often situations where the number of students in a group goes far beyond that figure, reaching up to 30-40 students per group. Thus, the extremely large number of students disrupts the educational process on one hand and, on the other hand, does not lead to the formation of methodological skills for students.

But this situation cannot be generalized and we must remember that answers were also recorded which shows a careful concern for improving teaching practice. Faced with a lack of interest from the part of the students to participate in the activity of teaching practice, we see that two trends have emerged and were suggested. A first group has chosen and suggested "coercive" means to ensure the presence and interest of students. Another group chose the opposite solution and proposed that teaching practice should become optional. Our recommendation is to adopt a middle road. We do not believe that imposing sanctions would be likely to increase the attractiveness of teaching practice, on the contrary. On the other hand, we can not agree with the optional nature of this activity, taking into consideration the importance of this segment of training for the teaching staff and we consider optional just the decision to pursue a teaching career. We also found that a solution constantly provided by mentors to improve the teaching practice, is to increase the number of hours devoted to this period of training.

This conclusion generally accepted by mentors led us to the last question of the focus group regarding their opinion on how effective the organization and conduct of teaching practice really is. As anticipated, the first suggestion provided by our group was to increase the number of hours of student effective teaching. We consider this claim justified, because it is also our position throughout the study. We also noted some the relevant suggestions on the organization of students schedule to perform effective teaching practice to ensure their presence, a schedule matching that of the mentors by establishing a daily practice that would allow the organization of practice for the entire group (e.g. discussions of analysis, attending colleague’s classes, feedback from colleagues). Another aspect, and perhaps the most important, was the need to develop a unique set of standards for conducting teaching practice in all specialties and all academic institutions. And last but not least, the absence of an effective and coherent partnership between
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universities, county inspectorates and mentors was highlighted, and the absence of a protocol of partnership between the university – inspectorates – application schools and mentors to define roles and responsibilities of each party.

Conclusions

We can conclude that it is necessary and appropriate to redefine the theoretical and practical balance throughout the initial training of teachers. Moving the emphasis in training on teaching practice is likely to put students in a position to discover their own teaching style and to develop the necessary skills for finding independent and creative solutions to problems that may arise in the profession. It should also be noted that teacher training has become essential now, and here we refer to teaching practice mentors, being imperative that they have access to training and the latest information in both the pedagogical and their specialized field.

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CAN WE USE FACEBOOK LIKE A TEACHING AND LEARNING TOOL?

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Abstract: In the last three years, Facebook has become one of the buzzword in the social media area, no matter of the location, age, income or occupation. With more than 500 million active and registered users, Facebook could be considered the fourth largest country in the world. Thus, taking into account the above issues is not surprisingly, Facebook has become a popular social networking site among young people worldwide, including university students. Over time, more and more applications and functionalities included increased value of this social networking.

In the educational area, Facebook has a great potential, both for teaching and for learning. Two years ago, when we used for the first time Facebook as a learning management system for teaching activities, Facebook wasn’t the preferred social networking of Romanian students. But even so, we created a closed group and we used it from time to time for posting announcements, sharing resources, organizing weekly tutorials and conducting online discussions. On the other hand, we use Facebook even for other educational related applications, purposes and activities. Thus, Facebook was also used for achieving of educational tools, for tracing the learning development, for informal learning activities and for assessment purposes.

More than that, this group has remained active even nowadays and thus, I could see how students work even after their period of study related to this discipline (according to their academic schedule). Therefore, this paper shows that the Facebook group could be
effectively used as a learning management system and as a tool to develop and enhance the 21st century skills of students. Therefore, this paper aims to show the possible integration of the social networking site Facebook into university life.

**Keywords:** Facebook, teaching, learning, social activities

### The Facebook context

In the last three years, Facebook has become one of the buzzword in the social media area, no matter of the location, age, income or occupation.

The social network Facebook had appeared on the social media market on February 2004 when it was described as a site for college students to connect and share information with each other. Founded by Harvard student Mark Zuckerberg, at the beginning, it was an exclusive social network only for the Harvard students, but soon had become opened to anybody with a university (addresses ending with i.e. .edu) email address. In September 2006, Facebook opened to anyone with an email address who claimed to be 13 or older.

Therefore, from the beginning Facebook has become a popular social networking site among young people, including university students, aspects which had assured to Facebook and amazing ascending continuity and popularity.

Thus, if in December 2006 Facebook reached more than 12 million users, in April 2007 Facebook had registered 20 millions, in August 2008 Facebook proudly had announced the incredible target of 100 million users. One year later, in September 2009 Facebook has registered 300 millions of users, whilst in July 21, 2010, Facebook had reached more than 500 millions of registered users.

Taking into consideration those amazing statistics, we could considerate Facebook the fourth largest country in the world. The world distribution and supremacy of Facebook could be also viewed in the following picture:
Can we use Facebook as a teaching and learning tool?

Fig. 1 The world map of social networks

![World Map of Social Networks](http://www.dreamgrow.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/world-map-social-networking-sites-2010-580x294.png)


Thus, we can observe that with some exception (Orkut.com in Brasil, Vkontakte.ru & Odnoklassniki.ru in Russia, Mixi.jp in Japan or Qzone.QQ.com in China), Facebook is the world dominate social network.

**Facebook characteristics**

Taking into account the above mentioned issues regarding the Facebook, we can see that Facebook is a social networking site designed to connect users. On Facebook, the registered users can benefit by a myriad of features like: creating profiles with (or without) photos, lists of personal interests, affiliation, contact information, and other personal information like photos and video sharing. Communicating with friends and other users can be done through providing information about their status, private or public messages, through instant messaging, applications and a chat feature. Users can also create and join interest groups and the registered users can "like” the visited pages, becoming
their fans. They could also plan events, play games, update their profile and their status, could create a network of friends to interact, they could also insert links, share news, blog entries, notes, photo albums. In addition, Facebook offers a search tool that allows users to search for specific information like people and groups.

Taking into consideration the Facebook security settings, the registered users have the possibility to make their page as accessible or inaccessible as they desire for a better socialization. Thus, through Facebook users have a mix of interaction possibilities: on their “wall”, they will have a space where friends can post messages, video and pictures. They can also update their “status”, which allows them to inform their friends about what they are doing or thinking. Apart from those well-known characteristics, they could also use: the “poke” features, the “notes application” section, the “news feed” section (where are highlighted information like profile changes, upcoming events, birthdays, status updates, photo uploads, tagging related information (from notes, photos, videos and status updates) etc.).

Fig. 2 The average Facebook user activities

Can we use Facebook as a teaching and learning tool?

Seeing the above picture, we’ll have a broader perspective of preferred Facebook activities done by its registered average users.

Thus, Facebook is similar with other social networks site. Likewise, even Facebook it doesn’t do anything the greatest, but anyhow does everything well enough. Moreover, Facebook is generally considered the leading social networking site among the students and among the young generation. Particularly, they have no problems sharing their lives with Facebook, and to share information between each other, information that to previous generations was unfathomable that individuals would want to share this information.

Starting from the mirage around this social network who were closed to the entire public till December 2006 for Facebook it was somehow created a good reputation, whilst for MySpace (the big rival at that moments), which were opened to everybody, no matter of education, background, behavior or hobbies, the bad reputation followed it. Thus, Boyd (2007) stands out the American class division between Facebook and Myspace: “society's "good" kids are going to Facebook and the "bad" kids are going to MySpace” which demonstrate the way in which technology is mirroring societal values.

Therefore, when the curtain was raised, a huge wave of people went to Facebook more to raise their self esteem then to use the fantastic Facebook’s facilities and functionalities. Moreover, even Facebook it doesn’t do anything the greatest, but anyhow does everything well enough, the registered users become devoted and even addicted to Facebook.

**Facebook educational context**

As it was highlighted in the previous sections, students are among the oldest and devoted users. Therefore, with so many students already using this website, it is the duty of educators to find the best solutions in order to incorporate learning into a website that students are so familiar with.

As for the teachers is perhaps harder than ever to catch student interest, by using Facebook they have now a tool to attract them into a familiar medium and to motivate them to effectively participate into class related activities.

On the other hand, Facebook is a cost-effective teaching resource, already set-up and functioning and most students are already using it. For teachers and some students who are not using Facebook,
there are plenty of resources available to get help on how to use more proper and efficiently the Facebook networking site. On the other part, for students is much easier to get help by asking their peers for different tips and recommendations of setting up and using a Facebook account.

Thus, as a social networking tool, Facebook could be used successfully as a communication (using different ways of communication already mentioned) tool between teachers and students, between teachers and between students. Moreover, from educators’ point of views, Facebook could be also used for different class activities: for delivering some materials, for making announcements, for planning events, for being in contact with other educators, for assessment purposes etc. From students’ perspective, they can socialize with friends, peers, family, they can access, think critically and provide feedbacks & comments to the materials, participate in class related activities etc.

In addition, on Facebook, the registered users could also benefit by using other educational applications. A useful, but not exhaustive list with educational applications included in Facebook could be consulted at http://www.interactyx.com/blog/facebook-apps-for-elearning.

Therefore, from the above mentioned issues, we can observe Facebook has a great educational potential, being considerate without doubts in the category of internet based learning and teaching tool, as well as learning management system.

The Facebook personal educational experience

During the academic year 2008-2009, I used for the first time Facebook for educational activities with my students from public relations and communications specializations.

At that time, Facebook wasn’t so popular in Romania and most of the students were addicted to another social networking site, namely Hi5, much more popular in Romania and in some other Latin countries like Portugal, Brasil etc. Therefore, in the beginning, for my students it was somehow unclear why to set up another account for a similar social networking site.
Anyhow, after they had become Facebook users, they were asked to join the common group I set up for them, namely “CRP2008UVT”. By using this Facebook’s group (with 152 members), my main purpose was not as direct teaching tool, but for an informal educational communication network.

As a professor, I had created a Facebook user different than my personal account. In my profile I had included photos and links and some background information. Even if I kept this account strictly professional, I tried to create a bond with my students, a confident climate. I set up my profile “open”, but I told to my students they can add me as a friend, but I will not add them back. On the other part, I warned the students to set their page as “limited” in order to be sure I’ll not see anything they don’t want me to see.

Through the class group, I had intended to offer a real communication space between me and the students and between classmates. I could post content, videos, pictures, links and messages related to the course work. Moreover, I have created events in order to notify students about exams, quizzes, general campus events etc.

The students’ posts were not totally academic in nature. But as they were aware I was looking on their posted content, they didn’t post unfavorable content. Information about the nature of the required readings and tasks, the speculated content of exams, required materials content and assignments’ details were things the students posted about.
Moreover, they posted even some other links related to their common interested domains (i.e. their specialization), as well as some parts of their tasks.

In my opinion, the most important benefit of using social networks in education is related to the support they provide for interaction. Because of this, I asked (as an additional task) students to get feedback to their peers. Thus, they were actively engaged in their learning: they had thought carefully and critical on the content, they had provided (and gained) feedback, questions and comments etc. Therefore, in an informal but familiar way, they are developed or enhanced also their 21st century skills.

Thus, even my initial goal was that the students to explore this new-to-use medium, I was quite impressed how much they love it. Even now, after more than one year they have been graduated this class, they are using Facebook and the group, too. They still share links about sites they are currently using as well as announcements, samples of works and other “exchanges of humor and nonsense”.

**Conclusions**

There are an important percent of students registered on social networking sites, especially on Facebook. Moreover, they are very active users. Even the main reasons of using social networking sites is for social purposes, students could also use Facebook for educational related activities, like informal and formal learning.

Facebook is an amazing social network site, with a great educational potential, capable to enhance student motivation, affective learning and classroom climate. But it is important to remember that reactions to using social networks sites in education are mixed.

On the other hand, Facebook increase teacher-student interaction in the form of web communication. There are also some studies which shows that students who participate in a web-enhanced class outperformed students in a traditional lecture style class.

In an opposite perspective, obviously Facebook has also the potential to distract students from their studies and to disconnect them from real world (Selwyn, 2009). In addition there are studies who found a link between Facebook usage and lower grades in college (i.e. Arin Karpinski from Ohio State University, SUA). Moreover, there are important issues to pay attention regarding privacy and safety of students in a Facebook context. But privacy control we are hoping will
Can we use Facebook as a teaching and learning tool?

be solved by increasing user familiarity with the tools and culture of social networks.

Therefore, taking into consideration the above presented issues, we still can conclude that Facebook as a tool that could and should be used in classroom today. As Facebook is an amazing emerging phenomenon (with new functions developed day by day, i.e. the new groups’ facilities), we are hoping present material is a pleading of increasing the usage of Facebook in educational related activities, both by teachers and students.

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MANAGERIAL STYLE APPROACH - COMPARATIVE DATA BETWEEN PRETEST AND POSTTEST

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Abstract: Like a promoter of changes the teacher-manager must demonstrate the ability to develop effective managerial styles in the educational activities, strategy implementation and proactive management styles within the school organization, in the classroom by default, being a key factor in the democratization of the educational relationships.

Keywords: school organization, educational environment, management strategies and styles, transformational and transactional management approach, organizational development project, operational leadership, monitoring and evaluation, feed-back and self-regulation managerial practices.

Premises which led achieve the formative experiment with the theme - Involve teachers in implementing strategies and effective management approach styles (transformational and transactional), were as follows:

- In the educational environment, the teacher and the students group must develop a new competence, focused on anticipating many changes, sometimes forecasted and wanted, sometimes random. Educator performance evaluation criteria is not limited to its ability to manage stable groups, and apparently balanced situations, but its real capacity to predict and direct transitions to the group and also the personal ones.

- The educator-manager has become a leader "transformational and transitional," able to conduct these successive reconfigurations that define the essence of the students group. In this case we speak about a transversal competence, whereby each member of the students group learns to predict changes and be optimally adapted to them. Student group training and leadership dynamics through the managerial styles,
within the meaning of the individual and collective, personal and professional transitions, becomes a major concern for every educator. The reference frame for a teacher-manager is established in terms of transformational and transition project.

- The group phenomena analysis demonstrate that the transition process is universal and should be designed to allow each student to go through it effectively, directed by management styles practiced by each teacher.

In chapter we presented obtained data (table 1.), when at the end of the formative intervention, for educators from both groups have been reapplied ISAM questionnaire. For the educators from the experimental group was developed and applied an instrument to measure the impact and efficiency of formative program and the tools used (posttest questionnaire).

Table 1. Management approach type by group - comparative results on the obtained frequency and percentages in the pretest and posttest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The type of management approach</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th></th>
<th>Posttest</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$G_E$</td>
<td>$G_C$</td>
<td>$G_E$</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequencies</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Frequencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformative approach</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>18.94</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional approach</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>26.84</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive/avoidant approach</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>47.90</td>
<td>94</td>
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<tr>
<td>Missing values</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.32</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>190</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transformative approach</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>26.31</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transactional approach</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>37.89</td>
<td>58</td>
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<tr>
<td>Passive/avoidant approach</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>35.80</td>
<td>81</td>
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<tr>
<td>Missing values</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</table>
For the experimental group, is observed, by comparing the results obtained in the pretest phase with these from posttest, an increased percentage of the transformational management approach with 7.36% and 11.05% at transaction management approach. Regarding the passive / avoidant management approach, in posttest is find a decreased percentage compared with pre-test, with 12.1% for subjects belonging to the experimental group. Following the calculation of $\chi^2$ was showed that these differences are significant for a $p < .01$. In the control group, by reporting the pretest results to those in the posttest phase, there is a similar dynamics for transformational managerial approach (an increase with 1.5%) and transactional (an increase of 1.05%), but the differences are insignificant compared to pretest.

Formative experiment resulted in significant progress in the adoption of transformational and transactional management styles approach among subjects in the experimental group and fewer educators using passive / avoidant management approach style.

Depending on the category of investigated subjects (teaching staff with managerial / non-management teaching staff) and professional development level (beginner / final degree / second degree / teaching grade I), inferential processing results show that there aren’t significant differences in the proportion of the three types of management approach.

In conclusion, it’s noted that we record a significant difference in the percentual distribution in management approach ways, depending on the group’s affiliation of the investigated subjects - experimental and control. These observed differences between subjects belonging to the experimental group, compared with control group subjects in the posttest phase, are the result of active involvement of educator/ managers in the professional development process, through a formative intervention aimed to developing transversal skills and inter-networking.

In the experimental group, both as guidance for the design of reactive management styles, as well as guidance for designing management styles proactive, there are statistically significant differences ($p < .05$) between scores obtained during the pretest and posttest phase. These data demonstrates that formative program addressed to educator/ managers led to the rethinking management styles, increasing subject’s adhesion in the experimental group for proactive orientation.
By reporting the control group results, it is noted that in the experimental group, the posttest compared to pretest, there was an increase in the average transformational managerial approach ($m_{pre} = 57.23 / m_{post} = 60.86$) and transactional ($m_{pre} = 71.64 / m_{post} = 77.20$). In terms of management approaches, educators in the experimental group obtained lower score in the posttest than in pretest, for the passive / avoidant managerial approach ($m_{pre} = 46.05 / m_{post} = 43.19$).

Comparative results between the main dimensions of the ISAM questionnaire, between pretest and posttest for the experimental group are as follows:

- **reactive orientation managerial styles** ($m_{pre} = 11.06 / m_{post} = 10.26$);
- **proactive orientation management styles** ($m_{pre} = 11.28 / m_{post} = 12.40$);
- **transformational managerial approach** ($m_{pre} = 57.23 / m_{post} = 60.86$);
- **transactional management approach** ($m_{pre} = 71.64 / m_{post} = 77.20$);
- **passive/ avoidant management approach** ($m_{pre} = 46.05 / m_{post} = 43.19$);
- **managerial efficiency by constructing meanings and perspectives** ($m_{pre} = 15.21 / m_{post} = 16.65$);
- **management effectiveness by focusing on results** ($m_{pre} = 14.71 / m_{post} = 15.45$);
- **self-assessment of managerial performances** ($m_{pre} = 6.40 / m_{post} = 6.75$).

After interferential processing for the three dimensions of the management approach has had obtained results that show significant differences at a threshold of statistical significance ($p < .01$) between pretest and the posttest phase.

Comparative analysis of the descriptive results for the experimental group, between the pretest and posttest stages demonstrates a significant increase in scores for the transformational and transactional management approach dimensions.

The analysis of these results it is noted that subjects in the experimental group, for variable construction of meanings and perspectives, had recorded higher average values, both in the pretest and posttest, which indicates their concern for the continued personal and organizational development. There is an anticipated increase in
managerial performance, this being achieved by stimulating and motivating subjects involved in the development of formative experiment. An important aspect to remember is that we are witnessing a significant drop in scores for variables that make up the passive / avoidant management approach.

From the perspective of the comparative analysis with the control group, we can estimate that the educators, managers constituting the experimental group, the formative intervention program determined a significant development in terms of flexible and dynamic implementation of management styles adapted to the new educational environments. It notes in this case a strong focus on transformational and transactional management approach, reducing the percentage of specific dimensions in passive / avoidant management approach, especially with regard to systematic-reaction to problem - situations, that are manifested in the school organization and require rapid and effective intervention.

The analysis of correlations between the defining dimensions for the managerial approach has validated the results of the descriptive data processing. The scores of designing managerial styles as proactive guidance influences, more evident, in the posttest, (number of significant correlations is higher than the pretest) educators adherence to transactional and transformational managerial approach. Based on these assumptions, we can say that the formative intervention had the effect of increasing educator adhesion to design managerial styles as proactive guidance.

Correlational study highlights the existence of significant correlations among all subscales of transformational and transactional management approach, which is found also in pre-tested. Analysis of these correlations allows us to appreciate that the distinction between the two management approaches is dynamic and flexible, educators are oriented to exercise inspirational motivation, idealized influence, using proactive involving strategies and transactional approach specific managerial styles.

In posttest there are significant negative correlations between the subscales of transformational and transactional management approach and passive adaptation. The teachers mainly oriented towards a transformational and transactional management approach, have a significantly increased degree of flexible adaptation to new learning situations, bypassing the issues quickly.
In this situation, we can say that educators' high adhesion for the transformational and transactional management approach is associated with a dynamic process of adapting management styles and strategies to the needs and specific educational context. In the pretest phase, only educators who recorded high values for intellectual stimulation, proactive involvement and development of strategic practices, have scores indicating concern for the continued development of capacities for adaptation. These results indicate that the formative program influences in some degree teachers' real-time adaptation to new challenges.

At this stage, managerial efficiency, by constructing meanings and perspectives (II), positively and significantly correlated with the subscales of transformational and transactional management approach. It is noted that the subjects' preference for the construction of new meanings and perspectives is associated with a better adaptation and immediate and effective response to organizational problems. To streamline the management process, it is necessary that the teacher/manager shows creativity and originality, researching and discovering new directions of development, through a reinterpretation of meanings.

Self-assessing management performances is positively correlated with idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, situational reward, proactive involvement, monitoring and evaluation of performance deviations. There are negative correlations between self-assessment of management performances and all size scales regarding on the passive/avoidant management approach.

Following the completion of regression analysis to identify significant predictors of the three management approaches, we find that every time they consist of scales comprising the investigated dimension. This can be explained partly because of high correlations between the scales and total score of the investigated dimension, and secondly, due to the large number of subjects included in the study. This latter point makes little differences to be significant, so the reduced variability between the other size scales compared to a dimension in which are not included, are not sufficient to identify other significant predictors. In other words, the scales included in a dimension, are differentiated compared with that size, compared with other scales of the questionnaire.
These results show that training teachers in the processes of design, operational management, management performance, has contributed significantly to increase subjects preference for transactional and transformational managerial approaching styles, and decreased use of passive / avoidant management approach.

In terms of measuring the impact of the formative intervention on the experimental group and to support the results of the ISAM questionnaire, we applied the experimental group instrument - posttest questionnaire.

For subjects in the experimental group, there were results that show a significant restructuring of strategies and management approach styles, due to the training intervention. In terms of restructuring management approach styles, subjects, in a proportion higher than 50% over central value of the scale, are partly or totally agree with this statement. For educators who said that they have restructured their management approach style in a large extent, it appears that they conceive management styles as guidance for proactive management practices.

The formative intervention focused on developing management approach styles, has the most important impact on the development of participatory structures, followed in descending order by contextual and situational analysis, operational plans elaboration, feedback and self-regulation of management activity, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of managerial styles. Formative experiment resulted in the subjects awareness that management approach styles has been optimized, most, in terms of developing operational plans and achieve the contextual and situational diagnosis. An even less effective aspect following the formative experiment is the use of monitoring and evaluation strategies of management performances. This aspect is confirmed by data processing results obtained during the formative experiment, as outlined above, educators are getting the lowest scores for monitoring the size of deviations.

These results lead us to appreciate that teachers develop and apply strategies and tools by which efficiently self-regulate management, first through situational analysis and develop operational plans and finally by giving and requesting feedback, but have fewer strategies for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of management approach styles during the management process. Based on
this finding, it may raise a number of new directions for teacher’s continuous training in managerial aspect.

In case of design and implementation of problem-based modeling, the descriptive results analysis show that the greatest difficulties were encountered with the identification of managerial performance standards \((m = 2.37)\). An other issue where there were greater difficulties was widening management approach perspectives \((m = 2.89)\), followed by situational diagnosis \((m = 3.10)\) and to set priorities and responsibilities \((m = 3.17)\). Difficulties arising from the managerial styles advantages / disadvantages analysis \((m = 3.20)\), and team motivating \((m = 3.33)\) have lower scores. Subjects relate effectively to issues determined by analyzing the advantages and disadvantages of managerial styles and easily establish priorities and responsibilities of each, estimating to be more difficult the process of broadening perspectives in management approach and situational diagnosis, and particularly identification of management performance standards.

In terms of usefulness of formative assessment tools by the educators of the experimental group, it is noted that the checklist on the situational model is considered the most effective tool \((m = 3.25)\), followed in descending order by: management approach style efficiency self-evaluation worksheet \((m = 3.24)\); educational needs analysis sheets \((m = 3.15)\); training log \((m = 3.13)\); development projects inter-evaluation sheet \((m = 3, 10)\) and observation protocols \((m = 3.05)\).

Based on the results of descriptive analysis is notable that subjects are positively valorizing the usefulness of formative instruments, designed and implemented during the course of the experiment, so the obtain average is higher than the theoretical average. It is noted that the averages obtained by variables management approach styles restructuring and the use of formative instruments are large, which leads us to appreciate the formative experiment led to a greater awareness on the need for strategies and tools addressed to specific transactional and transformational management approach styles. Descriptive analysis of the results leads us to declare that, in general, educators have praised the formative program as effective in multiple aspects (all obtained averages are higher than the theoretical average).

It can appreciate that educators who thoroughly revamped management approach styles, are witnessing a reconceptualization of
these, as a proactive and transformative orientation. Therefore subjects which were integrated into that category who used primarily a passive / avoidant management approach have restructured their management approach style, as a result of active involvement in ongoing formative program.

Educators who’re promoted a transformational management, naturally, have not changed their management styles following the formative experiment, this was revealed by scores indicating their restructuring, because decline as scores for transformational managerial approach growing.

The significant correlations between the dimensions of practiced strategy development, outlined in the pretest questionnaire and those administered in the posttest questionnaire, confirm the positive changes induced by the formative experiment on style management approach.

The correlation analysis between the results of the evaluation questionnaire about the impact of the formative program on the experimental group subjects makes us appreciate the fact that educators have largely restructured their management approach style, notably the development and implementation of operational plans. The instruments assessed as having an important role in how efficient management approach are: situational modeling checklist and managerial styles efficiency worksheet. Records efficiency analysis of the educational needs in facilitating transactional and transformational management approaches are highlighted by corelational studies. Educators have noted the difficulty in identifying managerial performance standards in the design and implementation processes of situational modeling, saying that they will largely transfer these tools and techniques used in the experiment group in the educational practice.

Based on these results and conclusions we can say that the systematic use by the educators of strategies and transformational managerial approach styles is influenced by the existence of organizational and individual development projects, through proactive and creative involvement in interactional processes of school organization.

ISAM questionnaire and posttest questionnaire results confirmed that the use of design techniques and tools, operational management, monitoring, evaluation and self-management practices had the effect of restructuring management approach style, for a significant number of subjects, but there is a significant positive correlation between
management approach styles restructuring assessment and management performance self-assessment.

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INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Motto: “Man is a creature with only one wing, that’s why we can only fly in two. For this... look for a friend” (Coelho)

Abstract: Europe can be regarded as a big family where many ethnicities and cultures live together. For us the Romanians, by entering this “big family” we must learn to understand and respect the different cultures and mentalities. The teacher’s task is pretty difficult. One must use such educational means by which to be able to eliminate any prejudice and capitalize on cultural diversity. Children should be encouraged to develop their artistic, language and other skills.

Key words: diversity, different cultures, educational partnership

By diversity we understand creativity, imagination and innovation. School’s mission is to enable every child to grow and develop one’s own spirit, body and heart which means intelligence, sensibility and creativity, allowing them to learn to live together, assume a progressive place in society and become active citizens. Intercultural means, first of all, respecting the differences. Teachers are the guarantors of such hardships of the spirit that watches over the differences, to learn, know, and understand what binds us, what makes us similar and what brings us closer. If education first of all means communication between people, than school is meant to facilitate the relationships between students from different geographical areas and seen as representatives of their own ethnic diversity, and help them
discover one another, and compare against a universally acceptable value system.

Internal or external educational partnership is a form of collaboration and an institutional framework that enables first of all the similarities between different cultures and only after that what makes them different, contributing to their integration through differentiation in this sea of universal culture. We, the teachers, are bearing a very important task of developing a constructive communication between all educational stakeholders involved in the education and development of children, creating a friendly environment for them and shaping them towards the acceptance of the cultural diversity. Even as early as preschool the child is helped to develop communication skills, take decisions democratically among his own group, and to engage in solving any interpersonal conflicts. The preschool teacher must pay special attention towards educating self-respect and respect for others, and acceptance of someone’s different opinion. It’s wonderful that in kindergarten children enjoy being together no matter what nationality, ethnicity or religion. They enjoy participating together in games, festivals and competitions. All customs and traditions have their role in the cultural existence of any nation, tribe and even a group that learns in an alternative pedagogy.

In our school we developed the educational project called „Unity in diversity“. All activities facilitated a learning process by collaboration and communication, and not by marginalization. Here are the objectives of this project:

- Stimulating children’s curiosity in the new European context, in favor of multicultural and multiethnic activities;
- Stimulating a curiosity towards all that is different from him as a person and the acceptance of new;
- Promoting communication, development of trust, solidarity and tolerance, by knowing of specific customs and traditions;
- Developing harmonious relationships between children and foreign teachers with a different ethnicity, culture, and religion;
Here I will mention a few activities included in this project:

- Joint activity and practice: „Carnival masks and decorations”;
- Plays: „Children’s Christmas”, „How’s Easter for us”;
- Folk costumes parade, specific ethnic dancing, drawing contest: „Knowing and drawing the folk costume”;
- Cooking a regional dish: „Let’s play Chefs”;
- Ethnic song: „The friendship choir”

In the current stage of development of social problems of mankind, the intercultural education is responsible for studying the different culture, establishing levels of acceptance, cooperation and experience exchange between „majority” and „minority” in a context of multiplying one’s system of values. Ethnocentrism and stereotyping should be avoided in teaching. The recent universal civilization’s experience proves that the interpretation of certain social events judged by a specific ethnic group’s point of view has nothing to do with any trial values.

Preparation for interculturality means a continuous effort of internal self-construction, a personal and institutional reflection, and an effort of nurturing the integration towards one’s own values and respect towards others’ values. This training is based more on attitude changes than on specific methodological instrumentation. It is targeting to establish a “intercultural capability” among teachers, meaning creating an assembly of beliefs and specific intercultural conduct based on appreciation, respect and valorization of one another, assembly called “intercultural competence”.

There is no specific methodology to ensure an intercultural education, but only resources capable of developing an intercultural
Intercultural education in primary school …

dynamic and understanding. There is no need to remove everything in the past, but to prioritize and develop those measures capable of promoting the human rights and to broaden the perspectives of solidarity, making them more concrete and less limited. In the daily school reality, one of interculturalism principles, one can start from a basic assertion: the difference between children, cultures, learning styles and behavior are only reasonable and positive. Children are equal not because they are all similar, but because they are different. That is why the children should not be forced to become copies of a default model in terms of a pattern dominated by stereotypes and cultural prejudices bared by grownups. All well-intentioned teachers that are convinced that all children are equal, and that majority is not above the others, are ignoring the differences between children setting the majority’s view as the applicable norm without negotiation. In our school, since there are no such problems, all children are equal and the Roma children have integrated so well that no one even notices they are Gypsies.

Therefore, the lack of marginalization and stigmatization of certain children is a notable thing. We should still move forward in recognizing everyone’s rights to have their own cultural norms, values or educational necessities. We will consider the interculturality a part of a daily school’s reality and not an added theme or activity. We should also pay attention to the material that is presented, the organization of a space that promotes learning by collaboration and communication and by no means the isolation of certain children. We planned to open the school’s area towards community and it’s specific by organizing meetings, field trips, and intercultural festivals.

The education towards diversity is thus an attitude, a mood, an enlarged system of practices and theories with openness to cultural pluralism which crosses the entire educational system. The relating to peer is completing the child’s social experience. The child cannot be left alone in his attempt to discover the similarities and differences between humans in his small universe. We must create an appropriate environment for learning and capitalizing on diversity, as a teaching resource. The school has a very important role in strengthening the
foundations of a harmonious coexistence of different cultural communities, without adversely affecting the formation and development of the child’s identity as a member of a particular cultural group. The mutual knowledge of the different cultural characteristics is a necessary but not sufficient element in this regard. Therefore, the school must allow the contact and communication (with the focus on interaction) encouraging mutual respect while capitalizing on the cultural differences.

Coming from different cultures we have the chance to get integrated in a different multicultural society which promotes the feeling of being part of the daily reality, to be an individual who does not look like anyone or anything. Today’s teachings promote new educational concepts and attitudes designed to determine various forms of communications, cooperation and collaboration in support of children.

The intercultural education is „an ideological option in democratic societies and aims at preparing future citizens so that they can make the best choice and can orient in the context of multiplication of the systems of values.” (Constantin Cucoș, 1996).

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ADAPTING SCHOOL TO MEET THE DEMANDS OF STUDENTS: A CONDITION FOR FORMING AN EFFICIENT LEARNING STYLE

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Abstract: The paradigm of school adjustment to the demands and teaching possibilities of the student, a characteristic of education in the future, but also of education systems organized according to the network model, prompts for a diversification of learning situations and experiences, and setting them up according to the possibilities and needs of all student categories in order to meet the following principles: “inclusive school,” “school for all,” “integrated teaching”. One of the periods which gives evidence of frequent difficulties regarding school adjustment is represented by the beginning of preadolescence, phase which coincides for the pupils with the transition from the elementary school to the middle school, and during which, based on a fragile emotional and mental imbalance and on a personality still being shaped, numerous adaptive behaviors are assimilated.

During middle school, in the process of studying different disciplines, a personal reasoning style is formed, the habit of thinking is consolidated and, consequently, the efficiency of the intellectual activity increases and depending on the protesting attitudes of the teenager development of intellectual curiosity and critical thinking.

Considering the changes appearing in the teens, both in psycho-intellectual activity and in the educational activity, due to which, in parallel with the completion of the gymnasium, a new learning style takes shape, the acknowledgement and correct evaluation problems of the students’ styles, of creating the necessary conditions to valorise the full learning potential, and also to help the student for adopting a certain efficient intellectual skills, adapted to the new requests, become more acute during this period.

Keywords: school adjustment, constructivist learning, student-centered approach, learning style, preadolescents.
1. Introduction, theoretical framework: the paradigm of school adjustment to the demands of students in the context of present educational policies

The present educational systems were set up based on the new principles of contemporary education: global education, lifelong learning, inclusive education, education for all, equal opportunities, educational partnership, and of contemporary pedagogy: reconsidering the role of the student, who becomes a subject of education, the transfer from hierarchical education systems to education systems organized according to the network model, problem-based learning, stimulating critical thinking, an interest in competence acquisition, emphasis on interactive activities, all of which lead to in-depth learning.

The paradigm of school adjustment to the demands and teaching possibilities of the student, a characteristic of education in the future, but also of education systems organized according to the network model, prompts for a diversification of learning situations and experiences, and setting them up according to the possibilities and needs of all student categories in order to meet the following principles: “inclusive school”, “school for all”, “integrated teaching”.

One way of defining school adjustment is by referring to it as a transforming process, a process of student behavior adjustment in line with the demands and exigencies of the educational-instructive process, so as to meet these adequately. On the other hand, school adjustment also presupposes altering, regulating, and adapting the educational-instructive process according to the potential, and psychological and individual student capabilities. The final goal of all these changes and adjustments applied to both parts (at student level, as well as at the educational-instructive process level) is to reach a balance between the demands of the school and the response behavior of the students towards these, but also between the needs, the student’s capabilities, and the way the educational-instructive process is suitable to all these (A. Coașan, A. Vasilescu, 1988).

A second definition of school adjustment, which refers to the adjustment of the school, of the educational strategies and the entire educational-instructive process to the individual needs of the students, to their learning capabilities and particularities is one dimension of the post modern paradigm within the education system, characterized by: promotion of new education systems, curriculum reform, a personalized approach of strategies, using alternative sources of information,
interdisciplinarity, ceasing to use traditional practices of transmitting knowledge, using a personal content instead of a pre-established content that reflects a subjective knowledge, using multiple means of instruction and teaching, placing the student, with its needs and capabilities at the center of the teaching process. Post modern tendencies mostly correspond to the constructivist approach in education, especially through the role given to the student concerning knowledge acquisition, and altering the role of the teacher and learning strategies with a strong formative aspect.

Summarizing the references regarding constructivist learning, E. Joița (2006, p. 62, 65) describes the following dimensions of the idea of centering the educational process on the student, as the main element:
- the students look up the information, process it, and then discuss it;
- the students gain subjective knowledge by asking questions, correlating, forming hypotheses, finding solutions, bringing arguments;
- focusing on understanding, critical analysis, self-interpretation and argumentation;
- encouraging autonomy of knowledge and actions, initiatives and curiosities;
- students shift from the passive attitude of receiving information to an attitude of mental and active involvement;
- the student solves problems by: learning through discovery, searching, formulating, making decisions;
- the students’ new knowledge is the result of rebuilding the old one, of integrating the new data;
- the student organizes and performs his/her own teaching by forming the capability to “learn to learn, to know”;
- the role of the teacher is to organize the information, problems, assignments, materials, to facilitate, guide, coordinate, offer support, formulate and encourage asking questions, encourage individual responses, debates, negotiations, and to give the final summary.

A series of documents of international educational policies promote and support dimensions of the student-centered paradigm and of a real school adjustment to the possibilities and needs of the student: the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Dakar Framework for Action at the World Education Forum, the Millennium Development
Goals, UNESCO’s Medium-Term Strategy, 2008-2013. Among the demands for democratizing the contemporary education systems, there is also the issue of transforming the students into subjects of education (though involvement, used methodology, enhanced responsibility) and the adoption of adequate support measures for the socially, intellectually, and physically challenged (alternative schools: Freinet, Montessori, Waldorf, Decroly that allow an individualized training, suited for the capabilities and the rhythm of each student), action directions aimed at adapting the school to the various capabilities and interests of students.

The need of school adjustment to the various educational needs, to the learning and development characteristics of each child is also reflected by the concept “education for all” launched by Jomtiem at the World Conference on Education for All (1990). Providing a quality basic education, acknowledging the diversity of the educational individual needs, engaging in a pedagogy that is student-centered, the right of every child to a complete cycle of elementary school, are a few of Jomtiem’s recommendations in order for everyone to get a basic education. (T. Vrășmaș, 2001, p. 22).

Flexing and individualizing curricula by adapting the educational offer to the individual needs is one of the priorities of the Romanian pre-university education reforms, representing an essential aspect of the curricular system reformation. The principle of decentralizing and flexing the curriculum, which offers the possibility of designing differentiated, personalized curricula, through the segment of curriculum at the school’s decision, one of the principles of educational policy that lied at the basis of the new Romanian pre-university curricula.

Generating a new type of curriculum is characterized by: transitioning from a teacher-centered school to a student-centered school by promoting interactive learning methods, flexing the curriculum, adopting an inter- and transdisciplinary approach to the curriculum, is in accordance with the paradigm of adapting the school to the demands and possibilities of the students, giving all of them an opportunity to identify their interests and to fully use their aptitudes and capabilities.

It is worth noticing that national educational policies support and promote the principle of school adjustment to the needs and capabilities of the students, at the levels of goals and action directions within the
context of national educational policy documents, which is trying to balance the internal priorities with those of European level: Post-Adherence Strategy 2007-2013, National Development Plan 2007-2013, aimed at establishing a good education system, especially by: reconsidering the role of the student, placing his/her needs, interests and demands at the center and ensuring equal opportunities throughout the school year.

2. Learning style of preadolescents

One of the periods which gives evidence of frequent difficulties regarding school adjustment is represented by the beginning of preadolescence, phase which coincides, as for pupils, with the transition from the elementary school to the middle school, and during which, based on a fragile emotional and mental imbalance and on a personality still being shaped, numerous adaptive behaviors are assimilated (L. Tăușan, 2008).

During middle school, in the process of studying different disciplines, a personal reasoning style is formed, the habit of thinking is consolidated and, consequently, the efficiency of the intellectual activity increases and depending on the protesting attitudes of the preadolescent, the intellectual curiosity and the critical thinking develop. In order to fructify the pupil’s whole potential and the efficient organization of the instructional activity, it is necessary to identify the cognitive style specific to each pupil.

Basically, cognitive styles represent the expression of individual and stable preferences, subject to the personality traits of the person, of selecting and analysing the information, that is, of perceiving, memorizing, of thinking over, of conceptualizing and solving problems. They imply a certain mode of functioning and engaging cognitive functions. On the basis of the cognitive style, the individual’s learning style is formed, which comprises a larger domain, including beside the actual ways of engaging the cognitive functions also the preference for diverse types of learning circumstances (I. Cerghit, 2002, p. 209). Learning styles designate the constant utilization of some learning strategies, irrespective of the peculiarity of the learning task, strategies which lead to changes in the pupil’s behavior.

R. Dunn and S. Griggs (1995) identified five main factors which are the cornerstones for the variability of learning styles:
- the concrete environment, the immediate setting (the sound, the light, the temperature, the layout of the furniture and its design);
- affective and motivational elements (the motivation, the tenacity, the sense of responsibility);
- social factors (solitary study, or in groups of different dimensions, next to an authoritative adult or one with a friendly attitude);
- physiological individual characteristics (the biorhythm, the external stimuli, the mobility during study);
- the manner in which pupils process the information (analytic/synthetic reasoning, impulsive/reflexive, left/right cerebral lateralization).

Individual differences regarding these variables generate the preference for a strategy or a set of learning strategies, which will be employed constantly, regardless of the characteristics of the learning situation, achieving the adjustment to the specificity of the learning task, through selecting the optimum strategy from the present ensemble in relation to which the individual manifests preference.

The task of the teaching staff, with respect to the diversity of the learning styles is to know the learning styles of the pupils, to help them be mindful as well of their distinctive learning style and to support them in accomplishing learning assignments, taking into account each style.

D. Sălăvăstru (2009, pp. 162-163) describes three methods of identifying the learning style:

- self-analysis and introspection into one’s own behavior and learning experiences so as to become aware of preferences specific to the personal learning style. The teacher may assist the self-analysis step by addressing some questions (How do you study?, Which stages do you go through?, Do you use schemes or annotations?, Do you take notes?, Do you prefer reading or listening?, Do you prefer studying alone or with someone else?)
- the use of instruments for measuring the learning styles, questionnaires which allow the identification of preferences to broach the learning tasks;
- the employment of descriptions, of characterizations, of explanations concerning the learning styles created by different authors;
The fair evaluation of the pupils’ learning styles will enable the teaching staff:
- to utilize appropriate teaching styles, compatible with the learning styles, in order to take advantage of all learning resources;
- to contribute to the reinforcement and the development of the pupils’ learning styles, by the means of using adequate teaching-learning techniques, methods;
- to achieve a differentiated treatment of the pupils, an individualization of instruction;

Simultaneously, in reference to pupils, the identification of learning styles contributes to: the development of knowing oneself, the exclusion of some obstacles in the learning process, the improvement of self-esteem, the prominence of learning abilities, the enhancement of learning by developing a personal style, and obtaining better school results.

The focus on using predominant didactic methods to the detriment of methodological variety, which would welcome numerous learning styles, may determine difficulties regarding school adjustment, especially at the beginning of middle school, when pupils are constrained to accommodate to diverse teaching styles employed by each teacher. The call for didactic methods, as varied and as adapted to educational circumstances as possible, balances out the pupils’ chances of succeeding, avoiding giving privileges to some, while disadvantaging others.

3. Experimental investigation on the formation of an effective learning style to pre-teens

In a wider experimental investigation, which proposed the development and implementation of intervention programs to help prevent / improve school adjustment difficulties for preteen students (students in 5th grades), one set of operational indicators relate to: development behaviors responsible for self learning through skills training, acquisition of techniques, strategies for enhancing learning effectiveness.

To identify how the students work, and their learning style, based predominantly on mechanical memorization, or of logic, as well as school performance, we used the following tools: pedagogical
characterization sheet (developed by I. Radu), and a questionnaire for students (L. Tăușan, 2008).

The data recorded on the pedagogical characterization sheet, style of work on how the students work are summarizing in Table no. 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style of work- how do they work</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Systematic, rhythmic, organized</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unequal, with fluctuations, in jumps</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sloppy, improvised responses, copying homework</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large gaps in knowledge, backlogs in school</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, we see that about half of the students enrolled in the sample (40.8%) is highlighted through a systematic work, continuous, well-organized. Those whose academic performance is uneven, fluctuating is 38.8%, while lagging behind students in school and those who come to lessons unprepared represents 20.4% of the sample.

Regarding the variable related to how students assimilate knowledge, predominantly using mechanical or logical store, the quantification of item no. 10 of the questionnaire for students, we obtained the following results (Table no. 2):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do you prepare your homework now?</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learn lessons more by heart</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn lessons more logically</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>55,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary data show that students tend to learn by heart the lesson content, persists in grade 50% of students say they learn lessons using mechanical memorization. Habit persistence students "to learn by heart" may generate situations of fatigue, decreased memory ability and concentration, resulting in disinterest in school work.
Adapting school to meet the demands of students …

Considering the changes that occur within school activities: increasing the number of subjects studied, increasing the difficulty of their contents is necessary to support students in forming a new learning style, adapted to new school requirements. The teacher must impart a new style of intellectual activity to the student, which is based on the assimilation of methods and techniques for learning: taking notes, to learn effective ways depending on the volume of the contents to be assimilated.

Data describing the work style of students, perseverance, continuity in the learning and how students assimilate knowledge, predominantly using mechanical or logical store may be illustrated by the following graphic:

**Fig 1. Work style of students, how students assimilate knowledge**

One of the interventions made in the experimental phase of the investigation, relate to: the implementation of appropriate activities in the curricular area "Counseling and Guidance", which meet the real needs of pre-teens from the fifth grade. For The Management Module the held projection themes were: My style and learning strategies; Learning motivation and its sources; How do I memorize?; How do I learn?; Effective reading, How do I take notes?, Preteen's daily schedule; How I can organize my time?.

Like a plan of the activities, we have chosen one based on the interaction with the students, offering them the possibility to express what they know and to learn by discovery what they are interested of.
We also started from the premise that the success of “Advice and guidance” classes is ensured by the active and responsible involvement of the form master professor (advisor) and also of the students, making a student-student and professor-student interaction, based on reciprocal respect and trust.

For that purpose, we used interactive methods, especially methods based on debate and group work, of which we mention: brainstorming, ”Phillips 6/6”, debate, questioning, group work, role play, exercise, “Gallery tour”, “One stays, the others move on”, SWOT analyze, cluster method, dyad work, the method “ know – want to know-learnt”, SINELG method, and so on.

To realize the specific goal of the ‘Advice and guidance” classes, self-knowledge and personal development of the students, a constructive attitude, generating positive behaviours should be adopted by the teacher, and also by the students, being characterized by:

- Respect for others’ ideas ;
- Capacity of actively listening ;
- Mutual emotional support ;
- Recognition of own limits
- Recognition of dignity and worth of others, with their strengths and weaknesses without judging or criticizing;
- Empathy, the ability to understand another person way of thinking, feeling and behaving
- Positive thinking regarding the personal development potential, and encouraging the students self esteem.

During the control stage of the experiment, re-evaluating the investigated indicator, we re-applied the used instruments and we obtained the following results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style of work – how are they working</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Systematic, rhythmic, organized</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>63,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unequal, with turnovers, leapingly</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careless, improvises responses, copies homework</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large gaps in knowledge, backlogs at schooling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comparing those dates with the ones recorded in the acknowledgement phase (Chart no.1), there is an evolution observed in terms of preadolescents students work style, embodied in the increasing of the ones working systemic and organised, and also in decreasing of the weight of the students having large gaps in knowledge and backlogs in schooling.

Referring to the way in which the students assimilate their knowledge, using predominantly logical or mechanical retention, we obtained the following results:

Table no. 4: How do you prepare your homework now?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swot learning</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logically learning</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>85.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we analyze by comparison the starting dates referring to this variable (Chart no 2), with the dates obtained during the control stage, we will see a significant evolution of the investigated test sample, meaning the emphasize moving from the swot retention to the logical retention for a large number of students. The results referring to the students work style, perseverance in learning activity, and also the way of knowledge retention, obtained following the re-appliance of the two instruments, are graphically illustrated in the following image:

Fig 2: Students working style, the way of knowledge assimilation
4. Results

Comparisons made between the analyzed dimensions, during the two stages of investigation (work style, the way in which the students are working and the way in which they assimilate their knowledge), certifies us the importance and utility of our interventions made by conveyance of the “Advice and guidance” classes, and especially of the ones included in the theme “Learning management”. Those considered especially the students committal in generating a new learning style adapted to the new scholar expectations.

Considering the changes appeared in teenage, both in the bio-psychological, and the plan of educational-instructive activity, due to which, once the completion of gymnasium, a new learning style takes shape, the acknowledgement and correct evaluation problems of the students’ styles, of creating the necessary conditions to valorise the full learning potential, and also to help the student in adoption of a certain efficient intellectual activity style, adapted to the new requests, become more acute during this period.

The teacher has to imprint to the student a new style in the intellectual activity, presuming assimilation of some adequate learning methods and techniques and training the thinking in new complex activities.

Transmittal of those methods and techniques for intellectual work and helping the students to assimilate them, should be the object of the teachers attention, no matter the development stage of the students working of, this fact imposing more imperative in the case of teenage students, being to the beginning of the gymnasium, and which are obligated to adapt to the new requests involving both the changes asserted in bio-psychological plan, and also in the changes of the educational-instructive activity plan.

Bibliography:

Adapting school to meet the demands of students …


Annexes:

The items valued during the investigation, selected from the two instruments used:

*Questionnaire for students:*

How do you prepare your homework now? [Mark only a response]

1. Swot learning
2. Logical learning, meaning, based on the main ideas of the lesson, trying to express in my words what I’ve learnt.
3. Other response (which one) ……………………………………….

*Student data sheet*

*Work style:*

a) How are they working:

- Systematic, rhythmic, organized
- Unequal, with turnovers, leaping alternating the intense preparation with lapse periods
- Careless, improvises responses, copies homework
- Large gaps in knowledge, backlogs at schooling
COOPERATIVE LEARNING

J. Varga, A. Vidra

Janeta Varga, Alina Vidra
Liceul Teoretic “Vasile Goldiș” Arad

Abstract: Over two thousand years ago, Aristotle visionary said that all those who pondered over the secret to govern the city concluded that it depended on how the city was educated in general.

Therefore, according to the paradigm which says that “education is the basis of the society”, reconsidering the importance of education to society in general and restoring confidence in education and school are key issues for our time. These issues go beyond the theoretical because the progress of nations, large and small, depends on education rather than on the economical factor, the latter couldn’t achieve its goals as long as education and its products haven’t paved its way.

The conclusion which is self-evident is that investment in education is compulsory and those who will delay it will face increasing costs that they will never be able to pay.

Keywords: work groups, cooperative, education system.

* 

Getting a new quality means, however, profound transformations of the educational system: reform or adjustment, remodeling or rethinking, flexibility and refreshing – all these being upsetting questions for contemporary teachers. (G.Văideanu, 1988).

“Tomorrow’s illiterate will not be the one who can not read, but that who hasn’t learnt how to learn.” (A. Toffler, 1973)

Cooperative learning is a structured and systematic training strategy in which small groups work together to achieve a common goal. The premise of cooperative learning is that the subjects working in a team are able to apply and systematize knowledge in complex and various ways, at the same time working harder than working individually.
Teamwork develops students’ ability to work together – an important skill for the life and activity of the future citizens.

Cooperative learning leads to personal development through self awareness activities in small groups. It calls for tolerance of different ways of thinking and feeling valuing students’ need to work together in a friendly environment of mutual support.

**Cooperation** or working with someone, involves **collaboration** that is active participation in an operation based on exchanging proposals, ideas. Although the two concepts are synonymous, distinctions of meaning can be made. Collaboration means a form of collaborative relationships between students which consist in solving problems of common interest in which each member contributes actively and effectively, while cooperation means a form of learning, studying, interpersonal interaction of varying lengths resulting from the mutual influence of the subjects involved.

Cooperative learning involves joint action of several individuals (students and teachers) to achieve common goals through influences enjoyed by everyone involved. The collaboration focuses on tasks while the cooperation on the process of achieving the task. Cooperation is a superior form of interaction in the learning process which includes collaboration.

Competition and collaboration are practices met in modern school and they are both necessary. The competition becomes destructive for the harmony of the educational climate when it is exacerbated and becomes an end in itself. Teachers need to balance the two forms of organization of the educational process, creating learning opportunities based on group activities that encourage competition and maintain constructive cooperation.

Studies plead for the use of methods based on cooperation in school activities. Learning situations, the nature of content, the type of task, the objectives are all important factors to be taken into account when choosing a particular type of interaction.
The principles of cooperative learning

Cooperative learning is based on the following principles:

1. **Positive interdependence** – the success of the group depends on the individual efforts to solve the task.
2. **Individual responsibility** – refers to the fact that each member of the group assumes the responsibility to solve the task.
3. **Training and developing social skills** – stimulating personal intelligence which refers to the ability to communicate with each other, to receive support when you need, to provide support, the ability to solve conflict situations.
4. **Face to face interaction** – means direct contact with the working partner, arranging the classroom furniture so that small groups of interaction can be created, groups in which students encourage and help each other.
5. **The division of tasks** in a group and the reflection on how the task will be solved by each member or by the group.

**The group – a central element of cooperative learning**

It is well known that “students learn better when they about what they learn, when they are directly motivated to achieve something, when there is a purpose, there is a responsibility and a commitment on what to do.” (Crenguţa Oprea, 2000)

Discussing the structure of student-student relationship, many teachers have formulated the following question: “When is learning more productive, when working alone or in a group?”

Analyzing the question, the contributory factors of cooperative learning arose:

1. stimulation during the task is enhanced by the presence of the others
2. the group resources (memory, attention) are richer than individual
3. there are greater chances that among the members of the group one of them to be able to find a solution
4. random errors are compensated, the overall result of the group will be more accurate than of the individual in isolation
5. “blind spots” are corrected; it is easier to recognize the others’ mistakes than our own mistakes
6. stimulating the emergence of new ideas is the result of cumulative action
7. one can learn from others’ experience
The factors that hinder the group work and sometimes make the groups less effective than individual work:

1. The opposition of goals, interests and habits of the members can make the collaboration extremely difficult
2. Difficulties in communication (for young students)
3. Coordination difficulties grow when the groups are bigger
4. Distraction and overestimation make it difficult to obtain individual effort
5. Excessive reliance on others can be favoured by group activity

Analyzing the dynamics of the group as a tool for psychological action, Constantin Cucoș specifies that a dynamic field is formed whose organization, unity and functionality is based on the interdependence of its members, which in turn bears all their efforts. This opens the path to using the group as a system of training and psychological change.

There are three main general groups:
- Informal learning groups
- Formal learning groups
- Team study

In terms of group size, for maximum efficiency, the researchers recommend that the groups should be smaller i.e. 6 -7 members. A class consisting of 24 students is the right number to organize cooperative activities because the teams are formed of 2, 4, 6, 8 or 12 students.

The stages of cooperative learning
Cooperative learning involves a dynamic and an activism continuously supported by the participants’ efforts. The stages of teamwork strategy involve taking into account the favourable and unfavourable factors which contribute to solving the problems in a team.

The stages:
- The formation of the working group
- Making familiar with the situation to be solved, setting priorities and responsibilities
- Documentation and research phase (can take a longer or a shorter period of time)
- The phase of collective debate, confrontation of ideas, analysis of errors and strong points;
“The quality of cooperative learning depends on the quality of democratic debate established between students through intellectual rigor and ethics in communication which means listening to and respecting your partners, seeking to understand their views, the way they think, the need for opinions and point of views to build your own thinking.” (Muşata Bacoş, 2002)

- Getting conclusions and solving the problem. Here takes place the integration of the new acquisitions by restructuring the existing system in the light of the newly acquired.

Effective cooperation refers to relationships of good understanding between team members, the acceptance of all group members of the working plan to achieve the common goal, the adoption of a common way to communicate the results and evaluate the solution.

**Favourable effects of cooperative learning**

Cooperative learning strategy gives students an opportunity to carry out the need to work together in a collegial atmosphere of self-help and mutual support. The group enables to test ideas, review the opinions and develop interpersonal intelligence.

Group work covers the shortcomings of individualized learning with considerable importance on the social dimension, thus developing interpersonal processes.

Cooperation provides an open relationship between partners, develops attitudes and behaviours based on trust promoting the formation of a positive attitude towards school and learning. Teamwork has significant effects on the students’ personality, the interaction with partners being an intellectual stimulant and a trigger for the exchange of views and information. The solutions issued by the group may suffer improvements and adjustments, critical analysis developing the participants’ self-evaluation skills.

Cooperative learning fosters verbal and intellectual exchange and relies on a learning approach that takes into account the opinions of the others.

Studies show that cooperative learning is superior to individual learning, it has a better productivity, it engages higher mental processes and develops critical thinking. It also develops better interpersonal relationships, a better psychological tonus best reflected in the assertion of the ego, social skills, self-respect and the ability to withstand stress conditions and adversity situations.
Interactive group methods and techniques

a) Teaching-learning group interactive methods: “Mosaics”, “Waterfalls”, “Pyramid method”, “I know/I want to know/ I have learnt”, “Reciprocal teaching”


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ACTIVE & COOPERATIVE LEARNING
PREPARING OUR STUDENTS
FOR KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

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Abstract: The phenomenon of globalization is a unanimous feature of contemporary society. It states that there are only various cultures always in the plural; their variety is an endless source of refreshing our vision of the words and of defining individuals and humanity. This phenomenon also reflects on the learning process and identifies it at all the levels of social organization, from the individual to the society. Learning now means change and communication: its processes are generated by the individuals’ need to change and to exchange views with each other. The aim of tomorrow’s education is thus to build students who are aware of their talents, who can set their own goals, who are ready to take risks, who can establish plans according to their priorities, who can evaluate their own work and progress and who can step forward with their creative ideas. Active and cooperative learning are, therefore, the most important educational tools that can be employed in order for our students to face successfully the challenges of the knowledge society of the 21st century. The diversified methods incorporated by these strategies will help build not only proficient students, but also complex and skilled individuals who will later belong to social groups such as families and work teams, the main societies in which they will spend most of their time and perform their activities.

Keywords: Active, Cooperation, Modern, Method, Communication, Change.

I. Why active and cooperative learning?

The world we live in witnesses a rapid increase in its complexity. Globalization, with its political, social and economical spheres, requires individuals a more pregnant need for knowledge and skills, both at individual and institutional levels.

Moreover, globalization also implies that cultures should merge, since there is no culture with a capital letter; there are only various cultures always in the plural; their variety is an endless source of
refreshing our vision of the words and of defining individuals and humanity (Nedelcu, 2008). This perspective is also reflected on the learning process and identifies it at all the levels of social organization, from the individual to the society. Learning now means change and communication: its processes are generated by the individuals’ need to change and to exchange views with each other.

The national education system is therefore now making an effort to align itself to the present trend of economical and political integration. There is a clear preoccupation for developing basic and advanced skills in our students, skills that are applicable in an unpredictable society which transgresses form the dimension of international education to global education, propositions of creating an interest in foreign cultures and a determination to build a competent workforce which help countries to compete globally.

In order for our students to cope with these new demands, we must offer them an educational environment that helps them meet the challenges of the world they live in. For instance, British teachers intend to focus more on using tools such as e-learning, social networking, Web 2.0 technologies (advanced Internet technology and applications including blogs, wikis, RSS and social bookmarking) and informal learning approaches in order to meet the latest social demands. Similarly, the Dutch secondary education is in the process of creating learning environments intended to stimulate new forms of learning, based on the idea that learning is a social-interactive, contextual, constructive, self-regulated and reflective process In addition to learning products (i.e., knowledge and skills), the functions of learning and “learning to learn” are coming to be valued as learning goals. This means that teachers in secondary schools must be not simply knowledge providers, but also guides to the learning process. Students, moreover, must become more active and more independent learners. Finally, the new forms of learning call for an increase in cooperative learning and thus require students to learn new roles in relation to each other (de Kock, Sleegers, Voeten, 2004).

Active and cooperative learning techniques are therefore the key methods that can help the Romanian educational system prepare its students for the challenges of the 21st century.
II. The difference between active learning and cooperative learning

In recent years, we have noticed an unprecedented interest among teachers in the principles and methods pertaining to the fields of “active learning” and “cooperative learning”. However, these terms are still quite misunderstood and teachers still mistrust the pedagogical movement behind the words.

Active Learning is a term that refers to anything that students do in a classroom other than merely passively listening to an instructor's lecture. When learning is active, students do most of the work. They study ideas, solve problems and apply what they learn. Active learning is fast-paced, fun, supportive, and personally engaging. To learn something well, it helps to hear it, see it, ask questions about it, and discuss it with others. Above all, students need to 'do it', figure things out by themselves, come up with examples, try out skills, and do assignments that depend on the knowledge they already have or must acquire. The responsibility of learning now shifts from the teacher to the students themselves. Here is the opinion of one student about his/her experience as an active learning student: “For the first time in my life, I was asked to guide my education, to problem solve, to reflect on the value of what I was learning for my own practice. The instructors who taught this diploma program did not only promote the value of active learning: they practiced it! And I became a convert... Sure, the instructors could have spent all their time telling me how great active learning is – but instead, they asked me to reflect on its value. In the end, that was the critical element that made me see its value. I had to discover it for myself.” Active learning strategies have thus been quite efficient in improving students’ thinking and writing, motivating them for further study and in an increased retention of material, as opposed to the outcome of traditional teaching approaches.

Examples of active learning include written exercises, a reflexive essay or a daily journal. Using meaningful materials and taking into account the principles of multi-sensory learning are important elements in creating an active learning environment.

Cooperative Learning, on the other hand, covers the subset of active learning activities which students do as groups of three or more, rather than alone or in pairs. This method helps students develop leadership skills and the ability to work as part of a team. Each cooperative learning group should be carefully selected by the teacher.
so that a heterogeneous structure allows each student to bring his or her strengths to the group effort. Cooperative learning is to be distinguished from another now well-defined term of art, "collaborative learning", which refers to those classroom strategies which have the instructor and the students placed on an equal footing working together in, for example, designing assignments, choosing texts and presenting material to the class (Bonwell, 1991). When planning cooperative learning activities, teacher should describe precisely what students are expected to learn and what they are able to do on their own. However, it is not sufficient for teachers to select these objectives: students must perceive these aims as their own, they must understand that each member of the group needs to master the common set of information/skills. Research has proved that students completing cooperative learning group tasks tend to have higher academic test scores, higher self-esteem, greater numbers of positive social skills, fewer stereotypes of individuals of other races or ethnic groups and greater comprehension of the content and skills they are studying (Stahl, 1994).

II.1. Active learning principles and illustrations

1. Building blocks of learning: students are presented with meaningful problem solving activities that require higher order thinking built upon learning the basic skills.

2. Student responsibility for learning: students take responsibility for setting goals, scheduling time, utilizing resources and making other responsible decisions.

3. Works well collaboratively: students engage in collaborative, open-ended problem solving with peers, as well as working independently when needed.

4. High social capital: students have strong, consistent relationships with adults in school; parents are involved as partners in the learning process.

5. Technology infusion: technology is used as a tool and a resource to support learning.

6. Global citizenship: students understand their role as contributors to a global society and make strides to contribute to the betterment of their family, community and the world.

7. Individual learning path: teachers differentiate instruction to meet the needs of individual learners.
8. Connected learning: students see learning as being connected, both across the disciplines and their lives.

9. Student behavior: students will consistently reflect upon and monitor personal behaviors.

10. High academic standards: all students are expected to challenge themselves to learn utilizing teachers, peers and other resources to meet with success\(^1\).

** Multi-sensory learning: students have different needs and learning styles of learners, as well as different ways of processing and retaining information: some tend to be more visual; others more auditory, while others still are predominantly \textit{kinesthetic}, i.e. they learn by \textit{doing}; most students, however, learn a new skill or knowledge best by using a combination of the visual, auditory and kinesthetic senses.

An example of active learning typical to an English literature class would be the \textit{double entry diary}, a method which leads to a close connection between the text (particularly long texts) and the readers’ experience and curiosity. In order to make such a diary, students have to draw a two-column table. In the first column they will write down a passage from the text which had a great impact upon them – it reminded them of a personal experience, they agree or disagree with it, or they consider it as a hallmark of an author’s style – followed by the second column, where they will have to motivate and comment on their choices. These diary entries will be extremely useful after finishing reading the text, when they reflect upon the literary texts and interpret it.

\textbf{II.2 Cooperative learning principles and illustrations}

1. Heterogeneous grouping: the groups in which students do cooperative learning tasks are mixed on one or more of a number of variables including sex, ethnicity, social class, religion, personality, age, language proficiency, and diligence.

2. Collaborative skills, such as giving reasons, are those needed to work with others.

3. Group autonomy: students are encouraged to look to themselves for resources rather than relying solely on the teacher.

4. Simultaneous interaction: in classrooms in which group activities are not used, the normal interaction pattern is that of sequential interaction, in which one person at a time – usually the

\(^1\) Adapted from IDE Corp-www.idecorp.com
Active & cooperative learning…

teacher – speaks. In contrast, when group activities are used, one student per group is speaking; in a class of 40 divided into groups of four, ten students are speaking simultaneously.

5. Equal participation: cooperative learning offers many ways of promoting more equal participation among group members.

6. Individual accountability: when we try to encourage individual accountability in groups, we hope that everyone will try to learn and to share their knowledge and ideas with others.

7. Positive interdependence: when positive interdependence exists among members of a group, they feel that what helps one member of the group helps the other members and that what hurts one member of the group hurts the other members. It is this “All for one, one for all” feeling that leads group members to want to help each other, to see that they share a common goal.

8. Cooperation as a value: rather than cooperation being only a way to learn, i.e., the how of learning, cooperation also becomes part of the content to be learned, i.e., the what of learning. This flows naturally from the most crucial cooperative learning principle, positive interdependence. Cooperation as a value involves taking the feeling of “All for one, one for all” and expanding it beyond the small classroom group to encompass the whole class, the whole school, on and on, bringing in increasingly greater numbers of people and other beings into students’ circle of ones with whom to cooperate.

The snow ball method is an example of a cooperative activity which works in teams of 7 or 8 students. They are given a theme and each member of the group has to write is own opinion about it, and put it in the centre of the table. The whole team then arranges these ideas on a scale from 1 to 8, and keeps in mind 2-3 of these ideas. The class unites and each group presents its 3 most important ideas. In this way, all the relevant aspects will be remembered by all the members of the class.

III. The roles of the teacher in active and cooperative learning

In order to update the educational system to the new social trends and demands, we must also focus upon the roles of the teacher and the student. We have to complete the teacher’s competence profile with new roles of support in the construction of students’ skills, with the

2 Adapted from http://www.readingmatrix.com/conference/pp/proceedings/jacobs.pdf
affirmation of reflexive involvement in action-research, with the application of inter- and trans-disciplinarity in the formation of transversal skills, and the creative application of the syllabus based on competence development (Joita, 2010).

Thus, the new responsibilities of the teachers involve the following: to announce the learning context; to formulate ideas, suggestions, and personal hypotheses; to ensure direct connections with other sources of information; to incorporate practical tasks wherever possible; to use collaborative learning strategies; to integrate learning activities using a range of different media; to ensure instruments for independent learning; to stimulate learning independently, in a group, or directly; to encourage autonomy, initiative and personal reflection; to offer opportunities for exploration, analysis, explanation and applying data in real situations; to solicit each student in all the phases of the learning process; to design activities where the students can invest their new acquisitions; to undertake the role of monitor, parent/friend, diagnostician, adviser, informer and guide.

All the above mentioned responsibilities can be summed up as part of the four key roles of contemporary teachers: policy members in practice, implementers of education policy and partners.

**Conclusions**

In the following years, literacy will acquire a completely new dimension as opposed to what it used the mean in previous years; the literacy of the future will include information technology, citizenship and personal skills, and lifelong learning, all key attributes for students’ future success.

The aim of tomorrow’s education is to build students who are aware of their talents, who can set their own goals, who are ready to take risks, who can establish plans according to their priorities, who can evaluate their own work and progress and who can step forward with their creative ideas.

Active and cooperative learning are, therefore, the most important educational tools that can be employed in order for our students to face successfully the challenges of the knowledge society of the 21st century. The diversified methods incorporated by these strategies will help build not only proficient students, but also complex and skilled individuals who will later belong to social groups such as
families and work teams, the main societies in which they will spend most of their time and perform their activities.

**Bibliography:**


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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SYLLOGISTIC REASONING AND INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: In our daily activity, sometimes we have to take a quick decision, without having sufficient data. Reasoning steps in, which determines us to issue a series of judgments that will lead us to choose a satisfying version? Often people resort to heuristics for making a decision. In this study, we will examine the relationship between the cognitive abilities and four types of responses in syllogistic reasoning tasks, during childhood. The connection between age and reasoning is mediated by cognitive abilities. The results highlight a concordance with the previously mentioned aspects.

Keywords: cognitive ability, syllogistic reasoning, cognitive development, heuristics

1. Introduction

Deduction refers to the process of reaching a conclusion on the basis of some given premises. Logic is a formal domain which attempts to characterize the specific forms of argumentation as being valid or invalid. In other words, logic provides the norms of textbooks for correct deductions, norms which are often used explicitly in academic context in order to evaluate deductive reasoning.

Deductive reasoning implies making inferences on the basis of some given premises. Making logical inferences is a key element of human thinking (Markovits & Barrouillet, 2002). Although there were evidenced people’s abilities to reason in a deductive manner, studies demonstrate the variability with regard to inferential performance.

The syllogistic reasoning is a component of critical thinking, constituting the starting point for a lot of theoretical and empirical studies. That implies making inferences with a major premise and with one of the following minor premises: modus ponens (MP), modus tollens (MT), denying the antecedent (NA) and affirming the
consequent (AC). Further on we will present these forms of syllogistic reasoning. If the first two forms (MP, MT) are valid logical forms because they favour correct logical conclusions, the last two forms (NA, AC) are forms which lead to incorrect conclusions.

Table nr. 1. Forms of syllogistic reasoning (Markovits & Barrouillet, 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Premise</th>
<th>Minor Premise</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P implies Q</td>
<td>P is true</td>
<td>Q is true</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P implies Q</td>
<td>Q is false</td>
<td>P is false</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P implies Q</td>
<td>P is false</td>
<td>Q is false</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P implies Q</td>
<td>Q is true</td>
<td>P is false</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With regard to deductive reasoning, two research directions have been identified. One of them implies studying performances with classical syllogisms: modus ponens, denying the antecedent, affirming the consequent and modus tollens. In this paradigm, subjects receive two premises and are asked to determine the truth value of the conclusion or are asked to establish the validity of the entire form. The second research strategy targets the development of selection tasks which implies the assessment of the conditional assertions. In the basic version, known as Wason selection task (1966, 1968), four cards are presented containing a vowel, a consonant, an even number and an uneven number, together with the rule: “If the vowel is on one side of the card, then an even number will be will be on the other side”. The participant is asked to select sufficient cards to verify the rule. The solution is to select the vowel and the uneven number. Both adults and children have low performances in this task. The most frequent pattern implies choosing a vowel and the even number.

The mental model theory (Johnson-Laird et al., 1986) implies that deductive reasoning covers three main stages:

- **Stage I** – those who reason imagine a typical situation in which premises are true. The important thing is that this theory does not have a subjective character.

- **Stage II** – those who reason will explore the built models to determine whether they can reach conclusions. The fact that people reach informative valid conclusions has important implications for
psychology; any theory which implies that there is an internalized logic is not sufficient to explain the human deductive competence.

Stage III – to guarantee the validity of the conclusion, those who reason must take into consideration if there is another model of the premises which lack affirmation.

Thus, in the first phase, a model is built for the first premise. Then new information is added for the second premise. In the third stage, people make an inference from their integrated model. The conclusion expresses a relationship which is not explicitly laid down in the premises. The final stage consists of testing the conclusion. People search for counterexamples, constructing alternative models. These models represent different situations from the original. When these alternative models are built, people can determine which conclusion is true for all their models. The simple syllogism states that people should be able to build a single representation and draw a conclusion. The multiple model of the syllogism tends to be more difficult because people should not consider all possible models, with a greater probability for them to commit errors (Copeland, 2006).

Syllogistic reasoning theories are classified into three categories. The first category is based on the idea that reasoning depends on the manipulation of verbally encoded internal representations. The second category proposes that reasoning depends on the manipulation of spatial/analogical representations corresponding to possible factual states. The last category postulates that reasoning is achieved through heuristics that are automatically activated (Capon, Handley & Dennis, 2003).

After the study conducted on children’s syllogistic reasoning (Johnson-Laird et al., 1986), the authors propose a different theory: children learn to form mental representations of the premises on the basis of understanding real conditions, to draw informative conclusions from such representations and to seek alternative representations that serve counterexample to formal conclusions.

Piaget (1977, apud Muller, Overton & Sokol, 1999) considered that logical implication develops in childhood at the same level at which they often understand the law of duality. Four standard syllogistic arguments can be constructed. Each consists of a major premise (conditional or the rule “if ..... then”), a minor premise and a conclusion. In some studies on logical implication, children were presented with the rule: “All watches manufactured in September are
faulty” and were asked to find the correct conclusion for each of the four forms of argumentation:

1. Modus ponens - “All watches manufactured in September are faulty; this is a watch manufactured in September; is this watch faulty?”; the correct answer to this question is “yes”.

2. Denying the antecedent - “All watches which were manufactured in September are faulty; this is a watch which was not manufactured in September; is this watch faulty?”; the correct answer to this question is: “cannot say” because we have an uncertain conclusion.

3. Affirming the consequent - All watches manufactured in September are faulty; this watch is faulty; was it manufactured in September?”. The correct answer to this question is: “cannot say” because we have an uncertain conclusion.

4. Modus tollens - “All watches which were manufactured in September are faulty; this watch is not faulty; was it manufactured in September?” The correct answer is: “no”.

Morf (1957, apud Muller, Overton & Sokol, 1999) and Piaget (1977, apud Muller, Overton & Sokol, 1999) stated that those children who are at the stage of concrete operations and who gave correct answers to tasks for inclusion in some classes make mistakes at conditions 2 and 3. They said that a watch which was manufactured in September must be faulty and a watch that was not manufactured in September can not be faulty. Thus, they do not realize that a controlling class of faulty watches (B) includes both watches manufactured in September (A) and watches manufactured in other months (A’), in other words, the children rendered the conditional rule in a symmetric or mutual one.

Noelting et al. (1993, apud Muller, Overton & Sokol, 1999) identified levels of reasoning comparable to Piaget’s stages. At pre-operational level, children are able to use only one transformation to a single statement. They do not prove the necessary competence to apply a transformation to another transformation, nor to capture the relationship between two sentences with the same meaning. At the level of concrete operations, children manifest the ability to coordinate two or more operations. This aspect can be illustrated with an example of items involving three transformations. In this example, the statement referring to hiding place “A” states: “The object is not here” and the child is told that this statement is false; the statement referring to hiding place B
states: “the object is not hidden in B” and the child is told that the statement is true. In the concrete operations stage, they say that the object must be hidden in B. At the level of formal operations, children manifest the ability to reason in a hypothetical-deductive manner. For items that require this kind of reasoning, children are asked to say how many statements are true and how many statements are false, but they were not told which statements they should apply the value of truth to.

2. Study Objectives and Hypotheses
This study is a pilot study in which we wish to highlight the various forms of syllogistic reasoning, comparing preschoolers and young schoolchildren. Also, we aim to capture the relationship between forms of syllogistic reasoning and intellectual development. Thus, we have postulated that chronological age significantly influences children’s responses to the proposed reasoning tasks. Also, the tasks of reasoning represent a predictor of children’s cognitive development.

3. Participants
In this study, we included 57 participants, including 32 children under school age and 25 small schoolchildren. This sample was selected from educational institutions in Oradea.

4. Research Methods
In order to achieve objectives, we used the following methods:
- Vocabulary Scale WISC - R
  It is considered a measure of verbal information learning skills and of ordering the ideas determined by the educational frame and cultural environment. This scale includes a list of 32 words, which the child must explain. 0, 1 or 2 points can be awarded.
- Reasoning tasks (Annex 1)
  Reasoning tasks were used in the studies of Klaczynsky and Cottrell (2004), Kokis et al. (2002) Epstein, Lipson, Holstein, and Huh (1992) and Tversky and Kahneman (1983, apud Morsanyi & Handley, 2008). In the first three types of reasoning, participants were provided the following response variants: normative, heuristic and other variants. In the case of the fourth one, there are two response variants: normative and heuristic. All questions are confrontational in nature.
The relationship between syllogistic reasoning and intellectual development

- **if-only fallacy**
  It is a type of counterfactual thinking. Counterfactual thoughts are thoughts about “what should be” and usually lead to negative things. Often, they help people learn from their experiences, but can also bring cognitive biases.

- **sunk cost fallacy**
  Current decisions are based on wrong past decisions. A goal in which people invest time, money and effort may not be desirable. In this situation, they may choose to invest more personal resources or abort it.

- **the syllogistic reasoning**
  Syllogistic reasoning asks children to determine whether different types of inferences lead to valid or invalid conclusions. These are:
  - Modus ponens: “if p ...then q”, “p.... therefore  q”
  - Modus tollens: “if p..... then q”, “non q..... therefore  non p”
  - Denying the antecedent: “if p ..... then q”, “non p .... therefore  non q”
  - Affirming the consequent: “if p .... then q”, “q ...... therefore  p”

- **conjunction fallacy**

5. Findings
  Table nr. 2 Comparing results obtained at “conjunction fallacy” task, according to chronological age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response type</th>
<th>Normative</th>
<th>Heuristic</th>
<th>Another response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chron age.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6 years</td>
<td>15,4%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>47,5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7 years</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>22,5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-9 years</td>
<td>84,6%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In concordance with existing theories, we conclude that heuristic responses are present in a higher percentage with 8-9 years old children compared to others. This type of reasoning is used by children as a basis for their judgments whenever the object of judgment is less accessible than a feature that may be related and that can lead to a plausible answer. Therefore, a lot of children of 8 / 9 years have resorted to heuristic type response, “Tim goes to chess tournaments.” an aspect
appearance which arises from the statement: “He likes sports in the park.”

Table nr. 3 Comparing results obtained at “if-only fallacy” task according to chronological age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response type</th>
<th>Normative</th>
<th>Heuristic</th>
<th>Another response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chron age.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>42,4%</td>
<td>57,1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6 years</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>28,6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7 years</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>14,3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table nr. 4 Comparing results obtained at “sunk-cost fallacy” task according to chronological age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response type</th>
<th>Normative</th>
<th>Heuristic</th>
<th>Another response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chron age.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>42,4%</td>
<td>57,1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6 years</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>28,6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7 years</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>14,3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analyzing children’s responses, it can be observed that in 8 / 9 years children, there predominate the heuristic responses to the given task, an aspect which can explained by the ability that they have already mastered, in the process of solving school tasks, that of completing an action, regardless of obstacles.

Table nr. 4 Comparing results obtained at “modus ponens” task according to chronological age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response type</th>
<th>Normative</th>
<th>Heuristic</th>
<th>Another response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chron age.</td>
<td>21,2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>71,4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6 years</td>
<td>18,2%</td>
<td>33,3%</td>
<td>14,3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7 years</td>
<td>60,6%</td>
<td>66,7%</td>
<td>14,3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The relationship between syllogistic reasoning and intellectual development

Table nr. 5 Comparing results obtained at “modus tolens” task according to chronological age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chron age.</th>
<th>Normative</th>
<th>Heuristic</th>
<th>Another response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-6 years</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7 years</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-9 years</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results from Table 4 and 5 show that at 8-9 years, children begin to apply logical thinking strategies, a thing which is highlighted by the high percentage of normative responses at this age. However, we notice a fairly high percentage under the heading ‘another response’ (incorrect answer), even in these children. They do not have the ability to decontextualize already formed representations, which would require a much higher cognitive effort, the result being random or incorrect responses. At the age of 5-6 years, children tend to give answers at random, most often wrong ones because the reasoning in solving a problem can be influenced by prior information or beliefs, and in the case of the “modus ponens” task in which children said, "Kiwi is not a pink fruit, or of the “modus tollens”, ignoring information from major premises.

Table nr. 6 Comparing results obtained at “denying the antecedent” task according to chronological age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chron age.</th>
<th>Normative</th>
<th>Heuristic</th>
<th>Another response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-6 years</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>48.1%</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7 years</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-9 years</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table nr. 7. Comparing results obtained at “affirming the consequent” task according to chronological age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chron age.</th>
<th>Normative</th>
<th>Heuristic</th>
<th>Another response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-6 years</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7 years</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-9 years</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How can we explain the reasoning errors that occur in children 8-9 years, in the above tables? These errors arise from the absence of cognitive resources necessary for the decontextualization of existing representations, decontextualization being regarded as a prerequisite of hypothetical thinking.

Table nr. 8. Relationship between cognitive development and “modus tollens”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>R² adjusted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0,73</td>
<td>0,54</td>
<td>0,52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F(2,54)=32,48  
p=0,00

The obtained results indicate a strong relationship between cognitive development and the “modus tollens” task. Thus, that syllogistic reasoning task 52% explains a proportion (R² adjusted - .52) of the cognitive development of children. The “modus tollens” predictor becomes statistically significant in subsequent intellectual development.

Table nr. 9. Relationship between cognitive development and “sunk cost fallacy”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>R² adjusted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0,56</td>
<td>0,31</td>
<td>0,29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F(2,54)=12,43  
p=0,00

Cognitive development is explained in a ratio of 29% by “sunk cost fallacy”. This type of task is a good predictor for cognitive development. The second hypothesis of the study was partially confirmed.

6. Discussions

Some authors (Klakzynsky Jakobs, 2002; Kokis, Macpherson, Toplak, West and Stanovich, 2002, apud Morsanyi & Handley, 2008) argued that the efficiency and the prevalence of analytical processing increase together with development and are associated with the increase of cognitive capacities within an age group. Dual process theory is consistent with traditional theories of cognitive development which
postulate that children’s reasoning becomes more analytical, complex and abstract with age. Although these theorists recognize the fact that proof for age orientation within heuristic and analytical responses is unclear, they suggest that that could be only the product of the characteristics of the task rather than a reflection over the actual changes in development, in terms of reasoning abilities. These theorists argue that the relationship between age and performance on children’s reasoning tasks is mediated by the cognitive abilities and dispositions of thinking, and analytical responses replace heuristic responses, maintaining cognitive abilities.

A major problem in the understanding of these results refers to the theoretical context in which they must be inserted (Markovits, Schleifer & Fortier, 1989). Thus, the study results indicate that preschool children in general will respond by resorting more to heuristics. At this age, children manifest the tendency to respond similarly to logical and illogical problems. They do not have the ability to distinguish sufficiently well between the logical and illogical premises. Only at young school age, we see an increase in the share of regulatory responses, which are consistent with the rules of logic. Metalogical understanding will only develop in the stage of formal operations.

One potential explanation for the results obtained from the developmental perspective is consistent with the approach of Chi, Glaser & Rees (1982, apud Byrnes & Overton, 1986). The authors emphasized that the effect of chronological age does not reflect differences in logical power, but reflects a greater capacity of older children to use formal language conventions.

Another line of research argues that abstract reasoning and cognitive abilities are not good predictors of reasoning and decision in real everyday situations. Social, motivational and affective influences as well as previous thoughts affect how people reason on various problems.

Some authors argue that heuristic responses decrease with age due to the development of cognitive abilities, while others argue that heuristics are independent of cognitive abilities. Therefore, all theories claim that analytical reasoning requires the decontextualization of problems.
7. Conclusions

The results of this study on the cognitive nature of syllogistic reasoning are consistent with the trend of other studies covering this issue. To explain these, we can resort to the theory of mind. The present research may be a pilot study for other future studies regarding the specificity of syllogistic reasoning to other age groups, of course, extending research on a larger number of subjects. This will facilitate a better identification of involved variables and a more significant identification of the inter-relationship syllogistic reasoning – executive functions, which could lead to better results than those obtained by us, relevant for research, correcting weaknesses in our research.

Bibliography:


ANNEX NR. 1
REASONING TASKS

Conjunction fallacy
I. Listen to the following situation and solve the task:
Tim is 10 years old. He lives in a house that has a garden. He has many friends, enjoys park sports of and collects football tickets.
Your task is to mark the statement which is truer with number 1, the next one with number 2 and so on. Mark the statement which is the least true with number 4.
   a. Tim is 10 years old.
   b. Tim does not like sports.
   Let’s see other sentences:
   a. Tim has a rabbit.
   b. Tim has a sister.
   c. Tim has a rabbit and often plays football.
   d. Tim goes to chess competitions.

If-only fallacy
II. Listen closely to the story and answer the questions.
Jessica goes to the concert with her parents. She asks her father not to go the normal way to the concert hall, but through the city center to take her friend who lives in the city center and who they promised to take with them to the concert.
Linda goes to a concert with her parents. She asks her father not to go the normal way to the concert hall, but through the city center to see Christmas lights and decorations. Unfortunately, they got stuck into a traffic jam and lost the first 30 minutes of the concert.
Which sentences seem correct to you?
   a. Jessica took a worse decision than Linda.
   b. Linda took a worse decision than Jessica.
   c. It was not their fault, they were unlucky.

Sunk cost fallacy
III. Consider the following two situations and answer the following questions:
A. You want to try the new skates that you’ve just bought, so you go to the rink. You wait for 40 minutes to get inside. When you
finally start to skate, you see that the rink is crowded and it is impossible to move around and you do not enjoy it. What do you do?
   a. You go home immediately.
   b. You skate a little then go home.
   c. You stay for two hours as you have planned.

B. You want to try the new skates that you’ve just bought, so, you go to the rink. When you start to skate, you see that the rink is crowded and it is impossible to move around and you do not enjoy it. What do you do?
   a. You go home immediately.
   b. You skate a little then go home.
   c. You stay for two hours as you have planned.

Syllogistic Reasoning Tasks
IV: I will give you some problems to solve. I will read a few sentences. Then you need to think about what follows from these sentences. There will be three responses for you to choose from, but you need to decide which one is correct in terms of sentence. Some sentences may sound strange or funny, but I want you to imagine that they are all true. In all cases, you need to think carefully about the assertions and imagine that they are true even when they are not true in real life.

For instance:
All frogs live in houses.
We know that in real life frogs do not live in houses. But, remember I asked you to imagine that all frogs live in houses. Now, if we assume that:
All frogs live in houses
And I tell you that
Benji is a frog
It follows that
Benji lives in a house?
Yes     No     Uncertain
You can think that it is sure that Benji lives in a house because it derives from the given sentence, so you should choose the answer “yes”. If you think that it is not true that Benji lives in a house because it does not derive from the given sentence, then you could choose the answer “no”. Or you can think that Benji is likely to live in a house, but
it is a possibility that does not derive from the sentence, then you should choose the answer “uncertain”.

Now, let us imagine that scientists have discovered a planet in our galaxy where there live animals and plants. This planet is similar to Earth in many aspects, but there are also differences. Choose the answers that best describe the animals and plants that live on that planet.

1. On this planet, all fruit is pink.
   Kiwi is a fruit.
   Is kiwi pink?
   YES  NO  UNCERTAIN
2. On this planet, all big animals can sing.
   Lions cannot sing.
   Are lions big animals?
   YES  NO  UNCERTAIN
3. On this planet, trees have red logs.
   Oak trees do not have red logs.
   On this planet, oak trees are not trees?
   YES  NO  UNCERTAIN
4. On this planet, all poisonous animals live in the jungle.
   Cobras live in the jungle.
   Are cobras poisonous animals on this planet?
   YES  NO  UNCERTAIN
PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN COOPERATIVE GROUP WORK ACTIVITIES

C. Popa

Abstract:
Cooperative learning is one of the teaching strategies that focus on the students, giving them the possibility to discover the new together with their peers freely and pleasantly. This study presents only the effects of the cooperative learning model on the students’ social skills. The research program runs in 6 experimental primary school forms (3 forms of 3rd grade and 3 forms of 4th grade), during the first semester of the 2005-2006 school year. We present in this paper the results of the comparison between the three phases of the research: pre-, post and re-test. The conclusion of our study underlines the idea that the cooperative learning model has positive effects regarding the improvement of the students’ social skills.

Keywords: cooperative learning, cooperative learning groups, social skills, encouraging verbal expressions, verbal expressions of non-cooperative

1. Introduction
We meet a lot of cooperative learning definitions given by personalities who were dedicated to research in this area: Aronson, Dansereau, Hertz-Lazarowitz, Kagan, Johnson, Sharan, Slavin, DeVries, and these are just a few names. I have chosen as a representative one Johnson’s definition, Johnson and Holubec not only because David Johnson is a pioneer of research in this area (in 1966 he began at Minneapolis University a teacher education program in cooperative learning, nowadays being together with his brother Roger Johnson, co-director at the Cooperative Learning Center), but also because their definition eloquently captures the specificity of cooperative learning groups as opposed to traditional learning groups:
“Cooperative learning means the use, as an instructional method, of small groups of pupils / students so that they can work together, so that each group member can improve his/ her performance and can increase the performance of other group members”; (1994, pg.3). We understand from this definition that cooperative learning is more than work in small groups usually consisting of 4-5 members who work together in order to solve some tasks. Student belonging to a cooperative group is responsible not only for their own learning, but also for the way that his team and other partners have assimilated the material. It is about creating the positive group interdependence which means, in terms of assuming different roles in the group, each member is a facilitator of learning for colleagues, that task is achieved when all members are able to solve correctly individually. When students work in cooperative teams, where “all are for one” and “one is for all”, team members receive support both in terms of knowledge and emotionally, it helps them to overcome the obstacles they confront at school.

In this article we intend to present the results that we obtained in the implementation of cooperative learning model. We classify the research as a classical experimental research with experimental groups and control class so that we can make comparisons between pre-post-re-test, on the condition that we introduce the experimental factor. At the experimental class it was introduced the variable work in cooperative groups, while the program control classes did not suffer any educational intervention on our part.

In the research there were involved 251 students, 124 of 3rd grade and 127 of 4th grade. The experimental group is composed of 123 pupils (59 pupils in 3rd grade and 64 in 4th grade) and control group of 128 students (65 of 3rd grade and 63 of 4th grade). A group description of participants involved in the pre-test can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Group description of subjects used in research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Batch type/ class level</th>
<th>3rd grade</th>
<th>4th grade</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXPERIMENTAL</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTROL</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The participants in the study were selected from four educational institutions in Oradea to ensure a similar level of education and environment (urban): SO8 “A. Muresanu”, SO8 “O. Goga”, “Iosif Vulcan” High School, “Onisifor Ghibu” theoretical High School. The sample included students from 12 classes and six experimental classes (three classes and three classes III to IV) and six control classes (three 3rd grade classes and three 4th grade classes).

The arguments that were the basis for our decision to conduct the test for grades 3rd and 4th were the following:
- Acquisition of this fundamental level age students (reading, writing, summing) corresponding to the two subjects considered in the intervention program (Romanian language and Mathematics) are sufficiently trained to allow students to focus their attention not only on issues of the learning content but also on the social networking at the group level in order to verify the working hypotheses. It also takes time for students to learn to work together. Group work activities must be prepared by working in pairs. We believe that the first two years of tuition can be realized by involving students in pair-work activities, and gradually, in classes III and IV of the learning experience together with other systematic activities to be enriched by working in cooperative groups;
- the data obtained after applying, at the acknowledgment stage, of the questionnaire on “Perception of primary school teachers on methods of cooperative learning groups” showed us that the frequency of application of group work in grades III and IV is much lower than that in grades I and II.
- Arguments supporting this position are related to the volume of information at this level which requires that a larger number of hours at the teacher’s disposal for its transmitting, the need of a thorough acquiring of knowledge in this period one of the reasons being the fact that they are the basis of knowledge from the upper cycle (5th grade) the frequency of assessment of the competitive type (like contests, local competitions, and national) a fact that which strengthens the teachers’ belief that it is primarily their responsibility of transmitting knowledge, the performance of students in various competitions, could affect their personal, professional or the school image without any belief that group work can produce positive effects at the stage of assimilation of knowledge;
- Studies and experimental research demonstrate the fact that the efficiency of cooperative learning model introduction is even bigger as students’ group work skills are formed early (even in kindergarten). Because the age level of those that we teach (1st and 2nd year students of the College of the Schoolmasters) was and is far from the target group that we wanted to investigate and because in that particular school year I did not coordinate the teaching practice in kindergarten but only the one in school, I decided to choose the 3rd and 4th grades so also for time management reasons. (Note that during the school year 2005-2006, the six 3rd and 4th grades were not involved in experimental coordination of the teaching practice of students due to the fear that this could be an uncontrollable variable which would disrupt the research data, making more difficult, from the organizational aspect, the development of our intervention);

The making of the sample population, especially the selection of the students in experimental and control classes and comparing the degree of equivalence between them was made from data collected from questionnaire, from the analysis of school documents and conversations with teachers.

Cooperative learning model was introduced in the experimental classes not as a separate program, where were assigned specific timetables hours of classes (although it could also have been proposed an optional variant on this theme), but as an alternative way of cooperative structuring of the existing contents in the curriculum for the subjects: Romanian language and Mathematics. Thus, if in the control classes, the contents were taught front, revaluating the benefits of teaching model where the activity is mainly managed and controlled by the teacher, at the experimental there have been planned and carried out experimental activities in which students had the opportunity to organize their own work, working together with each other, the teacher’s role being a secondary one, only indirect monitoring and coordination of these activities.

Selection of two subjects: Romanian language and Mathematics was based on the following arguments:

- Data obtained, at the application phase, from the observant teacher questionnaires, showed very clearly that the group work is not but seldom applied to these two, maybe because of the teachers’ lack of confidence in the efficiency of such a way of working in studying the two basic subjects, despite the obvious results of research in the field;
• We wanted to offer a possible model for implementing cooperative learning for our classroom practitioners, planning tasks for work in cooperative groups both for securing and consolidating lessons and mixed lessons, proving that students can study effectively and in an enjoyable way, ones from the others the contents of the two disciplines and through other means not only the competitive or individual one;

To ensure the representativeness of the selected content units there have been studied carefully the school documents such as: the curriculum, textbooks, learning units. In selecting themes from Romanian Language (3rd and 4th grades) it was taken into account the fact that they should cover: communication topics (representative for the content units studied in the first semester), contents that were aimed at familiarizing / study of poetic texts but also epic pieces (with specific methodological hours of familiarization with the text - the 1st class, or oral narrative text on the basis of the ideas – 2nd class), elaboration of different compositions (after a given plan, the given subject)

It was also considered the basic teaching load of each activity, meaning to ensure a diversity also in terms of the type of lesson. For the selection of contents in Mathematics (grades 3rd and 4th) it was considered the annual planning, the adequacy of the nature of this task of this discipline for group work, as well as choosing relevant content for the studied unit, and ensuring diversity in the types of lessons envisaged.

One of the particular elements of our research was given by the fact that all contents selected by us have constituted only a general framework within which the model of cooperative learning was integrated, focusing our attention not on thematic innovations, and especially on the conditions be observed for these levels to facilitate complex interactions among group members, while leaving room for learning social skills.

Thus, in what concerns the selection of social skills pursued in the program, we must say that this was done in an identical manner for both grades 3rd and 4th in joint discussions and analysis that have occurred between all teachers involved in this experiment. It was agreed upon a common set of social skills because the students’ experience in group work, although the classes were of different levels, was the same, that is all students were at their first activities of the kind. The Selection of the social skills was done based on consulting the literature.
They were chosen the following basic skills:

“Vorbim în soaptă” (We are talking in a whisper), “Vorbim pe rand” (Take turns) the skills that are necessary for the proper functioning of the group: “Ne ajutam unii pe altii” (We help each other), “Ascultăm cu atenție” (We listen carefully), “Ne încurajăm” (We encourage ourselves), “Ne respectăm” (We respect ourselves), „Solicităm ajutor sau clarificări pentru a elimina lacunele” (We ask for help or clarification to fill the gaps), „Ne motivăm unii pe alții pentru fi entuziaști” (We motivate each other to be enthusiastic) and skills that help students to verbalize what they have learned „Rezumăm cu voce tare cele spuse de colegi” (Summary aloud the words of colleagues), “Ne verificăm unii pe alții verbalizând ceea ce am înțeles” (We check each verbalizing others what I understand). These skills have been introduced gradually until the end of the project, discussed and reviewed with students. The content of each was formulated in terms of skills available and presented to students both on large plates, displayed on the wall in the form of badges, each student received a badge where were rated 1-2 skills. Before the group work activities, the teachers asked students to remember the reading skills and to remind them to others and to read them among each others in the group from their badge.

**The purpose of the research**

The present research is just one part of a wider research aimed to measure the effectiveness of the experimental conditions applying cooperative learning model in studying the Romanian Language and Mathematics subjects in grades 3rd and 4th. The objectives of our experimental intervention aimed at both familiarizing teachers with the model of cooperative learning, as well as the training at students of cooperative group work skills. In this study, however, we decided to present only the results regarding the effects of model cooperative learning on the social skills of encouraging students.

Thus, the general assumption that organized this study was that learning in structured cooperative groups results in significant changes on the frequency of use of cooperative and non-cooperative verbal expressions.
Independent variables were included in an organized way in a program of learning in cooperative structured groups and it implied the insurance for each learning group: of the positive interdependence among students, individual assuming of responsibility, the direct interaction of the specific social skills and practicing the assessment of the functioning of the group. These variables were integrated in a unified design model based on work activities in structured cooperative groups.

Dependent Variable: Supportive verbal expressions, non-cooperative verbal expressions.

In the experimental phase there were used research methods and tools specific to each type of targeted dependent variable. They allowed us to assess the changes experimentally induced in conducting the research so as to verify the hypothesis. The system of the used research methods included: direct observation, analysis of student work products, the conversations method, investigation based on questionnaire, the method of the video analysis of data and the statistical processing of data.

2. Procedure

The teaching experiment was conducted in the 1st semester and the first half of the 2nd semester of the school year 2005-2006, over a period of 20 weeks (see the schedule of the activities conducted in research in Table 2)

Table 2. Schedule of activities carried out in experiments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr. crt.</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Type of activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>September – October 2005</td>
<td>6 weeks</td>
<td>Pre-test administration of both experimental classes, as well as the control classes; Assistance in the classroom, recording the activities to familiarize with the video camera; Discussing the work schedule with the teachers;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As seen in Table 2, at the beginning of school year 2005-2006, the pre-testing was applied to both experimental classes, as well as the control classes. There followed a period of assistants in the experimental classes in order to know the students’ considering that previously it was necessary their distribution in groups. During the same period there were made some video recordings of teaching in both classes of experiments, as well as control. The purpose of these records was to familiarize the students with the video camera so that the results are not influenced by the effect of the observer presence.

Because in the experiment have participated teachers from different institutions with different working hours, it was necessary to establish with them a common working schedule for synchronizing the weekly meetings to prepare the activities with students. In this respect, it was determined that the teachers in the experimental group (and those from 4th grade, and from 3rd grade) meet together once a week for lesson planning, prepare the working sheets in groups and discuss the difficulties faced by students, the progress of the group. Please note that these meetings were also recorded and will form a database for future research.

In November 2005 it was given in the test set for organizing the groups of students and, after analyzing it, the researcher, together with each of the teachers of each grade made the final decision about the work groups. The set of images for the rules of cooperative learning, for
the students’ roles and also for the evaluation of these rules and those of adequate behavior were designed and completed in the same period. In the school year of 2005/2006, the autumn break for primary school pupils was set in the first week of November, followed by a week of strike, thus we only managed to carry on the activities of team work preparations in that specific period.

In the first week of December, the first activities of cooperative groups were carried on at two subjects: Romanian Language and Mathematics. For 10 weeks, the pupils had worked in cooperative groups for one Romanian class and one Math class each week. These activities were video recorded.

After the last lesson planned according to the rules of *Let’s work together*, we handed in the post-test. For the experimental group, the video recorded classes of the last week of the program represented the material we used in the video analysis. For the control group, we asked the teachers for permission to video record the activities of group work. The pupils were asked to solve in groups the same working sheets as the pupils in the experimental group.

8 weeks after the experimental program ended we requested the teachers to plan a group work activity for both classes, Romanian and Math, an activity that was also recorded as a part of the re-testing. For the control group it was the same activity, focused on group work for the same topics.

**The obtained results**

The results obtained in the post-testing stage are to be given as a set of comparisons between the **experimental** and **control** group. We are also to present the results obtained by the experimental group as they were underlined after a series of comparisons between **pre-testing** and **post-testing**.

In table 3 there are given the results obtained in post-testing for the frequency of **cooperative and non-cooperative verbal expressions** used in group discussions.
Table 3. Results of post-testing for *verbal expressions* used in groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Lot</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative verbal expressions</td>
<td>experimental</td>
<td>7.37</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>-3.97</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>control</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-cooperative verbal expressions</td>
<td>experimental</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>control</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it can be noticed in table 3, the results obtained in the case of *cooperative and non-cooperative verbal expressions* are significant for both variables at a $p \leq .01$. Thus, we can state that the experimental program led to an improvement of pupils’ results regarding the type of verbal expressions they use. The values of the averages for cooperative verbal expressions indicate that the obtained results by the experimental group are much higher compared to those obtained by the control group. This means that the pupils in experimental group have used before more frequent cooperative verbal expressions than those in the control group. For *non-verbal cooperative expressions* variable, the pupils in the experimental group have obtained a much lower average than those in the control groups. This result underlines that in the experimental group the pupils have used more rarely non-cooperative verbal expressions than those in the control group.

We have also investigated in which degree the differences between the pre-testing and the post-testing are statistically significant. Thus, we handed in test $t$ of comparison between two averages. In table 4 there are recorded its results.
Table 4. Comparisons pre-testing – post-testing averages for *verbal expressions* used in group (experimental lot)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Moment of evaluation</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative verbal expressions</td>
<td>Pre-testing</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>-2.05</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-testing</td>
<td>7.37</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-cooperative verbal expressions</td>
<td>Pre-testing</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-testing</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td></td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p<.001

As it can be noticed in table 4, it was recorded statistically significant differences between the two moments of the research (pre-testing and post-testing) for both, helping and non-cooperative verbal expressions. Thus, our experimental program had a positive effect in increasing the usage frequency of encouraging and supporting expressions and in decreasing the usage of those non-cooperatives. The fact that one of the rules of group work was *Let’s encourage one another!*, and also the assignment of the encouraging person’s role to a member of the group helped the pupils be aware that a cooperative environment can be kept if the pupils remember to tell one another words of praise, encouragement and to avoid non-cooperative expressions that destroy the trust among the group members and lessen their motivation.

The re-testing was given at an interval of 8 weeks from the post-testing, for both, experimental and control groups. Afterwards, the experimental group suffered no more interventions, most of the teachers returning to traditional teaching method, focused mainly on frontal and individual activities.

The re-testing consisted on the video recording of a lesson of Romanian Language and Mathematics, during which the pupils worked in groups.

The following pages contain the results obtained for *verbal encouraging* variable for testing at distance. We mention that the results present the comparisons between the averages of the pupils in experimental group and those of the ones in control group, as well as
those of the averages in post-testing compared with the ones in re-testing from the experimental group.

As it is presented in table 5, it were obtained statistically significant differences at a $p<.05$, for both, cooperative and non-cooperative verbal expressions, underlining that the pupils in the experimental group have used more often helping verbal expressions, and more rarely non-cooperative ones than it have done the pupils in the control group.

Table 5. Results for re-testing for verbal expression variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Lot</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative verbal expressions</td>
<td>experimental</td>
<td>10.41</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td></td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>control</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>-2.12</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-cooperative verbal expressions</td>
<td>experimental</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>control</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td></td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** $p<.001$

For verifying the effect in time of the experimental program, it were compared the averages in post-testing and re-testing for the experimental group.

Table 6. Comparisons of post-testing – re-testing averages of verbal expressions used in groups (experimental lot)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Moment of evaluation</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative verbal expressions</td>
<td>Post-testing</td>
<td>7.37</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>-2.12</td>
<td>.04</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Re-testing</td>
<td>10.41</td>
<td>6.67</td>
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<td>Non-cooperative verbal expressions</td>
<td>Post-testing</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>-.94</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Re-testing</td>
<td>.82</td>
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</table>
According to the results, it can be noticed (table 6) that the averages in re-testing for cooperative verbal expressions variable are significantly higher than those in post-testing at a p<.05. It demonstrates that the experimental program generated long term effects for the encouraging skills used by the pupils. Returning at the cooperative group work after an interval of 8 weeks made it possible for the pupils to practice the skills used also in the intervention. The results of the re-testing clearly underline that the encouraging skills became automatism for both, 3rd and 4th grade pupils. The high values of the averages in the re-testing of the experimental group (over 10 points) compared to those of the control group (around 3 points) demonstrate that our experimental program had a positive effect for the encouragement skills. Handed in at an interval of 2 weeks after the ending of the program, the re-testing at the experimental group had a significantly higher score than the pre-testing. Even though in the pre-testing at the 4th grade, it were noticed significant differences between the two samples (a higher frequency of encouragement for the control group than for the experimental one), the experimental group overpassed the start difference. Thus, even from post-testing, the experimental lot recorded a higher average than the control one (10.06 as to an average of 2.50 for the control group), a difference that it is maintained in re-testing, too.

It means that cooperative group work, rather than traditional group, develops encouragement skills. In the experimental lot, the pupils learnt to be more attentive to their peers’ feelings and to maintain a pleasant and helping environment within the group. They became aware that cooperative learning means taking care of one another and rewarding, at least at a verbal level, the positive behaviors through praises and encouragements. The most frequent encouragement verbal expressions used by the pupils were: Very well!, Good job!, Exceptional!, Yes, that’s it!, Go, Mădălina!, Super!, That’s good!, Come on, guys; please! Here are some support verbal expressions for work organizing: You know the drill; each takes, in turn, one word., Faster, the time tics and passes by!, We have to finish!, Come on, Adi, it’s your turn now!, Let’s each write!, We have checked them, so let’s say them once more!, and support verbal expressions for the correct solution for the task: Here we should write...because..., Be careful, close the inverted commas!, We have to build one more sentence with the noun Putna!.

In conclusion, we may state that the obtained results demonstrate that the encouragement skill is one of the skills well consolidated within the experimental program. The results confirm our hypothesis.

The use of Let’s work together pattern led to the increase of the usage frequency within the group interactions of some helping verbal
expressions and to the decrease of those non-cooperative. The results obtained in post-testing and re-resting (comparisons between pre-testing – post-testing and post-testing – re-testing averages, as well as comparisons between the averages of the experimental and control groups in post-testing and re-testing) certify that our experimental program had a positive effect in increasing the usage frequency of some encouragement and helping expressions and in decreasing the usage of those non-cooperative.

When they work in group, it is important that each member knows that his/her effort has been noticed, recognized and praised. In the case of peer teaching, recording the progress on the knowledge or personal development level of the students is a difficult, long term process that generates frustrations and disappointments. But in a group, each member receives an immediate feedback, an encouragement word, so that the students have courage and develop their trust in themselves.

The good results obtained by us for the encouragement behavior is based on the fact that throughout the experiment, the pupils were accustomed to encourage one another, to recognize the effort and individual contribution in completing the task, to praise, to take care and to help one another. Most times, what inspires most members to put a lot of energy into the performed activities is love for their work and for their peers. We think that the cooperative structure of the learning tasks and the encouragement of developing a helping environment within the group are the essential conditions that contribute to the improvement of pupils’ performances and to the development of their personality.

Bibliography:


PREVENTING INSTITUTIONALISATION AND FOSTER CARE.
WORKING WITH DISADVANTAGED FAMILIES AND THEIR CHILDREN

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Abstract: One of the most important trends in the modern child care represents the efforts of different institutions and organisations to work together with the families in order to avoid institutionalisation and to assure the parents participation at the development and implementation of complex care interventions. The main idea is not to separate the children from their parents and to place them in foster families or care establishments, but to achieve “inside” the family multidimensional but efficient care intervention programmes with the help of different practitioners, therapists and other categories of specialists working directly in the families and with the parents. The parents are required to play an active role, to take more responsibilities and to be able to support the works of the task-teams intervening at or outside home. In order to achieve these goals, the parents need a large spectrum of specific skills and abilities, which have to be learned, trained and continuously improved. For a long period of time it has been considered that the disadvantaged families have fewer possibilities (or even no possibilities at all) to play a significant role in the education of their own children and particularly in the multifaceted designed care processes.

Recent studies reveal that the participation of the parents with disabilities or disadvantages could be, under certain circumstances, more consistent as generally assumed. A model of cooperation and coherent structured interventions, including the direct contribution of the parents, can be individually designed and implemented.

The paper presents some of the premises and the ways the parents can become active factors in the improvement of the care measures and programmes individually designed for their children, as well as some of the possibilities they have to use their general and specific skills in order to achieve a convergence of the specific work, made by social workers,
Preventing institutionalisation and foster care…

care takers, psychologists, speech therapists and other professionals and the interventions of the family itself.

**Keywords:** Disadvantaged families, parents with disabilities, children at risk, parents’ competences, cooperation families – professionals,

**Introduction**

Researches\(^{29}\) evidence that prevention of institutionalisation and foster care of the children coming from disadvantaged families suppose an increase of effectiveness of assessment, communication and joint working between professionals from different institutions, organization and other implicated agencies. The parents with disabilities have to be adequately supported and children sufficiently protected.

The responsible services face various challenges to understand and to meet the needs of the parents with disabilities or with special needs and simultaneously to create an appropriate environment within the family, in which the child could benefit in the best way from the individually designed care measures. Some of the parents may not be very enthusiastic to work together with the specialists and practitioners or may simply lack the resources and the skills to deliver “interventions” or expected behaviours in appropriate ways\(^{30}\).

This was particularly observed in the case of the parents who are not severely disabled and therefore not immediately identified as such. The issue of parenting by adults with disabilities is complex. Pejorative historical perspectives, subjective opinions and limited research impact on the assessment process\(^{31}\).

Researches highlight also some actual trends, retrievable in most of the European countries:

- Parents with disabilities are increasing in number; the most of them come from socially and economically disadvantaged groups
- They are more likely than other parents to make heavier demands on the child welfare services in order to have their children looked after by the local authorities


• Parents with disability need considerable help to provide their children the needed care (pp. 81)\textsuperscript{32}.

In recent studies, most of the disadvantaged families were characterised by a significantly reduced ability to understand new and complex information, to learn new skills (impaired intellectual functioning [IQ < 70]), with reduced ability to cope independently (impairment of adaptive and social functioning), which started before adulthood, with a lasting effect on development.

1. Parents’ competences

Parents having children with care needs develop relatively quickly a large spectrum of special competences or are forced to develop them by the daily challenge of coping with life with children having a particular behaviour and/or needing a different type of relationship, different careers and social workers, household tasks and everyday responsibilities. Birger P. Priddat, professor of political economy and philosophy in Germany, compares modern families with small businesses, mostly headed by the women as general managers (from report in „Die Zeit“, 30th August 2001).

The parents need to develop a large range of specific competences:

• High organisational capacities and self-organisation
• Flexibility
• Ability to delegate
• Anticipatory planning
• Moderating conflicts
• Quick reactions to unpredictable and unusual situations
• Efficient style of work
• Stress management
• Team coordination
• „Learning by Doing“
• Optimised use of available free spaces
• Winning new perspectives and enlarging fields of interest

• Multiple social competences like:
  • Promoting motivation
  • Self-management
  • Social-communicative competences (listening, patience etc.)
  • Conflict solution and team capabilities
  • Participatory and participation competences
  • Planning and control  

In the case of disadvantaged families (parents with disabilities) increasing their specific and all-purpose daily life skills and educational know-hows and abilities represents a crucial task. In order to reach the goal of keeping the children with their parents and to avoid foster care or institutionalisation, a large variety of supporting programmes for the family and an uninterrupted training on the job are needed.

Two frequent behavioural patterns have been observed and repeatedly mentioned in recent studies:

• The parents with disabilities are rapidly overruled, overworked and not able to cope with the responsibility of every-day life. Some of them develop a lack of global sense of competence, efficacy and satisfaction with parenting. The more these parents are confronted with the problems of their children (and especially when the child itself has special needs), the more they become frustrated, anxious, and poorly motivated as parents. They tend to feel incompetent, incapable of problem solving and unskilled with parenting. They try to give up their parenting function and to charge the formal responsible institutions and organisations to solve their problems

• A significant number of parents with disabilities tend to become overindulgent, to adopt “soft-structures” in working with their children and “over-nurture” behaviour.

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Sources:

• Preis, P., Rothblum, S., -„ Mütter sind die besseren Manager“. Mosaik Verlag, München 2002, p. 22, p. 84
Family professionals should be attentive to normative and non-normative life transitions and stressors, because parents with disabilities are more susceptible to vicissitudes and unexpected changes of their daily routines. Using a variety of sources, professionals should also provide for family information and achievable, reasonable alternatives to their day-to-day behaviour patterns.

The professionals working with these families should also teach parents to:

• provide expectations regarding behaviour before their child engages in an activity
• offer reasons why rules should be obeyed
• help their child to understand the impact of behaviour
• talk with their child when misbehaviour occurs and
• emphasize the reasons for rules

2. General principles of working with disadvantaged families and their children and practice guidelines

The efficiency and positive results of the care measure initiated and implemented for reducing the risks of institutionalisation and separation of the children from their parents with disabilities and their social integration depend largely on the capacity of the responsible organisations, agencies, bodies of specialists and other concerned and connected institutions to ensure:

• multi-dimensional assessments (objectivity and relevance of the social diagnosis)
• effective working together (at the inter-institutional and intra-institutional level)
• appropriate inter- and multi-institutional interventions to support the parents and protect the children
• access to the most appropriate specialized interventions and specific modern tools (adequate methodology)
• permanent considering that the child’s welfare is supreme; safeguarding

34 Michael J. Walcheski, David J. Bredehoft, Melissa K. Leach – “Overindulgence, parenting styles, and parent sense of competence” - National council on family relations, Orlando, Fl., November, 2004
2.1. Safeguarding is a more extensive concept than child protection. The concept presumes that all institutions, formal agencies and professionals must significantly work together to support children and families (especially when parents have a disability)\(^35\). Clear guidance on the duty of all agencies, in order to ensure that they have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children was set out in different laws issued in the last years.

Most parents with disabilities love their children and want to parent effectively. When harm is suspected or occurs, children have a right to be protected, despite the fact that the parents might have reacted unintentionally.

On the other side, the parents also have a right to services designated to support them in parenting. Research shows that support can be one of the most critical factors in helping disadvantaged parents. “The most critical predictor is the presence of suitable social and other supports that are matched as closely as possible to the needs of the parent including their learning style and learning capacity”\(^36\). “To some extent, the greater the support available, the greater the capacity to parent”\(^37\).

2.2. Equal opportunities

Some researches show also that assessments are sometimes influenced by stereotypes concerning the capacity of parents with disabilities to parent.

When approaching any assessment it is important to be reminded that people with disabilities have the same rights as everyone else and that they are entitled to the same expectations as every other parent, regardless of the extent or nature of the disability, their gender and ethnicity.

\(^35\) Jenny Morris (2003). – “The right support: Report of Task Force on Supporting Disabled Adults in their Parenting Role”
Parents with disability “can in many cases be supported by family and supportive networks and professionals, enabling them to respond effectively to the needs of their children”\textsuperscript{38}

2.3. \textbf{Inter-institutional working}

Effective working between professionals supporting parents with disability and those supporting children is at the core of effective systems to protect children. Each service will have its own criteria for prioritising referrals. This must not become an obstacle to co-operation at an early stage.

The cooperation is not an individual option any longer but an imperious necessity. Due to the complexity of the situation of the children having parents with disability, the “working together” of all the persons planning and organising care or supporting activities for the child as well as for the family is the only way to assure a successful development of all the directly involved actors.

2.4. \textbf{Parental considerations as part of the assessment process}

When parental learning disability is probable, there will be additional parental considerations as part of the assessment process.

Some of the most important aspects which have to be taken into consideration in the assessment of the parents:

• cognitive functioning (cognitive ability, the parent’s intellectual abilities and skills)
  • parents’ ability to learn to respond to the needs of their child and the time-scale over which this learning is required to take place
  • functional assessment (also known as living skills assessment)
  • psychological factors that may impact on parenting ability (e.g., mental illness, emotional issues resulting from trauma, etc.)\textsuperscript{39}
2.5. Impact of parental disability

Professionals need to be alert to the possibility of significant harm and signs of neglect in children living with parents with special needs. Children who may be more vulnerable are:

- babies or infants under 1 year old
- toddlers
- children with a disability or special educational needs
- children in a caring role
- children experiencing domestic violence and/or having parents with a history of violence or sexual abuse

Due to the increased vulnerability of this group of children, it might be required a rapid response, a prompt and exhaustive assessment of the parents’ disabilities and of their potential for adequate parenting.

There must also be taken into consideration the discrepancy between parent’s knowledge, skills, life experience, resources and the child’s needs and the parent’s ability to learn within the child’s timescales.

2.6. Supporting parents with disabilities

Parents with disabilities need to receive support and interventions which are:

- Based on the outcomes of the parenting assessment are set up at home to maximise transference of learned skills
- Reduce the discrepancy between parent’s ability and the child’s essential needs
- Long term
- Broken down into small steps
- Matched to the parents level of understanding and comprehension
- Includes demonstration
- Included pictorial information in addition to verbal instruction.

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2.7. Sharing information with parents who have disabilities

- Sharing information in a way that is sensitive, respectful and appropriate to the level of understanding of the parents is crucial.
  - Parents often need more time and tangible examples to understand some items. Clear language is therefore important. Written agreements may be helpful.
  - Parents can find the involvement of different professionals and agencies overwhelming and confusing. It may result in a further decline of their functional ability.
  - It is vital that the professionals who have contact with parents with disabilities develop adequate communication pathways to facilitate a cohesive, co-ordinated and accurate communication, which is supportive to the child, parents and professionals alike.

3. Case Management and inter-institutional cooperation

In order to manage the cases and to make the inter-institutional communication effective, professionals need to consider that:

- early communication is needed if parents disability cases are suspected;
- regular meetings (monthly short meetings, phone calls for instance) should be organized in order to assure a coherent intervention of all team-members.
- Involving speech and language therapists and other specialists (therapists, psychologists, pedagogues, etc.) when speech, communication and other aspects of psychological or behavioural development of the child or of the parents have been assessed to be a problem,
- an advocate (independent from County Care Services – County General Directions for Social Protection) and/or a facilitator (trained by County Care Services) should be involved (even from the initial phase of the care planning) in case that the cooperation between family and the providers of the specialised care services does not work properly.

Inter-institutional cooperation, seen as joint working, needs to be agreed at all stages of the child protection process and from all the

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participants and beneficiaries. It represents a major component of the care processes and especially an important part of any child protection planning. The joint work is essential to ensure that appropriate services are provided by all institutions and responsible agencies, that the essential needs of the children and of the families are not overlooked, that visits, interventions, therapies are not duplicated and that professionals do not act divided.

4. “The Parental Skills Model”\textsuperscript{47} has been developed with the purpose to assist practitioners in the evaluation of one person’s parenting capacity.

This model covers assessment of four interlinked areas: family history, intellectual functioning, independent living skills, support and resources. These evaluated aspects converge into one central area: the child care process. All mentioned areas should be considered of equal importance.

a. Child Care & Development
   - Physical care
   - Affection, Attachment
   - Security
   - Responsibility
   - Ability to guide and control the child
   - Stimulation and independence
   - Ability to respond and adapt to child’s development needs

b. Intellectual Functioning
   - Problem-solving
   - Logical sequencing
   - Decision-making
   - Organisational skills

\textsuperscript{47} Sources:
- Basic cognitive skills, i.e., memory, attention, verbal comprehension and reasoning, verbal expression

c. Independent living skills
- Functional academic skills
- Social skills
- Self-help skills
- Domestic skills
- Ability to access community resources
- Ability to budget and take care of finances

d. Support and resources
   a. Family / social support
   b. Specialist services
   c. Community facilities
- Employment
- Transport
- Housing
- Socio-economic resources

The Parental Skills Model
5. Some researchers\textsuperscript{48} have also identified certain \textbf{“key features of professional practice and service organisation”} that undermine parents in their parenting and amplify their vulnerability:

- \textit{The presumption of incompetence} - or the belief that parents' innate limitations make them unfitted for parenthood

- \textit{The “deficiency perspective”} - or a tendency always to focus on people's deficits and on what they cannot do instead of their strengths and how to build on them.

- \textit{System abuse} - meaning policies and practices that harm the families they are supposed to get support or to be protected. “System abuse is the unacknowledged scourge of families. It is rampant, pervasive and destructive of family life”.

- \textit{Competence-inhibiting support} - meaning support that deskills parents, reinforces their feelings of inadequacy and undermines their independence.

6. Conclusions and key messages

- The impact of the level of disability of parents needs to be formally addressed at appropriate stages in the management of a case of chronic neglect.

- Effective ways of intervening and pro-actively monitoring the care of children should be implemented.

- Child protection plans should focus on how to achieve better outcomes for children and a clear statement of what parents can and need to do in order to improve the care of children

- The role of legal advice and interventions should be already considered at early stages in the work with families (after “Hertfordshire Serious Case Reviews”)\textsuperscript{49}.


\textsuperscript{49} Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board – “Serious Case Review Executive Summary”, 2007, p. 17 – 18 –

www.hertsafeguarding.org.uk/adults/user_controled../babyoscr.pdf
Disadvantaged families

Service-providers (formal organisations and agencies, NGO-s, etc.)

- Financial problems
- Geographical and cultural isolation
- Disabilities, addiction, psychiatric disorders
- Insufficient parental skills
- Abuse, domestic violence
- Family interpersonal inadequate relationship
- Belonging to a certain culture, marginalisation, social isolation

Parents are:
- desinterested
- unpredictable
- simulators
- make claims and complaining
- overwhelmed
- inappropriate behaviour
- decide on behalf of others

Service providers are:
- overwhelmed
- lack of credibility
- over-broadening of institutions, agencies, organisations
- poor information flow
- less joint-work and inter-institutional cooperation

Lack of cooperation between different specialists and practitioners

Orientation towards deficiency and symptomatology

Over dimensioned rules, regulations, procedures, guidelines and standards

Overdimensioned institutional priorities

Heterogeneous and insufficiently coordinated interventions in the families and inappropriate care programmes

Anachronisms, antediluvian ways of structuring and implementing care programmes

Intolerance and no acceptance for certain circumstances and individual difficulties
CONFIDENCES

INTERVIEW ON EDUCATION

With Prof. Univ. Dr. Anton ILICA, Dean of the Faculty of Education Sciences and Psychology, University Aurel Vlaicu of Arad

- Could you give me some biographical information?
- I was born on January 2nd 1947 in a village called Tagadau in Arad County, but my parents registered me at the town hall only on the 29th of January, with the name Anton, taken from my paternal grandfather. I had a free childhood, although my family was declared „kulak”, not necessarily because it was a wealthy family, but because we owned a thresher, a cauldron for boiling plum brandy and animals for breeding, together with other few villagers. Cooperativization determined my mother to choose my didactic career. I attended the Pedagogical High school in Arad, followed by the Faculty of Philology of the University in Timisoara. I was a primary school teacher, then a secondary and high school teacher; I was then the headmaster of the Pedagogical High School, and in 2000 I entered the university system at the Aurel Vlaicu University of Arad, at the invitation of our rector, Prof. Lizica Mihut. I had already published a few books, including two about Lucian Blaga and Ioan Slavici, many articles about Mihai Eminescu, Nichita Stanescu, Caragiale, and Slavici. The meeting with Prof. Miron Ionescu, PhD, from the Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca determined me to change my professional field. Under his coordination, I elaborated my PhD thesis „The Pedagogy of Reading” and, in 2003, I became a PhD in education sciences. After four years, I took on the position of assigned professor, as a dean of the faculty.
- What accomplishments do you think represent you?
- First of all, the pedagogical reconstruction of the Dimitrie Tichindeal High School in Arad, after 1990, was an accomplishment which gave me satisfaction. Until 1998, I was the school principal and in this period the high school affirmed itself in its traditional field: pedagogical education. Secondly, but in a different order, I have put up the Faculty of Education Sciences, Psychology and Social Work of the University Aurel Vlaicu of Arad.
Arad, which, under my management as a dean, now offers three programmes of accredited studies, as well as two MD programmes. Last but not least, other accomplishments include the ideas materialized in a few volumes. My desire is to offer the pedagogical literature a reference volume which should include a history of pedagogical doctrines and a doctrine of my own which should be included in the long development of the paideutic process of training and educating children. Until now, I have published „A Modern Pedagogy” and „Pedagogical Doctrines”, volumes which represent me and which will be improved in future editions. I will not approach other fields, since I am convinced that I still have to perfect my previous volume, a more compact and unitary one.

- Which are your dissatisfactions regarding education?

- I would start with the question: „How guilty are the teachers for the acute educational crisis?” The difficulties undergone by schools and universities come from the unclear value of educational effects. Civic, social and educational integration, moral virtues and the creative values don’t meet the expectations of our society. The flux of contemporary life motivates that the schools attended by our children and our youth don’t prepare them accordingly for satisfactory activities, both from the personal and professional point of view. The school programme, called curricular programme by educators, doesn’t coincide with the programme of real life. The gap between school and life deepens the personality crisis. Even societies find themselves lost due to the general uncertainty of educating the new generation. How guilty are the educators, myself included? As theoreticians of education, as researchers who generate ideas regarding the organization and management of the educational process – institutionalized and non-formal – of the young generation, the pedagogues need to provide efficient and scientific solutions. There is too much focus on the suggestions of psychologists, such as „multiple intelligence”, „emotional intelligence”, „learning focused on the student”, „critical thinking” etc.

- Reshaping the national education goes hand in hand with the Law of Education. What do you accuse educators of?

- We had good laws of education when their elaborators consulted the opinion of pedagogues. I’m talking of the Law of Spiru Haret, with counselors such as C. Dumitrescu-Iasi and G.G.Antonescu, renowned pedagogues of the previous century. The current law, which you are appealing to, is based on economical principles. Pedagogues keep silent, since they know that, from the point of view of educational efficiency, these will lead to failure and to the need of ameliorations, typical to our national mentality of Manoleian attitude (we build to demolish). I can’t
understand the inhibition of contemporary pedagogues, since we have a group of pedagogues of high scientific authority, which include Miron Ionescu, C. Cucoș, E. Joița, I. Negreț-Dobridor, I. Cerghit, D. Potolea, S. Toma, M. Bocoș, L. Ciolan, O. Pânișoară etc.

- Why is the European – and national – pedagogy in a search of „personality”?

- „Search of personality” is a good choice of words. Pedagogy finds itself in a difficulty regarding the delimitation of the research filed, but also regarding the pedagogical language. A science first needs a terminology of its own, a set of concepts, notions, sentences and terms which should isolate it from other sciences. There are confusions, ambiguities, uncertain meanings, verbal clichés, and borrowed terms from close of convex sciences. I should mention here the vast permissive character of the pedagogical science in accepting and using without discerning the terminology of psychology, sociology and economy, with terms such as „evaluation, objective, strategy, role, curriculum, management” or learning techniques with strange names such as „horoscope, fish bowl, solar explosion, cluster, diamond, lotus flower” etc. On the other hand, pedagogues themselves insist too much on the etymology of the word „paidagogus”, giving it a pejorative meaning, when they should actually identify it with the Greek „paideia” (process of becoming, of forming ones personality). Last but not least, there is the attempt of including the word „pedagogy” in the expression „sciences of education”, which affects even more the authority of the science, as opposed to its related fields, which take over the territory of education: psychology, sociology, anthropology, philosophy.

- But still, you could be accused of traditionalism and of a reticence regarding the modernization of the field of education.

- May be, but one can afford terminological and situational modifications when one has sufficient scientific stability. The changes that you are referring to are still barbarisms. The German epistemologist Th. Kuhn mentioned the necessity of a „normal science” of education called „pedagogy”. If we are talking about a world crisis of education, (P. H. Coombs), this fact derives from the malfunction of the science which puts to much theory into education. Pedagogy is theory, neither practice nor art. The teacher is not a pedagogue, but a didactic being, one who applies the scientific paradigm offered by pedagogues.

- What should actual pedagogy do to overcome the educational crisis?

- Education can’t be left on the hands of pedagogical inspiration, such as Comenius, Herbart, Rousseau or Dewey. The improvement (and healing)
of the educational process can be done by an international team of experts in the field of pedagogue, who should build a model of efficient education which should take into consideration the individual development of the child, his social adaptation skills, group philosophy, as well as the development of generations in educational institutions, but also under the controlled influence of the community. The society which educates will itself be influenced by pedagogy. At the time being, the school is a temple, an isolated place in society (some schools have gates, guardians), where one finds a voluntary and controlled process of learning. A true school for the young generation is public and direct life. Especially now, pedagogy justifies its status as a science. Society and the new generations need pedagogical expertise and educational assistance. The more pedagogy is delayed in finding its place among sciences and pedagogues isolate their relationships with institutionalized and un-institutionalized education, the deeper the crisis of education young generations gets. The future of society can’t evolve in a humanistic spirit without a proper education.

- What is your opinion about national education?
- Today it is more and more difficult to solve such an important problem only from the national point of view. We can already notice the emergence of a European mentality, the one which actually is included in educational procedures. But every change in educational problems is but the consequence of experiments made on the given sample. By doing so, we actually sacrifice a whole generation. The authority of pedagogues is worth rebuilding, giving it the right to provide society with solutions. Regaining authority starts with organizing its own field of knowledge. Pedagogy can’t still be isolated in the area of „educational sciences”. It can’t accept a terminology which isn’t its own, but needs its own body of concepts, notions, sentences and words. Building the educational system, the offer of solutions for the whole process of social, psychological and moral integration, the identification of the contingent of active teachers for the implementation of new educational strategies are prospective challenges of Romanian pedagogues.

- Thank you. We hope that your volume entitled „Pedagogy and Pedagogical Doctrines” will bring parenthesis regarding the positive mentality and the educational healing of the young generation.

Recorded by,
Gabriela KELEMEN
COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES
IN THE TEACHING OF LITERATURE

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Abstract: While the basic purpose for teaching/learning a foreign language is the transmission/acquisition of native-like communicative competence, the role of the social and cultural context of the target language cannot be neglected. Using appropriate tools, the literature class can turn into a memorable experience and also a powerful pedagogic tool in the learners' linguistic development. This article offers suggestions for the choice of relevant literary texts and a suitable approach, as well as a practical illustration which is based on the same literary context but two different methods.

Keywords: literary except, lesson, textbook, communicative approach.

1. Introduction
The dominant aim for teaching English as a foreign language has radically changed in the last twenty years and consequently the grammar and culture oriented approaches yielded ground to the communicative approach, although the latter made a very late appearance in Romania compared to the Western world. Some of the reasons for the change were well-founded, such as the inability of previous methods to train students with native-like competence, actually with communicative competence at all, the acquisition of which became the basic concern for the teacher of English. Communication is a basic tool not only for survival but also for integration and blending but for most of the Romanian students (and often their teachers) finding themselves in the country whose language they had been studying for years on end and interacting with native speakers proved to be a frustrating experience because of the lack of functional vocabulary, the
inability to spontaneously put into practice the rules they had successfully used in drills, and the inadequacy of exchanging rote-learned cultural information.

However, in the Romanian tradition, the role of literature as a medium of cultural manifestation has always been seriously considered in language teaching and, although questioned in certain contexts nowadays, it is still perpetuated in others. And rightfully so, for at least two reasons: firstly, the methodology of dealing with literature is no longer based on conveying information, on the contrary, as will be shown below, the possibilities are practically unlimited; secondly, the use of literature can provide a powerful tool for the students' linguistic development, the more so since communicative competence, besides the ability to master structure and form, also involves the capability of interpreting social and cultural discourse.

The purpose of this article is to practically demonstrate to what extent different approaches to the teaching process influence the acquisition of both language and cultural information and to emphasize the importance which consequently should be given to appropriate choices made by the educator, choices that would not hinder the teaching process but forward it, while creating an enjoyable working atmosphere. The experiment was conducted on two groups of students belonging to different educational backgrounds.

2. Why teach literature in the present context?

Once the decision has been taken as to the necessity of introducing literary texts in the process of teaching, the issue is reduced to the skill and resourcefulness of the teacher to change the classes into a rewarding enterprise. After all literature is not about learning names of writers and summaries of their works, on the contrary, it is about being open to the riches good books can bring into one's life. The study of literature educates students to enjoy reading and to build up their appetite for further reading outside the classroom; it teaches them to discover the meaningfulness of a text without the teacher's directions as to what they should think or feel; to understand the literary phenomenon and to give personal documented responses even if these contradict standard interpretations. It helps them acquire life experience, learn about the "ways of the world," enhance cultural experience and awareness (of others' cultures and one's own), practice tolerance and acceptance. It develops the students' artistic taste, while refining their
thinking and feeling, and it develops their critical thinking which engenders new moral attitudes. It teaches them to have an opinion and how to express it. Last but not least it stimulates their creativity and enhances self-knowledge. What is needed is an approach that would integrate all these elements while making the literary experience enjoyable besides beneficial. What a waste it would be to fall back on the old traditional teacher-centred approaches while depriving students of the possibility to judge for themselves, form their own opinions about society and express them in the language whose culture they are studying! No doubt such an extraordinary potential turns the teaching of literature into a responsible but worthwhile enterprise.

In the new context and as mentioned above, literature does not mean learning facts about the writer and his work but experiencing the latter. Under the circumstances the first role of the teacher is to provide suitable texts, the second is to develop activities that will focus the students' attention on the texts.

3. The choice of the literary text

The choice of the text becomes of extreme importance because virtually all the other issues that have to be tackled in connection with using literary texts in the EFL lesson depend on it:

- First of all, the text has to trigger the students' interest. If they cannot connect to it in some way, they will soon get bored and capturing their attention, once they lost focus, is more difficult than keeping it focused. The process of finding connections between the world of the text and their own improves with every new exposal. Brooks [1989: 10-11] noticed that her students were able to cope with difficult vocabulary and syntax problems in case of Joseph Conrad's story "The Lagoon" because they somehow could connect with Conrad's "grand universal themes." In my personal experience, Stephen Crane's short story, "The Open Boat," raises the same problem: even the use of a more demanding exercise – a listening activity – can lead to a fascinating discussion about human relationships and an instructive lesson on the four stages of group formation (forming, storming, norming and performing) if the listening is preceded by an exercise explaining some of the words connected with boating (an exercise and not a vocabulary box!) and it concentrates on description of people and activities for contextualisation. In case of Romanian students experiencing English or American literature, cultural gaps are not the
issue, however, problems may arise with what Brooks identified as the tendency of English writers "to express humour through understatement." Her students, despite of the fact that they understood the words, were able to enjoy Mark Twain's humour in passages of *Huckleberry Finn* only when she herself read them with the proper tone of voice, while finding nothing amusing in other easier excerpts, which they were supposed to read alone. The same may happen with excerpts from Jerome K. Jerome whose tongue-in-cheek humour is specific to the British culture. On the other hand, lack of familiarity with the reading experience in one's native language may also cause problems especially when students are exposed to modern and post-modern poetry and literature.

There is another dimension to choosing texts which are relevant to the students' knowledge and life experience: efficient comprehension cannot take place otherwise and, without it, responses will be artificial or difficult to elicit, which can turn the whole lesson into a frustrating experience. Once students have discovered the meaningfulness of what the text has to convey and found it enjoyable, they will be willing to react to it, open to discussing the issues it arises, agree to express an opinion and defend it. The teacher's role is to ensure a criticism free zone, an atmosphere in which students can react honestly, express their opinion even if it contradicts others' or critics' opinions. There are no right or wrong answers when it comes to interpretations of human motives, evaluation of contradictory situations, or walking in the shoes of one, or another of the characters. The student coming to inhabit the text is the greatest achievement a teacher may expect and if he/she shows genuine interest in hearing the students, their confidence and enthusiasm will flare up and they will be happy to play along in the game of literature.

- Second, *a great variety of genres and styles* should be considered when selecting the literary excerpt. Different types appeal to different readers and, as already mentioned, the main point of a literature class is to experience the literary text itself. This means reading it in the first place. Since the objective here is to enable students to read on their own, the procedures followed will have to resemble the natural process of adult reading in real life. This is why I suggest, after reading aloud the instructions to the activity proper, to proceed to silent reading, which is the normal way for an adult to approach an unknown text. What is different though is that adults do not normally read for the
purpose of discussing the subject. However, the students quickly realize the importance of sharing their opinions, since meanwhile they get good language practice but, even most importantly, they can enhance their own experience by listening to what others have to say.

• Third, the suitability of the text is one important criterion for several reasons as well as purposes. Age groups will determine the language level of particular groups, on the one hand and their needs, interests and cultural background, on the other. The text presupposes a certain mastery of both the target language and some reading skills. While vocabulary boxes will be present in most of the textbooks dealing with literature however, understanding from context should be encouraged. Explanation of words might be necessary in case of texts that belong to a contextual framework which is far in time or space from the students' specific environment. Devising activities that ask for different types of reading (skimming, scanning extensive, intensive), several types for the same text if possible, will develop reading skills which are a precious asset for adult life. Admitting that the main point of a literature class has to do with reading the selected text however, one cannot help noticing the array of skills and language work involved in such a class. Practically, the text can be used to practice any area of language study and while fluency should be expected in oral responses (even at the expense of accuracy), writing tasks will help improve the range of vocabulary as well as students' versatility in what concerns English morphology, syntax and semantics. A selection of different tasks (gap-fills, open closes, multiple choice, true/false, taking notes, etc.) can be used to replace the old way of transmitting contextual information about the period, writer, or work. These tasks can be solved individually, in pairs, or in groups, again the imagination of the teacher sets the limits.

• Fourth, teachers should welcome the benefits of new technologies. The literary excerpt, even if carefully selected, cannot be expected to do the trick every time for the very reason mentioned above: in spite of the common school background, differences in family background and knowledge acquisition will result in different preferences, tolerances, as well as performance. If work on the text is accompanied by exposure to different other media (tapes with readings, music, movies on the author or work, hand-outs with artwork, etc.), this would greatly increase its appeal. Today's technology allows for such extrapolations in most school environments.
• Fifth, perhaps the most important thing connected with the choice of the text is that *it has to fulfil the teacher's previously set literary objective*. No opportunity should be wasted that can be used for giving students elements of literary criticism or interpretation that will help them to come up, in their turn, with well-documented personal reactions. This sounds more complicated than it is: students are aware of literary genres even at lower secondary level, while at highschool level, they are already aware of notions such as theme, character, point of view, setting, atmosphere, imagery, or style. Even if they are not adroit at identifying them by themselves, they will easily reinforce former knowledge in the context of the lesson. The question is how these notions are dealt with and this leads to one more criterion for the selection of the text:

• Lastly, the text (and the lesson as well) should be *formative and not informative*. The purpose of introducing the literary notions above is not to increase students' passive (soon forgotten vocabulary) but to teach them to appreciate a literary work (or a work belonging to any other artistic form) in terms of their reaction to it but necessarily expressed in terms specific to and pertaining to the respective art. Teaching them to be able to come up with what I called above a "well-documented personal response" is perhaps the major benefit of the class. They learn the language by using it but, at the same time, they become cultured adults. What else could be expected from an EFL lesson?

In my experience such an approach to literature can be successfully used with students of most profiles if the variable number of classes per week is taken into account when preparing the lesson. It can turn a bunch of indifferent, uninterested and most certainly unenthusiastic (when it comes to matters of reading and literature) ignoramuses into students taking pleasure in reading and well-aware of what windows (and doors) the books and their teachings about the world can bring them. At the same time I admit that the amount of work on behalf of the teacher is to a great extent increased. One of the reasons is that teachers themselves have to feel confident with the material they are teaching. Another one is that it is much more difficult to work with larger classes than with groups and the results are less satisfying because they might take longer to accomplish. In large classes motivating students to read books (because of the impossibility to change this into a controlled activity), or to speak up is a challenge that can become overwhelming. The difference between the students'
language performance can cause the weaker ones to abandon reading activities, since experience tells them they won't be able to finish in due time anyway. Slowly the gap between them and the more advanced students widens and this may be a source of frustration. Developing efficient strategies for these situations depends on the teacher. The one I found best is restricting the number of tasks weaker students have to deal with and devising easier ones, if such activities are not provided by the textbook. I also learned to always follow-up and check everything that was done the class before. It is a time-consuming and often tedious activity, nevertheless, it always pays eventually. But such strategies are not the point of this paper.

4. The choice of the textbook – illustration

The following is an exemplification of how textbooks work and what a teacher should look for when trying to identify the textbook which would correspond to his students' needs and his personal approach.

Two different textbooks were chosen and used with students of the second year at university level and a group of 10 graders at high school level. The lessons in both of them were supposed to contextualize information on Nathaniel Hawthorne and The Scarlet Letter. The university students after going through each task, were asked to comment on the role fulfilled by the respective task. The material here exemplified is not treated exhaustively, many other ideas can be adopted to complete the books.

4.1. The first textbook

The lesson in the first textbook explored [Balan et al, 1997: 116-119] is called "Escape from the past" (notice the importance of an appropriate title to be perceived as a guessing challenge as to what follows) starts with a clever lead-in activity (I) consisting of three questions. The answers to these dwell on the importance of past history, which can be seen both objectively and subjectively; the continuity between the past-present-future experience of mankind, with the present being a result of the past and nobody being able to escape from it; the fact that the part contains the whole: the body of a prehistoric animal can be reconstructed using DNA cells since they contain information for the whole body and, the same way, one slice of the past, as the students will discover during the lesson – in this case Hester's story – will help
the reader learn about 17th century Puritan America. This is important since another point of the lesson is to prove that a fragment of a novel, when attentively read, discloses to the reader having acquired some versatility a wealth of information, about the whole novel.

The selected fragment is slightly adapted for use at highschool level, and so short that it can easily be reproduced here:

Thus, there had come to the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale an epoch of life more brilliant and full of triumph than any previous one, or than any which could be afterwards. He stood, at this moment, on the very proudest eminence of superiority, to which the gifts of intellect, knowledge, eloquence, and spotless reputation could raise a clergyman in New England's earliest days. Such was the position which the minister occupied, as he bowed his head forward on the cushions of the pulpit, at the close of his Election Sermon. Meanwhile, Hester Prynne was standing beside the scaffold of the pillory, with the scarlet letter still burning on her breast!

The instructions to the series of reading tasks (II) draw students' attention to the second point under study, the significance of the choices authors make and the "constant process of negotiation" that goes on between the reader and the writer. (Several other lessons before this one were devoted to defining points of view and other elements of narrative theory.) The four side-questions elicit direct answers which are meant to highlight: the place and time of the story (1), an interpretation of the findings by making associations between the historical canvas and the unique story that is told against it (2), an interpretation of the text by an analysis of linguistic associations (3), guesses as to the characters whose story is told (4). At the same time they reveal the fact that if this were the only fragment at hand, one would still learn a lot about the novel.

Thus the reader finds out that the action takes place in New England, "in the earliest days," an information which can be used to remind students of the Mayflower (1620) and the first Pilgrims, the Puritans having left England out of the desire to be able to practice their religion freely (1); that Hester Prynne is obviously associated with the pillory, the instrument of torture, this being one of the writer's significant choices (2); that the last words of the paragraph "the scarlet letter still burning on her breast" – as it is always the case with last sentences – have special importance: "scarlet" may allude to fire, blood, love, a wound; "burning" to fire and pain, or some kind of danger and, since these words are associated with Hester, she being the one who
wears the scarlet letter on her breast, the reader may conclude that the word "still" hints to the fact that this situation has been going on for quite a while (3); that Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale and Hester Prynne, being the only characters mentioned, are probably the main characters and closely connected, although their positions are very different: while Dimmesdale is at the height of his career, Hester is "standing beside the scaffold" (4).

Another aspect the short paragraph reveals is that it is likely that there are many other people present, although they are not mentioned. The Election Sermon is a moment in the life of the church which gathers many people, in this case the people of Boston. Reading between the lines one may understand that they will be the witnesses to the story. Thus, in spite of being an invisible presence in the excerpt, the people of Boston are very important in the novel, since they become the chorus judging Hester's actions. Therefore some supplementary information is needed for students to understand their character and moral values.

Grant Wood's painting American Gothic is used as a starting point for the next task. The painting, which came to be considered an expression of the American pioneer spirit, is exceptionally fit for identifying the Puritanical traits – rigidity, austerity and the "spotless reputation" – the text alludes to.

The stage being set, the students can now find out the name of the author and of the book together with a summary of the events. But these are not introduced as information to be learned. The summary has a task attached to it. During the scanning, the three words beginning with "A" have to be identified since they have a special meaning in the novel. These obviously are Arthur, Adulterer/Adulteress; one can add the letter "A" itself.

America in the 17th century was a period of great contradictions, even cruelty. The next series of activities (III) switches the focus to the period and the writer. In the first task seven words are given – witchcraft, dark, Puritans, hysterical, strict, prosperous, Salem – all of them relevant to the period which the students are asked to describe. But this is just a lead in since the next task asks them to use the same words to fill in the gaps in a fragment which gives them significant insight into an important aspect of Hawthorne's life, which tied him to the history of the 17th century: one of his ancestors, John Hawthorne, had been an executor in the Salem witch trials, the only one who never
repented for his deeds and was said to have incurred the curse of his victims. The lesson to be learned: personal life history often influences authors' work.

A last series of activities (IV) is optional and, through hidden complexity and superficial elegance, goes deeper into a second excerpt. This one comes towards the end of the novel (the moment when Dimmesdale finally publicly admits being Pearl's father) and is exceptionally suitable for stylistic analysis. The 10 side-questions help students discover: the out of the ordinary adjectives describing out of the ordinary situations in the fragment, which make the latter appear dramatic and unrealistic; the use of archaic language to restore the equilibrium and add some realism to the events; the archetypes of Virgin Mary and the Holy Child and the Devil; the symbolic use of names (Pearl); references to the supernatural world – the spell was broken when Pearl kissed Arthur Dimmesdale's lips. In the second part of the task the students are given descriptive traits of Medieval Allegory, Romantic vision and Realistic setting and are asked to ascribe the elements they identified in the text to one of these. They will thus understand what Hawthorne meant by romance and why he preferred to call his novels so.

The lesson concludes with a Project Work (V) which can become a piece of homework since it is connected to one of the Info boxes which break the monotony of the lesson. These boxes are not to be read during the class; what the teacher may discover is that, even if they are not assigned as compulsory reading at home, students will read them. In this lesson the supplementary information refers to The Ten Commandments (1), The Feminist Movement in 19th century America – Hawthorne's time (2) and the way children learned the alphabet in 17th century Boston – the story's time.

If more classes are allotted to this lesson, even more information can be given to students under the form of stories about Hawthorne, the Salem Witch Trials, The Seneca Falls Declaration of 1848, and the Romance as a literary form, since all this information is to be found in the Teacher's Guide [Balan et al, 1997: 76-79]. Two more things should be mentioned: the excerpts in the lesson are all supposed to be read silently and are accompanied by vocabulary boxes containing only words which cannot be inferred from the context, twenty-two in all. There is also a small box helping students with the pronunciation of the quite complicated names of the characters.
4.2. The second textbook

The lesson in the second textbook [Delaney, Ward, Fiorina, 2003: F65-71] unequivocally bears the title of the author and work under discussion, thus leaving no room for guessing what is to follow. It also starts with a lead-in but its scope is to a great extent restricted since it refers to only one of the themes in The Scarlet Letter: the dilemma of revealing (or not) a dark secret of the past at the height of one's career. Asking students to complete the paragraph with a few lines makes this task quite open and of not much consequence.

What comes next is an "Introduction" which, in three lines speaks, about Hawthorne's Puritan ancestors and the strict moral code the characters in The Scarlet Letter have to come to terms with. No task is attached to these lines. Neither is any to the summary of the story which comes next. Concomitantly, a quite useful box introduces the four main characters (with no hints to the pronunciation of their names) and describes their position to one another.

The first excerpt (455 words) is also introduced by a few lines placing it in the story. It is the moment when Dimmesdale, unable to bear the pressure of his secret anymore, tries to make amends for his sin. Four "Comprehension" questions follow the text, of which I am giving one example:

1. Pearl innocently asks the minister to stand with her and her mother the following day (line 3). This simple act would have serious implications for the minister which the small child does not understand. What are they?

   Answer: If the minister stood with Pearl and her mother he would be admitting in public that he was Pearl's father and would be disgraced in the eyes of the community (lines 5-6).

A second activity is called "Analysis" and contains five multiple-choice questions of which two refer to Pearl's "symbolic function in the scene," and respectively to the symbolic function "of the sudden change from darkness to artificial light," and other two to determining the "kind of narrator" and to finding examples of figurative language. A fifth question, the second in order, is plainly reading comprehension:

2. Which does Dimmesdale seem to fear most, the judgment of his fellow-men or the judgment of God?

   Answer: The judgment of his fellow-men (line 50).
The answers are to be found in the *Teacher's Book* [Delaney, Ward, Fiorina, 2003: 96-97].

An activity called "Out" moves away from the focus of the lesson asking students to think of a situation when, as children, they innocently revealed some embarrassing truth, or to remember one such situation from films or books.

A second excerpt is the longer version (518 words) of the second fragment in the previous textbook. Seven "Comprehension" and also seven "Analysis" questions follow it in exactly the same manner as was conceived for the first text.

Both texts are accompanied by extensive vocabulary boxes, 31 words for the first one and 46 for the second, comprising words such as *attempted, done, struggling up, since, brand, bears, spell, and sympathies*. Not much space left for inferring from the context, which is such a useful skill to develop for adult reading!

The "Writers' Workshop" is centred on the word "pathos," which is explained and followed by two tasks. Quite unhappily the answers to the first task are given in its formulation (a thing reinforced by the teacher's book), while the second is not different from what was called "Out" since the students are asked to resort to their personal experience again and think of "an episode from a book or a scene from a film that evoked strong feelings of tenderness, sympathy or sorrow" in them.

Another "Out" concludes this second excerpt returning to the subject of the failure of living up to the highest moral standards in case of leading public figures. A discussion is initiated to decide whether in the three specific situations given, the people involved should (not) resign.

The lesson on Hawthorne (like the others in the book) concludes with a one-page long "Writers' Gallery" dealing with the "Life and Works" of the author under discussion. The "Task" that follows asks students to "prepare a short report" on exactly the same subject. Copy-paste would come in handy if the students had the text on their computers.
5. Students' conclusions

The shortcomings of such an approach are obvious and students recognized them while doing and then commenting on the tasks. Some of them refer to the fact that:

- no real communication is involved
- there's not enough variety in the tasks and the way they are presented
- there is no clear delimitation between the types of tasks
- information is presented as such and not as tasks that would make it memorable
- personal response is not triggered
- language skills are not developed, especially since the majority of answers come directly from the text
- imagination and thinking are not challenged.

To do justice to the second textbook, I must add that it is exclusively devoted to the study of literature and, while not mentioning the age group it is addressed to, it approaches literature, in a quite intricate way, from several different perspectives: chronological, genre, theme and critical analysis. It was not difficult for second-year students to identify which lesson they enjoyed more and the advantages of approaching literature communicatively. Their observations were discussed and conclusions were drawn, some of which were mentioned above. Highschool students were helped to identify the traits of the communicative approach by being given a questionnaire containing cues like the ones below.

Which lesson:

- relied more on your opinions?
- allowed you to freely express these opinions?
- offered more opportunity to practice your language skills?
- offered more opportunity to practice your communication skills?
- challenged you to work more?
- contained a greater variety of tasks?
- forwarded information as tasks?
- you found more interesting?
- connected the literary excerpt to other arts?
- contained more collateral information relevant to the subject?
- triggered more personal responses as to the literary achievement?
- stimulated more your thinking processes by asking you to make connections, use your imagination?
- will be more memorable?, etc.
6. In a nutshell

Introducing lessons on literature may prove to be an exceptional idea and a rewarding experience if only the most suitable approach were selected for the transmission of knowledge. Besides the approach, the choice of text and activities comes next in importance. Teachers should not refrain from devising their own activities in completion to the ones in the textbook.

The most important points to mind were touched in the exemplification above and concerned the literary excerpt which must:

- trigger personal response in a free from criticism atmosphere
- be presented against a larger background in the context of the culture and civilisation to which it belongs (i.e. time and space) in order to facilitate connection to and understanding of even older texts.

The lesson itself must:

- deal with some objective information but it should be limited to what is relevant for the purpose of the lesson, e.g. the author's biography will not be presented unless parts of it may clarify aspects of the work
- offer the environment for practicing as many skills as possible
- contain a variety of tasks to avoid repetition and boredom
- develop creative imagination and thinking. The capitals are not here by mistake: these attributes are the most important assets teachers can endow their students with for the world of the future.

In my opinion the best option is the choice of a textbook that has a balanced view on the kind of education the EFL lesson should accomplish. One that sees the language component (included in lessons focusing on students and their interests and involving the four skills) and the lessons devoted to literature as evolving in a continuum since they have common objectives: to develop language skills (with an emphasis on fluency) and to enhance students' cultural awareness.

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EDUCATION THROUGH ADVERTISING’S METAPHORS

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Abstract: The study of brand choices based on our metaphorical interpretations can lead us to consider, in a more realistic way, the construction of individuals and today's world, as well as trades and relations that undertake a range of interconnected social processes. Eventually, the extensive process of media consumption - choosing, buying, and using - of goods, could provide us with answers to important questions, like “who are the social actors?”, “what kind of rules do they follow?”, or “what are their values?”. In this sense, this paper will try to discuss the important educational role of the advertising discourse. By promoting a vision of reality, advertising also assumes a social responsibility. In a way, an advertisement educates people about the product or service being advertised, but also about the values communicated through a proposed brand identity. We will focus on the metaphorical constructions that are involved in advertising communication, the social and ideological campaigns, as well as the role of the new media tools in targeting the emotional potential of the target audience.

Fallowing I. Richards’s and G. Lakoff’s theory that people frequently use metaphors in their daily conversations, we advanced conclusion that metaphor is an omnipresent principle in language through which advertising is connected to us. We therefore believe that the recurrent use of metaphor in advertising communication doesn't serve the purpose of generating the surprise of the consumer public anymore, but responds to an existential need for understanding reality. Furthermore, as we will try to argue, it is mainly due to this double metaphorization of the advertising discourse that it can be understood by such diverse masses, managing to bridge socio-cultural gaps.

Furthermore, we will try to encourage a reconsideration of educational methods proposing the new applications of advertising’s discourse as possible ways for better understanding of nowadays values and identities.

Keywords: education, metaphor, advertising, culture, identity
Introduction

Did you ever wonder why children emphasize so quickly with the advertising or commercial discourse? How it is that an idea communicated through an ad is so easily accepted by an entire community? Professor Jef Richards, former chair of the Department of Advertising at the University of Texas-Austin, weighed in on advertising in these terms: "Advertising is the art and sole of capitalism. It captures a moment of time through the lens of commerce; reflecting and affecting our lives, making us laugh and cry, while simultaneously giving traction to the engine that propels this free market economy forward into the future." Taking onto account the negative image surrounding the advertising field, we still have to see it as a real achievement of our society in terms of discourse and rhetoric. We often forget the positive role advertising has had on everyday life even if it is more than obvious how advertising and communications impacted human behaviour, through education of new ideas and new ways of perceiving reality.

Advertising communication operates by exploiting our symbolic arsenals and their metamorphosis into products, relating with the audience through a simple dual discourse. On one hand we have the economic size of the advertising message as well as its congruence with the persuasiveness for sale, and on the other hand we have the social and educational dimension of the advertising discourse that proposes lifestyles and behavioral patterns to the contemporary public (Social campaigns, value based brand identities, slogans, etc.). Lately, more and more campaigns are interested in and try to draw attention on the problems faced by individuals at different stages of their existence, attempting to provide a personalized response to question of ‘how to run my life’? Whether we are talking about our social issues (and this includes both socio-professional issues as well as those of gender or religion), or our personal affairs (family problems, moral or social networking profile, etc.) advertising has a pedagogical function in its discourse, suggesting socio-cultural and moral models representative for this century.

Educating through metaphors

One of the most frequently encountered topics within the theoretical debate surrounding the advertising discourse is the use of metaphor, both at the textual and especially the visual level of advertising communication. Researchers agree on the fact that metaphor
is the most commonly used figure of speech within the advertising discourse. Nevertheless, I. Richards 2 contradicts the notion that metaphor is a purely stylistic device that requires from the individuals a special rhetorical skill set. He observes that people frequently use metaphors in their daily conversations and thus advances the conclusion that "metaphor is an omnipresent principle in language". Furthermore, he argues that a metaphor is the result of the simultaneous interaction between two thoughts and that this interaction can vary from congruence to dissonance.

Is it possible to educate the masses through advertising? Apparently this discursive tool has been a manipulative ideological tool for several decades, starting nowadays to behave as a social driving force that animates our society through metaphor. We therefore believe that the recurrent use of metaphor in advertising communication doesn't anymore serve the purpose of generating the surprise of the consumer public but responds to an existential need for the alternation of realities and identification with an identity. Rules, principles and norms of conduct proposed are acting like guidelines for our society.

Furthermore, as we will try to argue, it is mainly due to this double metaphorization of the advertising discourse that it can be understood by such diverse masses, managing to bridge socio-cultural gaps.

**How does a metaphor work?**

By integrating metaphor in his daily communication, the individual is aware of the violation of linguistic conventions. If the use of words generally serves the purpose of interaction, transmitting meaning and receiving feedback, this is achieved through transmitting one of the meanings attributed by the dictionary. But a metaphor bypasses this convention by suggesting a hyper-reality in which the meanings are inverted. Therefore, the individual is aware of the contravention with the linguistic conventions. Take for example this slogan for the Johnson & Johnson band aids, "Say hello to your child's new bodyguards", accompanied by a picture of band aids decorated with cartoon characters. The violation consists in this case in a neutral deviation of meaning, culminating with changing the meaning of the word 'bodyguard'.

Starting with the research of George Lakoff, contemporary cognitive linguistic theory considers metaphor as "omnipresent in day to day life", arguing that "our ordinary conceptual system [...] is
fundamentally metaphorical in its nature”⁴. Consequently, literary-stylistic metaphors are only a subset of the metaphors used in day to day speech, a stylistically special case of literary works rooted though in the omnipresent metaphors of everyday’s life. Lakoff considers that these metaphors can be classified into categories such as structural metaphors, orientational metaphors and ontological metaphors. The examples used by the author highlight the way in which a metaphor like "ARGUMENT IS WAR" can trigger a real "bombardment" on the vocabulary of those who interact.

ARGUMENT IS WAR

Your claims are indefensible.
He attacked every weak point in my argument.
His criticisms were right on target.
I demolished his argument.
I’ve never won an argument with him.
You disagree? Okay, shoot! If you use that strategy, he'll wipe you out.
He shot down all of my arguments

Examples of structural metaphors like "argument is war", "love is a journey", and the famous "religion is opium for the masses", are instances of day to day speech illustrating the fact that we don't just talk about certain topics in a metaphorical way but we play the part defined by the metaphor, creating an entire discourse according to its stage direction; we don't just talk about argument comparing it to war, but we act as such, integrating into our conversations (arguments) a whole set of words related to war, immersing ourselves in the world described by the war metaphor as it was real. Thus, the concept is metaphorically structured, action is metaphorically structured and, consequently, language is metaphorically structured, leading to a metaphorically structured attitude on the part of the individuals. "The essence of metaphor is under-standing and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another." Let us analyze the relationship between the terms.

(A) ARGUMENT is (B) WAR

In metaphorical structures as the one above, the first term (A) is the target domain and the second term (B) is the source domain. (A) will represent the more abstract concept, metaphorically linked to a more concrete one (B), mapping the important traits from B applicable to A, based on experience. We can therefore state that the recurrence of
metaphor in advertising and the fact that it is still such a popular advertising technique is supported by two essential reasons; first of all, as we have shown and will try to illustrate further using popular slogans in advertising communication, a metaphorical familiarity with the everyday language. On the other hand, to reiterate the line of reasoning presented above, the use of metaphor in advertising communication responds to an existential need of the public for the alternation of realities in which it desires to lose and discover itself! Following this direction a corresponding advertising slogan can be attributed to each of Lakoff’s examples of orientational and ontological metaphors.

Lakoff exemplifies orientational metaphors using the expression "happy is up, sad is down". With reference to the same attribute of assigning value, accenting progress and an upward movement, advertising’s repertoire offers slogans as fascinating from a metaphorical perspective and accompanied by a brand attitude and vocabulary closely resembling inter-personal communication. The LG slogan for instance suggests a textual association between technological evolution (their area of activity being the production of household appliances) and an orientation towards the quality of life. With LG, “life’s good”.

On the other hand, Philips, another household brand, communicates the same improvement in the quality of life by exaggerating the message of progress, “Let’s make things better!”, and let’s not forgets, “Bigger is better”.

For the ontological metaphors, from the examples that Lakoff offers we can note Time is money and Life is a journey. If we analyze briefly a metaphor like time is money we will invariably refer to time as a limit of resources, as a valuable good, operating in our explanation with metaphorical constructs. The metaphorical status of these constructs is given by our attempts to conceptualize time using our quotidian experience with money, goods and limited resources. In addition to this, for the human-being, such a perspective is not a necessary model of conceptualizing time, which means that metaphor is culturally linked with us and that it emerges in well established contexts, since there are cultures in which none of the above metaphors designates a reference to time. Due to the hyper-real dimension promised through its discourse, advertising is abundant in ontological metaphors. When a telecommunication company refers to the future through its own brand name that references the colour orange (the colour of well-being and tolerance) but also the solar fruit, the orange it
becomes the expression for the aspiration to achieve more and the confidence in an assumed promise: “The future is orange”. On the other hand, the image of a walnut, accompanied by the slogan “Insurance is a walnut” and the comment:

“Like a precious treasure, the walnut is hidden in its shell. It forms a solid armour which protects the fruit as you would protect yourself with a helmet. We offer our clients a symbolic helmet, which protects you from the impact of incidents and unforeseen circumstances, adapted to your personal situation and insurance needs”, clearly induces the feeling of metaphorization of the message. With regard to the advertising discourse, the accompanying texts indicate the different aspects mapped from the source domain (the walnut) onto the target domain (insurance). The walnut is a metaphorical representation of the company's clients, in need of protection, and the nutshell suggests the protective attitude of the company.

From the perspective of Daniel Berlyne, like an aesthetic object, any rhetorical device, such as a metaphor, offers a means to make what is known, unknown and the natural, unnatural. The deviation is, in this case, a way to create what the researchers of the society of consumption call contextual dissonance. Thus, rhetoric dissonance could explain the way in which certain types of textual structures, metaphors for example, can produce displacements of meaning in advertising texts.

It has been concluded however that, although textual metaphors are very useful for advertising strategies, their results, difficult to quantify, may vary as far as to produce effects contrary to those predicted. To prevent this kind of outcomes, the whole context should be taken into account. It is important to recognize that a certain figurative expression may deviate to a varying extent and thus be more or less dissonant in relation to reality.

This applies corollary at two distinct levels: that of each individual in particular (especially the emergence of rhyme and metaphor, for example) and of the target audience (some dates, such as word groups or anagrams going as far as alliteration - the repetition of the same sound or group of sounds in words that succeed themselves). But, every time we compare rhetorical figures and their varying degrees of deviation we are operating with reference to the hypothetical medium associated to them.

Furthermore if the deviation is lower than a certain degree it could mean that we are no longer dealing with a rhetorical figure. This
can occur, for example, in the case of metaphors which have become static or conventional (the sports car that "embraces the road" in the BMW commercials or the floor than shines from the Pronto ads) or lost their emotional impact thus falling into banality. So, because the deviation of meaning is often temporary what was once a rhetorical figure doesn't necessarily retain this status, fact proven by the many metaphors that have passed into everyday’s language. The above examples, along with “the toy bodyguard” in the form of a patch, serve as a memento for the fact that the rhetorical structure resides and functions in a complex network of signs and socio-cultural meanings.

From a figurative-aesthetic perspective, rhetorical figures often lead to what Roland Barthes called "the pleasure of the text" - a reward that comes from an intelligent processing of an arrangement of signs. This arrangement, in turns, corresponds to Daniel Berlyne's argument which, based on his experimental research in the field of aesthetics, states that the dissonance (deviation) can generate the pleasant feeling of inspiration and even profound understanding. The rewards of meaning deviation suggest thus that the figurative language of advertising, by comparison to literary language, should produce a more positive attitude; advertising texts are liked and remembered more easily.

Besides invoking metaphors, the advertising discourse seems free of any constraints, and because due to the absence of the true-false criteria, it can exaggerate with its use of subjectivity, lyricism, expressiveness, metaphors. Even if, at a discursive level we are dealing only with the text-image couple, the broad spectrum of organizational forms of the persuasive advertising discourse is based mainly on the great availability/flexibility of each component to express its contents in diverse forms. Even when the lexical level is concerned, the advertising discourse seems not to be bound by any rules. Its openness toward increasingly more varied categories of terms, its propensity towards polysemy, insinuation and reading between the lines make advertising a contemporary discourse of great originality and dynamism that can communicate its contents to a large public. Moreover, those which linguists call ‘deviations from the rules of language’ (meta-plastic or onomatopoec changes of words) have come to be seen as distinctive traits of this kind of discourse. The adding of sounds (Mirindaaaaa!, Bamuchaaa!), using onomatopoec formations (Galina Blanca, bul-bul!, Hei Psst Cichi Cichi, Kltz Pmz Aahh!), replacing sounds or mixing
words (*Mégalumme = Mégane + lumme!* - catchphrase in the Romanian commercial for Renault Megane), are commonplace techniques for generating the advertising characteristic fervent discourse. From a pragmatic perspective, advertising texts are more evocative than explicit; they don't communicate raw information but a meaning and rarely talk about a direct benefit. This is why children, who resonate more on meaning than on the significance of words, have a better understanding of advertising discourse and an immediate reaction to its messages. Most often the text is generated as a fusion between a benefit, an offered value and a sensory fact or promise highlighted. A slogan like “*Sans parfum, la peau est muette*” (Without perfume the skin is mute) creates an entire sinesteyic symbolism, especially if the text is accompanied by a visual dimension that opens the perspectives of interpretation. The accommodation with the product is facilitated once we familiarize ourselves with it on a sensory level.

Revisiting Lakoff's perspective, based on the fundamental idea that metaphors are conceptual rather than purely linguistic phenomena, it has been stated that they mustn't be and indeed are not limited to verbal expressions. Metaphors can be expressed visually through images, either static, as in the case of magazine adverts or billboards, or moving, as with commercials and movies. These expression modes can be combined with all of the five senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste etc.) in order to render possible the construction and interpretation of metaphors in a pictorial or even a multimodal manner.

Following Lakoff's explanation of the linguistic context created by the use of metaphor in everyday language, we might argue that advertising slogans function from a contemporary standpoint as transcultural metaphors. If, as we have shown, the rhetorical structure of metaphors resides and functions in a complex network of signs and socio-cultural meanings, advertising slogans manage to convey concepts and ideas regardless of social and cultural barriers, liberalizing the meanings through the use of metaphor as a guide. We often use in our everyday language advertising slogans as metaphors to aid us in getting through an idea to our communication partners; familiar to a large audience, their integration in our interactions facilitates the understanding of the communicated contents, so much so that if we wish to express courage, we can easily achieve this by resorting to the Nike slogan - *Just do it!*.
Of image and rhetoric

Noteworthy for this discussion is the strong link between the text and the advertising image as a metaphor generator. The advertising discourse initially presents itself as an unstable, hybrid structure in which the balancing of text and images is made in an uncontrollable manner. Yet its message is understood as in a picture.

Second most influential for the consumers, though extremely visible in everyday language, the linguistic signifier emerges within the advertising discourse as several textual constructs: logo, slogan, body text, each serving the advertising discourse by simple way of the fact that any advertising argumentation begins with its visibility.

From the typography layout within the page, designed to grab the attention, to the aesthetic construction of the logo, intended to create/increase brand recall, the pragmatic characteristic of most of advertising texts is its sustainability, with the attention directed towards the visual-figurative whole. This indicates that even the construction of the advertising text abides by the outline of the visual and the visual metaphor which generates new meanings: specific typefaces for the logo and slogan, specific colors and textures for the letters, different orientation of text within the page, all of these draw attention on the importance of advertising visual rhetoric, as we will try to show.

"Whether we like it or not, each of us experiences at the present time a crack within the representation of the world and so, its reality. This is the split between action and interaction, presence and media-presence, existence and TV-existence." 6

The image of an ad thus becomes the opportunity to talk about multiple realities, not in terms of copying the reality, of mimesis, but especially from the perspective of the image's ability to infer the relationships which we establish with the give world. Furthermore, theorists regard the image today as renouncing its quality of being a representation of something, of referencing to something clear, in favour of a more important role; today it accompanies the human existence, the world, bordering on confusion. If Baudrillard's theory of a reality coefficient directly proportional to the supply of imaginary which provides it with its specific quality is true, then we can begin to understand why the visual and iconic are becoming means of adding transparency to the world through metaphor. The relationship between the world and its images is not based on mirroring but in identification as hyper-reality.
**Visual metaphors in advertising’s discourse**

Continuing the discussion on the representational nature of visual communication, we can consider the contemporary world as one of maximum accessibility and of visual signs. This means that we can educate best our public if we start from a visual level. In the advertising discourse, the social qualities and values are transmitted through cultural symbols and these latter ones as metaphors, function not by altering the meaning but attributing certain additional traits. These features make communicated ideas easy to understand for everyone. On one hand we are dealing with the universality of the visual message and on the other with the free individual interpretation of it. All we can know is the way in which the interaction between representation, the represented object and the receiver-subject produces.

The same premise underlies Roland Barthes\(^7\) in his "Rhetoric of the image", where two levels of image analysis, simultaneously perceived by the human eye, are presented: the denotative level, which is purely "theoretical" for image analysis, as it is hard to conceive an image without connotations. When referring to the "fashion system", Barthes identifies a specific language of combinations between colours and dimensions, which provides the subject with an additional meaning through the way in which it is presented. On the other hand Barthes describes the symbolic level, of connotation - at which the reading of the visual image varies according to the receiver and the codes which he associates with the message. The latter, emerges at the interpretation level, where the perceptive intelligence of the subject activates according to the socio-cultural meanings. The denotative layer plays a very important part as it represents the foundation for the connotative dimension.

As Charles Forceville\(^8\) has shown, we designate as visual metaphor a combination of two heterogeneous visual entities that involves a change in their meaning, one through the other. From the multiplicity of metaphor types discussed by the author, we will pause to analyze the hybrid metaphor and the multimodal metaphor, as two of the most recurrent in print advertising.
The hybrid metaphor (see Figure 1) is perceived as an object or gestalt formed by two entities seen as pertaining to different domains, incompatible and unable to form a whole. Regarded by the specialists as the quintessence of visual metaphor, this hybrid depends on understanding one of the parts in terms of the other and originates, as Forceville argues, from the surrealist painting movement.

Such visual metaphors are often present in advertising posters and prints, where the visual effect is instantaneous, their purpose being to suggest the product or a value without explicitly presenting it, to insinuate one of the product's traits or the alternative space proposed by the brand image (brand’s imaginative ways of creating realities). Of importance is that the resulting metaphor creates the feeling of a coherent context, totally new, created through the simultaneous transformation of one term into the other, and so the meaning of the image becomes understandable. The example shown above in Figure 1 (an ad to Melville's famous book Moby Dick) only comes to support the arguments presented.

On the other hand, in one of his later lectures (2002), Forceville discusses the integrated metaphor as being a construct which passes on to another by means of resemblance even without an integrating context. (Figure 2).

With this observation, we attach to the advertising metaphor a new dimension which we need to further explain. Theorists agree that the advertising mechanism functions on the foundation of the relationship between emotions and perceptions, appealing to primordial reactions through the
visual stimulus, very much alike to the way we read a photographic work. Visual stimulation has the power to associate form and content in a convincing manner. The iconic status is implicit and the images communicate meaning through the use of connotations and the capacity to be intentional. In his work, “Visual Persuasion. The Role of Images in Advertising”, Paul Messaris \(^9\) sees the absence of syntax, the combining and associative capacity not limited to causality or analogy, as one of the main traits of visual syntax in the advertising image.

Naturally, one of the necessary conditions for constructing a metaphor is a certain resemblance or similarity between the two visual concepts that generate it (the target and source concept). On the other hand, the similarity between two phenomena, regardless of the way in which it was established mustn't be seen as a sufficient condition for generating a metaphor. The famous all purpose Swiss army knife isn't a metaphor but simply a multifunctional object. Therefore, a necessity for constructing a metaphor is the ability to distinguish between the traits of the two concepts, as well as the transferability of at least one trait from the source towards the target, without distorting the message that needs to be communicated. Or, in other words, only in this way can the image of a book with tentacles be linked to the work of Herman Melville.

Considering this premise, Forceville shows that in the case of representations in which the concepts that need to be communicated are presented as moving images as opposed to static images, the opportunity to create visual metaphors grows exponentially. This is due to the fact that with moving images (TV commercials, for example) it is nearly impossible to extract a simultaneous scene in which both elements are presented.

If in the case of print the target and the source have to be represented or suggested simultaneously, within commercials, they succeed one another, the pictorial metaphor being the sum of frames that parade in front of the audience's eyes.

With the conceptualization of such a visual construct, the discussion opens towards the multimodal metaphor (Figure 3) which comprises in its construction text, image, movement and a time succession.

Figure 3
Here too, the focus is on the visual, which is highlighted though by the textual, the non-verbal (given by the movement) and the passing of time.

If, at the beginning of this part we advanced the image as preceding the text in terms of the importance attributed in perceiving advertising metaphor, with the multiplication of mass-media (especially video), the text can become illuminating for the perception of advertising metaphor by the public. It offers a better understanding of the message and cleans the noise of visual ambiguity. To the same extent, a visual metaphor acts to reveal aspects concealed by the textual metaphor, accenting mainly the cultural-contextual particularity that can be deduced from the image.

Conclusion

Because of the versatility of trans-culturally comprehensible meanings, advertising metaphor becomes a genuine global handbook, interpreted with every instance of itself, within the sight of every individual engaged in perceiving its message.

"You need to have advertising in a capitalistic society. You don't need advertising in communism. But in a capitalistic society – where people are competing for the same dollar – you need to have information out there so the consumer can make a choice. That's what advertising does. It's all advertising does for our lives". (Nina DiSesa, McCann Erickson, New York). Here, for example, a mission statement of the "Make it count!" campaign part of the Element brand philosophy: The Make it Count collection celebrates Element's deep roots, consistency and drive. It represents the importance of being graceful and approaching everything you do with depth and longevity. Leave an imprint deep enough, that it continues to make the world a better place. Make it Count.

Motivational statements and rules of life are increasingly emerging as campaign slogans such as „You are Volcom, do your job, recycle!” „Green works - Panasonic”, „Live. Learn. Grow – Element”, „Connecting people – Nokia”, „Sharp Minds– Sharp”, „Come alive! You’re in the Pepsi generation – Pepsi”, „Think different! – Apple”, „The Power to Be Your Best – Apple”, „Together we can do more – Orange”, „Impossible is nothing – Adidas”, „Nothing is too small to know, and nothing too big to attempt – Element”.

More and more advertising campaigns highlight values, in fact always present in our educational norms: respect for self and of others,
tolerance, pursuit of the public good, charity or eco ethics. Advertising campaigns promote healthy eating, personal hygiene, gender integration, packaging recycling or even green tourism. Relevant to its educational implication is the example of global codes of conduct recommended by advertising international committees of ethics: responsibility towards the environment, eco projects developed at the organisational level, institutional communication based on an ethical vision for environmental protection. Thus, without yet drawing a conclusion, we see as imperative for the future educational undertakings a research of the premises that have led to the transformation of advertising from an industry associated with a certain type of economy (and targeted specific social contexts), into something closely linked with the structure, organization and functioning of our society.

In a world without a stable configuration, advertising enables communication of multiple cultural identities, of belonging to a social or value based group, transforming itself into a social educational institution of diversity and multiculturalism. And this change of advertising into a societal institution doesn't refer only to its ability to mirror and contribute to a social order. Furthermore, advertising is given the role of re-producing a social order educating its public, with reference to its certain mediating quality through which cultural insertion and value assumption is possible. Advertising becomes an important tool through which future generations can be educated about “consumption of reality”.

Notes:
1 Jef Richards, Department of Advertising, The University of Texas at Austin, "Advertising Quotes," from http://Advertising.utexas.edu/research/quotes/Q100.html on April 7, 2006.
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MANAGING HIGHER EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY CHALLENGES

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Abstract: During the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, formal higher education has expanded very rapidly all over the world. Investment in human resource development has been considered to be a powerful metaphor for a healthy competition in the new world order for various reasons thus an increasing private demand for higher education. The view that education is a fundamental human right contributed to the rapid expansion. Special economic, social and political power attached to the positions given to graduates of higher education, attracted more and more students. There are economic and political reasons for the expansion of higher education. For all the countries, a university has been a symbol of national or regional prestige and this, too, has been responsible for the increasing number of universities around the world. In Nigeria since independence, various governments have spent substantial portion of their national budgets to develop education. Investments in this magnitude have been justified at all times as a means of producing rapidly the skilled manpower required for national development. This paper is concerned with the quality of universities in Nigeria. The main purpose is to show that the Nigerian university system is at the crossroads. What is happening in Nigeria today is certainly widespread in Africa, but not necessarily universal. Three strong evaluative words: relevance, usefulness and identity give the thesis of the paper. The paper underline that Universities has not been particularly pertinent, serviceable and contemporary on consonance with the challenges of the new world order.

Keywords: Development, Education, Higher Education, Nigeria, Universities
Introduction

The history of higher education in Nigeria is closely associated with the formal opening of the Yaba Higher College in 1934. The college was set up to produce “assistance to the colonial personnel in varied fields such as Medicine, Engineering, Surveying and Teacher Education. Compared with the length of time required to complete a similar course at the university, the duration of courses at Yaba Higher College was unduly lengthy (some 7 years for medicine and 5 years for engineering). The work done there was of high quality. Proof of this was the performance of graduates of the college in their occupations and the ease with which they obtain higher qualifications if they had the opportunity for further studies.

The Diploma awarded at the college was unfortunately accorded inferior status compared to the university degree. The graduates were not appointed to senior’s positions on the grounds that their qualifications were not equivalent to those awarded by universities in Britain. Whose still, the graduates were disappointed when denied admission to professional status. The Diploma did not qualify the graduates to sit for the external Degrees of either the university of London or Durham University.

The College was characterized with high-drop-out rate, repetition and inferior status. These made attendance at the College an unpleasant experience.

As the demand for self government was conceded after the second world war, enlightened opinion recognized the urgent need for university institutions to be set up to train the Nigerian personnel. This came into being the University College, Ibadan in 1984 just as Makerere University College in Uganda in 1946, Gordon College in Sudan in 1947 and the University College of the Gold Coast in 1984. The Ibadan University College was set up by the British Colonial Government based on the recommendations of the Elliot Commission. At its inception in 1948, the University College, Ibadan inherited the staff and students of the Yaba Higher College. Courses offered at the college were in the Arts, Sciences and Medicine. Between 1984 and 1063, the University College prepared its students for degrees of the University of London as was recommended by the Ashby Commission. Until 1960, Ibadan University College remained the Nigeria’s only university.

Under the Macpherson Constitution of 1954, the regional governments in Nigeria were granted greater autonomy. Higher
education for instance was placed on the concurrent list. In 1955, Dr. Akanu Ibiam proposed a bill to set up a university in Eastern Nigeria. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe championed the crusade and used his international connection and the Eastern Regional Assembly passed a bill to set up a university. This was not affected until November 1960 when the University of Nigeria Nsukka was formally opened. The university was founded in close association with the University of Michigan.

There was the Ashby Commission in 1960 headed by Sir (later Lord) Eric Ashby. The recommendations of the commission have been a profound influence on the structure of university programmes all over English speaking Africa but especially in Nigeria. Following the commission report, the universities of Lagos, Ife and Ahmadu Bellow were established in 1962, 1961 and 1962 respectively and the Ibadan University College was upgraded in 1963 to a full-fledged and autonomous university. These institutions departed from the previous pattern in several ways –they began from the outset as full-fledges universities awarding their own degrees, and offered courses in a diversity of disciplines relevant to the needs of the emerging independent nation.

In 1970, the Mid-West Institute of Technology at Benin was converted to the University of Benin. This marked the beginning of the “2nd general universities”. In the mid 1970s, four new universities at Calabar, Jos, Maiduguri and Sokoto and three university colleges at Ilorin, Kano and Port Harcourt were set up. The Colleges were upgraded to universities in 1977. Between 1980 and 1982, the Government approved the establishment of seven universities of Technology Bauchi, Makurdi and Owerri (1980), Akure and Yola (1981) and Abeokuta and Minna (1982). Abeokuta and Makurdi were in 1987 converted to Universities of Agriculture. And also between 1979 and 1984, the following state universities were established: Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Imo State University, Bendel State University, Ondo State University, Anambra State University, Ogun State University and Lagos State University.

As part of measures to ensure that qualified high level manpower was available at the nation’s high school system, the Federal Government in 1982, directed that seven Colleges of Education located at Ondo, Owerri, Abaraka, Kano, Port Harcourt, Uyo and Zaria to run first Degree Programmes in Education. Kaduna Polytechnic was also granted the power to run Degree Programmes in Technical Education.
with effect from 1987. The Colleges at Uyo and Abaraka have since become universities. And in 1984, agree in principle to establish the University of Abuja. The institution has fully started.

Today, there is no less than 80 Degree awarding institutions including the Nigeria Defense Academy in Nigeria, preparing the new generation for survival in the 21st century.

**Quantity versus quality**

By 1960, the highest seat of academic learning was the University College Ibadan established in 1948. Before the end of 1960s, the harsh realities of independence began to manifest them. Political dissent started to emerge and was met with repression. Inter-ethnic rivalry and suspicion escalated to open internal conflict. There was a bloody civil war from 1967-70. Corruption, military coups, election malpractices and disregard for rule of law led to doubts in the minds of many. Regarding the Universities, political leaders soon discovered that they were very expensive institutions and governments began to wonder whether the high cost of maintaining them was justified in terms of returns to the nations. Politicians also turned their attention to the privileges and freedom which the universities were claiming and enjoying, especially as much of the criticism of the political class came from the university.

In the 1970s, the economic maladies, social pathologies and political vagaries escalated to a wider crisis. Many external and internal factors made Nigerian economy crippled. Inevitably as the crisis depends, financial allocations to universities were drastically cut and facilities began to deteriorate. Consequently, the quality of service, instruction, research and identity built up over the years could be sustained. This was the origin of qualitative decadence in Nigeria universities. The size and complexity of universities today call for rapid and efficient methods of planning, communication and analysis of administrative function. The politicians only went ahead to create universities particularly the regional and state ones. The country at the, that juncture missed another opportunity of national integration at the highest intellectual level. Rather, what were amplified further following the regional universities were polarization, spatial injustice and social inequality. The situation is sad, sordid and sympathetic.

Worse still, universities sprung up at an incredible rate that no one gave thought to the development and evaluation of academic
traditions, let alone the maintenance of the already not too high academic standards and integrity. Poorly staffed and poorly equipped, Nigerian universities have become veritable wooden towers, ready to go up in smoke and flames at the least provocation. Universities are created in name only, as institutions that cannot function.

The agony of Nigerian young men and women who yearly performed the ritual of the JAMB examination but are unable to secure a place in one of the many universities can hardly be expressed in words. There is no doubt that if there is proper planning, the five so-called first generation universities could serve the university educational needs of the youths sound like a paradox and of course dramatic. But the reality of the situation is that Nigeria has universities that are victims of book famine, shortage of materials supplies, under-funding, under-staffing and worse still with poor structures and little or no facilities for research.

Because of the poor physical and intellectual state of the universities new and disturbing development have emerged. There is a high attribution rate among staff often referred to as brain. The colleges of Medicine and Applied Sciences are the most affected. In the circumstance that follows, one may want to know the quality of instruction offered in these institutions: how have the universities created awareness in the individual; carry on a dialogue with those who generate the knowledge; enable individuals to create new knowledge. None of these tasks are simple. Even the dissemination function requires careful planning and forethought.

To be realistic about what actually happens in university settings in Nigeria today, what is being promoted is. At most, they are able to teach students to recognize concepts that typify common fields of endeavor and the terms that describe those concepts. Often the process is boring and depends on memorization, routine, testing and review. The process can be “puffed up” and made to look prestigious because the university remains something of mastery to many in the public at large. But the function actually performed is routine treatment of common knowledge. For many university faculties, the only pedagogical technique and practice is memorization, rote learning, grammatization, ornamental meritocracy and little attention to the stimulation of students to be critical and creative for themselves and the society. The normal pattern is for the teachers to condense textual materials into notes that they either dictate or hand out and for the students to further abridge and
cram them as thoroughly as possible in order to reproduce at exam
pass.

There is dysfunctionalism in Nigerian universities. The
universities lack relevance and identity. Undergraduates and post-
graduate students demonstrate not only ignorance but also little or no
inclination for basic research. They neither write good prose (literacy),
discuss intelligently (articulacy), illustrate effectively (graphicacy) nor
provide concrete proof of their analyses in figures and other numerical
values (numeracy). So long as the graduates lack these skills, they are
only but “educated illiterates and “urban villagers”. Considering the
demands of the new world order in the 21st century, one wonders if
there is any future for an illiterate society –certainly not in the 21st
century, one wonders if there is any future for an illiterate society—
certainly not in the 21st century.

Without any fear of contradiction, it is clear to note that quality
has been sacrificed in the process of quantitative growth. The
proliferation of universities is certainly functional and pseudo. Some of
the universities fell into the trap of rapid expansion but without
adequate planning. The abandoned project saga is yet an evidence of
this assertion. As a result, rapid growth in enrollments led to much over
crowding, recruitment of less-qualified teachers, and insufficient
equipment and laboratory facilities for adequate operations.
Furthermore, universities absorb most admitted students not into their
choice of specialization. This results in graduation of large number of
students in field in which they are not interested. This is yet another
dimension of the unfinished agenda.

Policy implications

Education entails a recognition of the interdependence of people,
the acquisition and cultivation of such virtues as caring for our fellow
men, honesty, integrity, faithfulness, sympathy, thoughtfulness, trust
and a healthy attitude towards work to mention only but a few. In its
second National Development Plan, 1970-74, Nigeria articulated a set
of five national objectives. These include to build:
(a) A free and democratic society
(b) A just and egalitarian society
(c) A united, strong and self-reliant nation
(d) A great and dynamic economy; and
(e) A land of bright and full opportunity for all citizens
In order to realize these objectives, universities were made to aim at:
(a) The acquisition, development and inculcation of paper value – orientation for the survival of the individual and society.
(b) The development of the intellectual capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate their environments.
(c) The acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to develop into useful members of the community; and
(d) The acquisition of an objective view of the local and external environments.

Universities are the apex of academic learning. The teaching and research functions should have important roles to play in national development. That apart, universities had been known in the Western world to be one of the best means for developing national consciousness. Clearly, the Nigerian universities have not lived up to either the traditional objectives or the aims as set out in the National Policy on Education. They have not been particularly effective in directing the nation to the path of truth and equity. If this were different then indiscipline, corruption, disorder, and unpatriotism should no longer be the bane of the Nigerian society particularly among leaders. Perhaps what universities in Nigeria seem to have succeeded in doing is the development of intellectual capacities of the individual but unfortunately not to understand and appreciate the environments rather, to exploit, cheat, and manipulate the environment for selfish purpose. The system has failed not only as a mechanism for westernization but also as an instrument for the identification, modification and codification of Nigerian cultural values. Consequently, universities have been a disastrous clash of cultures. The products are neither Western nor Nigerian. Perhaps the western values have really been understand and appreciated while the local values are misunderstood, denigrated and sometimes discarded.

The 1962 UNESCO Tananarive Conference on the Development of Higher Education in Africa remarked the issues of reliance and identity as important factor in ensuring sustainable development through universities. The preamble of the Association of African Universities which followed the conference reads as follows.

Conscious of the role of African Universities to maintain an adherence and loyalty to world academic standards, and to evolve over the years a
pattern of higher education in service of Africa and its people, yet promoting a bond of kinship to the large human society”.

The significant points in the preamble include:
(i) The acceptance of the existence of a world standard; and
(ii) The necessity to evolve a pattern suited to the need of Africa without disregarding the assumed world standards.

These are the challenges of universities in Nigeria as well. While it is, however, debatable whether there is indeed “universalisticness” in the world standard of universities, we may wish to take refuge in Sir Eric Ashby’s remark that the African university should refurnish in the house of Western tradition and adapt their degree programme to fit the needs of the African society. But it must be noted that African universities cannot be engines of national development if their frame of reference is confined to local political predilections and ideologies as in the case of Tanzania particularly at the University of Dar-es-Salaam.

Nigeria universities should enhance sustainable development by intensifying and diversifying their programmes within the context of the needs of culture, society and economy without prejudice to intellectual training in basic sciences and liberal arts. There needs to be effective machinery for the identification of the manpower needs. The universities will enhance national development when the quality of their graduates is improved through consultations between them, the employers of labour and the government. This must be followed with proper funding and links with the industrial sector to facilitate research.

During the 21st century, it is increasingly evident that the societies which will survive are those that recognize that knowledge and ideas are critical to development. Indeed, the keys to the future are embodied in ideas, in research, in knowledge which can be modified and reorganized to improve the quality of life of the citizens as demonstrated in higher incomes, higher standards of education, better health and adequate nutrition. This is a challenge to universities.

In addition, as the enabling environment and the rules of the game for industrialization is dramatically changing, the pivot of development are but information technology, aerospace, electronics, materials science, chemical and pharmaceuticals and the biological develop through biotechnology. The science bases for sustainable development will be provide by biotechnology, communication technology and computers. The players in this emerging industrial world of the 21st century will be those countries that have invested in
the necessary skills through research at the frontiers of Physics, Chemistry, and Biology and of Engineering through the instrumentality of qualitative education particularly post-graduate studies. In view of this, Nigeria should choose between encouraging the mad rush for university paper qualifications otherwise known as degrees and the proliferation of the institutions to award such degrees or make emphasis on the heart of the matter: “relevance, usefulness and identity to be part of the 21st century crusade for sustainable development in consonance with the new world order of globalization, differentiation and interdependence which is propelling the east Asian Miracle.

**Summary and conclusion**

This paper is concerned with the quality of universities in Nigeria. The main purpose is to show that the Nigerian university system is at the crossroad. What is happening in Nigeria today is certainly widespread in Africa, but not necessarily universal. Three strong evaluative words: relevance, usefulness and identity from the thesis of the paper. The paper notes that universities in have not been particularly pertinent, serviceable and contemporary on consonance with the challenges of the new world order. The universities are in the throes of a major crisis, which has been brought on by economic recession, unchecked demand, and political naivety about higher education functions. The paper resonates that the consequence is that the universities are bewildered with ornamental meritocracy, memorization and devoid of complete scholarship and intellectualism. The paper makes it clear that the proliferation of universities has done no good to Nigeria. That the Nigerian universities are bleeding to death is not an exaggeration. In view of this, the author recommends some policy decisions that can help alleviate the plight of universities.

The problems and issues facing universities in Nigeria cover a wide number of areas: quality of instruction, admission policies, practices, and shortage of qualified faculty particularly due to attrition, and limited research facilities. If universities adjust to the new realities, they will be able to prosper but is not they will continue to decline as the product becomes more and more similar to high school leavers. In view of sustainable development, the universities should adjust by:

- Negotiating with their governments to name social functions.
- Forging a trusting relationship with governments and employers of labour
- Managing themselves in a fashion similar to modern business, and
• With other institution having similar research comparative advantage.

In the 1960 and 1970s, it was not uncommon to justify university education in Nigeria in parochial terms, and to consider a university as an academic finishing school for local elites. At the same time, universities have been portrayed as having an economic function in that it can help bring Nigeria out of its predicament of depression.

This paper is of the view that one cannot have it both ways. A finishing school cannot be expected to pull its economic weight competitively. To do that one needs to be more purposeful. To achieve serious national goals, one needs to make serious choices.

Indeed, the level of national development in any nation is directly related to the relevance, usefulness and identity of the educational system. If Nigeria should enhance national development through the universities, they must emphasize, extol and exemplify the basic positive human attributes and virtues of life such as intellectual meritocracy, academic discipline, creativity, industry, patriotism, academic excellence, self reliance and high sense of responsibility. For as the school, so is the state of national development (economy and society) and the quality of the graduate- the product of both the school and the culture. Whatever Nigeria want in the society, the country must put it in the educational system.

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THE REPRESENTATION OF VIOLENCE IN YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

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Abstract: Violence steps into our lives through novels, young adult literature, magazines, television, newspapers, etc. It can be represented in different forms, such as emotional, physical, spiritual, and social violence. There are a great number of books for young adults that deal with controversial topics, such as drugs, alcohol, violence, and sex. This paper seeks to explore the pros and cons of the representation of violence in young adult literature. In order to do that, literature about violence in young adult fiction and examples from two novels for young adults will be used to support the arguments. The two novels are The Chocolate War by American writer Robert Cormier, published in 1974, and Lord of the Flies by British writer William Golding, published in 1954. An appendix, which includes the plot summary of the two books, follows the references list.

Keywords: Robert Cormier, violence, young adult literature, William Golding

Introduction
Violence steps into our lives through novels, young adult literature, magazines, television, newspapers, etc. According to Miller (2005), violence can be defined as “action driven by anger with the possible intent to injure and a lack of restraint” (p.89). Violence can be represented in different forms, such as emotional, physical, spiritual, and social violence. It also includes violence against the self, against other humans and animals (Miller, 2005). Youth violence in and outside schools is recognised as a major issue which has a great impact on educational professionals, parents, and

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families. 11% of the public thinks that violence is the biggest problem faced by public schools (Rose, 2000). Keeping schools safe is both the responsibility of teachers and students, with research showing that 44% of students feel responsible for keeping their schools safe (The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher 2000, 2000). Researchers have observed a trend that depicts violence in young adult literature, a trend which finds its roots in television, film, and video games (Kaplan, 2004). In her dissertation, Melissa Comer, an educator at Cumberland College in Kentucky, surveyed a number of professors about their young adult literature courses. Comer’s findings state that the majority of the professors surveyed agreed that the ability of adolescent literature to appeal to its readers is one of the strengths of young adult fiction (Brown, 1999).

According to Reid (1997), “Literature is power, and we must use that power with care.” Teachers can use young adult literature to explore the ethical possibilities provided by such literature. It is believed that by reading stories from different walks of life students can become caring citizens. Thus, adolescent fiction can be used in developing a new generation of critical and creative individuals (Kaplan, 2004). But, Samuels et.al. (1992) argue that “teachers should consider books carefully before adding them to their lists of recommended reading” (p.25). Nevertheless, educators should be trusted with the choices they make in providing books for their students (Reid, 1997).

Setting the stage
There are a great number of books for young adults that deal with controversial topics, such as drugs, alcohol, violence, and sex. Some researchers argue that these issues are real and must be discussed in classes that controversial texts must be made available to the student (Kaplan, 2004). This paper seeks to explore the pros and cons of representation of violence in young adult literature. In order to do that, literature about violence in young adult fiction and examples from two novels for young adults will be used to support the arguments. The two novels are The Chocolate War by American writer Robert Cormier, published in 1974, and Lord of the Flies by British writer William Golding, published in 1954. An appendix, which includes the plot summary of the two books, follows the references list.
Some authors argue that although according to some statistics 96% of students admitted that they feel safe at school, the public has to acknowledge that violence exists in the school setting, and is not necessarily rare (Kelly, n.d.). According to several studies conducted in the United States of America, physical attacks without a weapon are much more common in schools than are other, more serious incidents, such as rape, sexual assault, or aggravated assault. In 2000, of all schools in the United States 44% to 49% reported to authorities that violent acts were committed in schools (*A National Study of School Environment and Problem Behavior: The National Study of Delinquency Prevention in Schools*, 2000).

A study released by the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice mentions that 2.7 million crimes were committed against students aged 12-18 years at their schools (*Indicators of School Crime and Safety 2000*, 2000). Another study shows that youth are more likely to be victimized by violence than to commit violence (*Less Hype, More Help: Reducing Juvenile Crime, What Works – and What Doesn’t*, 2000).

Studies have also shown that students are two times more likely to be victims of serious violent crime away from school than at school. Nevertheless, in 2000, 15% of students in grades nine through twelve were involved in a physical fight on the school premises (*Indicators of School Crime and Safety 2000*, 2000). Younger students, with ages between twelve and fourteen, were more likely to be victims of crime at school than older students, aged fifteen through nineteen (*2000 Annual Report on School Safety*, 2000).

**What is the role of young adult literature?**

Writers have acknowledged that violence, among other controversial topics, such as sex, homosexuality, etc., have been issues discussed in young adult novels ever since the genre was invented (Isaacs, 2003). The increase of school violence during 1997 and 1998, which culminated in the 1999 Columbine High School massacre from Littleton, Colorado, made educators and writers ask themselves if young adult literature could be used to raise awareness of this issue. Nowadays, either through media or in real life, violence is part of young people’s lives (Brown, 1999).
Many researchers have asked themselves what role young adult literature should play in informing teenagers about political, social, and moral aspects of life. Should young adult fiction expose adolescents to the demand of modern life or should literature reflect only the aspects of life lived by young adults every day? In other words, should young adult fiction present life as teenagers know it (Kaplan, 2004)? Other researchers raise the question of how teachers deal with sensitive topics in young adult literature without dodging controversies or overextending their expertise (Reid, 1997).

While Klaassen (2007) asks whether violence in young adult fiction foster violence in real life behaviour, Kaplan (2004) raises the following question: “Should students read books about events that they have never experienced – school violence, excessive brutality, and sexual assault – or should they read books that merely reflect popular culture and not what students know as their everyday reality?”

In this essay both sides of the problem will be analysed, giving arguments for and against the representation of violence in young adult literature, with relevant examples from the two novels chosen.

**Arguments against the representation of violence in young adult novels**

Opponents of representation of violence in young adult novels argue that it can produce imitative behaviour (McKenzie, 2002), that violence in young adult fiction should take an offstage place rather than an onstage one, and that the violence presented is not relevant to the teenagers reading these books (Isaacs, 2003).

First, representation of controversial social issues in young adult literature may produce imitative behaviour. What for some might be a way to foster distance and resistance to a particular harmful behaviour, to some might be self-reinforcing (McKenzie, 2002). Isaacs (2003) believes that the author, editors and book buyers of young adult fiction that depicts violence is highly influenced by the media. Research on the representation of violence in media, such as television and films, video games and music, has shown that the likelihood of aggressive and violent behaviour increases with the teenagers who have been exposed to violent media (Anderson et.al, 2003). From here to assume that young adult readers can be negatively influenced by the violence they read about in books there is just one small step.
What would happen if all teenagers in school ganged up on other students they did not like? Consider the following paragraph from Cormier’s *The Chocolate War*:

“‘That’s enough out of you, Rollo,’ Carter said. Simultaneously, his hand shot out and struck Rollo in the jaw. Rollo’s head snapped back – *snap* like a knuckle cracking – and he bellowed with pain. As Rollo lifted his hands to his face in tardy defense, carter’s fist sank sickeningly into his stomach. Rollo groaned and retched, doubled over, clutching himself in disbelief, gasping for breath. He was shoved from behind, and dropped to the floor coughing and spitting, crawling on all fours.” (pp.171-172)

Or what would happen if older children decided to take their frustrations out on younger ones, as is the case with Jack and Piggy in Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*:

“This from Piggy, and the wails of agreement from some of the hunters drove Jack to violence. The bolting look came into his blue eyes. He took a step, and able at last to hit someone, stuck his fist into Piggy’s stomach. Piggy sat down with a grunt. Jack stood over him. His voice was vicious with humiliation.

‘You would, would you? Fatty!’

Ralph made a step forward and Jack smacked Piggy’s head. Piggy’s glasses flew off and tinkled on the rocks. Piggy cried out in terror:

‘My specs!’” (p.75)

From too much exposure to violence, both at school in their reading class and at home through media, students might get the impression that this kind of behaviour is normal (Reid, 1997). Second, violence in young adult fiction has taken a place onstage rather than offstage, with writers describing disturbing details. According to Isaacs (2003), the amount of violence in books published for young adults has multiplied and the descriptions have reached details described by some as being disturbing. If at first violence was usually described as taking place offstage, nowadays, violence in young adult fiction appears “onstage in single scenes” (Isaacs, 2003).

A novel which brought violence to the front stages of fiction is *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier, causing furors at the time of publishing (Isaacs, 2003). The question that Isaacs (2003) asks is whether readers need to know all the gory details of the fights presented in the novels and whether this sets an example of how teenagers
(especially males) define their lives. Take the following fight scene for example:

“He struck Jerry with all the force he could summon, the impact of the blow coming from his feet, up through his legs and thighs, the trunk of his body, the power pulsing through his body like some elemental force until it erupted through his arm, exploding into his fist. Jerry had girded himself for the blow but it took him by surprise with its savagery and viciousness. The entire planet was jarred for a moment, the stadium swaying, the lights dancing. The pain in his neck was excruciating – his head had snapped back from the impact of Janza’s fist. Sent reeling backward, he fought to stay on his feet and he somehow managed not to fall. His jaw was on fire, he tasted acid. Blood, maybe. But he pressed his lips together. He shook his head, quick vision-clearing shakings and established himself in the world once more.” (Cormier, 2002, p.239)

Another example is the vivid and disturbing description of Piggy’s death, with brain spilling on the rock he fell on from high above on the cliff:

“The rock struck Piggy a glancing blow from chin to knee; the conch exploded into a thousand white fragments and ceased to exist. Piggy, saying nothing, with no time for even a grunt, traveled through the air sideways from the rock, turning over as he went. The rock bounded twice and was lost in the forest. Piggy fell forty feet and landed on his back across that square, red rock in the sea. His head opened and stuff came out and turned read. Piggy’s arms and legs twitched a bit, like a pig’s after it has been killed. Then the sea breathed again in a long slow sigh, the water boiled white and pink over the rock; and when it went, sucking back again, the body of Piggy was gone.” (Golding, 1998, pp.200-201)

Although experts cannot deny the fact that violence and sex has become a common occurrence in young adult literature, they believe that the action has to be offstage. The violence scene should not be too descriptive and disturbing as they can have a negative effect on the young readers (Kaplan, 2004).

Third, the violence presented in young adult fiction is not relevant, as most of the readers are not likely to live such violent lives. Isaacs (2003) admits that novels for young adults can benefit from discussing controversial issues presented in fiction, but she believes that the problems do not represent the norm, and are thus irrelevant. The
majority of young people today do not live in a world where violence takes place on a regular basis. The absence of violence from these young adults’ lives makes them prefer not to read books that present violence.

Not every football player experiences the violence Jerry experienced in Cormier’s *The Chocolate War*:

“Suddenly, he was struck from behind, a vicious blow to his kidneys, sickening in its impact. His knees caved in and he sank to the ground again. As he attempted to run around to find out who had attacked him, another blow landed, some place, and Jerry felt himself hurtling off/balance to the ground. He felt his eyes watering, tears spilling onto his cheeks. He looked around and saw the fellows getting into position for the next play.” (p.179)

When adolescents read about violent acts in young adult fiction and cannot relate to what they are reading, the readers are done a disservice because they are faced with issues that they are not prepared to understand or discuss (Isaacs, 2003).

How many children find themselves on a deserted island, separated in gangs, with no adult supervision, and on top of that involved in vicious conflict, as the boy in Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*:

“Then there was a vicious snarling in the mouth of the shelter and the plunge and thump of living things. Someone tripped over Ralph and Piggy’s corner became a complication of snarls and crashes and flying limbs. Ralph hit out; then he and what seemed like a dozen others were rolling over and over, hitting, biting, and scratching. He was torn and jolted, found fingers in his mouth and bit them. A fist withdrew and came back like a piston, so that the whole shelter exploded into light. Ralph twisted sideways on top of a writhing body and felt hot breath on his cheek. He began to pound the mouth below him, using his clenched fist as a hammer; he hit with more and more passionate hysteria as the face became slippery. A knee jerked up between his legs and he fell sideways,busyng himself with his pain, and the fight rolled over him. Then the shelter collapsed with smothering finality; and the anonymous shapes fought their way out and through. Dark figures drew themselves out of the wreckage and flitted away, till the screams of the littleuns and Piggy’s gasps were once more audible.” (pp.184-185)

The violence presented in such books will never be experienced by many of the adolescent readers, thus becoming irrelevant (Kaplan, 2004). This does not mean that educators do not acknowledge the fact
that violence exists, but not every adolescent is confronted with it on a daily basis (Isaacs, 2003).

**Arguments for the representation of violence in young adult novels**
The reasons for the representation of violence in young adult novels argue that they can provide a place to address difficult issues (Angel, 2000; Gervay, 2000; Kaywell, 1994), that the issues addressed can be educative (McKenzie, 2002), and that by writing about controversial issues, authors only present life as it is (Angel, 2000).

First, by writing about controversial issues, authors of edgy young adult literature give the readers the opportunity to discuss and analyse the issues at hand. Writers want their books to be talked about because change can occur from reading about difficult topics (Angel, 2000). Relating to a story facilitates learning. Above all, young adult fiction provides situations that allows the exploration of topics, attitudes, feelings and strategies that can be explored and discussed in a classroom context that is non-threatening (Gervay, 2000).

According to some educators, literature can offer students a safe forum for addressing difficult issues, such as violence. Young adult fiction presents characters that encounter conflict and violence and have to assume responsibility for their actions and face the consequences. These kinds of situations give the teachers and students the opportunity to discuss the problems at hand.

For example, the following extract from Cormier’s *The Chocolate War* can be the springboard for a discussion about violence in and outside school:

“It was a familiar voice – the voice of all the bullies in the world, Haevey Cranch who used to wait for Jerry outside the third grade at S. John’s and Eddie Herman at summer camp who delighted in the small tortures he inflicted on the younger kids and the complete stranger who knocked him down at the circus one summer and tore the ticket from his hand.” (p.198)

Adolescent literature can have an important role in the emotional and mental health of teenagers who read young adult fiction (Gill, 1999). Teenagers are able to identify with the problems that characters face in young adult literature (Brown, 1998). By introducing to adolescents young adult fiction that deals with sensitive social issues, such as abused children, eating disorders, homosexuality, teen pregnancy,
suicide, and violence, students are provided with the chance to discuss these issues in a safe environment (Kaywell, 1994).

The following paragraph from Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*, where Jack and Ralph fight over supremacy, can be used to analyse the strong feelings that the two boys have towards each other, how they reached this point, and how they could have defused the situation without hurting anyone:

“Jack, knowing this was the crisis, charged too. They met with a jolt and bounced apart. Jack swung with his fist at Ralph and caught him on the ear. Ralph hit Jack in the stomach and made him grunt. Then they were facing each other again, panting and furious, but unnerved by each other’s ferocity. They became aware of the noise that was the background to this fight, the steady shrill cheering of the tribe behind them.” (p.199)

Reading a good choice of young adult literature, students can experience, without being hurt, the harsh realities of violence in general and school violence in particular (Brown, 1999).

Second, by exposing teenagers to the damage that violence can cause, readers learn to become more tolerant. Thus, as McKenzie (2002) put it, young adult literature can be educative. Research has shown that reading literature that tackles issues of violence, especially in the light of Columbine massacre, helped the students reflect on the events rather than just simply react. Teachers involved in studies that explore the impact of conflict and violence in today’s society through young adult literature reported a positive change in their students’ attitudes and their ability to share and listen to other points of view (Brown, 1999).

Using the following paragraph, teachers could talk about the pros and cons of letting oneself be drawn in school violence:

“But he didn’t want to fight. He didn’t want to return to grammar school violence, the cherished honor of the schoolyard that wasn’t honor at all, the necessity of proving yourself by bloody noses and black eyes and broken teeth.” (Cormier, 2002, p.201)

In a world where many adolescents have access to drugs, sex, freedom of movement, etc. providing them with information about the dangers and consequences of their choices is important (Reid, 1997). “I think there’s a kind of Darwinian brutality that can run rampant when kids are given power, and if you’re on the wrong end of the pecking order things can be very scary” (Adam Rapp cited in Angel, 2000).
Reading and thinking about what went wrong on the boy’s island in Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* students can learn how to deal and avoid conflicts that could result in violence and even loss of life:

“The circle moved in and round. Robert squealed in mock terror, then in real pain.

‘Ow! Stop it! You’re hurting!’

The butt end of a spear fell on his back and he blundered among them.

‘Hold him!’

They got his arms and legs. Ralph, carried away by a sudden thick excitement, grabbed Eric’s spear and jabbed at Robert with it.

‘Kill him! Kill him!’

All at once, Robert screaming and struggling with the strength of frenzy. Jack had him by the hair and was brandishing his knife. Behind him was Roger, fighting to get close. The chant rose ritually, as the last moment of a dance or a hunt.

‘Kill the pig! Cut his throat! Kill the pig! Bash him in!’

Ralph too was fighting to get near, to get a handful of that brown, vulnerable flesh. The desire to squeeze and hurt was over-mastering.” (p.125)

Although researchers are aware of the fact that controversies cannot be avoided, they believe that teachers should politicize their classrooms by making books about violence, drugs, alcohol, and sexuality available to the students. Research has found that the reading of literature can assist young adults in coping with their problems. Reading young adult fiction can be an ethical and intellectual process that can help students deal with complicated and emotional issues. Young adult fiction that deals with difficult topics can help students come to terms with issues that they often have to face in real life too (Kaplan, 2004).

Third, the primary function of a writer is to tell the story as it happens in real life. The author’s responsibility is that of telling the truth about an issue observed, with little responsibility to the reader (McKenzie, 2002). Adam Rapp, an American young adult fiction writer, confessed that “violence can become gratuitous when it’s not serving the story” but that the responsibility of an artist “is to tell the truth and it’s as simple as that” (Angel, 2000).

Such incidents, like the one described below can take place in any school, anywhere around the world:
“Approaching the stairs, he felt himself pushed from behind and he pitched forward, off balance. He began to fall, the stairs slanting dangerously before him.” (Cormier, 2002, p.215)

It is important for students to read literature that they can relate to, that reassures they are not the only one facing difficult problems (Reid, 1997). Adam Rapp strongly believes that most adolescent readers can tell the difference between right and wrong, and thus are able to reject the violence they might read in books for young adults rather than endorse it. By reading about violence, readers actually come away with a message of peace and understanding (Angel, 2000).

Even without guidance from educators, children can understand the gravity of throwing stones at other students, as depicted in Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*:

> “Silence and pause; but in the silence a curious air-noise, close by Ralph’s head. He gave it half his attention – and there it was again; a faint ‘Zup!’ Someone was throwing stones: Roger was dropping them, his one hand still on the lever. Below him, Ralph was a shock of hair and Piggy a bag of fat.” (p.199)

According to Reid (1997), well-written young adult literature can offer a healthy antidote to students who feel isolated because of their personal problems. By experiencing violence through young adult literature the students’ inner feelings of anger that cannot be acted on are given a place of representation. Thus, students act out their inner darkness by experiencing the violence in the lives of others (Miller, 2005).

**Conclusion**

Young adult fiction author Mike Klaassen (2007) believes that violence in fiction can be destructive, but it can also serve as a good lesson. This paper looked at both the reasons for and against the representation of violence in young adult literature. The three reasons mentioned against the representation of violence argue that: it can produce imitative behaviour; that violence in young adult fiction should taken an offstage place rather than an onstage one; and that the violence presented is not relevant to the teenagers reading these books. The reasons for the representation of violence in young adult novels argue that: they can provide a place to address difficult issues; that the issues addressed can be educative; and that by writing about controversial issues, authors only present life as it is.
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Appendix
Plot summary

The Chocolate War by Robert Cormier is a young adult novel that follows the protagonist, Jerry Renault, as he refuses to participate in the chocolate sale organized by his school. His refusal is at first dictated by “the Vigils,” a secret school society run by the ruthless Archie, but later on, even when his assignment was over, Jerry still decides not to sell the chocolates. With the unspoken help of Brother Leon, the temporary head of Trinity High School, Jerry becomes the target of numerous violent acts that try to coerce him into selling the chocolates.

In Lord of the Flies, William Golding presents the disastrous results of a group of British school-boys who find themselves marooned on a deserted island without any adult supervision. As the boys organize themselves, two opposing groups of children are formed. The one run by Ralph, the elected leader, believes in the importance of having a constant fire burning at the top of the mountain, while the other group, lead by Jack, is more interested in hunting. The clashes between the two groups will eventually lead to extreme violence and even death.
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