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A TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF LITERACY STRATEGIES APPLIED IN EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

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Abstract: *The article highlights the perspective of high-school teachers working in a pedagogical profile regarding the application of literacy strategies in various disciplines and the importance of such strategies in the development of functional literacy in students. The method used for this study has been investigation, and the tool used to collect information has been the survey. The data has been analyzed using SPSS software, version 22.0. The elements examined through pilot study returned a reliability rate in between 0.62 and 0.822. Results have shown that teachers can partially define literacy, but they do not frequently apply, in their teaching activity, strategies that would develop students' abilities. This study is paramount in the context of the PISA exams taken by students in Romania, which revealed the scale of functional illiteracy in pupils. Furthermore, the relevance of the study resides in the analysis of teachers' perception of literacy strategies from the perspective of forming students as functional literate adults, but also as future teachers for primary school.*

Keywords: *literacy; functional literacy; literacy strategies;*

1. Introduction

In the always expanding and dynamic current society, the young generation must be trained to adapt quickly to change and successfully deal with the novelties that occur in all areas of the social and professional life. In this way, the school and, implicitly, the teachers have a special mission: to help the students develop the learning abilities that will support their effective adjustment to change, but, at the same time, to make maximum use of their creative potential.

Literacy is both a path and a purpose in reaching these objectives: when it's learned as an ability for study, literacy becomes a working instrument for the entire life.

1.1. Literacy – conceptual delimitations

What is literacy? This new concept for the lexicon of the Romanian language is used in many educational systems. *Literacy* is defined by the OCDE (The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) as "the aptitude to understand and use written information in daily life, at home, at work in a group, so that the person in question may reach certain personal purposes and develop their knowledge and faculties." (OCDE, 2000). In the OCDE document – *Glossary of Statistical Terms* (2003), literacy is defined as "the ability to understand, use and reflect on written texts in order to reach one's objectives, to develop one's knowledge and potential and participate effectively in society" (https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail). The term *literacy* is translated in Romanian as *alphabetisation*, meaning learning to read and write. In order to distinguish between basic alphabetisation and functional alphabetisation, we will continue to use the term *literacy.*

1.2. Functional illiteracy in Romania

Literacy can be analyzed from the point of view of functional alphabetisation, a complex term which defines the ability of an individual to use written information in daily activities. In order to reach this level, forming literacy abilities during mandatory schooling is essential. In the Romanian educational system there is a major deficit in forming these abilities in students. A large number of students that take the PISA exams show a low level in their abilities for learning and analysis of the given text and in the usage of the learned information in new contexts. The official document published by the Ministry of Education presents the general results of the Romanian students in the PISA exams: „35% of the Romanian students are on the level 2. Below level 2, meaning levels 1a, 1b and below 1b are 38,6 % of the students. Cummulatively, on the higher levels – 3, 4 and 5 – are 27,5% of the Romanian students." (https://www.edu.ro/rezultatele-elevilor-rom%C3%A2ni-la-testarea-oecd-pisa-2015). Level 2 is considered to be the basic level that must be reached at the end of the mandatory studies so that a 15 years old youngster may continue his studies effectively or to be integrated on the labor market. As the data presented above indicates,, 35% of the Romanian students are on the basic level and nearly 39% are below this basic level. These students are not illiterate, they know how to read and write, maybe they even memorised a lot of information. The students' illiteracy is functional, meaning they don't understand what they read and don't know how to apply the learned information. This is a great alarm signal for the current educational system.

1.3.The literacy-functional illiteracy relationship

The literacy strategies applied in the didactic activity aim to form literacy abilities in students. After these abilities are developed, the students can use these strategies in the learning activity in all of the fields of study. "As the students make progress in school, they are asked to read more and more complex information. The ability to understand and use information from these texts is essential for the student's success in the learning process (*Think literacy - Introduction to Reading to Strategies* http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/studentsuccess/thinkliteracy/files/reading.pdf).

In order for students to be successful in learning they must master a diverse repertoire of strategies and learn how to use them when selecting information and apply them in various circumstances. The literacy strategies „use a variety of graphical characteristics and text in order to organize the main ideas, to ilustrate key-concepts and emphasize important details and helpful information. These features will help the reader to select information and make connections. The readers who understand how to use these strategies need less time to decipher the text", as it is mentioned in *Reading Strategies - Introduction to Reading Strategies* (http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/studentsuccess/thinkliteracy/files/reading.pdf).

It's important for students to link information, because they give meaning to learning by interconnecting notions and, thus, a holistic informational system is formed. In this way, the fundamentals for an applicative, effective learning are constituted. If the teacher uses literacy strategies in various disciplines, the students will develop their own study system which will become a basic tool in the permanent education, in forming the *learning to learn* competence.

2.The methodology of research

The study uses inquiry as a method of research and the tool is the survey. The survey is made up of 5 questions, some with multiple choice, others with an open answer, so the respondants have the possibility to express their point of view regarding the importance and usage of literacy strategies in teaching thier own discipline. The survey was applied to a group of 50 teachers of different specialties who teach in pedagogical vocational high-schools

in Romania. The teachers were selected from pedagogical high-schools because the graduates of these high-schools will become teachers in primary schools and pre-schools, so the literacy strategies used in the teaching-learning activity will be a support for students in forming functional literacy, but also a model for the future career in teaching. The results were interpreted by using the SPSS software, version 22.0. The elements that were studied through pilot study have shown a reliability between 0.62 and 0.822.

3.The results and interpretation of the research

The interpretation of the results has pointed out different perspectives of the teachers on the literacy strategies. The quantitative analysis of the results indicate a few educational realities.

Most of the teachers who were questioned state that they are familiarized with the notion of literacy (50%, 25 teachers), but 50% are in the category of those who are not familiarized or don't know whether this notion is familiar to them or not.

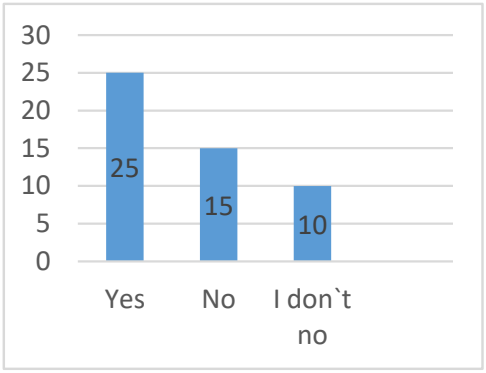

Fig. 1. You are familiarized with the notion of *literacy strategies*

Literacy was defined as *the study of the written text* by 40% (20 subjects) of the people who were wuestioned, *the study of text with the purpose of learning it* 20% (10 subjects) of the respondents and *reflecting on what was read* (16%, 8 subjects). It's interesting that 4% (2) of the respondents have defined literacy as *an operation which enables decoding and recomposing the text in order to realize the didatic transposition so that the text might become accessible to the students,* therefore a wrong interpretation of the term. Other answers were: *the ability to decode and apply information from a text that was read so that the message would be clearly received and processed* (10%, 5 subjects), *understanding the text* (4%, 2 subjects) and *the emission of valuable judgment on the text* (4%, 2 subjects).

In the didactic activity, 16 of the teachers that were questioned (32%) have followed the steps of a literacy strategy, but most of them answered with *no* or *I don't know.* Some teachers explained their choice of the negative answer: *the discipline that was taught* (n.a. Maths) *doesn't require such strategies!*

The pozitive aspects that can be noticed in the didactic activities were literacy strategies have been used are: *the students acquire the new knowledge consciously, according to their own possibilities* (15%), *efficient solving of the tasks related to the given text* (25%, 25 subjects). Most of the teachers' answer should also be noticed: *the students become more calm.* Other answers were: (13%) *capturing interest for books, stating some personal opinions on a given subject, assimilating the message of the text and connecting information with other information that was already assimilated.*

When forming the didactic competence in students from pedagogical schools, the literacy strategies are considered important by 28% (14) teachers who were questioned, 63,3% (30) don't know, and 6,3% don't believe that literacy strategies are important. We will

now mention a few of the srguments that support the importance of the strategies: *they develop empathy, educate patience, develop communication, the speciality language is formed, (the students) learn how to learn.* We will now mention a few of the arguments of the negative answers: *the presentation and exemplification of a didactic method is much easily understood than if it's studied in theory, the students learn better through exemplification or the teacher's model.*

After analyzing the answers given by the teachers, a superficial knowledge of the terms *literacy* and *literacy strategies* can be noticed. This stems from the eronous definition of the concept. Some subjects claim that they are familiar with these notions, but they only offer partial definitions or partially correct definitions, and out of the 50 subjects, over 50% (25) don't know or don't even know if they have information on these notions. The application of literacy strategies in the didactic activity was done by 16 subjects (32%), some of whom have argued that these strategies are not suitable for the discipline that theya re teaching. But it is known that literacy implies the receival, analysis and interpretation of a written message in any field: literature, Maths, Physics etc. There are different literacy strategies for different fields that help the students select information from various texts and link the information with another that is already known to them.

The teachers who applied literacy strategies in didactic activity have signaled serious difficulties that can be easily correlated with the functional illiteracy of students: *the indolecnce of students who are not willing to reflect or make an effort, insufficient patience to read, a low ability of students to select information, formulate main ideas or extract the key-notions from a text.*

The answer to the question *Do you consider the literacy strategies useful in the formation of the didactic competence in students (the teacher-educator speciality)?* is surprising. Only 28% (14) consider these strategies to be important, and 70% don't consider them useful or don't know. As it can be noticed from the answers, the profesional competence of the teacher is reduced to their abilities, while knowledge and the attitudes are ignored.

Even though only some subjects agree that literacy strategies have a major contribution in forming the didactic competence in students, it should be noticed that positive aspects that are extremely valuable about the use of literacy strategies in the didactic activity are mentioned, such as: *the students understand much better if they read and explain a text in their own words; the students acquire new knowledge consciously, according to their own possibilities; the particular message of the text is easily assimilated by the students and they manage to make connections that they will be able to use later; organized learning that can be measured immediately.*

4. Conclusions

After this survey, we can draw the following conclusions:

Most of the teachers-subjects in the current research are in the beginning of the methodical information and formation in the field of literacy;

A reticent attitude of the subjects when using literacy strategies in the didactic field can be noticed. This aspect can be detrimental to the students who will become, in turn, teachers in primary school and pre-school;

The results of the study, even if they can't be ignored in the entire body of teachers from our country, reflects a reality that can explain the functional illiteracy of the students;

The study can be expanded on a representative sample in order to obtain a whole picture of application and awareness of the importance of the literacy strategies in the didactic activity.

The literacy strategies are a valuable way of helping the students acquire abilities of study and become functionally literate adults. *Literacy* is „a key-ability, but also a key-measure of the education of the people" (Roser, Ortiz-Ospina, 2018), and the duty of forming this ability belongs to the teachers.

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Appendices:

A suervey destined for the teachers in order to analyze the perception on the literacy strategies:

1. Circle the chosen answer:
Are you familiar with the notion of *literacy strategies?*
1.Yes 2. No 3. I don't know

1. What do you understand through *literacy?*

2. Circle the chosen answer:
When teaching, did you follow the steps of a literacy strategy?

1. Yes 2. No 3. I don't know

3. Describe, in short, the difficulties that you encountered in class when you applied literacy strategies.

4. Mention the positive aspects that you noticed during the activities that were based on literacy strategies.

5. Do you consider literacy strategies useful in forming the didactic competence in students?
1. Yes 2. No 3. I don't know

6. Note at least two arguments for the previous answer.

POSITIVE ATTITUDE BUILDOUT AT SECOND GRADERS THROUGH OUTDOOR EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

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Abstract: *Outdoor education has come to the point where, besides being a modern teaching-learning method, it can easily develop certain competencies if it is done according to strategical rules. Modern education is based on the development of competencies and the curriculum motivates the use of activities that can build these in children of any age. One of the most important parts of a competency is the attitude of pupils towards oneself, others and learning. This study, presents the theoretical base of attitudes as parts of competencies and how pupils can achieve them through formal education. It also presents a research amongst a group of second graders from Arad County based on outdoor learning activities and the multiple ways in which these can develop attitudes in the research group. We are going to present the instruments and the results, which preliminarily show that involving kids in outdoor learning activities can successfully develop positive attitudes towards self, society, the micro group and towards learning.*

Key words:*attitudes; buildup; outdoor education; competencies; group;*

Introduction

There are many ways through which education can be done and competencies can be developed. Teachers all over the world can choose from many methods and educational procedures in order to get to the results that they desire and to get as closer as possible to the educational ideal that can be found in the National Curriculum.

There are also competencies that can be found in the National Curriculum of every educational system, that have to be developed throughout every scholar year, regardless the fact that they are key competencies or transversal ones. In the latest years, there has been a great emphasis on the development of transversal competencies and mostly on the buildup of the three components of every competency: knowledge, ability and attitudes.

Unfortunately there is a less emphasis on the last one, and a bigger emphasis on the first one. Usually, because educational systems are built in order to develop and evaluate knowledge and sometimes abilities. The attitudinal component of the competencies is often neglected in the instructive process. This fact can be explained by the difficulty of evaluating it and also because of the fact that teachers and parents, also community ask for results that translate through grades and marks, not behavior of pupils.

In the following, we are going to present one modern educational strategy through which attitude of pupils can be successfully developed in order for them to become independent and successful learners and then useful members of the community. Also by having a positive attitude towards learning, grades can increase and the atmosphere within the educational process can change in a positive way. Also, we are going to discuss the need of attitude buildup and we are going to present some results of introducing outdoor education in the instructive process and the way it changes attitudes towards self, others and learning.

Theoretical foundation

In this paper, the concept of outdoor education will be used as a basic concept, both in the definition of the concept and in the explanation of the paradigms on which the concept is based, since we consider this term to be the most comprehensive as well as regarding the semantic analysis, both phonetic and etymological.

From etymological point of view, outdoor education refers to an organized learning situation that takes place in the external environment. Outdoor activities can often involve experiences based on near-trips through participation in a variety of adventures and outdoor activities such as hiking, climbing, canoeing, rope racing or group games. Therefore, outdoor education is based on the philosophy, theory and practice of experiential education.Also from the etymological point of view, another definition of outdoor education is noted, according to Smith, it is based on relationships and connections in terms of people and natural resources. The same Julian W. Smith described outdoor education as *a learning environment for those contents that can best be assimilated outside the classroom.* (Smith, 1955)

Outdoor education is a concept that takes into account an entire education program based on the experience and practical activity that takes place outside the classroom in the natural environment. It helps people to better understand themselves, to perceive more correctly the surrounding world and especially to gain a better knowledge of the people around them. It is considered a modern learning strategy with strong educational effects benefiting the development of innovative spirit, leadership, communication and other aspects of modern life.

The concept of outdoor education directs attention to an education based on experience and practical activities that take place outside the group halls, aiming at understanding the self, those around and the surrounding world. It is a relatively new type of education, producing long-lasting effects in terms of mastering complex learning situations and especially developing the skills necessary for modern life: innovation, leadership, team spirit, communication, autonomy and creativity. In our country, outdoor education belongs to non-formal education through extra-curricular activities outside the school environment, but is also used in formal education as a learning strategy or as a type of new education. (Șerban, 2014)

Definitions are categorized in the literature according to two major plans:

• From a psychological-socio-educational point of view

• From an environmental point of view.

From the point of view of the psychological-educational and social level, outdoor education is defined according to the Foreign Learning Institute as *the use of external experiences in order to educate and develop the whole personality*. Lewis, (Lewis, 1957) argues that outdoor education appeals to all the senses of the individual in order to observe and perceive the environment as efficiently as possible. Analyzed from a socio-educational point of view, and according to a more modern approach of the same author, outdoor education is defined as *a phenomenon of Western postmodern society*. It does not take place as we currently understand and define in Eastern society or pre-modern Western society. It is necessary to distance civilization from nature, for nature to have new effects and to stimulate education so that outdoor learning can be regarded as worthy of identification. (Neill, 2004)

From the environmental point of view, outdoor education is defined as *an experimental learning process involving all the senses of the participants, which takes place primarily, but not exclusively, through exposure to the natural environment*. (Priest, 1990) This definition is complemented by the following: *Exiting in the natural environment, learning and respecting the environment.* (Ketchie, nd)

The objectives of outdoor learning can include: knowledge and understanding of geographic processes or plant growth techniques, attitudes towards the future or towards society, values and feelings related to the environment or self, assimilation of skills such as orientation in space or communication , behaviors such as personal and group interactions,

coping strategies, personal development and the development of self-confidence. Outdoor learning places can include: school grounds or gardens, wilderness areas, urban spaces, rural farms, parks and gardens, natural centers, etc. (Bilton, 2010)

Directions

Throughout the history of pedagogy, fluctuations can be noticed as regards the roles used in the educational process, the objectives set, the contents addressed, but especially the intended objectives. Each time, these features have been dealt with based on the individual needs of the educator, but also on social needs and expectations. Until recently, the emphasis was on the accumulation of theoretical knowledge and information, the pedagogy of the present starts from a preview of the future in what challenges and needs can arise. With socialization developing socially, education has had to move to a different level, namely to form individuals adaptable to new social requirements. The roles in the instructive-educational process were rethought. The teacher is no longer the sole source of information, nor is he solely responsible for the educational process. Parents and society have gained a significant role in shaping and developing children's personality by asking them for active involvement in learning. Students have become passive listeners, active participants, even proponents of learning situations and their assessors. So, a knowledge-based education has turned into a skill-based one. Knowing is no longer sufficient in a society that is constantly changing, but this science must be transposed into practice, adapted and adapted as often as necessary. It can therefore be said that pedagogy of the future is a pedagogy of competences.

It is not possible to achieve a complete definition of competencies without taking into account their component parts. The concept of competence as a variable of the educational process is preceded by other value acquisitions without which it cannot exist. According to Miron Ionescu (Ionescu, 2003), knowledge is given and information that is subject to analysis, observation and synthesis and passing through the student's thinking filter. Skills are the ability to effectively perform intellectual and practical operations. Skills are components of abilities and activity, originally developed consciously, but which then become automatisms. Also they are systems of sensory-motor, cognitive, affective-motivational and volitional components, ensuring the success of an activity. Capacities are psychological-individual attributes that allow for good performance in a certain area, using minimal energy.

Competencies represent a set of capabilities and skills used in the application, operation and transfer of acquisitions that enable the efficiency of an activity to be carried out, but also the functional use of knowledge, skills and skills acquired both in formal, non-formal and informal contexts. (Roman, Balaş, 2010)

Skills-based education is education that looks to the future and prepares to cope with it. Action, activity and interactivity, as well as the involvement and accountability of educators are the first steps in skills training. Transdisciplinary learning and multiple dimensions of contemporary life require acquiring skills that propel the individual into the much-desired places in society. The experiences and experiences of the individual complement the learning and reorganize it so that modern education really responds through innovative educational practices to the requirements of modern society.

Transversal competences are value acquisitions and attitudes that go beyond a specific field or study program and are expressed through the following descriptors: autonomy and responsibility, social interaction, personal and professional development. (Ilica, 2013)

Cross-skills are based on the following skills, abilities and attitudes:

• Interpersonal skills: organizational, communication, collaboration and teamwork, socialization, collegiality, empathy and compassion.

• Intrapersonal skills: discipline, the ability to learn individually and independently, flexibility and adaptability, self-awareness, perseverance and self-motivation, compassion, integrity and self-esteem.

• Critical and innovative thinking: creativity, entrepreneurship, reflective thinking and reasoning in decision-making.

• Global citizenship spirit: openness and civic conscience, tolerance and respect for diversity, responsibility and conflict resolution, ethical and intercultural understanding, democratic participation, respect for the environment, national identity and sense of belonging, ability to critically evaluate information, and media content and the ability to obtain and analyze information through computerized and technological tools.

• Other: appreciation of a healthy lifestyle and respect for religious values.

Recent perspectives

The complexity of today's society demands that educational systems, through the educational and educational activities they organize, develop individuals prepared for social life but also developed complex, for a satisfactory personal life. This can only become possible if the educator goes through situations that can form him from the physical, social and psychological point of view. Education can do this by organizing activities where students can practice cohesion, cooperation, respect, self-esteem, self-discipline and care for the welfare of others. Outdoor education is a way in which these behaviors can be practiced in formal education. In this chapter we present the most important social and psychological aspects of outdoor education and the role played by each factor / partner involved in this type of education.

Outdoor education, through learning activities conducted in the external environment, is aimed at learning based on practical activities and learning experiences. It is a relatively new type of education that is considered in the literature as a learning strategy, correlating the philosophy, theory and practice of experiential learning, environmental education elements and environmental education. A conceptual differentiation of these three elements was made in the previous chapters. Outdoor education is approached in the educational field as a way of developing acquisitions such as self-esteem, self-understanding, a better understanding of the surrounding alum and the natural world. It also develops psychosocial characteristics from very young ages: leadership, innovation, communication and team spirit. In the following, we will address the topic of outdoor education from a holistic perspective, through the objective analysis of the benefits and plans of its manifestation. Then we propose to investigate the role of nature in the educational process and the attribution of adults in the planning and development of activities related to outdoor education.

Recent studies in the field of primary education have drawn the attention of specialists to the improvement of didactic methods and strategies, as well as to the activities carried out in the class of students. In the last period, it is desirable to renew pedagogical methods so that learning becomes one that targets new skills. Thus, teachers have to organize their educational approach taking into account: curricular provisions, organizational strategies and didactic methodology.

Second grade is the last level of the three inherent in the core procurement cycle. Specifically, by the end of the second grade, the desires of the child's training profile are achieved, and the pupil is expected to be able to:

• use various ways of communicating in real situations

• demonstrate creative thinking and adaptability to varying situations

• valuate their own experiences in investigating the natural and social environment

• to understand and perform social roles within different types of communities

• understand and use technologies appropriately

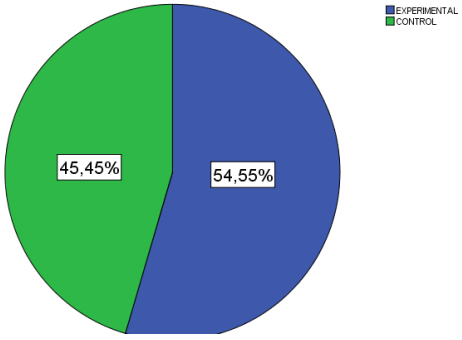
• to internalize a set of individual and social values to guide their behavior
• to mobilize their own potential for building a quality life.

By thoroughly analyzing the skills required for a student who completed the second grade, completing the cycle of fundamental acquisitions, one can observe the requirement of a dynamic, natural, open education, an education that is in constant contact with the society and its members, but more chosen education that is constantly concerned with the environment, natural areas, harmonious physical and cognitive development in the natural environment. It is also seen to encourage self-discovery and relationships based on communication, sharing, discovery, experience, learning holistic and especially interdisciplinary. The aim of this level of education is to provide the conceptual, psychological and behavioral bases that allow the child to adapt effectively to the next level of schooling, but especially the social integration of each individual as quickly as possible. Skills can be gained more easily and faster if each teacher prepares the necessary space and resources for modern learning, starting from the needs and interests of each child. This can be done mainly through the use of outdoor education activities.

Research

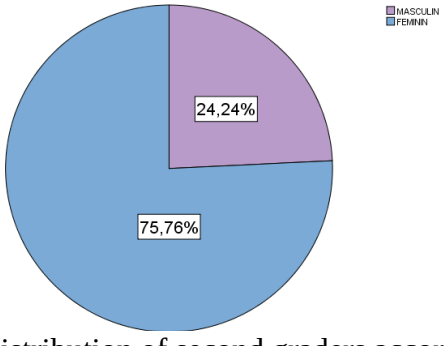
The present study was conducted in the second class, from the urban environment, in an educational institution from the outskirts of Arad County. The institution has expressed a strong interest in participating to the study, both the experimental class and the control group.

The population was made up of pupils of second grade, urban-peripheral environment at a General School in Arad. The students participating in the present study were of both genders, ages 8 to 9 years. The distribution of the participating posology is homogeneous as a number and as an age group. Within the control group participated 15 students, compared to the experimental group, where 18 students participated. These classes are relatively small as the number of students, but considering the environment of the institution, we can say that the number of pupils is relatively balanced.

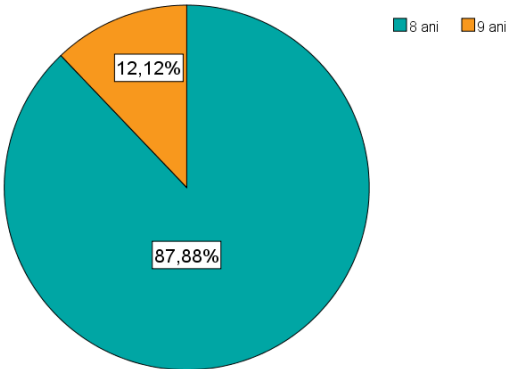


Graph nb. 1. The distribution of second graders in groups

The distribution by gender was done within the two groups, as shown in the following graph:



Graph nb. 2. The distribution of second graders according to the gender



Graph nb. 3. The distribution of second graders according to their age

According to the graph above, it can be seen that the highest percentage is represented by the 8-year-old pupils (p = 87.88%), followed by the 9-year-old pupils (p = 12.12%). In this study, there are no pupils from three separate age categories.

In order to present the results of the study, we have to mention that there have been used the method of outdoor education, with the following activities: a general culture activity, an orienteering activity and a mathematical activity. The instruments used to verify and evaluate the activities was the evaluation sheet of the competencies,based on three criteria: the cognitive criterion, the abilities criterion and the attitudinal criteria. In this study, we are only going to present the last criteria, the one that measures the development of attitudes at second graders during and after outdoor education activities, at both classes, the experimental group and the control group. During the evaluation, we have been using scores of two types: from 1 to 5, and 1 and 5. This was important to specify because for each student in part there will be a final score of a maximum score set for each activity under the outdoor education.

Hypothesis and results

The main hypothesis of the present study was formulated as follows: *There are significant differences in the results obtained between the experimental group and the control group in the second grade students, regarding attitudes towards learning.*

In order to test this hypothesis, we used the t test, having as a variable the group of study and experimental and control subjects, and as a dependent variable, the results obtained in the post-test phase, structured on the three criteria at the level of each Class II observation sheet. We will present the results for the 1st outdoor activity.

Group Statistics

	GRUP	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
TOTALcognitive	EXP	1	10,6	1,29	,30
	CTRL	1	10,0	1,43	,37
TOTALabilities	EXP	1	13,0	1,30	,30
	CTRL	1	7,0	1,16	,30
TOTALattitudes	EXP	1	**13,0**	1,68	,39
	CTRL	1	**4,6**	2,52	,65

Table 1. T test applied for the general knowledge activity

We will present the results for the 2nd outdoor activity, as it follows:

Group Statistics

	GRUP	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mear

TOTALcognitive	EXP	1	10,8	2,39	,56
	CTRL	1	4,8	1,20	,31
TOTALabilities	EXP	1	8,0	3,43	,80
	CTRL	1	3,3	2,46	,63
TOTALattitudes	EXP	1	**8,8**	1,84	,43
	CTRL	1	**4,3**	2,02	,52

Table 2. T test applied for the orienteering activity

We will present the results for the 3rd outdoor activity, as it follows:

Group Statistics

	GRUP	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
TOTALcognitive	EXP	1	10,2	,89	,21
	CTRL	1	8,4	,91	,23
TOTALabilities	EXP	1	9,0	,97	,22
	CTRL	1	3,6	,72	,18
TOTALattitudes	EXP	1	**4,7**	,42	,10
	CTRL	1	**1,4**	,50	,13

Table 3. T test applied for the math's activity

As it can be seen in the tables presented above, (Table 1, 2 and 3), there were significant differences between the results obtained (in the third item, which measures the development of socio-emotional attitudes and attitudes towards learning) between control group and experimental group. Thus, we obtained the coefficient t = 11,325 significantly at p <0,01, between the results obtained by the experimental group (m = 13, SD = 1,680) and the results obtained by the control group (m = 4,67, SD = 2,526) dimension attitudes / socio-emotional behaviors. This can be interpreted by the fact that at the level of the attitudes criterion, the students who participated in the training program consisting of activities related to outdoor education, show positive changes in the development of positive attitudes towards learning. This means that by taking part in outdoor education activities, the competences selected within the socio-educational attitude criterion can be significantly developed vis-à-vis those involved in the classroom instructional process. This may be due, in particular, to the freedom of expression and exploration, but also to the possibilities of communication and inter-relationship between members of the second class of study participants.

Conclusions

Firstly, significant changes can be observed in the development of the buildout of positive attitudes towards learning at second graders, by comparing experimental and control group scores. This is explained by the fact that outdoor education through related activities develops skills and changes behaviors, socio-educational attitudes to a significant level. It greatly enhances the level of autonomy and increases the level of self-confidence, increases interest and especially engagement in activities. It can be noticed that during outdoor activities, pupils were not only interested in going through the proposed activities, but they wanted to repeat the activity as many times as possible.

Secondly, through the implementation of the three integrated activities related to outdoor education, there were positive effects regarding students' attitudes regarding learning and inter-group communication, sharing ideas and information, as well as regarding pupils'

autonomy. These results were not reflected only during the program activities, but the positive results were reflected in the classroom shortly after the completion of the outdoor education activities that were implemented at this level.

We have received a positive feedback, meaning that outdoor activities were requested by parents throughout the school year, even though there was skepticism initially about the way in which this is done and the results that can be achieved in this sense.

As well as development spaces, those around the institution were chosen, with a large courtyard and natural garden, as well as immediately adjacent spaces where outdoor activities can be successfully carried out. Thus, community members and students' parents were also involved in the experimental class. They have developed so that positive communication and student quality of life has increased considerably.

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STUDENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL

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Abstract: *At any level of the educational process the common efforts of the teacher and students are reflected on the obtained and evaluated students' results. What is the students' involvement and decision in setting up the assessment criteria and instruments to asses these results at university level? How will students' results be affected by the possibility to choose some of these instruments and the number of participations in the formative examination? How will the formative assessment and the portfolio sustain personal and group progress? These are important questions for which this research will identify some possible analyses and conclusions. The research sample consisted in 71 second year students who were investigated during the first semester of 2018-2019 university year. Following the proposed assessment modalities and criteria, other teachers at university level could optimise the teaching process and the learning performance of their students.*

Keywords: *formative assessmentinstruments; personal involvement; formative assessment activity; portfolio.*

1. Introduction

The issues of formative assessment at university level were characterised through diverse and complex approaches in the scientific literature. Most of the authors have studied formative assessment and its implications at university level from the following points of view: the implications of the feedback on the students' learning process (Sadler, 1998; Yorke, 2003; Higgins et al., 2001; Poulos & Mahony, 2008; Carless, Joughin, Liu, & Associates, 2006); teacher's specific modalities to give feedback to their students (Ott, Robins & Shephard, 2016; Hattie, 2016; Brookhart, 2017) or to provide feedback for the adjustment of ongoing teaching and improving student achievement related to instructional objectives (Biggs, 2003); the influence and the effects of the use of different methods and instruments in the assessment process (Tang, 1994; Boud, 2006, 2007; Joughin, 2007). As we see, this issue is very complex and offers different perspective on how teachers at university level could use formative assessment in their day to day activity.

According to these approaches, the article tries to analyse formative assessment at university level from specific points of view: the student involvement in the assessment process and the influence of formative assessment and the portfolio on the obtained learning results. We considered the three approaches as fundaments for a possible proposal to develop a formative assessment process at university level.

1.1. The students' involvement in the assessment process

W. Astin (1984) defined the academic involvement as a complex of self-reported traits and behaviours (e.g., the extent to which students work hard at their studies, the number of hours they spend studying, the degree of interest in their courses, good study habits). In the formative assessment process students' involvement related to this approach could refer to: their participation in the development of the assessment criteria, choosing the assessment instruments and the marking system or the frequency of the assessment process. All these actions will contribute to a better acceptance of the assessment process and to a better mark

obtained on the curricular content assessment. Regarding this fact, A. Lyons (1989, p. 37) argues that students' participation in the development of the criteria for assessment should manifest on a greater acceptance of the assessments made by the tutors.

Although the process of developing the assessment criteria is itself a learning experience because it determines the students to question what constitutes 'good' or 'bad' performance. Despite of these benefits, P. Orsmond et al. (2000) argued that students' involvement in the assessment process did not determine the possibility to discriminate between criteria given to them and those constructed by them and that the construction of the criteria does not increase the agreement between student and teacher or tutor. This is an issue that involves many individualised factors as personal beliefs and values, self-assessment criteria, the personal reflection process or the scientific level of knowledges on the evaluated discipline knowledges.

Involving students in the assessment process will assure the fundament for self-assessment and peer-assessment. For example, D. Dancer (2005) pointed that the subjectivity of the assessment process is minimized by involving students in the specification of clear criteria and the assessment process as they were asked to. For students this process is a long term one and supposes continuous and systematic steps and support from the part of the teacher. Also, teachers must be open to this form of cooperation and trust students for their capacity to understand and construct assessment criteria. Involved in the assessment process, students optimise their learning process and receive a better understanding of the curricular contents of the discipline.

1.2. The formative assessment activities

How often we do we use formative assessment at university level? Certainly, each course or seminary activity supposes a minimum feedback offered by the teacher to the students, students to students or students to teacher. But, within this relatively flexible approach, it is important to set up planned formative assessment activities (assessment on a specific subject matters). Some researchers pointed to the fact that students manifested positive responses when they have been surveyed about the value they place on organised formative assessment activities (Carroll, 1995; Rolfe and McPherson, 1995). This shows that the teacher has an important role in organising in a systematically and coherent manner the assessment activity with the participation of the students. Throughout this process the teachers' responsibilities are to assure the correspondence between the assessment tasks for the course/seminary competences and objectives, to choose and to build up the assessment methods and instruments, to set up a calendar for the formative assessment activities and the related activities and to give personal formative feedback to students on the obtained performance. Also, the students must be involved in each previously mentioned action, having the opportunity to choose the number of participations, the assessment instruments and the expected level of performance.

It is a fact that much of the planned formative assessment has been conducted with teacher-oriented requirements which included testing the class's general level of understanding on the curriculum and not giving attention to students' consequential action (Yorke, 2003). For attending this requirement, it is important that the teacher chooses specific assessment instruments. These instruments will give the students the possibility to learn continuously and systematically and to observe their evolution related to the expected competences. Only teachers who give feedback on these issues for each student and each assessment activity could assure and support students' performances and implication.

1.3. The portfolio and the assessment process

L.A. Shepard (2000) argued that, whilst approaches to learning have moved in the direction of constructivism, approaches to assessment have remained inappropriately focused on testing. The test is one of the most used assessment methods, which is also the most objective assessment instrument. But, from the student's involvement perspective in the assessment process the test is not very efficient: the teacher creates some items which are focused on the curricular content and only a very few types of items could evaluate skills or attitudes. We have previously mentioned the importance of students' implication in choosing the assessment instruments and the students' involvement in the formative assessment process. In this respect, one of the modern assessment methods is considered the portfolio, which assures a good understanding of the criteria involved and the agreement between assessors (Ben-David, 2000). The students could personalise their portfolio respecting also the assessment criteria proposed by the teacher.

Different researches offered various perspective on this method of assessment. For example the following issues were approached by the educational researchers: the importance of establishing the purpose of the portfolio, the impact of portfolio on learning, teaching and professional development processes (Klenowski, Askew & Carnell, 2006); the facilitation of student centred learning through assessment using portfolios (Brown, 2002); the role of the portfolio in student self-assessment and the reflection on the learning process and products (Andrade & Cizek, 2010; Alonso-Tapia, 2002; Brookhart, 2008; Danielson, & Abrutyn, 1997; Wolf, 1989); the usage of the e-portfolio in the educational process (Pitts & Ruggirello, 2012).

The portfolio exceeds the limits of tests and accompanies the students' route from the beginning to the end of the educational activities. This method offers support to students for improving their learning process and for teachers also for optimising or changing their teaching process. Also, permanent and formative feedback between teacher and students is assured, but also between students and their colleagues.

2. The research methodology

Our research was focused on the following *aim:* to offer a proposal for developing students' involvement in the formative assessment process at university level and of ascertaining the effect of this involvement on the learning results. Our hypothesis was that using different modalities to involve students in the formative assessment process will improve their learning performances.

The *objectives* of the research were to:

Q1. Set up the modalities to involve the students in the formative assessment process at university level;

Q2 Establish the impact of using the formative assessment and the portfolio on the students' obtained results;

Q2. Setting up a formative assessment proposal which could be used in the academic formative assessment process.

The *target* group of the research were 71 second year students which were investigated during the first semester of 2018-2019 university year at Teacher Training Department (course and seminary activities for the Pedagogy II discipline). We analysed the impact of using our formative assessment proposal on the students' results in a qualitative and quantitative manner.

The analyses of the results (qualitative and quantitative) are presented below and refer to the three characteristics of the implemented formative assessment:

The students' involvement in the assessment processwas manifested in the following ways:

-During the seminar activity -

At the beginning of the semester the students chose the percentage for each piece of the portfolio (60% the lesson project; 20% the application of a teaching method on subject from the content of their specialization- and 10% the workpapers done during the classroom activities and 10% the intervention in the seminary activities). Also, the students expressed their opinion on the portfolio pieces, on the deadline and possibility to optimise their obtained mark. The students chose the subject for the designed lesson from the gymnasium syllabuses for each specialisation, the type of the lesson and a minimum three workpapers done during the classroom activities.

-During the course activity -

The students had the option to keep or renounce the obtained mark from each formative assessment activity. In the case that they kept their mark for each formative assessment activity (to time evaluation on different contents), the assessment items were only for the specific assessment content (the third formative assessment activity' content). In the case that the students renounced any formative assessment activity mark, they would be assessed on these contents in the final examination.

The formative assessment activities were three, two of them during the semester (on established date and only one was compulsory) and one in the final examination (the compulsory semester examination). Only 4 students did not participate in all the three assessment, choosing only 2 participations (the first and the third formative assessment).

The curricular contents and the dates of examinations were established by the teacher and communicated at the beginning of the semester. Also, the teacher explained the modality to calculate the final mark for the course and the final mark for the discipline. Each course support was accompanied by possible issues/items for the formative assessment activity. The teacher prepared various and different types of assessment items: for the 1 and 2 assessment activities: multiple choice, completion items, correlation items; and open responses at the 3 formative assessment activity. For the final examination activity, the assessment items were centred on the skills to develop a topic in a scientific and personal manner.

The portfolio was constructed on the following pieces: the lesson project; the application of a teaching method in their specialization and minimum three workpapers done during the classroom activities. The deadline for the project lesson was commonly established with the students and each of them had the possibility to redo their project one time following the teacher indications and suggestions, if they wanted to. The second piece of the portfolio was presented in an applicative manner, each of them choosing the modality to interact with their colleagues and identify in which way they could use it in teaching a subject from their specialisation. The workpapers done during the classroom activities were individual or group activity sheets which reflected students' work and the involvement in the classroom activities. For each workpaper, every student received an immediate feedback from the teacher and from colleagues. 92,5% of students optimised their project lesson after the teacher's feedback and obtained a better mark on it.

The table presented below (Table 1.) shows the students means for each assessment activity (1, 2 and 3-the final examination) and for the final mark obtained by students (66% the mean between the three examination 'mark and 33% the mark obtained for seminary: portfolio and personal involvement at the seminary activities).

Table 1. Formative assessment activities' results comparison

Pair sample	Formative assessment activities pairs	Mean	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	assessment activity1 - assessment activity2	7,27-7,46	-,871	61	,387 p >0.05
Pair 2	assessment activity1 - assessment activity3	7,27- 8,08	-5,205	61	,000 p<0.01
Pair 3	assessment activity1 - assessment activity4	7,27- 8,53	-10,292	61	,000 p<0.00
Pair 4	assessment activity2 - assessment activity3	7,46- 8,08	-7,504	61	,000 p<0.01
Pair 5	assessment activity2 - assessment activity4	7,46-8,53	-3,324	61	,002 p<0.01
Pair 6	assessment activity3 - assessment activity4	8,08- 8,53	-4,409	61	,000 p<0.01

Analysing the previous table, we observe that was a significant difference between the means in each correlation possibility ($p<0.01$), except for the correlation between the means obtained at the formative assessment activity 1 and formative assessment activity 2 ($t=0.871$ and $p>0.05$). Probably because the two formative assessment activity (1 and 2) were relatively close to each other in time and the students did not have enough time to optimise their learning style. Also, each of the means are up to 7 points (out of 10), which is a good score.

We think that the significative grow of the means from assessment activity 2 to assessment activity 3 was based on the specific feedback given by teacher for each student assessment paper, but also due to the longer time for preparing and optimising the assessment items/requirements. It is a significant difference between the means obtained at the assessment activity 1 and assessment activity 3 ($t=-5,205$ and $p<0.01$) and between assessment activity 2 and assessment activity 3 ($t=-7,504$ and $p<0.01$). So, the students had time to get used to the specificity of curricular contents and a better understanding of the discipline itself. The type of items (open responses with personal approach) were preferred (assessment activity 3) than the items used in assessment activity 1 and 2 formative assessment activities.

The fact that there was a significant difference between the means obtained at the assessment activity 1 and assessment activity 4 (final mark: 66% the course mark and 33% the seminary mark) is shown by $t=-10,292$ and $p<0.01$ which demonstrates that the formative assessment proposal optimised students' learning process and their involvement in the assessment process stages.

3. Conclusions

Formative assessment is an important issue in higher education and the focus on more frequent and better developed formative assessment needs to be addressed within curricular developments (Knight 2000). Analysing the obtained results, we can conclude that the formative assessment process at university level is fundamental for developing students' involvement in the teaching, learning and assessment processes. The manner or the methods and instruments which will be used in the formative assessment process depends on the teacher and students, process in which they will be coparticipants.

As we have previously seen, the teacher has the principal role in setting up the entire structure of the formative assessment plan. He constructs the assessment instruments and prepares models for assessment on each course subject matter. Also, the teacher develops different types of items/ requirements for each course unit, covering the whole curricular

content and skills that will be assessed. Each formative assessment activity must be well prepared, and the calendar commonly established with the students. It is important that the assessment activities should be distributed according to the difficulty level and volume of the evaluated curricular content. The students' involvement in each stage is very important.

From the beginning, this type of assessment process must be a collaborative one, giving the students the possibility to choose the type of assessment and the frequency of their participation in the assessment activities. Knowing the type of the assessment instruments/items/requirements for the beginning, the students' involvement in the learning process will develop and will be reflected (as we previously have seen) on the growth of their marks' mean (which proves the optimisation of their results).

Continued and objective feedback is necessary for an efficient formative assessment. Throughout our research feedback has accompanied each assessment activity (per individual as obtained mark and per group as obtained mean of marks) and each piece of portfolio (for each student). In this respect, the feedback was given by the teacher also on each piece of the portfolio used for our research and it was important for students' learning improvement. As we demonstrated, a high percent of students revised their lesson plan and obtained a better mark. We also asked for students' feedback on their colleagues' activity. The feedback functioned as a support for better learning of the students and for a higher score.

At the end of the semester, the teacher presented the students' progress statistically and used a motivational text, as the following:

Dear students,

Here's how you've completed another discipline ...It was a common effort and I thank you for the progress that you have made, both individually and at the group level! Bellow I am presenting the results of your work (the average of all participants on each assessment activity). Notice that there has been a significant growth regarding the mean of your marks during the semester and that the final average is high. Even though the statistical average does not reflect the individual progress of each one, I have seen and tried to appreciate it correctly. I hope that the competencies you have gained will be useful for you, both in the following activities of this programme and for a future teaching career. I wish everyone to have success in all your future educational activities!

Although the growth should be natural from the beginning to the end of a discipline engagement, this does not happen when the assessment process is summative. The shadow of summative assessment has never been far away, and each academic teacher is very likely to have to switch roles from that of supporter of learning to the assessor of achievement (Yorke, 2003). For avoiding this issue, each university teacher must use formative assessment constantly and involve students in every stage of this process.

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MUSICAL CONTENT INSPIRED BY NATIONAL CREATIVITY OF ETHNIC COMMUNITIES OF VOJVODINA – MODELS OF MUSIC ABILITY DEVELOPMENT AT THE PRESCHOOL AGE

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Abstract:*It is undeniable that tradition and culture form a nation's "mirror of the soul". In accordance with this the cultural heritage of a country with all its elements is the reflection of the existence of every nation (Stolic, 2017:182). It is clear to everyone that the young are the successors and carriers of the nation's cultural identity, but it is also well known that children cannot often come across and in that way learn about the cultural heritage of their country. The way of dressing and life is different today and traditional songs and games are rarely listened to and performed (Stolic, 2017:182). Therefore, it is necessary to periodically influence and enrich their lives with traditional national songs and games. National songs and games with singing can be present in the children's lives from their birth. Through an adequate selection and usage the children will in an unobtrusive way become familiar with their national heritage through song and play (Stolic, 2017). The topics of national song and games can be diverse, but humorous and love texts are the most common. Also common are the texts which describe work in the fields or the process of other types of work.*

Key words: *cultural heritage; models of music;song and games*

Methodic actions

Depending on the selection of the song or game with singing, the preschool teachers need to make an adequate atmosphere. They need to familiarize the children with the origin of the song or game. Firstly they can familiarize the children with: significant historic information and characteristics of the nation that produced the song, how the song or game was created, at what occasions it is performed, the way in which the people who made the song dressed and lived at the time when the song or game were created, and many other facts (Pavlić-Mandić, 1979: 5−6). For the children to become more involved the preschool teachers need to familiarize the things which are usually unknown to them. It would be desirable to equip the classroom in the spirit of the people's daily lives, also the costum that follows the given song or game, e.g, to show them as many elements, pictures, items, clothes, shoes and other things as possible. If there's a possibility, the preschool teacher can wear appropriate clothes, i.e. traditional clothing that was worn back then. In regard to what was mentioned, it is necessary to think of a motivational preparation as an introduction to the methodical articulation of the activity. The introduction part of the activity serves as an emotional preparation within which a certain feeling is made and awakes interest in children. (Đurković-Pantelić, 1998:105).

The motivational preparation is followed by a learning announcement (Đurković-Pantelić, 1998:105). To make the task more interesting, an enigmatic question can be asked, e.g., What kind of a miracle has happened in Budim city? In that way, the children can surely actively listen to the teacher's performance so that they could "discover" and find the answer to the asked question, and at the same time "experience" the song. Then comes a short conversation about the happenings in the song and feelings that the children have experienced while listening to the performance.

After the motivational preparation and demonstration of the song comes the teaching of the song text (Stolic, 2014: 79). Since national song texts contain many words which are unknown to children, they need to be explained and the plot of the song explained (Stolic, 2014: 94). The preschool teacher expressively recites the song in its entirety and then explains the unknown words. The song is taught in segments (Stolic, 2014: 79). The preschool teacher expressively recites the segment at least two times after which the children repeat the same segment a number of times. When the children have learned the first verse in this way, the verse is recited in its entirety by the children. The teaching in segments is repeated for all of the verses (if there is more than one verse) (Stolic, 2014).

The learning of the song text is followed by breathing exercises and voice training exercises which need to be in accordance with the main activity (Durkovic-Pantelic, 1998: 72-84, Cinc, 2012: 53-58, Stolic, 2014: 32-43). For the children to be motivated they need to be implemented through play (Stolic, 2014: 32-43). Firstly we start with breathing exercises. The correct usage of air is founded on diaphragm breathing, which consists of filling the lungs and abdomen with air during the inhaling and emptying during exhaling (Cinc, 2012: 54). During breathing exercises it is necessary to implement exercises for the development of the chest and practice: correct body posture, slow and quick inhaling and exhaling, the way in which we breathe in and hold the breath before singing (so that children could, when the time comes, correctly and confidently produce the singing tone), correct diction and text pronunciation (Stolic, 2014). In this way the children will achieve the ability to evenly and without breaks exhale for a long time, which will contribute to the ease of singing (Ђурковић-Пантелић, 1998). After the breathing exercises come voice training exercises. These exercises are meant to prepare the singing apparatus for singing and warm up the vocal cords. With these exercises we can practice and prepare for a jump in the melody, a specific rhythm figure, the widening of the vice range, practice dynamics, tempo, articulation and many other occurrences in music (Stolic, 2014). Voice training exercises can be organized within everyday activities, for example the preschool teacher asks questions through singing, and children answer in the same way, but also through especially created exercises connected to the topic of the activity (Stolić, Činč, Maran, 2015). The children can for example imitate the sounds of animals or which occur in nature etc. A simple familiar song can be used for this purpose also. At the start songs with three or four tones should be used with the goal to widen the range, latter use exercises on one tone, which are also very demanding because the vocal cords are equally stressed (Stolic, 2014). Of course these exercises also need to be adapted to the children's musical development.

In order to follow the didactic principle of time economy the preschool teacher can think of a story with a game (in accordance with the topic of the activity and selected song or game with singing which is being taught), within which all of the aforementioned exercises will be demonstrated (breathing and voice training). The children need to repeat everything that the preschool teacher does (Stolic, 2014: 141-143). The children will in this way acquire all of the necessary exercises in an interesting way and be ready for singing.

The mentioned exercises are followed by a melody-rhythm interpretation of the song by ear. The procedure of teaching is similar to the teaching of a text and it consists of learning in sections. The teacher sings expressively part of the text (most frequently the first verse) at least twice, then, after listening, for a few times, the children sing the same part. After that they start on the next verse. When they have learned the first verse with this principle, they expressively sing the whole verse (Stolić, 2014). If the song has a few verses, the principle is repeated for each one.

If the verses are hard for the kids to learn, after learning the text of the first verse we immediately teach its melody in order to make sure that the children mastered the song, only

then can we continue with the second verse. After all of the verses have been taught, the song should be performed as a whole.

It is certain that the process of acquiring folk songs or games with singing is not simple, starting with the right selection of songs and games to be taught to teaching songs and performance of games. It is necessary to spend a lot of time and patience to become familiar with the songs, and to compile the whole methodical preparation for their implementation, starting from the motivational preparation to the conclusion of the activity.

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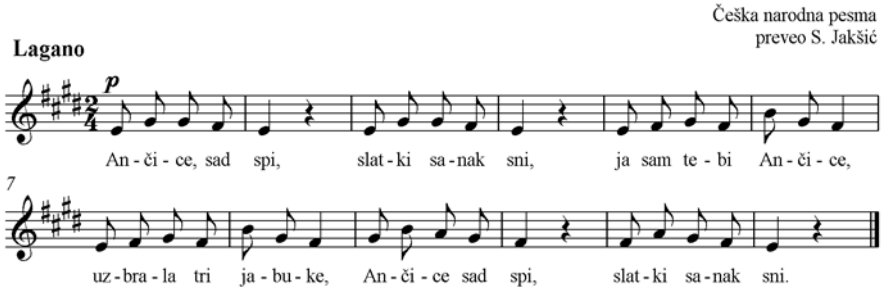
The area of Vojvodina from the oldest times has represented an area in which many cultures, confessions and languages intertwined. Many peoples crossed its territory, countries with different government orders were formed and disappeared, so we can conclude that it has always represented a model of multiethnic, multicultural and multireligious society. The Ethical picture of modern Vojvodina began to be created in the 18th century, in the period of Habsburg colonization which came after the Ottomans' departure from the area which used to belong to south Hungary. The main motive of the colonization of a large number of different nationalities implemented by the Habsburg Monarchy was of an economic nature. Namely, it was supposed to restore and revive the stagnated economy of the new conquered areas. Furthermore, it was supposed to strengthen the defense on its south border in a situation where the Ottoman empire still represented a serious threat. The second goal was to create an ethical and confessional diverse environment, so if needed, the state could easily manipulate with its citizens, keep the subjects under control and keep the already existing state and social structure, using the politics which was used by Romans called *divide et impera*.

The Czechs started to settle todays Vojvodina in the 18th and 19th centuries. In 1762 in Backa they settled Bezdan and Kupusina, and in 1827 in Banat 60 Czechs settled Kruscica and Bela Crkva, and in the same year 24 Czech families from the former town of Sental on the Danube settled on a field Albian, in the Atar area, where they received 295 morgens of land. In Veliko Srediste near Vrsac the feudal lord Golub Lazarevic in 1838 built a manour house and in it settled about 30 Czech and Bulgarian families. In the year 1920 in Gaj near Kosovina 20 Check families from Granika settled there. The Czechs in Vojvodina are mostly of the Catholic religion although there are those who are Evangelists. They gave Vojvodina many famous individuals in the area of culture, science and art. Among them were Robert Tolinger (1859-1911) composer and choir-master, Vladislav Titelbah (1847-1925) professor, Dragutin Blazek (1847-1922) choir-master, composer and a music pedagogue, Rudolf Novacek (1860-1929), visual artist, Mihovil Tomandl (1849-1963) lawyer and historian and others.

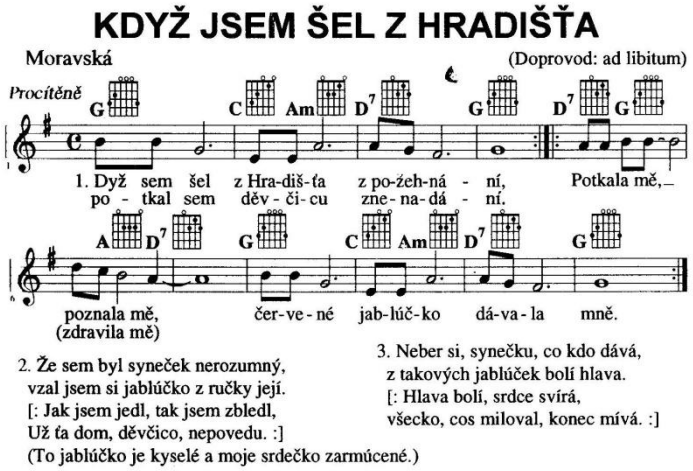
Suggestion of music examples

Example. Czech national song Sleen Ancice (Vukomanović, 1984: 55):



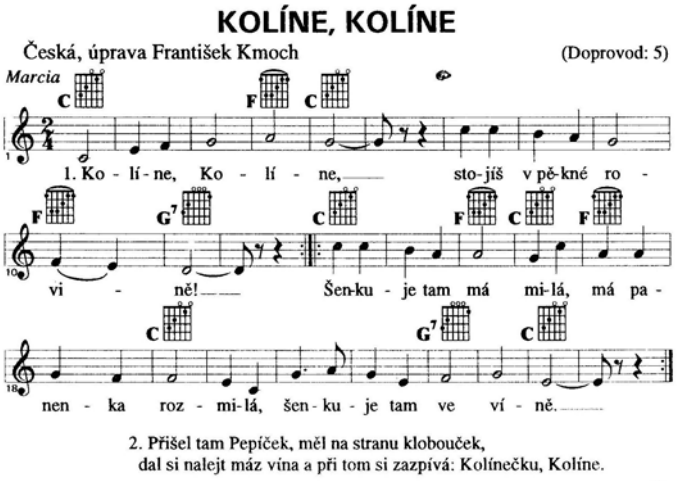
The song is intended to be performed with children of the middle and older group. Since it is a lullaby, it is suitable for the creation of musical and listener notions, and if need be familiarization with the music genre of *cantilena,* as one of the three main "musical columns" (Kabalevski as cited in Radičeva, 2000: 366).

Example. Czech national song *Když jsem šelzhradišťa*(Jánský, 1994: 17):



The song is intended to be performed with children of the preoperational group, as well as for younger school aged children. It is characterized by longer note values, therefore it is necessary, for the breath to last, to prepare the children through breathing and voice training exercises.

Example. Czech national song *Koline, Koline* (Jánský, 1994: 17):



The song is intended to be performed with the children of the older and preparatory preschool group (note: hereinafter the proposed songs are suitable for the young school age). It is characterized by the pace of the march and a two-way measure, thus it is suitable for creating musical and auditory performances, and if necessary it can be used for the development of musical literacy, as well as getting the children familiar with the musical genre of the march, one of the three main "musical pillars" mentioned (Radiceva, 2000:366).

The Hungarians moved to the Pannonia Plain at the end of the 9th century under the leadership of Arpad and in the beginning of the 11th century upon they acceptance of Christianity, their ruler Stefan I received the Royal crown from the Roman Pope.

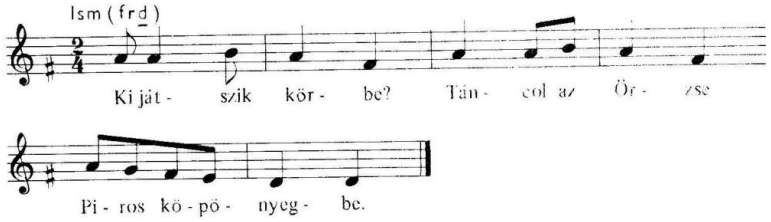
The Hungarian kingdom in the middle ages represented a significant political factor in Europe until it's fall to Ottoman rule in 1541. During the late middle ages, the territory of today's Vojvodina was part of the Hungarian state in which the nobility enjoyed special privileges.

After the defeat of the Hungarian army in battle on Mohac (1526.), the death of king Ludvig II opened the question of the selection of the new king in which the main pretenders were the Duke of Vojvodina Jovan Zapolja and the Habsburg ruler Ferdinand, who imposed himself as the king of the Hungary, and on this basis the Habsburgs, until the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy along with the imperial title, also held titles of Hungarian kings. The colonization of Hungarians in Banat had progressed slowly, first in its southern parts that were in within Banat's military border, to the Austro-Hungarian settlement from 1867, because the Austrians tried, for political reasons, to prevent the Hungarian to settle. After the resolution in 1867., (with the establishment of a dual monarchy), the ruling Hungarian circles wanted to increase the number of Hungarians living on these territories so the first wave of colonization was achieved from 1860-1890 under very unfavorable conditions for the colonies. On that occasion they were settled, in the surrounding of Pančevo, Skorenovac and Vojlovica with Szekelys from Bukovina.

Today, Hungarians make the majority of the population in municipalities Kanjiža, Senta, Ada, Bačka Topola, Mali Iđoš, Čoka and a relative majority in the municipalities/cities Bečej and Subotica. A big amount of the Hungarian minority lives in other cities and municipalities in Vojvodina (Temerin, Srbobran, Novi Bečej, Novi Sad, Kula).

Suggestion of musical examples

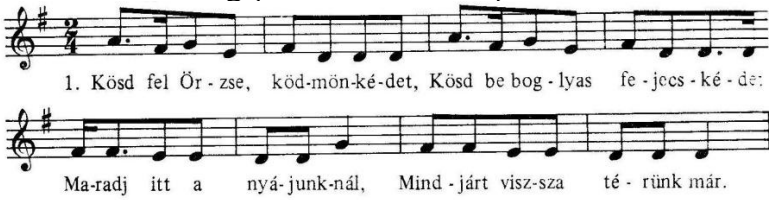
Example: Hungarian national song (Forrai, 1991:162):



Játékra hívogató.
Három-négy gyermek körben jár, és a csatlakozó játszótársakat maguk közé veszik. A dallamot addig ismétlik, míg a további játékokhoz nincsenek elegen.

The song is intended to be performed with children of the middle and older age group. At the beginning there is a specific rhythmic figure – syncope, therefore it is appropriate to use (especially for the beginning of musical literacy).

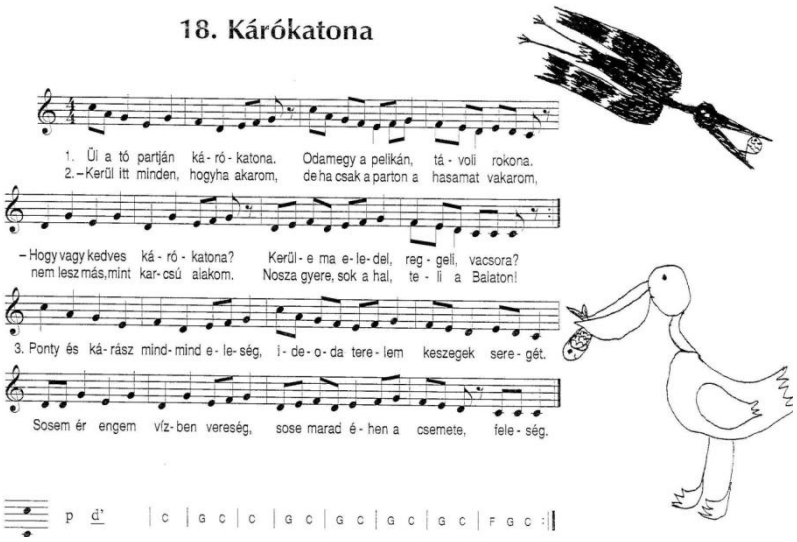
Example. Hungarian national song (Forrai, 1991: 214):



2. Hurka, kolbász, szalonna
pásztoroknak jó volna,
ha a gazdasszony adna,
ha a gazdasszony adna.

The song is intended to be used with the younger and middle age groups. It is categorized by rhythmic figures – dotted and reverse dotted rhythm on a unit of counting, therefore its purpose is, apart from creating music and auditory representations, to familiarize the children with these music figures.

Example. Hungarian children's song:

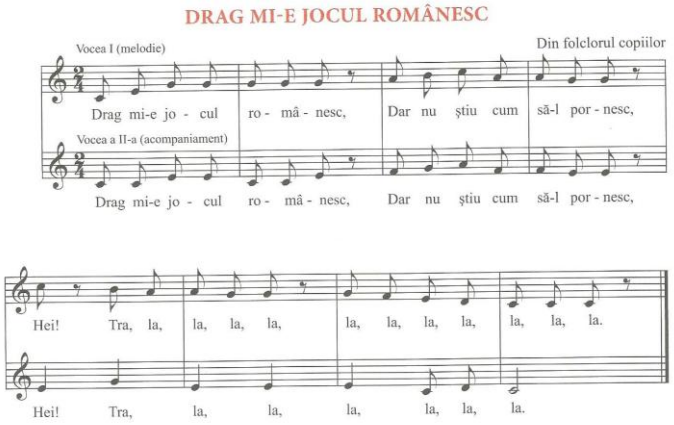


The music-rhythmic structure of the song is quite demanding, therefore it is recommended to be used with the school-preparatory group, as well as with younger school-aged children.

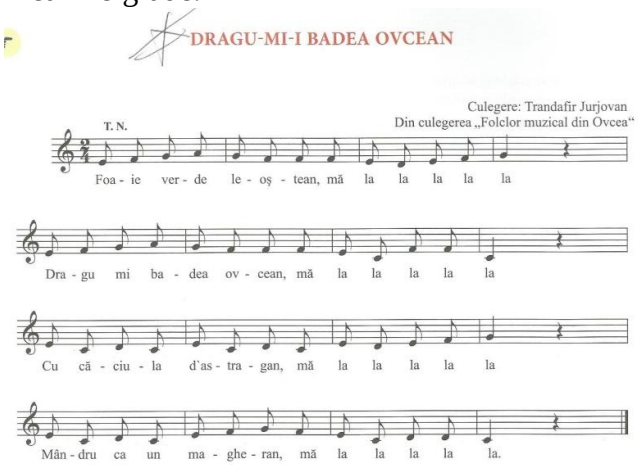
Romanians live in almost forty settlements on the territory of the area of Banat which was from 1918 in the territory of Yugoslavia, and which today belongs to the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina in the Republic of Serbia. Some medieval sources tell us about the presence of Romanians' ancestors, in the period when they were developing as an nation, in the Pannonian Plain area when Hungarians were conquesting it. Latter, other sources mentioned the presence of Romanians in this part of Banat, usually as additional non-important information. Such sources can also be found from the period of the Turkish invasion of Banat, but they became especially numerous after the fall of Banat under Austrian rule (1716). Nowadays the number of Romanians in Banat – Autonomous Province Vojvodina is in constant decline, because of the low birth rate, emigration to the western countries, but also because of assimilation.

Suggestion of music examples

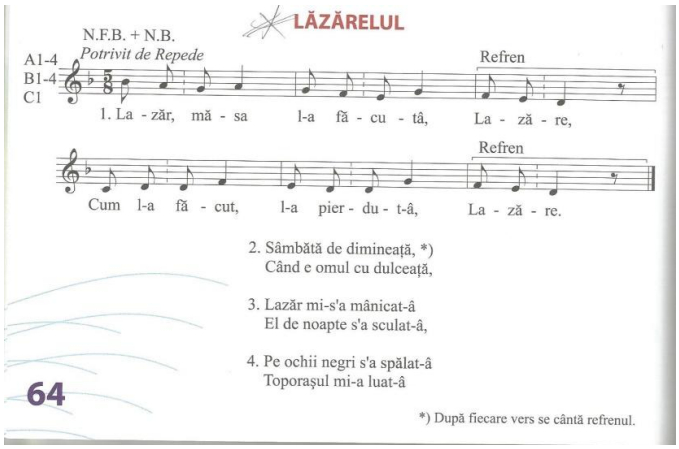
Example. Romanian national song with the games *Drag mi-e jocul românesc* and *Dragu mi-e badea ovcean* (Lelea, 2005)



As in the previous example, the notary text of this song presupposes a performance in more voices which considering its structure (dominant accompaniment in the third), shouldn't be a problem. The text itself, the origin of the song in national dance and the inserted chorus starting with the letters la, la, la… give the preschool teacher the possibility to, after the song and literary text had been taught, use the example to set up a simple choreography through which the children can become familiar with the steps of Romanian national dance. The next example can have a similar application in practice. It originates from local Romanian folklore from the village Ovca near Belgrade.



Example. Romanian ceremonial national song for the cycle of Easter holidays *Lăzărelul* (Lelea, 2009)

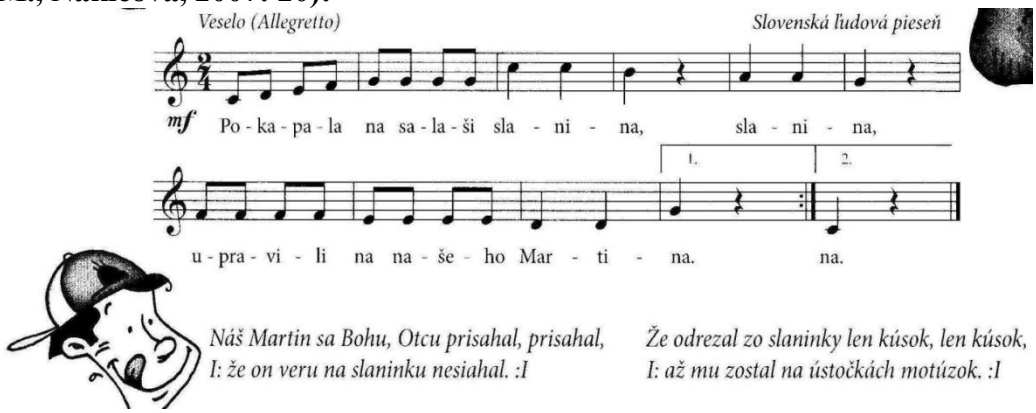


Known as *lazarica*, the song can be interesting for the familiarization of children with the specific rhythmic systems which are present in the national creative work and metric models which are not frequently present in classic repertoire for children. The simplicity of the text and melody can be an advantage for the children while they are in the process of decoding the unusual rhythmic and metric formulas. The song is a good suggestion for familiarizing the children with Romanian Easter traditions, i.e. with the traditions connected to Lazar's Saturday.

The settlement of Slovaks on the territory on part of the South Kingdom of Hungary (today's Vojvodina) started within the first phase of the Habsburg colonization which the Vienna nobility conducted in the 18th century, after these territories were taken from the Turks. The first settlement of Slovaks in Backa was recorded in 1720 in Bajs, after which they settled Backi Petrovac (1740), Bezdan (1742) and Lalic (1760). In the next decades the colonization continued with the settlement of Kisac, Glozan and Pivnice. In the 19th century it was continued in Kuplin (1812), Sibas (1814), Lalic (1760). The strongest center of Slovaks in Srem was Stara Pazova. In Banat the colonization started a bit latter than in Backa. The first settling was recorded in 1781 on the manor house of Isak Kis, where a Slovakian Aradac was founded. After this, they settled Coka, Pardanj and Hajducica. In the 19th century they settled Supljaja, Banatski Dvor and Stari Lac, then Kovacica (1801-1802) and Padinu (1806-1809) on the territory of the Banat military border (German-Banat regiment no. 12 with the center in Palcevo). In the second half of the 19th century they settle Voljovica, Ivanovo and Belo Blato.

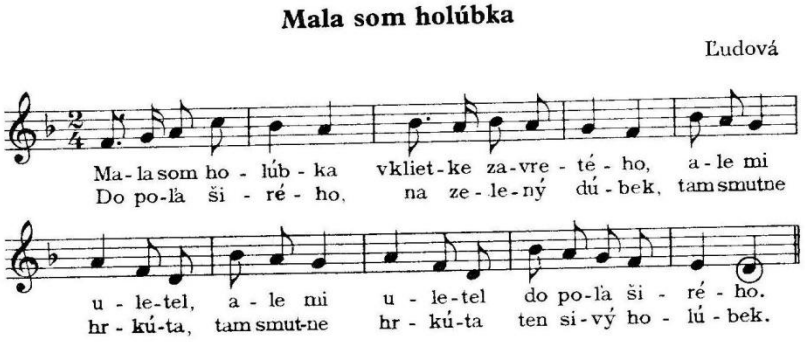
Suggestion of musical examples

Example. Slovakian national song *Pokapala na salaši slanin* (Stankovićová-Kriváková, M., Nakićová, 2007: 20):



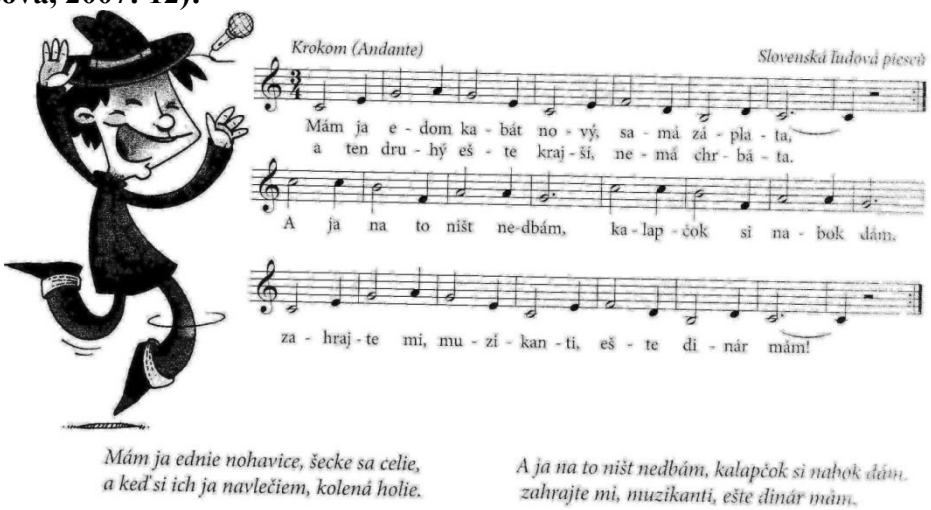
The song is intended to be performed with the older (if they have developed the voice range) and school-preparatory groups. It contains gradual melodic movement and quants and quintets which can according to need be applied in practice for the voice training exercises.

Example. Slovak children's song *Mala som holúbka* (Pavlovská, 1977: 128):



The song is intended to be used with the older and school-preparatory groups. It contains a specific rhythm – a dotted figure on the counting unit. Therefore it is suitable for creating music listening representations, and latter for the development of music literacy. Furthermore, the melody of the song contains a tone quant cord downwards with a jump to the fourth level which is repeated twice; therefore it is suitable for the practice of the given topic.

Example. Slovakian national song *Mám ja edom kabát nový* (Stankovićová-Kriváková, M., Nakićová, 2007: 12):



The song is suitable to be used with the school preparatory group but also with younger school children. Because of the specific type of text – three part, it is suitable for the creation of music-listening representations, and latter according to need for music literacy development, familiarization with musical genre of dance (waltz), as well as with the three part tact.

Conclusion

The continuality of a nation's folklore in the contemporary context can be secured only if the ones who value it and recognize its worth, manage to continually find ways to value folklore and in this age of unavoidable mercantilism, find a practical use for it. This collection of songs emerges from the idea to give the creative output created by the ethnic communities on the territory of Vojvodina a new dimension in the form of a didactic function and fulfill some of the goals of musical education of preschool children. This creative output has been created during the centuries and has been adapted to the times, feelings and social circumstances. With the implementation of national songs and dance children will become familiar with our cultural heritage but also the cultural heritage of other nations and peoples

we live with. The songs and games can be used at the preschool and school age within educational institutions, but also within professional musical education.

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TEACHERS' OPINIONS REGARDING TEACHING AN INTEGRATED OPTIONAL DISCIPLINE (IOD) IN ROMANIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract: *Curriculum integration is a necessity. In everyday life, problem solving requires knowledge, diverse skills that cannot be acquired by studying only individual disciplines, with no connections between them. This study explores the views of the teachers in the secondary schools, in Romania, on teaching an integrated optional discipline. We have designed and carried out a mixed research – quantitative and qualitative, based on several objectives focused on teachers' opinions to teach an IOD, the required competencies to teach an IOD, their perceived barrieres in teaching an IOD and possible solutions to overcome those barriers. We did our research in **18secondary schools** from Bucharest city and five counties, on a sample of **153 teachers**. The results of the research show that only few teachers teach IOD in Romania. In order to teach an IOD, they need to have social skills and creativity besides knowlege from different areas. Theachers state that there is a lack of curricular resources and time to prepare the lessons. Also, they have difficulties in making connections between the knowlege from different areas. Teachers consider that in order to solve these problems, they need to help each other, to study more and suggest that schools must support them with diverse curricular materials.*

Key words: *competencies; integrated curriculum; obstacles; secondary schools; teaching an integrated optional discipline;*

Introduction

Curriculum integration represents "*the connection of school disciplines in order to avoid their traditional isolation*", as well as "*the process and the outcome of the process by which the student interprets the subject matter based on his or her life experience and knowledge which has already mastered them*" (Legendre, 1993, as cited in Ciolan, 2008, p. 116).

Integrated curriculum is a necessity. In everyday life, problem solving requires knowledge, diverse skills that cannot be acquired by studying only individual disciplines, with no connections between them. Moreover, in a rapidly changing society in which the global connection has grown significantly, knowledge from different areas, the ability to solve problems, critical thinking and the ability to communicate effectively are needed (Wagner, Baum, Newbill, 2014).

J. Dewey, the pioneer of the curriculum integration, considered that the student has to learn only what makes sense to him or to her, something that widens his or her horizons (Dewey, 1977) and he realised that there must be a connection between the school and the social community in which it resides (Dewey, 1972). For this, for example, it is necessary

that "*the questions, the chemical and physical problems that arise in the kitchen*" to be "*brought to the laboratories for study*" (Dewey, 1977, p. 129).

Iosifescu (2012), reflecting on the current mission of school, believed that it "*has to form autonomous individuals involved in the process of knowledge and capable of contextualizing responses to a wide diversity of situations and tasks*" (p.125). Therefore, it is necessary to develop transversal competencies that facilitate the transfer of knowledge and skills from one discipline to another, from school to everyday life. How do we develop transversal skills? By changing the angle from which we perceive teaching and learning, these need to be "*seen from a holistic perspective, reflecting the real world*." (Shoemaker, as cited in Ciolan, 2008, p.117).

Teachers' competencies in curriculum integration

At this moment we could not identify any study regarding the teachers' necessary competencies to teach an integrated optional discipline, but we will create a list of those competencies from the study of the benefits of curriculum integration.

"Why integrate the curriculum?" is the question that many researchers, specialists in education have asked. The answer is, in short: because integrated curriculum enhances knowledge, it diminishes the fragmentation of the student program (Jacobs, 1989), and knowledge (Potolea, 1983); gives relevance to the curriculum and learning (Jacobs, 1989; Drake & Burns, 2004; John, 2015), rigor of content, despite apparent superficiality (Drake & Burns, 2004); facilitates meaningful learning contexts (Beane, 2005, as cited in Dowden, 2010).

Through curricular connections (DeMoss & Morris, 2002, as cited in Munroe, 2015; Mason, 1996, as cited in Hall-Kenyon & Smith, 2013), connections to real life (John, 2015), stimulating learning opportunities (Furner & Kumar, 2007) in different contexts (Potolea, 1983), curriculum integration contributes to increasing learning efficiency and fosters the intrinsic motivation of knowledge (Potolea, 1983; Veblen & Elliott, 2000, as cited in Munroe, 2015; Gresnigt et al, 2014). *"Often students cannot solve problems because they do not understand the context in which the problems are embedded*." (Frykholm & Glasson, 2005, as cited in Furner & Kumar, 2007, p. 186); students who benefit of an integrated curriculum learn with pleasure (John, 2015), gaining cognitive skills (Gresnigt et al, 2014; Stohlman, Moore, Roehrig, 2012), emotional skills (Gresnigt et al, 2014), social skills and creativity (Stohlman, Moore, Roehrig, 2012). Relations between teachers and students are strengthened, and the results of quality learning confer dignity to students (Beane, 2005, as cited in Dowden, 2010).

Another benefit of curriculum integration, as seen by the National Herbart Society in 1895, is that it represents a possible solution to the following three problems:

> *What is worth knowing, given the huge increase in available knowledge? What is important to be able to do, given a huge increase in the number of students needing education to be productive in the workplace? How can schools teach moral character if teachers cannot relate curriculum to the real world?*
> (Wraga, 1996, 1997, as cited in Drake & Burns, 2004, p.19).

Based on all above mentioned benefits, we have sketched a **list of competencies that teachers need to own in order to teach an IOD**, as follows: knowledge from different areas; the ability to make connections between disciplines and between disciplines and real life; the ability to recognise and explore relevant and meaningful knowledge and learning

contexts; openness to integrated curriculum; commitment; critical thinking; problem solving; efficient communication; collaboration; creativity.

Implications of curriculum integration

Hulstrand (2012) considered the curriculum integration as a marathon. In this context, we see the curriculum integration as a source of life because it energizes teachers and students in the process of teaching-learning-evaluation (on the one hand) and brings to school events, experiences, abilities from everyday life (on the other hand). However, a careful and long-term preparation for teaching is required, otherwise several factors could hinder it. These factors are:

- Lack of time (Munroe, 2015; John, 2015);
- A lot of practice (John, 2015);
- Teacher motivation and commitment (Gresnigt et al, 2014);
- Professional development of teachers (Gresnigt at al, 2014) and prospective teachers (John, 2015);
- Profession development of all stakeholders such as: principals, senior teachers, grade teams, parents, administrators, curriculum supervisors, school supervisors (John, 2015);
- Teachers support given by:**a)**school principals, that do not make sufficient provisions for funding the teachers' training and material base. (Gresnigt et all, 2014); **b)**universities that are not assisting sufficiently teachers in classrooms and teachers trainings (Rogers & Portsmore, 2004; Cantrell et al., 2006; Nugent et al., 2010, as cited in Stohlman, Moore, Roehrig, 2012); **c)** their colleagues (Potolea, 1983);
- Lack of time/space within the existing curricula and timetables (Gresnigt et all, 2014, p. 68);
- Lack of explicit training (John, 2015, p. 186),
- Dedicated, organized and knowledgeable individuals (Stohlman, Moore, Roehrig, 2012, p. 32).

Problem Statement

In teaching/learning content in pre-university education, the tendency to organize the disciplines from an integrated perspective is increasingly present. This is possible due to the framework plan that is structured on curricular areas (Language and Communication, Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Human and Social Sciences, Arts, Physical Education, Sports and Health, Technologies, Counselling and Guidance), which expresses the intention to find solutions for content integration. Moreover, one of the principles behind the elaboration of the framework plan is the principle of combining disciplinary approaches with multi-, inter-, and transdisciplinary approaches (Potolea, Toma & Borzea, 2012). This principle is reflected in the new framework plan at the secondary level, which entered into force in September 2017 in Romania, which provides for an IOD at a level of each curricular area, as well as the existence of an IOD at the level of several curricular areas, the student being able to opt for 1 - 4 IODs, of which at least one at the level of several curricular area is compulsory (OMENCS 3590, 2016).

According to the educational policy document on the design and updating of the new National Curriculum, an IOD is "a new discipline, structured around an integrative theme for a certain curricular area or for several curricular areas" (ISE, 2015, p. 32).

In 2018, just one year after implementation, the obligation of studying an IOD has been removed. (OMEN 4828, 2018) Why? Maybe the teachers do not have the necessary competencies and experience to teach an IOD? Maybe there are different issues such as lack of time, practice, material or financial resources.

In this article we present a research to find out the issues that make it difficult to teach an IOD in the Romanian educational context. We should mention that there are only few studies in the existing literature regarding teaching IOD in Romania. Therefore the current paper fills this gap that currently exists.

Research methodology

In this section we will present first the objectives, the hypothesis, then the research instruments, and the sampling of the research.

Objectives

- Identification of teachers' opionins regarding teaching an IOD;
- Identification of teachers' level of knowledgein teaching an IOD;
- Identification of teachers' level of class experience in teaching an IOD;
- Identification of the obstacles and possible remedial solutions in teaching an IOD.

Hypothesis

We assume that a low number of teachers teaches an IOD due to the lack of expertise and experience in curriculum integration.

Research methods

A questionnaire-based survey addressed to secondary teachers was design and applied for collecting the data. The first part of it included six questions collecting data about the respondents (such as the school and locality where he/she teaches, the discipline from the core curriculum taught by he/she, teaching experience, studies and didactic grade) and the second part included closed and open-ended questions in order to identify the teachers' views and opinions: teachers' options for teaching an IOD, the way the respondents teach an IOD, the way that the respondents acquire their knowledge in curriculum integration, their competencies needed to teach an IOD, their experience in teaching an IOD, the obstacles that the respondents who teach an IOD meet and suggestions for possible remedies, the reason why some respondents do not teach an IOD.

Table 1: The schools involved in the research

No.crt.	City	District/County	School	No of teachers
1	Bucharest	District 1	Nicolae Titulescu	**12**
2			Geo Bogza	**17**
3			Petre Ispirescu	**6**
4			Sf. Nicolae	**7**
5			Eugen Barbu	**8**
6		District 3	Leonardo Da Vinci	**15**
7			Cezar Bolliac	**8**
8			No 78	**7**
9			Al. I. Cuza	**4**
10		District 5	No 131	**9**
11		District 6	No 206	**9**
12			CN Elena Cuza	**7**
13	Voluntari	Ilfov	No 1	**3**
14	Urziceni	Ialomița	I. H. Radulescu	**10**
15	Scrioastea	Teleorman	Anghel Manolache	**11**
16	Filiași	Dolj	Filiasi	**17**
17	Ploiești	Prahova	CN Al. I. Cuza	**2**
18	Câmpina	Prahova	Ion Campineanu	**1**
TOTAL OF TEACHERS				**153**

Due to the

nature of the applied questionaire (more than half of the questions have opened answers), we consider that we have been conducted a mixed research - quantitative and qualitative research.

Sampling

The sampling method used in this research was the snowball one (Noy, 2008).

We did our research in **18 secondary schools,** located in **Bucharest city and 5 counties**, on a sample of **153 teachers**, as following (Table 1):

In Table 1 we have the teacher distribution according to the place where they teach. Most of the respondents are from Bucharest, followed by those from the other counties (Dolj, Teleorman, Ialomița, Prahova, and Ilfov).

Further we will present the respondents' identification data. The data that we collected about teachers are the followings: *teaching experience, studies, didactic degree and taught discipline from the core curriculum.*

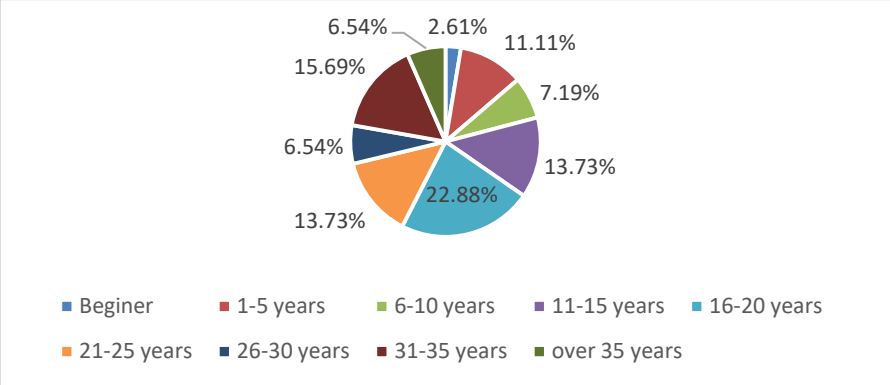

Figure 1: Teaching experience of the respondents

As we can see in the Figure 1, the teaching experience of our teachers is mixed. Most of them (22,8%) are beginners in the teaching process. Around 16% of the respondents have between 31 and 35 years of teaching. At the same percentage (13,73%) we find the number of teachers with 11-15 years and 21-25 years of teaching. We can conclude that our respondents have a working experience that varies a lot. They are both career debutants and experienced people who can contribute with consistent information on curriculum integration.

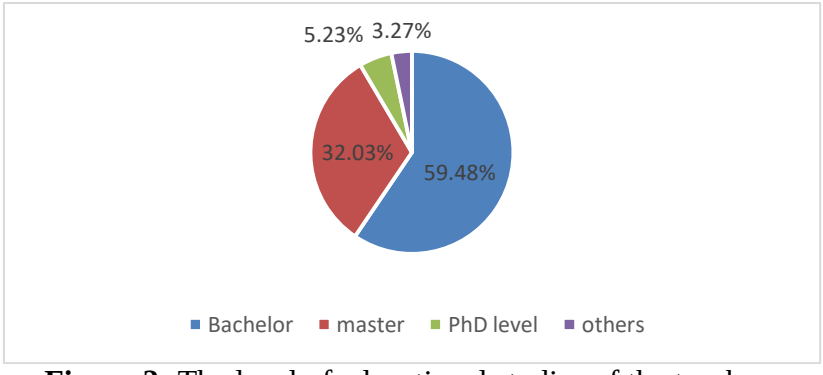

Figure 2: The level of educational studies of the teachers

The Figure 2 of this paper shows us that most of the respondents (59,48%) have only bachelour degree, 32,03% master degree, and only 5,23% PhD level.

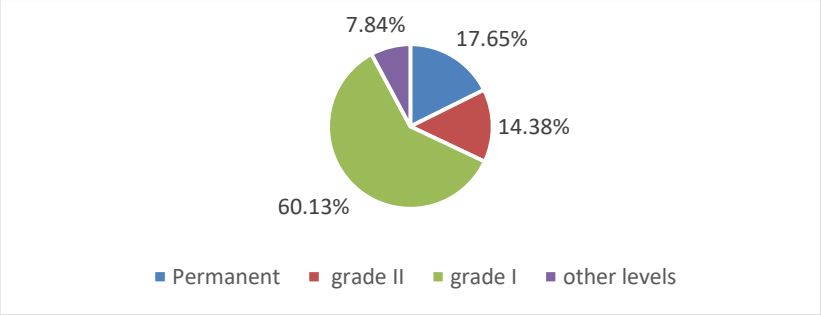

Figure 3: The didactic degree of the professional experience of the teachers

Tabel 2: Different disciplines taught by respondents

Curriculum Area	Discipline	No. Teachers
Language and communication	Romanian Language and Literature	**23**
	English language	**15**
	French	**7**
	Italian language	**1**
Mathematics and natural sciences	Math	**22**
	Physics	**7**
	Chemistry	**6**
	Biology	**8**
Man and society	History	**9**
	Geography	**8**
	Social Education and Civic Culture	**8**
	Religion	**15**
Arts	Art education	**5**
	Musical education	**3**
Technologies	Technological education	**5**
	Informatics and ICT	**1**
Physical education, sports and health	Physical education and sport	**7**
Not specified		**3**
TOTAL		**153**

We wanted to know what is the didactic degree of the professional experience of our respondents. We realised, from the Figure 3, that most of our teachers (60,13%) have the highest degree (grade I). This degree is recognized in the Romanian educational context as the highest for teachers. It is attributed to those teachers with many years of teaching and a high knowledge level in the taught subject matter.

In Table 2 we have the list of the subject matters taught by our respondents. Most of them are Romanian Language and Literature teachers (23), Math teachers (22) or Religion and English language teachers (15). We can see that all Romanian curricular areas are covered by our respondents in the teaching process.

Findings and discussions

We have analyzed the collected data and explored the teachers' opinions, following the objectives and hypothesis formulated at the beginning of the research. We will present our findings in relation to the research objectives presented previously.

Objective no 1: Identification of teachers' opinions for teaching an IOD

- ***Teaching an IOD***

From the 153 teachers, only 19.61% said that they were teaching an IOD, while 80.39% of them did not teach. We observed that there are quite few teachers that teach an integrated optional discipline.

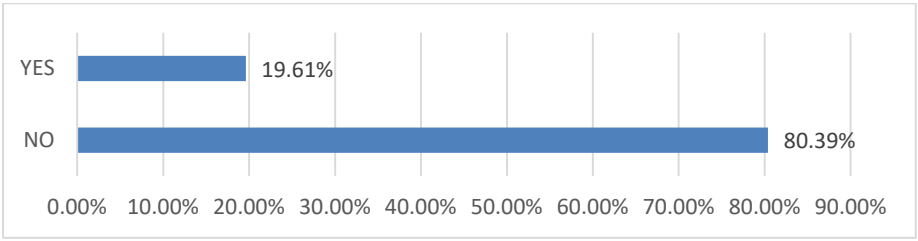

Figure 4: Teachers availability for teaching an IOD

➢ ***Ways to teach the IOD***

We wanted to know the opinions of the teachers that teach an IOD regarding the ways of teaching it. As we can see in the Figure 5, more than half of the teachers (53.33%) teach alone this kind of disciplines, 33.33% teach taking into account the collaborators' advice, and less than 14 % said that they teach in team. We observe that almost 50% of the teachers need support from other teachers or advisors to teach integrated disciplines.

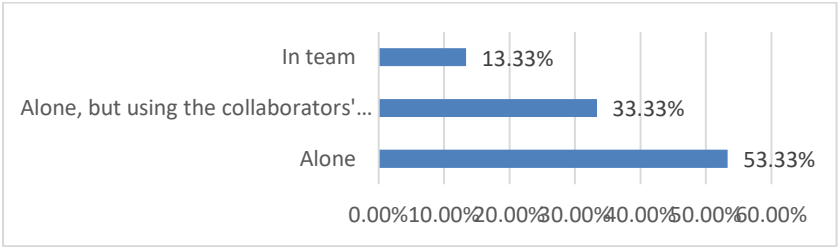

Figure 5: How do teachers teach the IOD

➢ ***Reasons for which the teachers do not teach an IOD***

We were interested what reasons have the teachers that do not teach an IOD. We discovered (Figure 6) that most of them (69.75%) do not teach an IOD because *they were not requested*, 24.37% invoked *other reasons* such asonethat *the Romanian school is not ready for this approach and moreover the framework curriculum provides a maximum of hours for each class, which limits the inclusion of an IOD.* Around 5% of the teachers acknowledged that *they do not have the necessary skills*. A very small percentage (1.68%), even if they were required to teach an IOD and have the necessary skills, declined because *the proposed area has a low professional interest for them*.

At this level we can conclude that an IOD is a really challenge for Romanian teachers.

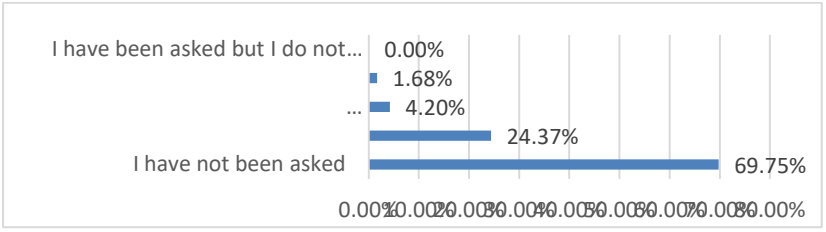

Figure 6: Teachers' reasons for not teaching an IOD

Objective no 2: Identification of teachers' level of knowledge in teaching an IOD

➢ ***How teachers acquire the necessary knowledge to teach an IOD***

Those teachers that teach IODs were asked to tell us how do they acquire the knowledge for it. In the Figure 7 we discovered that almost half of the teachers (46.94%) improved their performance through *individual study*. Taking some *other courses* (42.86%) is another alternative, but we do not know which type of courses the teachers mention. Few teachers have mentioned *university courses* or *courses organized by CCD*"[1]. Only 10.20% of the answers make reference to *teaching experience.* We can see that teaching an integrated discipline is optional and every teacher will prepare to teach this kind of discipline in different ways, from individual studies to university level or courses from different educational institutions.

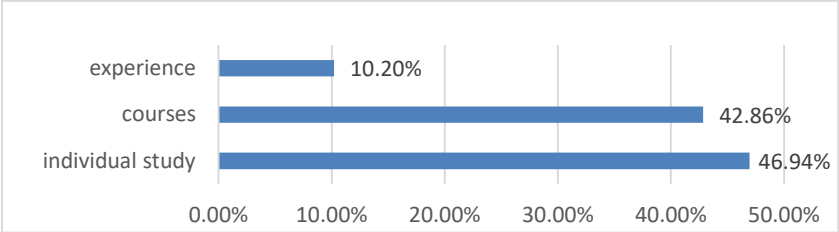

Figure 7: How teachers acquire the necessary knowledge to teach an IOD

➢ ***Competencies required to teach an IOD***

For our research it was very important to know from the teachers' point of view what are the competencies required to teach an IOD. The teachers that teach an IOD have a varied range of the necessary competencies in teaching an IOD (Figure 8). For example, they consider extremely important the attitudes towards students (25%) such as*the desire to make students understand things, the ability to capture attention, engagement through games and applications, closeness to student's needs, the ability to stimulate children to collaborate and work in a team, the desire to involve students in specific activities*. Other competencies (also identified by us and mentioned in our list) suggested by the teachers are social skills, creativity & problem solving skills (14,29). The third place (12,50%) is occupied by the knowledge competencies regarding the taught discipline. The teachers also mentioned various attitudes (10,71%) such as *seriousness, discipline, sense of initiative, openness to the new and good things, respect for the values of the past, dedication, interest in environmental protection, passion for profession, desire for improvement / development, and adaptability*.

To teach IODs is a really challenge for teachers in Romanian secondary schools. They know that the knowledge is less important in comparison with others competencies such as creativity, the desire to make students understand things, desire for improvement/development, and adaptability, engagement through games and applications.

[1] CCD stands for The Teacher Training Centerwhich is a resource center aiming at the professional and personal development and development of the employees of the pre-university education system in Romania.

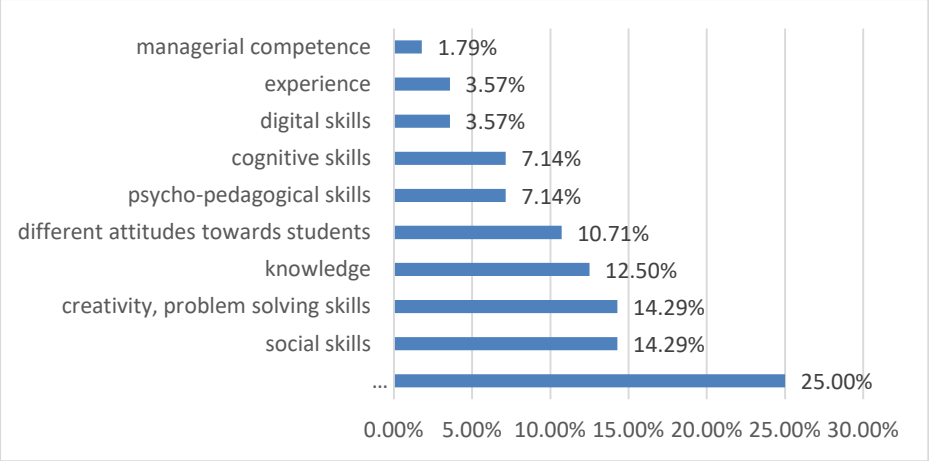

Figure 8: Teachers' competencies for teaching an IOD

Objective no 3: Identification of teachers' level of classs experience in teaching an IOD

➢ ***Teachers' experience in teaching an IOD***

We observed, in the Figure 9, that most of the teachers (65.52%) have been teaching IOD for 1-2 years. Fewer percentages are seen for teachers that teach from 7-8 years (10,34%) or 9-10 years (6,9%). We can conclude from this that teachers are required to teach in the last two years and also that an IOD is something new for most of the teachers.

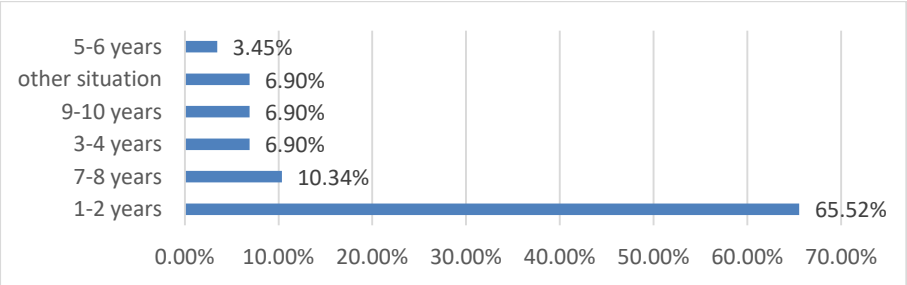

Figure 9: Teachers' experience in teaching an IOD

Objective no 4: Identification of the obstacles and possible remedial solutions in teaching an IOD

➢ ***The main obstacles the teachers have encountered in teaching an IOD***

From the teachers that teach an IOD we observe (Figure 10) that one-third of respondents feel that they did not encounter obstacles while teaching an IOD, and another third think they have no curricular resources. However, only 15.63% of the teaching staff involved in our research encountered a major obstacle that is also mentioned in various international studies - difficulty in selecting, explaining, making connections between knowledge. (Been, 2005, as cited in Dowden, 2010; DeMoss & Morris, 2002, as cited in Monroe, 2015).

Some of the main obstacles mentioned by teachers are: *the lack of auxiliaries, textbooks and authors who focused on the integrated curriculum; the time allocated to analysing the optional and synthesizing the information according to the level of the class of students; difficulties in gathering the information necessary for the discipline, making*

students make connections, finding interactions between information, and explaining certain notions.

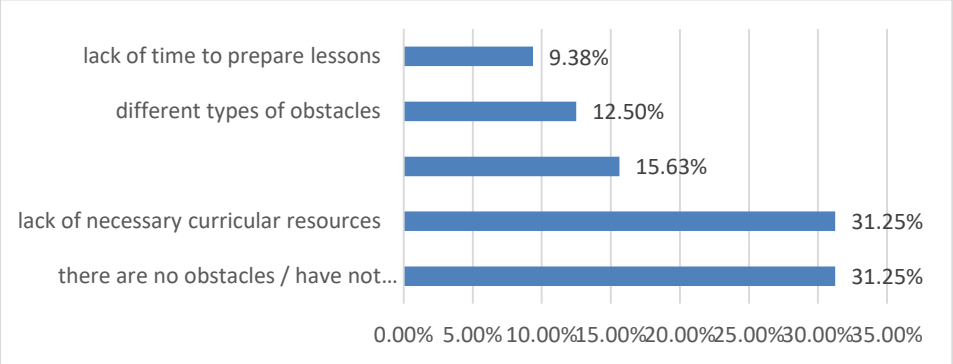

Figure 10: Types of obstacles in teaching an IOD

➢ ***Types of possible remedies for obstacles in teaching an IOD***

The solutions that were identified (Figure 11) are as follows: collaboration between teachers, parents and students (36.84%), providing the school with curricular and material resources (31.58%), and greater involvement of teachers (31, 58%).

First of all, teachers believe that it is necessary to equip schools with the necessary resources to deliver integrated options, such as: *organizing tutorials, accessibility to educational platforms, writing manuals and accessing them in electronic format, editing books on the integrated curriculum, of the school*. At the same time *it is necessary to teach together with other colleagues and to collaborate with parents and former students.*

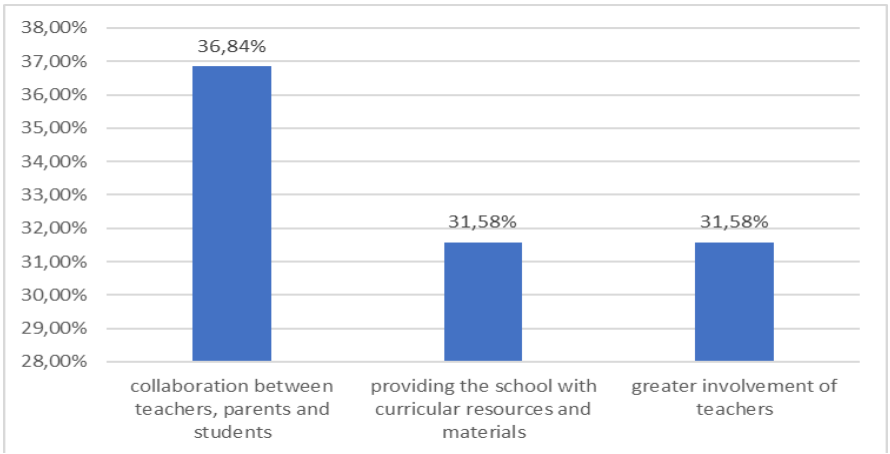

Figure 11: Types of possible remedies for obstacles in teaching an IOD

1. **Conclusions**

We did a research with 153 teachers from 18 secondary schools located in Bucharest and 5 counties. Following the analysis of the given answers, we made few conclusions based on the research objectives, as follows:

- A very small number of teaching staff is involved in teaching an IOD. This validates also our hypothesis that a small number of teachers participates in teaching IOD;
- The main reason teachers do not teach an integrated option is that they were not "asked for this"; however, the involvement of a small number of teachers in teaching an integrated discipline is also due to the lack of teaching space in the timetable, with the framework plan providing only 1-4 hours a week for an IOD. This lack of space was also identified by Gresnigt et all (2014);

- Around three-fourth of the teachers teaching an IOD consider that they have sufficient knowledge; the main competencies identified by teachers being social competencies, creativity, and problem solving ones. We observe that some of the competencies we identified as requiring for teaching an IOD (see our list of competencies from Introduction) are found in the competencies that teachers believe they have acquired.
- Although three-fourth of teachers that teach an integrated discipline think they have the necessary experience, more than half of them have been teaching IOD only from 1-2 years;
- Around one-third of teachers teaching an IOD say they have encountered no obstacles. Another one-third thinks that it does not have the necessary curricular resources and proposes that the school to be adequately equipped with the necessary curricular resources. This problem, as well as the remedy proposed by teachers, was identified also by Gresnigt et al (2014) as factors that may disrupt the implementation of an integrated curriculum.
- Another obstacle recognized by respondents is the difficulty of selecting, explaining and linking content, which in fact represents an important skill needed for teaching an integrated discipline, is also observed by Been (2005, as cited in Dowden, 2010) and DeMoss & Morris (2002, as cited in Monroe, 2015).

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EDUCATION IN THE MAN AND SOCIETY CURRICULAR AREA

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Abstract: *This articleaims to highlight the importance of activities inscribed within the Man and Society curricular area, by way of showing the implications played in preparing kindergarten students for later school and especially for their social life. We shall prove that practical activities contribute to the multifaceted development of pre-school children's personality.*

Key words*: personality; social behaviour; social abilities, attitudes;*

Introduction

Pre-school level education, as integral part of the undergraduate level teaching system, aims to afford a holistic and normal development for children. The general aim of pre-school level education derives from the general scope of the national educational system and endeavours to allow each child to grow and develop in his/her own rhythm, offering support for:

- developing one`s physical and psychological potential;
-improving the capacity to interact with other children and adults;
- stimulating the child to interact with the environment, to discover it by means of exploration, trials, exercises and choices;
- aiding the child to discover his/her own identity and a positive self image;
- supporting the child in developing aptitudes necessary for future school related activities.[2]

1. Pre-school level education aims to fulfil several objectives by way of kindergarten activities, amongst which activities that fall under the *Man and Society curricular area*.

1.1. Environmental education targets in equal measures the knowledge, attitudes, values and practical endeavours related to the environment.

Environmental education has the following objectives:

- Nurturing love for the Earth as well as for all related elements: water, plants, animals etc.;
- Increasing the desire to take care, respect and protect nature by involving children in experimental and demonstrative actions;
- Developing environment related research, exploration, investigation aptitudes;
- Getting to know various beings and phenomena as well as their characteristics;
- Building vocabulary with the aid of words related to ecology;
- Developing necessary behaviours in order to ensure the balance between the individual`s, society`s and the environment`s wellbeing;
- Knowing the protected plants and animals;
- Researching the ways to rehabilitate the environment by engaging pupils in waste management and various other ecological cleaning activities;
- Understanding the need to save water, electricity, wood etc. (all natural resources);
- Forming a disapproving attitude towards all who violate ecological laws and norms.

[2]Tomsa Ghe., *Psihopedagogie prescolara si scolara,*MEC, Bucuresti, 2005

1.2. Education for work is distinguished by a new conception regarding general and particular objectives, and, even for pre-school level it stipulates the following:

- Development of practical self-serving skills, and communal work habits (in classrooms, hallways, locker rooms, yards)
- Practical work abilities, maintaining order at the work place as well as playgrounds, taking care of plants.
- Developing autonomy in daily activities such as: washing, dressing, ordering materials needed for various activities
- Developing notions and representations regarding the family, home, the street children live on, people`s work and social relations pertaining to the work process
- Getting familiarized with certain areas of activity and associated work tools.
- Getting familiarized with simple work practices and handling tools such the hammer, scissors, pliers, shovel etc.
- Educating the respect towards work, the respect towards working people, the respect towards the public domain
- Training towards an effective participation in various work areas according to their abilities
- Accomplishing practical tasks inspired by nature, daily life or imagination and based on a pre-chosen topic either decided upon by the tutor or the child, using available materials and contributing towards the embellishment of the ambient environment.
- Developing motor skills in using tools and objects

In conclusion kindergarten specific activities try to channel the pre-school children towards knowledge, education and successful integration in school and social activities in order for the pre-school child to successfully face latter, school related challenges. Once positive work attitudes are successfully formed the pre-school child will have a smoother transition from kindergarten games to learning activities he/she will face in school.

1.3. ***Education for peace and cooperation*** is the safest way to eliminate aggression, violence, terrorism and conflict between communities. It represents a factor able to contribute towards the creation of a democratic society. Peace is an aspiration, a fundamental imperative of our age and an educational priority of today's and tomorrow's education. "With all the differences between continents and countries, with all cultural and ideological differences, the finality of the fight for a better future is the same everywhere. Protecting peace isa universal desire similarly to that of ensuring basic education for all people, to eradicating hunger and protecting health, defending nature, saving the cultural identity of different human groups"[3]

Education for peace can be efficient on a socio-politic level only if it spreads simultaneously in every country, based on common trust and fundamental common objectives. Educational objectives regarding peace can be divided into 3 main categories:

- To develop concepts as well as area specific knowledge: peace and education for peace, disarmament and education for disarmament, democracy and human rights, cooperation, universal culture and national cultures, final and instrumental values, contemporary issues and possible solutions, bridging the past to the future and present, the distinction between pacifists and peace builders, conflict and conflicting feelings, fanatics and believers etc.

[3] Bogdan Suhodolski- Polish philosopher

- To develop abilities and aptitudes: to listen, to conduct a dialogue, to propose and offer answers, to faithfully communicate one`s own opinions or intentions, to initiate change and control them, to continuously develop etc.
- To develop behaviours and attitudes: responsibility towards one`s country, solidarity and trust in mankind, respect towards other cultures, tolerance i.e. accepting diversity and generosity, moral and intellectual integrity, respect towards spiritual values, modesty, critical spirit and the ability to make decisions.

1.4.***Human rights education*** (EDDO)

EDDO objectives, like any other educational segment refer to: knowledge transfer, fostering aptitudes and developing attitudes.

EDDO related knowledge target rights, liberties, obligations and responsibilities; various field specific international instruments, organizations and institutions; various forms of inequality, discrimination, significant developments registers during the past and present of establishing human rights, principles, values, institutions and mechanisms specific to democracy.

Within EDDO, the following can be developed:

- Intellectual aptitudes:

- written and oral expression, the ability to have a dialogue, to listen and argue one's opinions;
- collecting, selecting, synthesising and analysing information from different sources and developing objective and balances conclusions;
- identifying and refusing preconceptions, stereotypes and discrimination.

- Social aptitudes:

- recognizing and accepting differences;
- establishing positive and un-oppressive personal relationships;
- peaceful conflict resolution;
- accepting responsibilities;
- partaking in the decision making process;
- understanding and using human rights defence mechanisms at local, regional and European/worldwide levels .

Some of the EDDO targeted attitudes are: self respect and trust in one's own potential, understanding the problems of others (empathy) or the group's (solidarity), responsibility for one's own actions and respect towards social order, rebuttal of discriminations and abuse in other words civic values based on general human moral values.

1.5.***Education for communication and mass-media***includes forming and developing abilities for the cultural capitalization of media information, developing civic spirit as well as of the means that must be used to understand such aims.

1.6. ***Health education***

School level health education represents one of the main ways to promote correct knowledge pertaining to the various aspects of general health as well as to form necessary attitudes and habits for responsible and healthy behaviour. In several countries health education is compulsory in schools starting from kindergarten until the end of high school, each study cycle relying on appropriate health education materials. There are several arguments that can be brought forth to highlight the importance of health education within schools:

- first of all, one of the main aims of the educational system is to pass along sanctioned information from different fields of science and culture alongside with the development of

practical abilities. Health education as part of medical sciences aims not only to transmit correct scientific information but also to create healthy individual behaviours, attitudes that are in line with the educational ideal.

- The school is an ideal place to disseminate these types of information, for no other institution has the ability and capacity to encompass and to address such a high population percentage.
- One of the essential elements for reaching a desired outcome is to initiate and develop health related educational programmes from an early age. Preventive behaviour thus becomes a habit, one that exists alongside educational development. For a grown person the impact of such programmes is always of lesser consequence compared to someone who was initiated at an early age.
- At the same time school represents an institution with a great moral authority, offering a framework for formal, informal and non-formal education; more to the point, academic subjects develop a higher importance (at an individual psychological level) compared to those subjects which are not included in a curriculum.

Of course that other types of education that have emerged in the contemporary educational system could be analyzed, however I chose only the few which appear to be more tightly connected to each other, especially considering the topic developed in the next chapter. I assert this because a positive work attitude cannot exist outside a proper attitude towards the environment, people around us and our own self. All of these cannot be accomplished without the different types of educations mentioned earlier. [4]

2. Research methodology

2.1. Research Objectives

The study of differences between the subjects of Group 1 and Group 2 (each group consists of pre-school children). The study of the correlation between performances registered during the psychological tests.

Optimizing the performances registered during the psychological tests by way of training.

2.2. Hypotheses

1. There are significant differences between subjects belonging to group 1 and 2 due to the intense involvement of group 1 pre-school children in the Man and Society *curricular area.*

2. The performances registered during the psychological tests (x1, x2, x3) are correlating.

3. The performances registered during the psychological tests can be improved after partaking in a training session.

2.3. Design

Hypothesis no. 1. V.I.-A- subjects

a1- group 1

a2- group 2

V.D.- x- test scores

x1- W.I.S.C.

x2 - Rey

x3- Inventory

A	x1	x2	x3
a1			
a2			

Unifactorial inter-subjective design

[4]Sas Cecilia, idem

Hypothesis no. II. V.D.- x- test scores
x1- W.I.S.C
x2- Rey
x3- Inventory

x	x1	x2	x3

Correlational design

Hypothesis no. III. V.I. – A- moment of testing
a1- pre-test
a2- post-test
V.D.-x vocabulary development

A	x
a1	
a2	

Unifactorial inter-subjective design

2.4. Subjects description
- The total number of subject is 60; N=60
- The subjects are divided into two sample groups of 30 pre-school children each, age group between 5-7 years.
- The first sample group consists of 30 pre-school children (n1=30)
- The second sample group consists of 30 pre-school children

2.5. Description of tests applied:

- W.I.S.C test.
- A. Rey memorization test
- trial inventory to determine the psychological age of language I

,,Competent test users are and must be always aware of the limits that the instruments used provide and, at the same time, they must know the way in which these can be compensated through other information sources pertaining to the subject" (Mitrofan, Mitrofan, p.18, 2005).

- **The W.I.S.C. test**

The W.I.S.C. battery test includes verbal tests (that imply the usage of language) and non-verbal tests (issues can be solved without the involvement of speech). The latter are defined as "performance tests".

Verbal	Performance
l. Vocabulary	l. Image filling in
2. Arithmetic	2. Cubes
3. General comprehension	3. Image sorting
4. Similitude	4. Code B.
5. General Information	5. Object assembly

The study relies only on the vocabulary test. This trial is composed of 40 words. Assessment is made by granting 1 or 0 for each word. The maximum number of points achievable is 40.

1. Dog		11. Sloth		21. Tasty		31. Dress	
2. Candy		12. Soup		22. To finish		32. Valid	
3. Mailman		13. Snowdrop		23. Angry		33. To return	
4. Hammer		14. Pill		24. Tea pot		34. Closet	
5. Plug		15. Carriage		25. Hypocrite		35. Confusion	
6. Carrot		16. Bookstore		26. Lock		36. Jubilant	
7. Truck		17. Gum		27. Brother – in-Law		37. Narration	
8. Knife		18. Lining		28. Fuel		38. Crenel	
9. Pebbles		19. Landmark		29. Fence		39. Dawn	
10. Winter		20. Beam		30. Indifferent		40. Airtight	

- **A.Rey memorization test**

The inventory targets children aged from 3 to 7 years of age and consists of 7 trials that allow the identification of deviances in the development of language in accord with chronological age.

2.6. Testing procedure

The training, including an optional course with activities related to the ***Man and Society curricular area*** has been applied to group 1 during 10 distinct activities.

Activity 1

Activity objectives

After undergoing the activity, children will be able to:

- To establish in accord with the supervisor, the training's objectives;
- To establish certain rules to be followed during the training period.

Activities

- Short overview – I introduce myself, then I ask the children to do the same;
- Establishing the date of the next meeting (2 hours per week).

Evaluation

- Some of the established training's objectives are enumerated.

Activity 2

Activity objectives

- establishing and activating the vocabulary regarding certain words (adjectives, nouns) with an opposite meaning;
- perfecting the correct formulation and the meaning of the sentences;

Activities

- the game "Answer quickly and correctly!"
- finding antonyms for some of the words used and forming sentences;
- using images containing elements that suggest an antonym: short pencil – long pencil, full basket – empty basket, happy child – sad child etc. When indicating an image the child is to name it and enounce its antonym;
- for the end of the game, we have introduced movement based applied elements: I raised my hands up – the child lowered his arms, I turned to the right – the child turned to the left; I walked forward – the child moved back.

Evaluation

- Verification of the way the image is named as well a show the antonym is used;
- Formulation of a sentence with the antonym.

Activity 3

Activity objectives

- developing the ability to form complete sentences referring to everyday items, to identify and to present their personal hygiene usage;
- activating logical thinking by identifying corresponding words.

Activity

- the game"Fill in the missing part!"
- completing a sentence with the missing part

Evaluation

- Forming complete sentences by identifying the appropriate missing word.

Activity 4

- Activity objectives
- Verifying and consolidating behaviour patterns in a shop;
- Educating correctness in paying and standing in line;
- The ability to identify the larger number (1-10: is greater than 1, therefore 500 I sgreater than 100).

Activity

- playing"Shop";
- Correct usage of polite greetings from the moment of entering the shop until the end of the visit;
- Counting from 1 to 10 and backwards from 5 to 1;
- Discovering the missing number from a string of numbers;
- Using money (play money) within the role play game;
- Discovering related numbers for a given one (ex. for 3, identify 2 and 4) ;
- Correct identification and naming of an ordinal number (in a string consisting of 3,5,7,9 he/she is to identify the middle number as the first, the second, the third etc.)

Evaluation

- Verifying the correct placement of a number between 1 and 10 within an ascending and descending order);
- Understanding the value of an object by means of money;

Activity 5

- Activity objectives
- Recognizing materials (metal, glass, plastic, paper etc.) used in making objects.;
- Developing tactile sensitivity.

Activity

- the game "Say what it's made of!"
- We have introduced several small objects in a bag. The child must reach inside without looking and by feeling the object must identify what it is made of. Then he/she is to take it out and name it.
- Evaluation
- Verifying that the child recognizes the objects and names them correctly.
- **Activity 6**
- Activity objectives
- To consolidate their counting technique by use of their tactile sense;
- To determine the value of a number by counting.
- Activity

-the game "Close your eyes and count"

- the child shall wear a scarf covering his eyes and will be handed a basket with a varying number of beads. The child must count the beads while extracting them from one basket and placing them in another.

- verifying correct counting.

Activity 7

- Activity objectives
- Verifying the child's knowledge regarding some well known colours: white, yellow, red, green, purple, maroon, blue, black;
- The child`s capacity to respond to the game coordinator by direct action.

Activity

- the game "Small boats are coming!"
- 15 children take part;
- the imaginary lake is a circle, drawn with blue chalk. Each child receives a different colour boat. At the raising of a flag (with colours corresponding to the boats) the child who has the right colour boat will place his boat on the lake. If a mistake is made the rest of the group will correct the child.

Evaluation

- Verifying colour related knowledge.

Activity 8

- Activity objectives
- Developing the ability to form sentences using correct present tense verbs;
- Vocabulary building with words expressing action;
- Educating the possibility to perceive movement in a different ways and to link the object to the action.

Activity

- the game "What am I doing?"
- The child verbally expresses the action named.

Evaluation

- Expressing in short sentences the perceived action.

Activity 9

- Activity objectives
- To name animal cubs;
- To use their names correctly;
- The ability to use the genitive and dative cases;
- Emphasising the mother1s care towards her cub.

Activity

- the game "What`s good, what`s wrong", the child names and recognizes adequate (polite) behaviour related actions.

Evaluation

- Recognizing adequate and inadequate behaviour based on drawings.

Activity 10

- Activity objectives
- To use comparisons between drawings and to select them according to similitude and differences;
- To strengthen analysis and comparison abilities;
- To develop powers of observation.

Activity

- Each child receives a file containing images of objects and characters from fairytales they know; they must identify negative and positive characters and must identify the characteristics of socially adequate behaviour;
- Each image appears 3 times and the all identical images must be found and coloured with a different (indicated) colour.

Evaluation

- Respecting the narrative of the story in addition to observing the way the child solves the exercise.

3. Data and results analysis

3.1. First Hypothesis

There are significant differences between subjects in group 1 and 2 from the perspective of vocabulary development.

In order to process the data we have relied on the SPSS 10, 0 statistical-mathematical computer programme.

To highlight the existing differences between the two pre-school groups (Romanian and foreign language based kindergartens) the main tendency and spread factors have been calculated for each group of children in regards of the total score.

After interpreting the data the following descriptive results have been found for W.I.S.C. (Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children), A.Rey and inventory (Sample inventory for the assessment of the psychological age of language) tests. The descriptive processing of data has been conducted for both sample groups and the average values registered are represented in the table below:

Tabel 1. Indicators for the main tendency for group 1 – Romanian language kindergarten

	W.I.S.C	Rey1	Rey2	Rey3	Rey4	Rey5	Rey6	Inventar
N	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Media	20.50	6.23	6.96	7.30	8.53	9.53	10.23	6.10
Mediana	20.00	6.00	6.50	7.00	8.00	9.00	10.00	6.00
Ab. standard	2.84	1.47	1.65	1.41	2.30	2.06	1.86	0.71
Minimum	15.00	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	7.00	7.00	5.00
Maximum	28.00	9.00	12.00	11.00	14.00	14.00	14.00	7.00

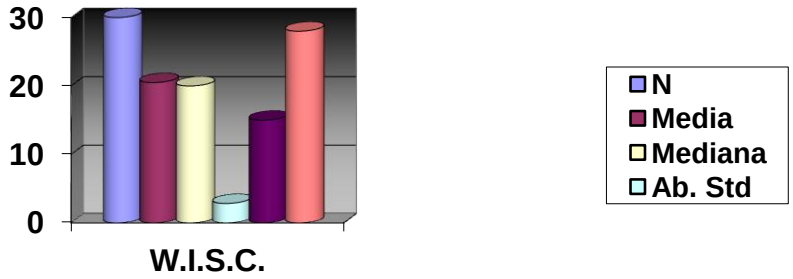

Diagram no. 1.– Statistical results based on the W.I.S.C test, group 1

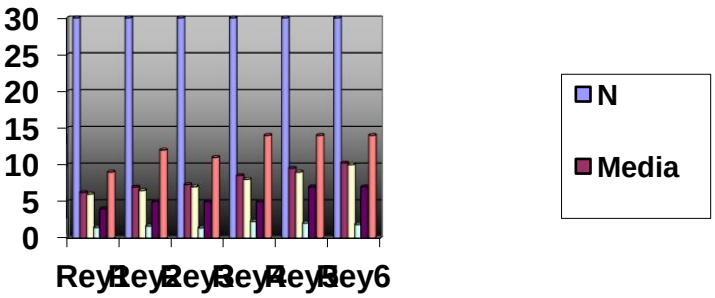

Diagram no. 2. – Statistical results based on the Ray test, group 1

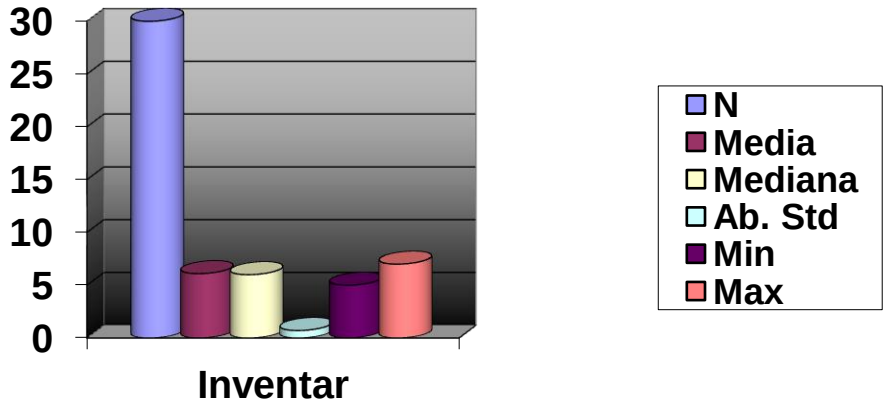

Diagram no. 3. – Statistical results based on the sample trial inventory for group 1

Table 2. Indicators for the main tendencies for group 2

	W.I.S.C	Rey1	Rey2	Rey3	Rey4	Rey5	Rey6	Inventar
N	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Media	20.00	6.46	7.06	7.23	7.80	9.16	10.10	6.00
Mediana	19.00	6.00	7.00	8.00	8.00	9.00	10.00	6.00
Ab.standard	3.07	1.38	1.38	1.56	1.75	1.44	1.37	0.64
Minimum	14.00	4.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	6.00	7.00	5.00
Maximum	28.00	9.00	10.00	10.00	11.00	12.00	13.00	7.00

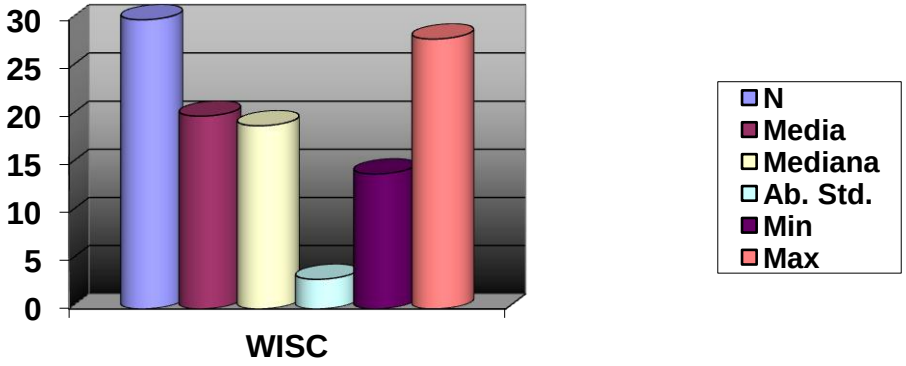

Diagram no. 4. – Statistical results based on the W.I.S.C test for group 2.

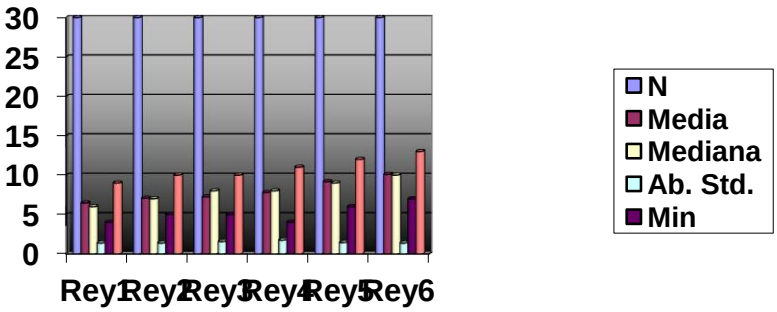

Diagram no.5. – Statistical results based on the Ray test for group 2

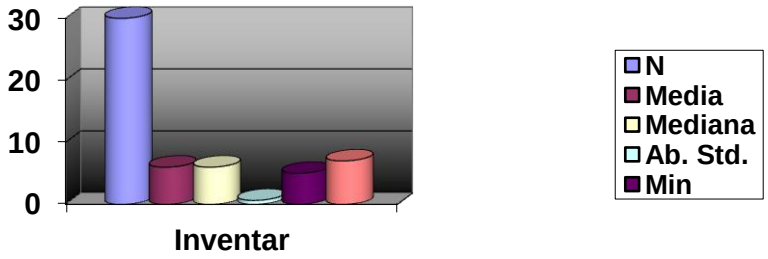

Diagram no. 6. – Statistical results obtained following the evidence inventory for Group 2

Based on the descriptive data from the three trials it becomes obvious that there are differences between the two sample groups. The comparisons regarding the significance of the differences between the two sample groups (group 1 pre-school children and group 2 pre-school children) have been based on the *t* test independent samples, the distribution being symmetrical.

Table 3. T test results:

	T	Df	P
Rey1	34.54	59	0
Rey2	35.93	59	0
Rey3	37.95	59	0
Rey4	30.58	59	0
Rey5	40.82	59	0
Rey6	48.37	59	0
W.I.S.C	53.52	59	0
Inventory	69.46	59	0

There are significant differences between the two groups in regards of the Rey test, dimension 1 ($t(59)=34.54$, $p=0.00<0,05$; Rey test, dimension 2 ($t(59)=35.95$, $p=0.00<0,05$; Rey test, dimension 3 ($t(59)=37.95$, $p=0.00<0.05$;
Rey test, dimension 4 ($t(59)=30.58$, $p=0.00<0.05$; Rey test, dimension 5 ($t(59)=40.82$, $p=0.00<0.05$; Rey, dimension 6 ($t(59)=48.37$, $p=0.00<0.05$;
W.I.S.C test ($t(59)=53.52$, $p=0.00<0.05$; inventory ($t(59)=69.46$, $p=0.00<0.05$.

These results prove that there are differences between the two groups.

3.2. Second Hypothesis

The study of correlations based on the performances obtained during the psychological testing

The Pearson correlation coefficient has been used in order to observe the correlations between the tests applied in this study, the data distribution being symmetrical.

Table 4. Correlations based on the vocabulary trials

	Rey1	Rey2	Rey3	Rey4	Rey5	Rey6	W.I.S.C
Rey1 R	**1.00**	**0.72****	**0.50****	**0.56****	**0.52****	**0.55****	0.21
P	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.00**	0.10
N	**60**	**60**	**60**	**60**	**60**	**60**	60
Rey2 R	0.72**	**1.00**	**0.67****	**0.71****	**0.62****	**0.61****	0.23
P	0.00	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.00**	0.07
N	60	**60**	**60**	**60**	**60**	**60**	60
Rey3 R	0.50**	0.67**	**1.00**	**0.61****	**0.46****	**0.43****	0.30*
P	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.00**	0.02
N	60	60	**60**	**60**	**60**	**60**	60
Rey4 R	0.56**	0.71**	0.61**	**1.00**	**0.68****	**0.64****	0.18
P	0.00	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.00**	0.16

N	60	60	60	**60**	**60**	**60**	60
Rey5 R	0.52**	0.62**	0.46**	0.68**	**1.00**	**0.83****	0.18
P	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	**0.00**	0.15
N	60	60	60	60	**60**	**60**	60
Rey6 R	0.55**	0.61**	0.43**	0.64**	0.83**	**1.00**	0.18
P	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	0.15
N	60	60	60	60	60	**60**	60
WISC R	0.21	0.23	0.30*	0.18	0.18	0.18	**1.00**
P	0.10	0.07	0.02	0.16	0.15	0.15	**0.00**
N	60	60	60	60	60	60	**60**

** Significant correlation at a 0,01 threshold

* Significant correlation at a 0,05 threshold

3.3. Third Hypothesis

Optimizing results gathered from psychological tests by way of training

After the descriptive processing of gathered results (the following data has been obtained for the Ray, W.I.C.S. test as well as for the inventory) based on the occurrences of the test: pre and post test (after the completion of the training).

The comparison has been made using the *t* tests for pairs.

Table 5. Rey test comparison results,group 1

	Media	**N**	**P**
Per1 PostRey1 PreRey1	6.23	30	1.47
	5.96	30	2.00
Per2 PostRey2 PreRey2	6.96	30	1.65
	4.93	30	2.05
Per3 PostRey3 PreRey3	7.30	30	1.41
	6.53	30	2.11
Per4 PostRey4 PreRey4	8.53	30	2.30
	6.93	30	2.14
Per5 PostRey5 PreRey5	9.53	30	2.06
	7.70	30	1.93
Per6 PostRey6 PreRey6	10.23	30	1.86
	8.83	30	1.83

Table 6. Rey test comparison results,group 2

	Media	**N**	**P**
Per1 PostRey1 PreRey1	6.43	30	1.38
	5.90	30	1.47
Per2 PostRey2 PreRey2	7.06	30	1.38
	6.16	30	2.01
Per3 PostRey3 PreRey3	7.23	30	1.56
	5.90	30	1.64
Per4 PostRey4 PreRey4	7.80	30	1.76
	5.63	30	1.58
Per5 PostRey5 PreRey5	9.16	30	1.44
	7.86	30	1.77
Per6 PostRey6 PreRey6	10.10	30	1.37
	8.13	30	1.43

Judging from the gathered data there are significant differences between the timing of the two tests

Table 7. The significance of the differences between the two testing periods, for the Rey trial, group 1

	T	**Df**	**P**

Per1 PostRey1PreRey1	5.58	29	0.00
Per2 PostRey2 PreRey2	5.83	29	0.00
Per3 PostRey3 PreRey3	6.96	29	0.00
Per4 PostRey4 PreRey4	6.43	29	0.00
Per5 PostRey5 PreRey5	6.32	29	0.00
Per6 PostRey6 PreRey6	4.69	29	0.00

For the first pre-school group, which attends a Romanian language kindergarten we have obtained the following results:

Table 8. The significance of the differences between the two testing periods, for the Rey trial, group 2

	T	**Df**	**P**
Per1 PostRey1 PreRey1	10.21	29	0.00
Per2 PostRey2 PreRey2	6.65	29	0.00
Per3 PostRey3 PreRey3	8.08	29	0.00
Per4 PostRey4 PreRey4	9.70	29	0.00
Per5 Post Rey5 PreRey5	6.80	29	0.00
Per6 PostRey6 PreRey6	4.54	29	0.00

For the second pre-school group, which attends a foreign language kindergarten we have obtained the following results:

Table 9. The results of comparisons between pairs for the W.I.S.C. test, group 1.

	Media	**N**	**P**
Per1 PostW.I.S.C.	20.50	30	2.84
PreW.I.S.C.	18.36	30	3.51

Table 10. . The results of comparisons between pairs for the W.I.S.C. test, group 2.

	Media	**N**	**P**
Per2 PostW.I.S.C.	20.20	30	3.07
PreW.I.S.C.	17.40	30	3.51

Judging from the gathered data there are significant differences obtained between the timings of the two tests

Table 11. The significance of the differences between the two testing periods, group 1

	T	**df**	**P**
Per1 PostWISC	6,68	29	0.00
PreWISC	6.04	29	0.00

Table 12. The significance of the differences between the two testing periods, group 2

	T	**df**	**P**
Per2 PostWISC	7,61	29	0.00
PreWISC	7,35	29	0.00

Table 13. The result of comparisons amongst pairs for the inventory, group 1

	T	**df**	**Standard deviation**
Per1 PostInv.	**6.10**	**30**	**0.71**
PreInv.	**5.96**	**30**	**0.50**

Table 14. The result of comparisons amongst pairs for the inventory, group 2

	T	df	Standard deviation
Per2 PostInv.	**6.00**	**30**	**0.64**
PreInv.	**6.43**	**30**	**0.67**

From analyzing the acquired data it is obvious that there are significant differences between the two testing periods.

Table 15 The significance of the differences between the two testing periods, group 1

	T	df	P
Per1 PostInv.	5.03	29	0.00
PreInv.	4.84	29	0.00

Table 16. The significance of the differences between the two testing periods, group 2

	T	df	P
Per2 PostInv.	4.17	29	0.00
PreInv.	4.05	29	0.00

4. Conclusions

The kindergarten level instructional-educational process pertaining to the ***Man and Society curricular area***of activities combines in a logical manner, elements of learning and day-to- day practical aspects. The present study wishes to highlight the way in which preschool level personality development can be optimized based on a training that consist of numerous practical activities aimed at developing an adequate social behaviour as well as of some proper practical attitudes in reply to daily occurrences. The article followed precise objectives that were inscribed in game – type activities and were followed by a specific evaluation. After verifying the hypothesis, conclusions can be drawn regarding the optimization of developing specific behaviours and social attitudes for pre-school level children based on a specific training that consists of adequate activities pertaining to the ***Man and Society curricular area***.

Regarding the importance of the role played by the acquisition of social competences several theories have been formulated forwarding valuable contributions for the understanding of the complex aspects of social behaviour that are developed during early childhood.

As a conclusion, I`d like to accentuate the fact that the activities pertaining to the ***Man and Society curricular area***are very important judging from the implications of preparing pre-school children for their later social life.

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COMMUNICATION AND CREATIVITY FOR PRESCHOOLERS

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Abstract: *The study we made has the purpose to reveal the way some of the techniques, methods and stimulation principles of creative features can be used on children. The study group contains children from the "big group". They have been involved in creative exercises like "Storytelling cubes", "Comic books", "Thinking hats" and other exercises based on synectic and brainstorming principles. The recorded results, after the game like or creative exercise evaluations, have revealed qualitatively changes of creative features like fluidity and flexibility.*

Keywords: *communication; creativity; divergent thinking; creative techniques;*

1. Theoretical premises and aplication principles

The problem of creativity has become a concern in all sorts of areas. The being of creativity is vital in life, work, social relations, education. The main factor of creativity is not represented by intelligence or general knowledge, but by imagination and the non-intelectual personality features: epistemological interest, divergent thinking, curiosity, passion, will, decision, determination, motivation, trust, etc. In the development of creative characteristics obstractions may occur. They can be either of social and educational nature (stiffed-traditional education system, inhibited educational enviorment, based on memorizing and imitation, the society, the imperious political system), but also interpersonal (distorted self image, poor self knoledge, excesive shyness, distrust in own power of achievement). (Dughi, Roman, 2008)

The development of divergent thinking requires exercises which helps to incite the needed capacitys of creative thinking (Roco, M., 2001; Kelemen, G., 2007, Dughi, Ropotă, 2018):

- Verbal fluency – tell, within a given time, as many words possible, represeting objects, beings, animals, foodstuffs, etc. or words describing a certain sound.
- Ideally fluency – listen to the story, poem and give them as many titles as possible, find multiple usage of a sole object (paper, carpet, orange), answer to questions like: what would happened if...?
- Spacial skills – draw a flower using rectangles and circles.

By adopting the incorporated curriculum in the kindergarten, a great consideration is being given to children's creative and critical thinking development. For reaching the proposed purposes in education there are a few theories and methods to stimulate them. Most of them have general basic stimulation principles of creativity which derive from synectics and brainstorming.

The „Thinker's keys" method was introduced by Tony Ryan (1991). He names and describes several creative and criticak thinking strategies, like:

a) „*The reverse*" – place words such as **cannot**, **never** and **not** in sentences which you usually don't use: name 8 things that you could not touch; list 5 sounds that you have never heard; name 3 things that you could not photograph.

b) *„The What IF?"* - you can ask virtually any What If question. They can be either serious or merry.What if there will be no more paper? What if there will be no water?Etc.

c) *„The Disadvantages"* –Choose an object, eg an umbrella, or a practice, eg playground duty, and list a number of its disadvantages. Then list some ways of correcting, or eliminating these disadvantages.

d) *„The Combination"* – children get to name a list of attributes of 2 dissimilar objects - eg."magazineandswimming goggles" then combine the attributes into a single object.

e) *„The BAR"* –reinventing or redesigning everyday objects.

f) *„The Alphabet"* - Choose an object/word and compile a list of words from A to Z which have some relevance to the object/word.

g) *„The Variations"*-Start each question with "How many ways can you (make new friends,wash a giraffe, catch a gazele, etc.)

h) *„The Picture"*-The teacher draws a simple diagram which has no relevance to the area of study and the students then try to work out ways in which it could be linked with that area.

i) *„The Prediction"* –Ask for a series of predictions in regard to a particular situation, product or set of circumstances.Eg. Who will i be in 30 years? How will amusement parks look like in 100 years from now?Etc.

j) *„The Different Uses"*– we appeal to the notion of recycling, by naming several possible ways an object can be used (an old chair, a broken tv, an old shoe).

k) *„The Ridiculous"* – make a ridiculous, impossible statement, then students will have to give arguments to make the impossible possible, eg. Every child must pay taxes for each present from the Easter bunny.

In order to regain trust in own creative capacity, professor Annabella Cant (2010) suggests several ways, advices for exciting and waking creativity:

A. *Free discussions of stundents* - listen carefully to them, and take notes. Conversations with children stimulates our imagination and creativity; they hold a natural ability to make connections and create associations between elements that for us seem to be totaly different.

B. *Write down right away ideas, pictures, behaviours, events, facts, processes, happenings* etc. that you like and see on tv, in a paper, daily situations. The attempt to apply and adapt these new knowledge in daily educational cases.

C. *Imagine your curricular activities before* , without projecting it. Try to prepare interesting, unusual, exciting, extreme even, elements for each theme. These will stimulate both the stundent's and teacher's thought.

D. *Insert „Magic"* in each educational moment.Magic offers us the posibility to escape our daily routine, but on the other hand, by stimulating our creative imagination, it manages to enrich our inner life.

E. *Give students the possibility to offer for themselves ideas, aspects or initial elements to a theme.* These kind of exercises give students the possibility to freely express themselves, unconstrained by the coerciveness of truth and reality's objectivity.

F. *Trust your own intuition,* proffessionaly, in your own educational instinct, because these will help you outline and develop brand new and personal ideas

G. *Talk to people whom you believe are creative, and get inspired from their activity and experience.* This is an efficient method to get methodological and professional enriched.

H. *Do crosswords puzzles.* A recreative activity, which helps practicing logical and creative thinking.

I. *Write down as much as you can from what you live, see and read!* The abundand colection of information, opinions and reflections will be the foundation generating new personal ideas.

*J. Don't get frightened by creativity.*Try to conceive your new task from perspectives of enthusiasm, freedom and spontaneity proper to childhood, cutting out disruptive influences in the ongoing creative thinking.

2. Study goals

The study's main goal was to highlight the main factors that can stimulate the creative potential in preschoolers.

The specific goals were:

- Activating the required educational methodologies for growing creativity in preschoolers.
- Stimulating creative thinking by noticing and answering to certain learning situations.

3. General assumption

If the educational activities are setting goals and using techniques focused on creativity, then the development of creative features in preschoolers can be noticed.

4. **Research tools**

As research methods we've used the observation method and the productreview method.

The observation method – systematic, selective and continous observation. In the language teaching and practical skills activities, we have noticed children's creative acts in creative games regarding everyday themes.

The product review method – of all the products through which preschoolars creative potential reaches out i will analize storytelling and practical deeds. These two categories of products offers informations about the intelectual factors of creativity. From these factors we have chosen fluidity, flexibility and orgininality.

5. The group study describtion

The group study has 21 preschool children from the „big group". For the group study dates to be obvious and comparable we've developed activities in experiential DLC areas (language and communication-storytelling area) and DOS (human and society – practical skills area).

6. Working variables

Independent variables:

For the development of preschoolers creativity, games have been applied as tasks of creativity, destined to enhance the child's *socio-emotional side*; the „Storytelling cubes" creativity development method has been applied – children creating stories, with the help of cubes having certain object drawn on each side of the cube; the Brainstorming method – for group stimulation creativity, games that grow flexibility, creativiy and originality, different objects were handcrafted, collages during the practical skills activities.

Dependent variables:

After using dependent variables, creativity develops to preschooler children (originality, fluidity and flexibility).

7. **Research Design**

Initial evaluation

The study has been made during the second semester of the following school year 2017-2018.

The ascertaining experiment, as a preliminary step of the study, had the purpouse to identify the creative potential at children from the „big group". We have started with the premises that the preschooler's creative potential has general attributes as a base, which mainly belong to the intelectual, thinking and imaginative factor and that this is a variable ordinary distributed amongst children. We have taken as a basis of discussions the general creative potential, as it reflects itself in activities specific to the preschool child (language, practical skills). It contained tasks for the assesment of the preschoolers creativity level from the „big group" applied during clasical learning situations. In this way we have investigated fluidity, verbal

and plastic flexibility at the students group. The methods used were the product review method (the story created by children, crafting an object with practical skills) and the „Comic book" task.

The main indices (dimensions) of potential creativity followed in this experimental step were: fluidity, flexibility, originality.

- Fluidity reveals the ease and swiftness of association between new ideas, images, verbal flow, ideational ease and wealth; as sign of graphical fluidity we have taken into consideration the number of makeup elements.
- Flexibility consist of an efficient reorganized way of thought according to new situations, in the possibility of handling certain transfers, in being able to give up old points of view and adopting new ones; as a sign of graphic flexibility we have taken into consideration the number of types of makeup elements.
- Originality is being able to develop ideas, solutions, striking products, out of the ordinary; we have apreciated according to unusual makeup elements or thoughts in the students group.

The tasks of whose products were analized were: the story children have created, crafting an object and themed drawings.

Reviewing the products has been made by using the following scoring procedure:

- for figurative-plastic products (crafting an "object" and a drawing with a given theme, "Comic book" task)
- for each subject – we have analized and overall evaluated the drawings (within the group), under the aspect of the three dimensions (fluidity, flexibility, originality) using a Likert type scale with three steps. According to the Likert type scale, the lower scores show a *lower level* of the measured dimension, and high scores show a high level of that dimension:
  - 1 point–*low level;*
  - 2 points–*medium level;*
  - 3 points–*high level.*

The answers were thus rated:

1. for the**verbal and plastic-figurative originality**dimension(valued by the unusual makeup elements in drawings, by the number of unusual, novel, rare drawings by group level, by the ways of work:
   - 1 point –stereotypes elements;
   - 2 points–fresh elements apear;
   - 3 points–original, novel drawings.

2. for the **verbal and figurative fluidity** dimension (valued by the number of compositionalelements:
   - 1 point–between one and three different elements;
   - 2 points– between four and seven different elements;
   - 3 points–over seven different elements.

3. for the **verbal and figurative flexibility** dimension (valued bythe number of categories in which the compositional elements belong toand by the number of types of objects represented with drawings, but also by the complexity of the story):
   - 1 point – the elements belong in only one category;
   - 2 points – the elements belong to two-three categories;
   - 3 points–the elements belong in more than three categories.

The subjects results in the ascertaining step

At a first analisis of the results we have obtained, for the creativity's diagnosis task, the following frequency tabels –which synthesizes the rating occurance of each scoring version for the three dimensions of creativity (Tabel 1).

Tabel 1. Answering rating for the creativity's diagnosis tasks – „big group".

(N=21) (preliminary step)

Nr. crt.	Dimensions	Low level	Medium level	High level
1.	Verbal and figurative fluidity	5 (30%)	14 (65%)	2 (5%)
2.	Verbal and figurative flexibility	6 (30%)	12(55%)	3 (15%)
3.	Verbal and figurative originality	3 (15%)	14 (60%)	4 (25%)

By analizing the table we can see that, before the start of the formative experiment, creativity's dimensions at preschool children have recorded a medium level, as such:

- for the *verbal and figurative fluidity* almost two thirds of children (65%) have been evaluated by having a *medium level*. Only two children (5%) have recorded a *high level* at this dimension.

- for the verbal and figurative flexibility dimensions half of the children (55%) have been evaluated by having a *medium level* verbal and figurative flexibility.Just three children (15%) have recorded a *high level* at this dimension.

- for the verbal and figurative originality dimensions above half of the children (60%) have been evaluated by having a *medium level* verbal and figurative originality. But, only four children (25%) have recorded a *high level* at this dimension.

The creative element is missing in most of their works but also around the story, immitation being dominant, especially at children with low levels. Although they had the required materials within reach (cardboard, coated paper, wadding, matches, various beads, crushed ornaments, scissors, glue) they weren't able to create the suggested theme, only by immitation, although they knew the required techniques (gluing, cutting, assembling). During the story, no visual materials were used.

The in fact experimental step. The teacher's intervension

Educational activities have been developed in an incorporated manner on themed projects, according the preschool learning level for children in the „big group".

The „Storytelling cubes"

Is a technique through which group creativity and revelation of new is being stimulated, it was introduced in the development of educational process to different learning situations, also with the purpouse to enhance creativity to preschoolers. Starting from the idea that it offers the posibility of free, spontaneous acting of imagination by the group members, it grows the productivity of individual creativity, as a result of members interactions and them acting for a group solution, we have used it in applying the method going thru several steps.

The preliminary step contained four stages:

- the stage of inquiring the group members and selecting them towards establishing the creative group;
- the stage of creative practice, which consists in organising and familiarizing with the working techniques;
- the stage of preparing the working sessions, in which the group's room has been arranged, a day time has been chosen, the necessary materials were checked, children have been told the rules, stages, the time of each child's intervention, mentioning that everyone will tell only one thought, even if they have several in mind, speaking one at a time. It will be allowed only the intervention of the ones who take an idea and develop it;
- the productive stage of the creativity group, in which jumping ideas manifest, children don't criticize, don't extend the lenght of expression, try to issue as many own situations, new, to develop the coleagues ideas, to analize, to imagine. Interventions were made only

when rules weren't followed and to encourage, stimulate, coordinate and to conduct childrens creative activity.

The method was applied to the language and communication domain activity taking the following stages:

- The themathic setting stage – sets a minimum number of „story" situations which must be made on the time unit (each child must use a figure from a side of the storytelling cube, and then continue the narrative thread by the classmate from the right), for the individual theme to become collective wearing the name „Story...". Ideas told by every child were classified, partial synthesis were made and questions like these were asked: „What could we... change, add, combine, reverse, multiply, in our story?" and thus the preschoolars brain, being helped, answers by action. Each child, at a time, has brought original ideas that change the look of the story.
- The stage of gathering additional ideas was made the next day, assuming keeping the „narrative thread" created by children on several days within the group with the purpouse of growing the issued ideas. In the same day, the step of sorting and selecting ideas took place, meaning the evaluation in which children are allowed to express their critical thinking, forbidden in the previous steps. At first, a list of ideas made by the group members was presented, and recorded in order of appearance: flat, sun, car, stoplight, flower, trail, bench, bridge, etc.

The „Comic book" method

The drawing activities with a chosen theme took place by grouping children in five-six groups containing six children. Each child received a chart and the necessary working tools. The theme was previously chosen. The attention was focused on the time given to the activity. Each child starts his drawing with the element he desires. The charts turn to the right, children retaking the idea and cotinuing it, making „comic books".

Final testing and data analizing

The final step of the experiment consisted in applying tracing tasks to the level of creativity after the development of the experimental activity.

In *the post experimental step*we have applyed the same tasks again in *the ascertaining experiment* – tasks that targeted the diagnosis of *creativity indexes* (*flexibility, fluidity, originality*) in various experiential fields (*language and communication, man and society – practical skills*).

After applying the tasks and analizing the data, the following results were obtained:

Tabel 2 The mentioning frequency of each version (N=21) (*postexperimental step*)

Nr .crt.	**Dimensions**	**Low level**	**Medium level**	**High level**
1.	Verbal and figurative fluidity	-	11(50%)	10(50 %)
2.	Verbal and figurative flexibility	4 (20%)	12 (60%)	5 (20%)
3.	Verbal and figurative originality	-	4 (20%)	17 (80%)

From the analisis of table 2 it can be noticed that there are differences regarding the way how they were evaluated and directly regarding the creative abilities they have showed in language and by making an object at practical skills, as such:

- at the *verbal and figurative fluidity* dimension, 10 children (50%) were evaluated as having a *high level* verbal and figurative fluidity. None of the children has been recorded at a *low level* at this dimension, compared with 4 (20%) in the inital stage.

- at the *verbal and figurative flexibility* dimension, 5 children (20%) were evaluated as having a *high level* verbal and figurative flexibility. Instead only 4 children (20%), compared with 8 (40%) from the initial stage, have been recorded at a *low level* at this dimension.

- at the *verbal and figurative originality* most children (80%) were evaluated as having a *high level* verbal and figurative originality. This dimension however has known a development compared to the initial stage, so that no child was recorded as having a *low level* at this dimension.

8. Conclusions

The development of creative potential cannot be made by itself, but it needs actions that are continous and organized by stimulation and activation. Activating and stimulating the creative potential enforces its specific and growing level, age and individual particularities of the child and decisive relations, in which creativity is involved. In the same time, not any kind of learning activity allows the develoment of the creative potential, but only the active learning based on questioning, discovery, exploration.

This is the aspect we tried to show in this study through which, by using certain techniques, exercises and favourable attitudes toward developing creative features, qualitative changes of them were recorded at children. Still, the limits of this study must be mentioned: the low number of subjects, the low capacity of isolating the experimental variables, the relative objectivity of the evaluations of the creative features, the subjectivism of the evaluation items, the non-standardization of the creative features evaluation tasks.

Beyond this limits remains the importance of highlighting some techniques, principles and working situations with children in the way of supporting some features like critical thinking, divergent thinking, flexibility in thinking, the courage to express own ideas, the motivation to discover, these strategies being accessible to any teacher, no matter the age of children they are working with.

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SOCIAL INFLUENCES AND DEVELOPMENT OF MUSICAL PREFERENCES - ATTITUDES OF FUTURE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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Abstract: *In modern school teachers are the main actuators and initiators in the process of learning, upbringing and development of pupils. The paper considers how future teachers perceive the social impacts on their musical preferences. The research part brings the results of the empirical research conducted with 78 students of the Faculty of Education in Užice, Serbia. Students' opinions on social factors that influenced the development of their musical preferences, changes and influences on them during their growing up was examined. The results show that students' musical preferences changed over time in relation to different social influences.*

Keywords: *social influences; students - future teachers; musical preferences; school; family.*

1. Introduction

Music is present in the lives of all the people. It affects the various aspects of their lives. Particularly significant is its impact on the lives of young people, and it can be said that its social role is very important. Some studies speak of how much music permeates social life, signifies and shapes the identity of both individuals and collectives (according to van der Hoeven, et al, 2016: 45). In her study (De Nora, 2000), Tia De Nora observes music as "technology as itself" and demonstrates how individuals build their own identity using music in important life events and relationships with others. She also states that music follows a large number of activities in everyday life. Groups use music to create their own identity. According to the authors of the Birmingham School, social groups, or, as they call them "subcultures", take, transform, and develop certain trends and characteristics of wider, ruling culture, creating their own culture. Through practice, their culture is reproduced and transmitted. But this practice takes place only in the given field of possibilities and constraints (Hall & Jefferson, 2003: 11). Subcultures have their own position in society and their vocabulary (both visual and verbal) is obvious (Hebdige, 2002: 93-94). By clear form and structure they are separated from the wider culture, through certain activities, adopted values, the application of certain material objects and territorial spaces. Through dressing, activities, leisure and lifestyle, listening to a particular type of music, they can project a different cultural response or "solution" to the problems posed by material and social class and experience (Hall & Jefferson, 2003: 14). It is exactly the music, since its field of activity is broad, which plays a significant role here. Individuals can certify belonging to one group by selecting specific artists or music genres. Thus, the music is, as Roy and Dowd (2010) say, "the technology of the collective," because people are connected with those who share similar aesthetic perception, expressive forms and cultural practices. It should be noted that researches carried out recently (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2006; Selfhout, Branje, ter Bogt, & Meeus, 2009; Boer et al., 2011) show that adults use music to shape the impressions on others in situations where meet some people. On the other hand, young people and

adolescents tend to form more stable friendships with peers who share the same musical preferences.

North and Hargreaves (2008) summarized the social function of music in three dimensions: 1) as a means of social communication, used to convey ideas, thoughts, ideologies and feelings; 2) as a commercial product designed to satisfy and manipulate the habits of cultural-music consummation and increase the profit of music industry; and 3) as an educational resource within the school curriculum.

Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1984) in his works, among other things, also dealt with the question of musical taste. According to him, taste is a matter of class and cultural diversities that correspond to what is culturally acceptable or, as he says, good taste (according to Allen, 2002; Holt, 1997). Bourdieu ties the taste to cultural capital that represents a kind of tissue that builds social distinctions, and connects social and cultural hierarchy. Namely, through the cultural model that governs society, a set of cultural and verbal dispositions is mobilized, a habitus that is close to the habitus of the dominant social classes, and it is recognized as legitimate, autonomous and distanced from class distinctions, while its own culture is considered illegitimate (Bourdieu, 1984: 101-102). Taste (manifest preference) is a practical affirmation of the inevitable differences. Since every taste is perceived as natural, it presupposes the rejection of others as unnatural (Bourdieu, 1984: 56). Thus, the class affiliation of individuals is reflected in their taste. In that sense, we can talk about musical taste as a manifestation of musical capital (as a part of cultural capital), which represents knowledge and abilities related to the totality of musical knowledge and creativity, as well as the competence for understanding different musical genres, recognizing various music tracks, and, in the last instance, possession of cultural capital. Taste is not an attribute, it is not property (of thing or individual), it is an activity. It should be performed an activity to listen to music or evaluate an object. Tastes are not given and determined, nor are their objects. An individual should make they appear together, by constant experimentation, which is adapting progressively (Hennion, 2007: 101). Speaking of musical taste, one concept of traditional music, that is a combination of urban and rural folklore, will produce a completely different experience within the audience coming from the same cultural community (e.g. emigrants) and others who did not grow up in that musical environment (Bužarovski, 2016 : 33).

Earlier studies by North and Hargreaves (1999) to this day were the only one to deal with the idea that musical tastes of people relate to their "self-concept". Starting from that idea, Lonsdale and North conclude that people are even expected to use musical taste as a means of representation, which provides information about their desirable characteristics and identity. They think that this symbolic role directly implies how the musical taste of the individual develops (Lonsdale & North, 2016: 308). In this sense, the musical taste is assumed to function symbolically, as a local "badge" of identity and belonging to a group (see Frith, 1983; North & Hargreaves, 1999). Another function of musical taste is related to this. Instead of connecting individuals, groups or cultures, musical taste can emphasize social division, as groups can use a particular type of music to separate themselves from others (van der Hoeven, et al, 2016: 46). This view of musical taste is precisely the hypothesis of the Birmingham School.

Speaking of musical tastes, Finnäs (1989) concluded that there are several causative factors that can affect the music preferences: e.g. specific characteristics of music (tempo, rhythm, silence, etc.), knowledge and listening which is repeated, the affective experience of the listener while listening to music, as well as various social influences. The results of the researches carried out in the last decade (North & Hargreaves, 2007; Bonneville-Roussy, Rentfrow, Xu & Potter, 2013; Greenberg et al., 2016) show that two factors are of utmost importance for the formation of musical taste: 1) individual characteristics of the listener, such as his age, sex, education, values and personality traits; and 2) the socio-psychological

context in which the music is being listened, which relates to how and how much the social environment affects the individual. The results of the study conducted by Bonneville-Roussy and Rust (2017) confirm that social influences, and especially mutual relations towards conformism, are important for the adoption of different musical tastes, as adults change over the years (Bonneville-Roussy & Rust, 2017: 2). Schäfer and associates (Schäfer, 2016; Schäfer et al., 2016) emphasized that social cohesion is an important source for creating musical tastes. In their researches, the positive and negative feedback of the social environment successfully modified the strength of the musical taste of adults in an experimental environment.

When we talk about changes in musical taste, a series of qualitative researches on the development of musical taste has provided convincing evidence that musical tastes change over the years (Greasley & Lamont, 2006; Greasley, Lamont & Sloboda, 2013; Lamont & Webb, 2010). Lamont and Webb (2010) have proven that musical taste changes almost daily. Using interviews, Greasley and Lamont (2006) found discontinuity of the taste influenced by daily social interactions. In addition, qualitative interviews emphasize that adult musical preferences are constantly evolving both in the short term and over decades, and appear to be under the influence of social changes (Greasley et al., 2013).

In modern school, teachers are the main actuators and initiators for the modernization of the educational process. They are leaders in the process of learning, upbringing and development of pupils. They are educators, organizers and innovators. They need to possess knowledge, abilities and skills in order to maintain quality of work and constantly to improve it. They are expected to enrich the teaching process with new methods, means, strategies of work, taking into account the individuality, interests and opportunities of pupils, as well as the needs of the society (Selaković and Ivanović, 2017: 198). When it comes to teaching music culture, it is necessary that the teacher responds with success to the tasks that are in front of him, and the precondition is possession of the entire spectrum of knowledge that defines his competence for teaching (Sudzilovski and Ivanović, 2016: 436). According to Milan Matijević, today the teachers are needed who can create new and original pedagogical situations, respecting the scientific knowledge and competences they mastered during their studies, which will optimally satisfy the developmental needs of children who grow up in a new media-technological environment (Matijević, 2007: 307). This is especially important if we are talking about contemporary tendencies to integrate popular music into the teaching process and to take into account the informal and non-formal knowledge and earlier musical experiences of pupils (Cremades et al., 2010: 123), since young people from birth are everyday exposed to a multitude of different musical stimuli, such as music that, for example, their parents are listening, or it is available on radio and television, video games and the Internet (Folkestad, 2006: 144). The fact is that individuals are more motivated and more enthusiastic about solving tasks they find pleasant and in which they enjoy. Therefore, understanding pupils' musical tastes may be to help teachers to gain their attention (Teo, 2003). Also, knowledge of pupils' tastes and knowledge about music can be useful in determining which teaching programs, teaching strategies, contents, and materials will be used. This is important because the multidimensional character of the music teaching and learning process needs to be seen within a wider context, not just in formal learning situations. Non-formal education outside the school environment contributes to the adoption of formal musical knowledge.

2. Methodology of research

Having in mind the stated above, the aim of the research was to determine how future teachers perceive the social impacts on their musical taste. With this research, we tried to answer the question of whether students are aware of the factors that influence the formation

of one's own musical tastes, whether as future teachers can help their pupils, to make them interested in formal education, to support them in creation of their knowledge, attitudes and future choices.

From the defined aim, the following tasks of the research emerged:

a) to examine students' opinions on changes in their own musical tastes during their growing up;

b) to examine students' opinions on social influences that are crucial for creating musical taste earlier and now;

c) to examine students' opinions on the positioning of their own musical tastes in the prevailing cultural milieu.

From the defined tasks, the following hypothesis of the research emerged:

a) students' musical tastes had been changing during their growing up;

b) family, peers and school, as well as mass-media have an influence for creating musical tastes earlier and now;

c) students' musical tastes fit in the prevailing cultural milieu.

The research was conducted on a sample of 78 respondents - students of the third and fourth year of bachelor academic studies at the department for teachers at the Faculty of Education in Užice, University of Kragujevac, Serbia.

Respondents completed a questionnaire designed for research, which is related to their opinions about their own musical tastes earlier and now, as well as the factors and influences responsible for their formation. The questionnaire contained questions that included the three-tier scale of Likert-type courts and the tasks of a two-member election. In the analysis and interpretation of the obtained research results, a descriptive method was applied. The results of the research were analysed in terms of gender, year of study and dealing with music (Table 1).

Table 1. Structure of the research sample

Gender		**Year of study**		**Dealing with music**	
male	14 (17,95%)	third	23 (29,49%)	no	60 (76,92%)
female	64 (82,05%)	fourth	55 (70,51%)	amateur	9 (11,55%)
Total:	78 (100,00%)	**Total:**	78 (100,00%)	the member of choir	7 (8,97%)
				member of folklore section	2 (2,56%)
				Total	78 100,00%)

3. Results of research and discussion

Music is a kind of communication in which the meaning hidden in the text is received by people from different socio-cultural settings (Marc, 2013), precisely because of its immediacy of activity and accessibility. Text medium is the closest to people. However, how people will evaluate the "verbal messages" of music depends on their, as van der Heven and associates say, cultural capital and the local context in which music is consumed (van der Hoeven, et al, 2016: 44). According to Larkey, genres provide a musical and cultural context,

a frame for the social and cultural positioning of both textual messages and moods and attitudes that are found in the text (Larkey, 2010: 16-17).

The results of the research were that the musical taste of students changed during the upbringing of students - 60 or 76.92% of the students answered affirmatively. There are no significant differences and deviations if we compare students' responses by gender, year of studies and whether they are currently engaged in music (Table 2).

Table 2. Students' answers whether their musical taste was changed over the years, by gender

Geder	**yes**	**no**	**Total:**
male	11 (14,10%)	3 (3,85%)	14 (17,95%)
female	49 (62,82%)	15 (19,23%)	64 (82,05%)
Total:	60 (76,92%)	18 (23,08%)	78 (100,00%)

The question related to the effects of the social environment on the formation of musical tastes during the upbringing and at the present moment was significant for us, having in mind that a large number of foreign studies with this issue were realized. Namely, many authors have written about the influence of the social environment, social groups and interpersonal relations within them, as well as the influence of the culture formed within given groups on the formation of musical preferences, especially in childhood and adolescence (Arnett, 1995; Crozier, 1997; Gilliver, Carter, Macoun, Rosen, & Williams, 2012; North & Hargreaves, 2000, 2008; North, Tarrant, & Hargreaves, 2004; Selfhout, Reading, and Bogt, & Meeus, 2009; Tarrant, Ter Bogt, Mulder, Raaijmakers , & Nic Gabhainn, 2010).

Evidence of the family's influence on the formation of musical preferences in childhood and adolescence has shown that family members, including parents, brothers and sisters, are moderately important (Boer & Abubakar, 2014; Davidson, Howe, Moore, & Sloboda, 1996; Finnäs, 1989; Russell, 1997; Ter Bogt, Delsing, van Zalk, Christenson & Meeus, 2011). The results of our research confirm the given theses - 48 or 61.54% of the students answered that the family had a significant influence on the formation of their musical tastes during their growing up (Table 3). However, on the question of whether the family continues to have an influence on the formation of their musical tastes, as many as 73 or 93.59% of the students answered negatively, which again confirms the thesis that, after adolescence, the influence of parents on musical taste is not of greater significance (Bonneville-Roussy and Rust, 2017: 6).

Table 3. Students' attitudes about social influences on the formation of musical taste

Social influences	**Earlier**		**Now**	
	yes	**no**	**yes**	**no**
parents	48 (61,54%)	30 (38,46%)	5 (6,41%)	73 (93,59%)
school	36 (46,15%)	42 (53,85%)	4 (5,13%)	74 (94,87%)
society - peers	53 (67,97%)	28 (32,03%)	22 (29,49%)	55 (70,51%)
mass-media	31 (39,72%)	47 (60,28%)	33 (42,31%)	45 (57,69%)

The results related to the influence of peers on the formation of musical tastes are interesting - 53 or 67.97% of students answered that earlier peers had a great influence on the formation of their musical taste, which is expected because social comparison is an important component of childhood and adolescence musical preferences, i.e. young people try to avoid music that is not popular, so they search for popular music to connect with peers. Important number of students, 55 or 70.51% of them claim that today peers have no influence on the formation of their musical tastes, which can coincide with the results of Lynn & Snyder's research (2001) that says, contrary to the tendency to conform and follow others in childhood and adolescence, some adults tend to be unique and tend to avoid behaviors that are considered normative.

Contrary to expectations, the majority of students responded that mass-media did not have a major influence on the formation of their musical tastes earlier (47 or 60.28%), but that even now they do not affect their musical tastes (45 or 57.69% of students). Such results are unexpected, given that today, more than ever, mass-media and technologies have contributed to the high availability and supply of musical products.

On the question related to the influence of the school on the development of musical tastes earlier approximately the same number of students answered affirmatively and negatively - 36 or 46.15% of students said that the school had an influence on the formation of their musical tastes, and 42 or 53.85% said that it didn't have an influence on the formation of their musical tastes. As for the current moment, as many as 74 or 94.87% of students said that the academic environment has no influence on the formation of musical tastes. This can be interpreted by assuming that students have already formed personalities with formed attitudes, values, behavior and musical tastes. Such respondents' responses are interesting if we take into account Bourdieu's theory, according to which academic capital is guaranteed a product of the combined effect of cultural transfer of family and cultural transfer of school (whose efficiency depends on the amount of cultural capital directly inherited from family) (Bourdieu, 1984: 23).

When asked if their musical taste fits into the prevailing cultural milieu (Table 4), which implies the music that prevails in the media at the moment, only less number of students responded negatively (10 or 12.82% of them). This confirms the hypothesis that it is important for students to fit into the social environment, that is, to accept certain influences in their own choices. Studies where respondents were children and adolescents (Finnäs, 1989; North & Hargreaves, 1999) dealt with a given issue. The results showed that it is more likely that they will modify their favorite music selection if they know that this choice does not appeal to peers, as they want to be in line with the preferences of those peers. Conformism can lead adolescents to adopt different musical preferences to avoid negative social consequences.

Table 4. Students' whether their musical taste fits into the prevailing cultural milieu, by gender

Gender	yes	I am not sure	no	Total:
male	7 (8,97%)	5 (6,41%)	2 (2,56%)	14 (17,95%)
female	25 (32,05%)	31 (39,74%)	8 (10,26%)	64 (82,05%)
Total:	32 (41,03%)	36 (46,15%)	10 (12,82%)	78 (100,00%)

It is noticed that a slightly higher number of students (36 or 46.15%) answered that they are not sure if their musical tastes fit in the prevailing cultural milieu, of those who answered yes (32 or 41.03%). Such a result could be interpreted by fact that different music is

listened in their family environment, in peer groups with whom they spend time at home, in their places and in the group of students they study together.

In the answers to all the questions, there was no statistical significance in relation to the gender, year of the study of the respondents and whether they are dealing with music.

4. Conclusion

Teachers are role models, examples of social values and they have very important role in the development of children's preferences. Their role, as well as the role of parents, is very important in the development of musical preferences of pupils. The results of this research have shown that students - future teachers are aware of development of their musical preferences and tastes during their growing up as well as which role their parents and peers had in that process. Also, they are aware of the role of school, where they will have a key role. Results indicate that school can have a great impact on development of musical taste, but its impact is less by time, as the influences of society and mass-media is stronger as the time is passing. This research may encourage future teachers to think about the role of the school and their place in a process that is very important in a particular time - the process of personality formation.

The potential of music to express the identity and values of people and to connect them is closely related to the power of taste. Several authors (Hargreaves et al., 2005; North & Hargreaves, 2008b; Schubert, Hargreaves, & North, 2014) suggest that the listener, the situation and the context in which the music is listened as well as the music itself are significant and influential variables for any reaction to music (according to Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2017: 370). Bearing in mind everything that has been said about the social role of music, musical tastes, teachers as a key roles in the process of upbringing and education, as well as the results of our research, we can conclude that it is very important, from elementary school education, to direct individuals to develop according to their needs. The teacher is the one who should exploit the potentials of music as a medium close to students, to transfer knowledge, values, to enable them to use their possibilities and esthetically educate them. This is only possible if the teacher is aware of his own knowledge, possibilities, abilities, and if we are talking about music, his own attitudes, tastes, he can respect the choices of others, but he remains unique.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CRIMINAL OFFENCE AND SELF SERVING COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS

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Abstract: *Literature in the field of aggressive and violent behavior indicated a strong link between anti-social behavior and self-serving cognitive distortions. The concept of self-serving is represented by a series of distorted cognitive processes, which can take shape due to the generally oversized tendency of self-perception. The purpose of this study was to investigate the possible positive relationships between different levels of offences/ crimes and self-serving cognitive distortions in a sample of juvenile delinquents and young individuals from Romania. The assessment of the self-serving cognitive distortions was measured with the How I Think Questionnaire and the type of the criminal offence was taken from the Institutional evaluation sheet. Data was gathered from 55 juvenile delinquents, ages between 15 and 19, the average age being 17.13 (SD = .92). Positive correlations were found between the different levels of offences/ crimes and self-serving cognitive distortions, except for Self-Centered, Minimizing/Mislabeling, Physical Aggression and Stealing. These results suggest that as the level of offence gets higher so does the level of self-serving cognitive distortions and anti-social tendencies.*

Keywords: *anti-social behavior; juvenile delinquency;self-serving cognitive distortions; criminal offence.*

I. Introduction

The importance of attitudes in relation with juvenile delinquency and adult crime has started to be addressed in the literature decades ago (e.g., Glueck & Glueck, 1930; 1934).In line with this, Mylonas & Reckless (1963) identified a series of attitudes that can associate with anti-social behavior, such as: attitudes of self-justification, loyalty, faith in luck and the tendency to exacerbate society's defects. Other researchers have associated antisocial behaviors with attitudes towards legal institutions, legal authority or other offenders (Gendreau et al., 1979), as well as with emotions such as shame, guilt or pride as a consequence of the anti-social acts (Shields & Whitehall, 1994).

One of the modern theories of aggression and aggressive behavior postulates that there is strong evidence from practice and research on the link between cognition and aggressive behavior (Sestir & Bartholow, 2007). In a meta-analytical study, criminogenic needs (anti-social values, behaviors and cognitions) proved to be the best predictor of recidivism in adults (Gendreau, Little & Goggin, 1996).Investigations of the origins, development and maintenance of antisocial behaviours underline the importance of self-serving cognitive distortions regarding the social cognitions of juvenile delinquents and young individuals (Gibbs, 2003).

The concept of self-serving is represented by a series of distorted cognitive processes, which can take shape due to the generally oversized tendency of self-perception (Myers, 2015). In other words, self-serving prejudices are represented by a series of cognitive strategies that allow an individual to have a very positive self-image, generally with egocentric manifestations (Matsumoto, 2009).

Anti-social behavior is described as an externalizing behavior that negatively affects other individuals, directly or indirectly, by violating important moral or social norms, including delinquent and aggressive acts such as serious aggressive acts (e.g. murder, rape or violent content attacks) or lesser acts of aggression (such as stealing) (Barriga et al., 2001).

From the explanations provided in the literature that have attempted to elucidate the beginning, development and persistence of antisocial conduct and violent behavior, cognitive distortions related to antisocial behaviors or individual's deficiency in interpreting social events can offer important explanations regarding the thinking patterns of adolescents. These patterns of thinking may have criminogenic value because they have the potential to isolate the individual from fault or a negative self-concept (Barriga et al., 2000).

Self-serving cognitive distortions (Barriga et al., 2001) can be divided into four categories, such as:1. Self-Centered - attitudes by which individuals focus on their own needs and rights, to the extent that the views and needs of others are very little, or never taken into account or respected;2. Blaming Others –represented by cognitive patterns designed for the misdirection of guilt resulting from the individual's negative behavior and externalized to sources outside the individual; 3. Minimizing/Mislabeling–represented by thinking patterns in which anti-social behavior is viewed as an acceptable way to achieve certain objectives, as well as the dehumanizing and degrading way of referring to other individuals;4. Assuming the Worst - represented by the attribution of hostile intentions to others, the perception that the most unpleasant scenario is inevitable or the perception that their own behavior is beyond the scope of improvement (Gibbs, Potter & Goldstein, 1995).

Literature mentions a series of tools that evaluate criminal thinking, criminal attitudes and cognitive distortions such as: Criminal Sentiments Scale-Modified (CSS-M; Simourd, 1997); Measure of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA; Mills, Kroner & Forth, 2002); Psychological Inventory of Criminal Thinking Styles'' (PICTS; Walters, 1995). In order to evaluate self-serving cognitive distortions, the How I Think Questionnaire (Barriga et al., 2001) was developed based on the four categories of cognitive distortions (Self-Centered, Blaming Others, Minimizing/Mislabeling and Assuming the Worst).

II. Objective and hypothesis

The present study aims to investigate the possible positive relationships between different levels of offences/ crimes and self-serving cognitive distortions in a sample of juvenile delinquents and young individuals from Romania. The formulated hypothesis is that there will be a positive relationship between the intensity of the criminal offence and the levels of self-serving cognitive distortions.

III. Research methods

3.1. Participants

In the present study there were included 55 participants, 6 belonged to the female gender (10.9%) and 49 participants belonged to the male gender (89.1%), with the ages between 15 and 19, the average age being 17.13 (SD = .92).In terms of their education level, participants were classified as it follows: without education (20%), low level of education (40%), medium level of education (32.7%) and appropriate level of education (7.3%). Regarding their family of origin, 1.8% of the participants were classified without parents, 20% came from single-parent families and 78.2% came from bi-parental families. Of the 55

participants, 31 had no criminal record (56.4%) and 24 of them had a criminal record (43.6%). The reasons the participants were incarcerated were the following: robbery (25.5%), stealing (23.6%), murder (16.4%), rape (9.1%%), driving without a license (9.1%), profanation of graves (3.6%), attempted robbery (3.6%),prison-breaking (1.8%), false testimony (1.8%), murder and robbery (1.8%), attempt of murder (1.8%) and trafficking of minors (1.8%). The gender distribution of the sample reflects the majority of male prisoners from the Arad Penitentiary from Romania, the Arad Probation Service from Romania and the Buziaș Re-education Center from Romania.

3.2. Instruments

How I Think Questionnaire (HIT, Barriga et al. 2001**)** – HIT was developed to assess self-serving cognitive distortions (Self-Centered, Blaming Others, Minimizing/Mislabeling, Assuming the Worst) and 4 types of anti-social behaviors (Opposition-Defiance, Physical Aggression, Lying and Stealing). HIT (Barriga et al., 2001) contains 54 items, with a 6-points Likert type response scale, ranging from disagree strongly (1) to agree strongly (6). The questionnaire consists of 12 scales, meaning that of the 54 items, 39 items were designed to assess the four self-serving cognitive distortions, 8 items evaluate the level of anomalous responding, and 7 items are positive filters (in order to camouflage the 39 items). The 39 items also refer to the four categories of anti-social behaviors. The sum of Opposition-Defiance and Physical Aggression refers to the Overt Scale, which is represented by the direct confrontation with the victim, and the sum of Lying and Stealing refer to the Covert Scale, which is represented by anti-social behaviors that do not involve direct confrontation with the victim (Barriga et al. 2001). HIT was linguistically validated in a previous study with an internal consistency ranging between .531 (Positive filters) and .863 (Overt Scale), with an alpha-Cronbach coefficient for the whole questionnaire of .914 (Demeter et al., 2018).

Institutional evaluation sheet – This standardized data sheet includes information on criminal history and the crimes committed. The data was obtained for each individual participant from the institutional psychological /individual evaluation sheet provided by the Arad Penitentiary from Romania, the Buzias Re-education Center from Romania and the Arad Probation Service from Romania.

3.3. Study Design and Procedure

In the present study, a correlational design will be used, were the positive association between the self-serving cognitive distortions and the intensity of the criminal offences will be investigated. The investigated variables are: the scales and sub-scales of HIT (Total Hit, Overt Scale, Covert Scale, Self-Centered, Blaming Others, Minimizing/Mislabeling, Assuming the Worst, Opposition-Defiance, Physical Aggression, Lying and Stealing) and the level of the criminal offence (1 - driving without a license, false testimony; 2 - prison-breaking, stealing; 3 - profanation of graves; attempted robbery; 4 – robbery; 5 - trafficking of minors, attempt of murder, rape; 6 – murder).

The How I Think Questionnaire (Barriga et al. 2001) was administered to the participants in a paper-pen format. The participants were given an informed consent consisting in an agreement of participation to the research, a short description of the aim of study and an assurance on the confidentiality of the collected data. The institutional psychological/individual evaluation sheet was accessed through a written request addressed to the representative of the institutions where the study took place (i.e., the Arad Penitentiary from Romania, the Buziaș Re-education Centre from Romania and Arad Probation Service from Romania).The data collection took place between November 2017 and April 2018, and the completion of the questionnaire was approximately 20-25 minutes for each participant.

3.4. Results

The data was processed using the SPSS 17 software. Besides the variables mentioned above, the scores for the Anomalous responding (scale that measures the sincerity of the responses) scale of the HIT Questionnaire (Barriga et al., 2001) were calculated in order to control the sincerity of the answers given in this study (Table 1). According to literature, if the score on the Anomalous Responding scale is higher than 4.00, then the protocol is suspect as to the sincerity of the response; if the score is higher than 4.25 then the protocol may not be considered as valid (Barriga et al., 2001). The mean value for the Anomalous Responding scale of the studied group was: M = 3.23 (SD = 1.15). This value indicates that the participants provided unbiased answers to the questionnaire elements.

Table 1. Alpha Cronbach coefficients for HIT Questionnaire (Barriga et al., 2001)

HIT Scales	α
Anomalous Responding	.757
Total HIT	.931
Overt Scale	.847
Covert Scale	.890
Self-Centered	.744
Blaming Others	.767
Minimizing/Mislabeling	.802
Assuming the Worst	.761
Opposition-Defiance	.756
Physical Aggression	.744
Lying	.736
Stealing	.874

In order to calculate the positive relationship between the intensity of the criminal offence and the levels of self serving cognitive distortions, Spearman correlation test was used. The obtained scores were as it follows: Total HIT ($r = .312^*$, $p < .05$), Overt Scale ($r = .300^*$, $p < .05$),Covert Scale ($r = .292^*$, $p < .05$), Self-Centered ($r = .179$, $p > .05$), Blaming Others ($r = .456^{**}$, $p < .01$), Minimizing/Mislabeling ($r = .179$, $p > .05$), Assuming the Worst ($r = .320^*$, $p < .05$), Opposition-Defiance ($r = .339^*$, $p < .05$), Physical Aggression ($r = .218$, $p > .05$), Lying ($r = .366^{**}$, $p < .01$) and Stealing ($r = .212$, $p > .05$).

I.V. Discussions and conclusions

The present study investigated the assumed positive associations between different levels of offences/ crimes and self-serving cognitive distortions in a sample of juvenile delinquents and young individuals from Romania. The data from this study partially confirm the hypothesis, meaning that positive relationship between the different levels of offences/ crimes and self-serving cognitive distortions were registered for nearly all the scales of the How I think Questionnaire (Barriga et al. 2001). Exceptions in terms of positive associations were found for the sub-scales assessing the dimensions: Self-Centered, Minimizing/Mislabeling, Physical Aggression and Stealing. Result also showed that the Blaming Others self-serving cognitive distortion and Lying anti-social tendency had the strongest positive relationship with the levels of offences/ crimes compared to all the other cognitive distortions or anti-social tendencies.

These findings suggest that as the level of offence gets higher (i.e. murder or rape), so does the level of self-serving cognitive distortions (especially Blaming Others) and anti-social tendencies (especially Lying) in the investigated sample. In line with this, one can

assume that offenders with more aggressive crimes have a thinking pattern that justifies their actions by blaming other individuals and deceiving others for personal gain. The results of this study are consistent with other studies in the literature that provide a strong evidence from practice and research on the link between cognition and aggressive behavior and underline the importance of self-serving cognitive distortions regarding the social cognitions of juvenile delinquents and young individuals (Barriga et al., 2000; Barriga et al., 2001; Gibbs, 2003; Sestir & Bartholow, 2007).

In conclusion, the results of this study are promising and relevant in the understanding of social cognitions and criminal thinking of juvenile and young offenders from Romania. The findings can offer valuable insights for developing intervention programs based on the severity of the offence, in order to reduce the complexity of the self-serving cognitive distortions. The programs can be based on an already existent educational models, such as the one developed by Gibbs, Potter & Goldstein (1995), called EQUIP, which consists in educating moral judgment, pro-social abilities, anger management, and aims at diminishing anti-social behavior by reducing the levels of the self-serving cognitive distortions of juvenile delinquents and offenders.

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RECOVERY OF CHILDREN WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES IN THE MASS SCHOOL

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Abstract: *The author presents in the theoretical framework some theories about intellectual disability, common in the literature; the characteristic features of this and the programs of recovery. The research is based on the idea that if a group of children with intellectual disability is subject to a game-based learning training, then they will make significantly greater progress than a group of children with intellectual disabilities who did not benefit from this training. On a group of 43 children were measured the progress made by half of them who underwent this training through the game. The results recorded after inferential data processing confirm the validation of departure assumptions. It can be concluded that the intervention program structured on different types of games has a high efficiency, which determines the need to introduce game activities to help children with intellectual disabilities to express themselves more easily within a framework appropriate from an emotional and educational point of view.*

Key words:*intellectual disability; school children;game-based learning training;*

Theoretical frame

In order to support the theoretical foundation of mental deficiency, specialists in the field proposed several theories most frequently cited (Ghergut, 2005):

- *Etiological theory:* explains the nature of mental deficiency through the multitude of factors that determine it;

- *Symptomatological theory:* defines mental deficiency by reference only to certain processes and mental phenomena (thinking, intelligence, affectivity, will); Within this theory there were several currents:

- Seguin (apud Gherguţ, 2005) characterized the mentally deficient as a person without will;
- Intellectual currents accentuate mental insufficiency, reduced mental level in defining mental deficiency;
- Lewin and Vigotsky formulate the dynamic theory of mental debility, integrating mental deficiency into the complex system of mental processes and phenomena, with all the consequences on the development and evolution of the personality of the subject (apud Birch, 2000);

- *Theory of specific syndromes:* it is supported by a series of theses, among which we mention the thesis of heterogeneity, heterogeneity, heterodevelopment, social incompetence, the theory of genetic viscosity, the thesis of the inertia of cognitive processes, thesis of stiffness of brain structures and others;

- *Psychoanalytic and Psychosocial Theory:* Explains the appearance of mental deficiency as an effect of lack of affectivity (especially of the mother) in the early years of life of the child, favoring the installation of a pronounced inhibition at the level of the

thalamus, lacking affective stimuli and leading to a structural-functional failure of the bark due to the suppression of stimulus intake at this level; it is known that through the genetic program in the early years of life the development of nerve links by increasing the number of synapses is based on a high incidence of cerebral stimuli and the concomitant occurrence of neuronal anatomo-physiological structures responsible for the acquisition of the information (Holdevici , 2000);

- *Integrated theory:* This theory, supported by Paunescu (apud Gherguț, 2005) explains mental deficiency as a pathology of organization and functioning of mental structures and personality as a whole.

Recovery programs for mentally impaired seek to harness the intellectual and aptitude potential of the mentally deficient child, assuming that any progress made in recovering and developing personal and social autonomy will allow for a higher level adaptation and integration into the family and community environment as a condition for standardizing the lives of these categories of people (Handley, Southwell, Kiel 2012).

Children with mild intellectual disabilities have an IQ ranging from 50 to 69, and decompensation occurs around the age of 1-13 years. The main characteristic is that by becoming adults, those with mild mental deficiencies can reach a satisfactory degree of social autonomy and a degree of economic semi-independence. However, they will always need a support person because they are not able to fully assume the responsibility of their conduct (Bertelli et al, 2016).

There are characteristic features of all forms of mental deficiency and have a certain degree of stability, become more and more acute as the deficiency increases, and as the elderly subject advances; they do not disappear through instruction and education, but they can get a masking character, emphasizing when the person performs intellectual activities or is in stressful situations.

Rigidity (Kounin, apud Bonchiș, 2004) - is the resistance to change including the idea of fixing, hence the difficulties in adapting to new situations; the mental deficient can not apply what has been taught in a new form, has a slow growth rate, the improvement curve is capped with psychic blockages.

The rigidities of adaptive and behavioral responses (Luria - apud Birch, 2000 - it denotes oligophrenic inertia). This oligophrenic inertia is adaptive insufficiency of behavioral responses to environmental changes, a phenomenon resulting in a strong lack of mobility of reactions, slow thinking, apathy in behavioral reactions or precipitated reactions due to storage of excitations above the normal range). Continuous repetition of an activity and after the stimulus that triggered it disappeared by keeping some gestures even when it is no longer necessary.

Genetic viscosity (Inhelder apud Schwartz, Kelemen, Moldovan, 2009). If intellectual development in children with normal intellect is characterized by dynamism in the transition from one stage to another, mental deficiency is characterized by slumbering, capping, regression, when it encounters difficulties in carrying out formal operations due to the non-determination of its mental structure. The deficient goes through the same stages but differently; development is characterized by specific slowness and by a long-standing stagnation, the sooner the mental deficiency is more pronounced.

In a normal child the shift from one way of thinking to another naturally occurs, tends towards a progressive balance, with a good stability of acquisitions that show that the new structure is working satisfactorily; in the mentally deficient mind, the evolution of thinking tends towards a false balance characterized by the viscosity of judgments, the fragility of the acquisitions, the inability to leave one's point of view to another - and when it reaches a higher stage, thinking retains the imprint of the previous level regressing when faced with difficulties. The mentally deficient oscillates between two levels of development (between

concrete operations in one area, and in another is intuitive - serials by length criterion but not by thickness);

Oligophrenic heterocronia of development (Zazzo, apud Zlate, 2004). Mental deficients have a disharmonic development, they are uneven in different levels. These differences between the developmental rhythms of the various elements that form part of the psychological profile can be observed also in children with normal intellect, but in the case of the deficient they are generating disharmony; while in the normal child there is a concordance between the speed and the quality of the execution, to the deficient there is a very large gap (in realising a performance a 14-year deficient has the speed of a child of 12 years and in the quality of execution of one of 6-7 years). This is a consequence of the interaction of the other traits of specificity resulting in a differentiated approach of the deficients in the compensatory process both with respect to others and towards one's own person (he develops discordantly in relation to himself).

Fragility of personality construction occurs when the requests exceed the possibility of response; infant behavior is recorded, low-level logical operations do not help to build stable social relationships. Personality can be: dissociated - with manifestations of impulsivity, hardness, lack of control under environmental unsecured conditions; or masked - to those living in a secure environment;

The fragility and lability of verbal behavior (Verza, 1997) is expressed by the inability to logically and grammatically express the contents, the situations, the impossibility to maintain the verbal conduct of continuous progress, to adapt it to various situations; is manifested through language retardation or frequent language disorders.

Among the specific features of intellectual deficiency can also be mentioned:

- *difficulty in receiving information* - due to the narrowing of the perceptual field, or problems in perceiving size, weight, shape, as colors are perceived more easily. This explains why some stimuli need to be more intense;

- *thinking is too little flexible and creative* - being too tributary to concrete. This means that any knowledge is taught to students with mild mental deficiency needs to be supported by real, real support, and its use for children must be clearly explained (Băban 2001);

- *the language* - is somewhat delayed, it is poor, limited, with few words existing in the passive vocabulary of the vocabulary but with less use in the current speech. In its turn, language is tributary to concrete, being made up of too few abstract concepts. Oral and written language disorders are common and resistant to correction compared with preschool choildren (Dughi, Ropota 2018). A possible explanation for this phenomenon is given by the lack of cognitive support that would allow for the conservation of acquired acquisitions through therapies followed ;

- *poor memory efficiency* - its lack of flexibility in the transfer of data from one unit to another, insufficient memory fidelity or high degree of suggestiveness, make these processes questionable;

- *difficulty in organizing and planning different activities* - students with mild mental deficiency encounter such difficulties, due to the poor structure of cognitive activities and, on the other hand, the difficulty of anticipating an event to occur, as well as to take a responsible decision in this regard;

- *affective immaturity* - is characterized by intense, chaotic, and sometimes even ambivalent feelings towards others, manifested by oscillations between feelings of sympathy and antipathy towards others. This may be one of the causes of poor social relationships (Atkinson, 2002).

Children with intellectual disabilities are people who are educated in special education in general, but with the help of specialists (including the support teacher) there are cases that can be integrated into mass school.

Self-image and behavior in children with intellectual disabilities

The structure and dynamics of self-image in those with intellectual disabilities has been the subject of careful study in the US and Western European countries when it comes to the question of school and socio-professional integration of these people, following the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and promoting non-discriminatory access to services and structures for all members of the community (Buice, 2004).

In our country, unfortunately, the action of school integration of children with disabilities started without a sufficient assessment of the impact that such a measure would generate in an unprepared and reticent institutional environment, which could compromise the chances success of this approach (Zlate, 2000).

In principle, a pre-integration stage should be taken into account, on the one hand, the formation of minimum social skills in order to maintain a favorable school climate în the presence of pupils with intellectual disabilities too and, on the other hand, the initiation of some actions of mutual recognition that can alleviate the differences of inherent social perception. Additionally, counseling teachers and normal parents in the presence of school counselor and support teacher is another factor that is indispensable to increasing the chances of success of integration.

Before any concrete didactic activity, it is necessary to educate the self perception and the behavior of the child with intellectual disability. If he does not have a proper picture of his abilities and will alter the atmosphere of the school group through inappropriate behavior, no one will benefit from integration (Vereenooghe, 2018).

Four axes are involved in the formation of self-image: the cognitive axis, the affective-motivational axis, the behavioral-relational axis and the moral-value axis. If to the child the self-image is constituted from the outside to the inside and is due largely to the attitudes of adults towards the school and social behavior and performance, in puberty and adolescence, the process is reversed, going from inside to the outside (Buice, 2004).

In those with intellectual disabilities, all four axes develop inadequately and flawlessly, which is why the level of personal development of self-image is not attained. For this reason, the way in which teachers, parents and other members of the family react to the child's intellectual disability, in time, shapes and stabilizes a certain self-image. Perron (1969, apud Macsinga 2000) identifies two tendencies of confronting parents with the disability of their own child: either they impute the child's mental retardation (mother is usually "guilty"), or consider their own conduct as a reaction to their manifestations. It is very likely that parents who focus their attitudes and conduct on the disability of the child teach him to look at and define himself as a handicapped (Dolto, 2005).

Teachers unfamiliar with the specific of intellectual disability either devalorize the integrated student and place it in the category of compulsory tasks, or treat it with indulgence, but not differentiated, in accordance with its learning and conduct potential. If critical and repressive attitudes, motivated by the need for strict control of child behavior, induce him to fear and lack of initiative, overestimation and hypertolerance are not indicated, unjustified praises and non-punishment of inappropriate manifestations which have, over time, hypertrophy of the self. Keeping the student in a segregated institutional environment will only strengthen a self-image that will flagrantly contradict its real capabilities. On the other hand, the unassisted placement of the mental deficiency in a group of normal children will negatively affect both the way in which he will work and how he will perceive the other colleagues (Verza, 2000).

The results of various studies converge to the conclusion of the malfunctioning of the self-image to the mental deficient, accentuating either the state of inferiority and devaluation or the state of superiority and overestimation. The child with intellectual disability is lacking or very low the critical sense, the ability to self-examine objectively in relation to the social rules and values, as well as with their own interests.

Self-assessments are not based on essential criteria such as intelligence or social adaptability, but rough, directly measurable and comparable benchmarks such as muscle strength, school grades. Professor hierarchies impose on the student with intellectual disability classifications that he does not question. The need to be accepted and valued positively by other normal students often generates displaced, exaggerated behaviors that awaken the group's amusement. By focusing on this, the child will strengthen and amplify deviant behavior, and the punitive intervention of the teacher will only increase his popularity among colleagues (Florea and Surlea, 2005).

Feelling ignored and dismissed by colleagues, in the vast majority of situations, due to its low ability to be a good school mate or play partner, the child with intellectual disability acquires the conviction that only through behavioral eccentricities will it become interesting for others, who will persevere in such a relational disfavoring pattern.

The cardinal axes of the child's self-image of low-school intellectual disability evolve in the following way (Buice, 2004):

The cognitive-actional axis is marked by both a low interest in the actual knowledge of the other, as well as the lacunar and superficial perception of its character and intentions. If sometimes a child with mild intellectual disability can figure out in certain situations when he is preparing a hoax or "laughs" with him, the one with a higher degree of intellectual disability is incapable of discerning hidden intentions or more subtle implications of some certain reactions or suggestions. Self-perception depends strongly on affective mood and the opinions of others. The increased emotional laxity on the background of a young and fluctuating motivation leads to rapid passages from psychological comfort and self-confidence, to personal anxiety and disgust (Dumitrescu and Dumitrescu, 2005). The mentally deficient child should be taught to think positively because positive thinking creates positive feelings and leads to an active and comfortable adaptation to reality (Roman, 2018).

The affective-motivational axis is dominated by the high lability of emotions, but also by the needs. Satisfaction of a positive self-image and initiative in pursuing immediate interests are rapidly eroded and turned into counterparts as soon as they are apostrophe or face significant obstacles. Also, the affective disposition of the group or its motivations contaminates the present state of the child with intellectual disability (Weiss, Markowetz, Kiel 2018).

The behavioral-relational axis is very sensitive to the parameters of the environment. The child forms certain patterns of conduct and interaction as a result of the long-term relationship with certain adults, patterns that he tends to transfer uncritically and in relationships with other people. Particularly, the rigidity of addressing formulas and low preoccupation for adapting the relationship to the age and social position of the interlocutor (Creţu, 2001) is noted.

The moral-value axis remains at the piagetian level of heteronomy, from which derives the so-called moral realism, characterized by immutable dependence on norms and values imposed externally. However, the censorship of the supra-ego is easily corruptible by the concrete temptations that claim immediate satisfaction, which in the absence of an adult happens very quickly, without the momentary guilt of guilt. When the degree of discernment is profoundly impaired, the child with intellectual disability tends to associate the rule with the parent or educator and therefore elude them during their physical absence (Birch, 2000).

In terms of behavior, this remains closely related to the degree of self-image development and the functional level of other higher psychic processes (Bogatu, 2002).

Hypothesis and objectives

The research started from the following working hypothesis: *It was assumed that,if a group of children with intellectual disabilities is subject to a game-based learning training, then they will make significantly greater progress compared to a group of children with intellectual disabilities who have not benefited from this training.*

From the general hypothesis, the following specific hypotheses are broken down:

Hs1 - there are significant differences in school children in the number of attempts to perform a task, depending on the level of intelligence

Hs2 - there are significant differences in school children in the number of mistakes in the task, depending on the level of intelligence

Hs3 - school children with intellectual disabilities can progress in achieving a task as a result of didactic learning.

The goals were the followings:

- recording the number of trials required to perform a task;
- recording the number of errors made by children with intellectual disabilities in the task;
- identifying the progress made by school children with intellectual disabilities as a result of learning through the game.

Sample taken into study

The sample taken into study was made up of two groups of children with intellectual disabilities:

- group 1 - 22 scholars with mild intellectual disabilities (QI ranging from 60 to 69)
- group 2 - 21 scholars with moderate intellectual disabilities (QI ranging from 50 to 59).

The level of disability was appreciated by the psychological test of nonverbal, global intelligence testing: Raven color

Twenty (20) children with intellectual disabilities participated in the training, of which 10 benefited from the intervention, and the other 10 represented the control group. The age ranges for these two subgroups are shown in Table 1 and figure 1.

Table 1

Values of central trend indicators for the training and control groups

Group	Characteristics	Age average	Std. Dev.	Total subjects
1	Intervention group	7,12	0,23	10
2	Control group	7,24	0,31	10

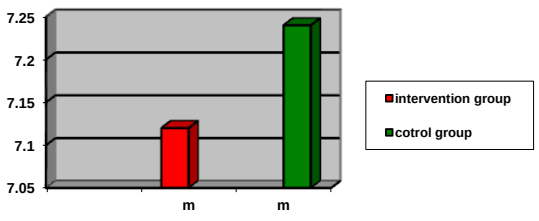

Figure 1 The average age for the two groups

Methodology

The trial and error test

Children were provided with cubes which had red and blue colored faces. There was an image in which the cubes were arranged to form an arrow. The task of the children was to build the arrow, fully respecting the pattern and colors.There were recorded the number of attempts the child needed to perform the task, as well as the number of errors.

The Raven colour test

It is a test destinated to show the global nonverbal intelligence coefficient.

Intervention program

The intervention program consisted of choosing 12 didactic games to help recover children with intellectual disabilities.

Results and discussions

Hs1 - *there are significant differences in school children in the number of attempts to perform a task, depending on the level of intelligence.*

In Table 2 and Figure 2 are presented the indicators of the central values tendencies in the tests for carrying out the task.

Table 2.Values of central trend indicators at test levelaccomplishing a task in school children

attempts	Average	Std.dev.	N
Group 1	0,50	0,21	22
Group 2	7,25	2,36	21

Where: group 1 = children with mild intellectual disability
group 2 = children with moderate disability

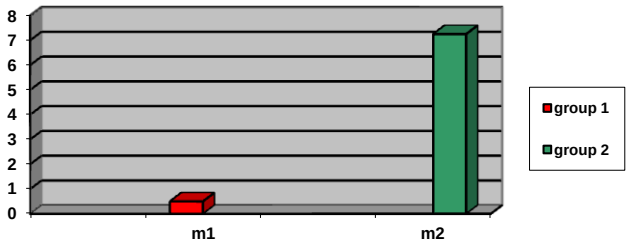

Figure 2. Values of central trend indicators at test level accomplishing a task in school children

As can be seen from the table and the graph, there are statistically significant differences between subjects in terms of the number of tests required to carry out a task, the t value being 16,024 at a significance threshold of p = 0, see Table 3

Table 3.Meaning of differences in levelthe number of attempts at small schools

Attempts	df	t	Sig
Intergroup	**1**	**16,024**	**0,00**
Intragroup	**41**		

It can be stated, based on the data presented in table, that the specific hypothesis Hs1 was confirmed by the results obtained by us.

Hs2: *there are significant differences in school children in the number of mistakes in the task, depending on the level of intelligence.*

Table 4 presents the values of central trend indicators, at the level of mistakes in achieving a task for school children.

Table 4.Values of indicators of central trends in the level of errors in achieving a task in school children

Erors	Average	Std.dev.	N
Group 1	0,02	0,29	22
Group 2	7,38	1,82	21

Where: group 1 = children with mild intellectual disability
group 2 = children with moderate disability

From the table, it is noted that there are significant differences between the two groups of subjects in terms of mistakes committed in carrying out a task, since the value of the test t = 18,450 is significant for a significance threshold p = 0 (see table 5).

Table 5.Meaning of differences in levelthe number of errors in small schoolchildren

Erors	df	t	Sig
Intergroup	**1**	**18,450**	**0,00**
Intragroup	**41**		

The specific Hs2 hypothesis was confirmed by our results.

Hs3:*There are significant differences in ice scratches and errors between mentally disabled children undergoing training and those who have not been subject to it.*

Children of intellectual disability can progress in achieving a task as a result of learning through the game.

Table 6 shows values of central trend indicators at the pretest and posttest groups, and Table 6.11 includes the significance of differences in the price and posttest groups.

Table 6.Values of central trend indicators at the level of pretst and posttest groups

		Average	Std.dev.	N
Intervention Group pretest-posttest	Attempts	7,6 4,5	2,27 0,84	10
Intervention Group pretest-posttest	Erors	7,6 3,6	2,27 0,84	
Control Group pretest-posttest	Attempts	7,2 6,9	1,47 1,59	10
Control Group pretest-posttest	Erors	7,2 6,7	1,47 1,82	

We will try to graphically chart the progress of the training intervention group compared to the non-training control group. This will make it easier to observe the progress made by the intervention group, where the introduction of the didactic games in learning led to a superior improvement in the children included in this group compared to their colleagues, although they had the same degree of intellectual disability. A more illustrative overview of the differences between the two groups in pretest and posttest assessments is shown in Figure 3.

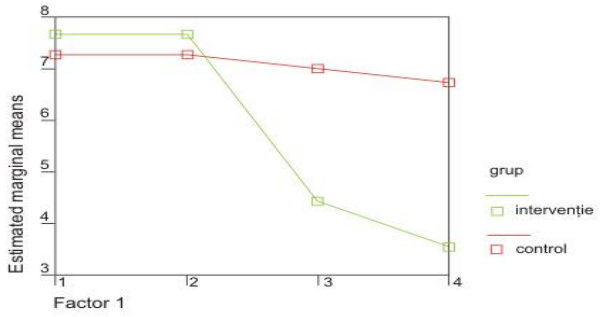

Figure 3. Differences between groups in pretest and post-test.

As can be seen from Table 6, there are significant differences in the pupils in the intervention group compared to those in the pretest - posttest group, the value of the test F (1,18) = 404, 116, significantly at a significance threshold p = 0.

Table 7 shows the significance of group differences in pretest-posttest.

Table 7.Significance of differences in twogroups in pretest and posttest

	df	F	Sig
Intergroup	**1**	**404,116**	**0,00**
Intragroup	**18**		

The specific Hs3 hypothesis formulated by us at the beginning of the research was confirmed by the practical results obtained

Conclusions

The didactic game is a complex form of activity that solves one or more didactic tasks by combining the techniques of accomplishing these tasks with the game element. We use the game to stimulate children to solve a teaching task in a more attractive form, knowing that learning involving the game becomes more enjoyable and refreshing. Essentially, from our point of view, it is that the game creates favorable conditions for practicing skills and abilities in the form of pleasant and attractive activities, in a relaxed, warm and encouraging atmosphere for children with intellectual disabilities.

The sample sstudied consisted of 43 children with intellectual disabilities divided into two groups: children with mild intellectual disabilities (QI between 60 and 69) and children with moderate mental disabilities (QI between 50 and 59). The samples were applied both individually and collectively. The applied tests were as follows: - Raven for determining the level of intelligence, - Testing and errors for problem solving abilities by model.

After the statistical processing of the obtained data, the following aspects were highlighted:

- results from inferential processing of data confess these hypotheses, there are significant differences in the number of attempts and the number of errors in school children in carrying out tasks.
- verification of hypothesis no. 3 highlights the role of the didactic game in learning, the results obtained showing the efficiency of the intervention program, the differences between the intervention group and the control group being significant.

Thus, we can conclude that the intervention program structured on different types of games has a high efficiency, which determines the necessity of introducing some gambling activities that will help children with intellectual disabilities to express themselves more easily in a appropriate framework, from an emotional and educational point of view.

Acknowledgement: We hereby state that the subjects involved in our research were informed about the voluntary character of participation in this research, about the understanding of information and of that fact that withdrawal from research is possible at any time without negative consequences upon the participant. The research complied with all ethical research standards, the research participants/participants` guardians giving their consent to participate in the research.

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EDUCATION IN THE 5G AND THE AI CONTEXT

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Abstract: *Recent research has advanced the knowledge on the impact of motivation and engagement on student performance and retention. In this spectrum, the most relevant factors are the personal and demographic data, general perception about motivation, perception about the university, student behavior, perception about program and perception about classes as well as about teachers. Joining 5G and AI will open new possibilities for eLearning platforms, and will offer unprecedented access and depth to all of the variables in the spectrum. While 5G networks are known for improved device capacity, faster network speed and lower latency the AI networks are capable of offering real time analysis of the dynamic data streams. Data mining algorithms can uncover unseen patterns, unexpected associations, and inadvertencies in the collected data. The speed of the first and the precision of the second, can critically enhance the decision-making processes for more accurate predictions and recommendations in the area of student performance. The unique combination will offer students the option of personalized curriculums, will favor higher engagement rates and further enhance academic success as an economic model*

Keywords: *ai education; 5g education; elearning curriculum design; course recommender; fuzzy association rules; k-means clustering, educational business model;*

1. The status of education

The factual reality is that all of the educational settings function as organizational structures. The present investigation will address the higher education tier, best known as the university educational system. Therefore some of the questions related to technological advancement should also be applied to universities as organizations. Last years' call for papers at the Academy of Management for Organizational Behavior Division, highlighted a few pressing questions related to the digital persona. The technologically induced paradigms seem to posit serious but also formidable opportunities for exploration and insight. The questions that are to be addressed in the 2019-2020 timeframe, are intriguing and exude a high level of relevance:

a. In what industries is digitalization more likely to increase the use of a platform model?

b. Does digitalization facilitate innovation in such industries, or does platformization constrain the scope of potential innovation?

c. Is digitalization more likely to transform organizations in some industries more than others?

d. Are there particular types of organizations better positioned to benefit from digitalization?

e. What is the effect of the use of digital technologies on friendships and informal communication in organizations?

f. How does digital transformation shape reciprocity, empathy and emotional capabilities within the organization?

g. Do digital tools extend or limit individual cognition? Do we observe any effect on cognition and framing at the organizational level?

h. What are the effects of artificial intelligence and digital technologies on creativity, imagination, and intuition?

i. How should organizations overcome resistance in using digital technologies and AI?

j. Which parts of the strategic decision-making process are likely to be outsourced to intelligent machines and what are the likely effects on organizational performance?

k. How will the role of managers change if decision-making is outsourced to machines? [1]

All of these questions are essentially asking an underlying question: How do we align processes with technological advancement and changing market demand? As mass market sectors are increasingly assisted by automated management systems, in order to stay relevant, universities will have to align their vision to the emerging technoculture and produce eligible workforce that will natively integrate with intelligent systems.

The research on the alignment becomes more relevant when connected to the impact of AI infrastructure in contemporary educational designs [2]. On Romanian soil, the alliance between intelligent design and the existing educational infrastructure receives a growing academic interest and support. By focusing on the alignment between curriculum design and market trends, academics signal the systemic benefits of such marriage:

Personalization is the key to offering quality services, and this is what disruptive technologies are offering. Universities have to focus on technologies that are appropriate for their strategy but at the same time to align with key market trends. Students are being more informed and empowered by personal devices that help and assist them in fulfilling their tasks and goals. Anticipating and meeting their needs and expectations suppose automating process and increasing digitization offering in universities. [3]

Probably one of the most entitled institutions to investigate the social impact of the next generation technology is Vodafone. Privately funded research by the telecom cements even more the alignment necessity by finding that:

[...] the future learning model will be an international, immediate, virtual, and interactive environment which enables learners to learn and interact in much different ways that we do today. The new model will be learner-centric, skill-centric, on-demand and personalised. It will improve student development in the areas of critical-thinking and collaborative learning. In order to reach this model embracing mobile technology seems indispensable. Applications such as Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) will play a big role in quality education and understanding-based learning. By combining Tactile Internet with VR and AR the learning experience will go far beyond today's one, bringing new definition to Tele-teaching, Tele-mentoring, virtual university, virtual classroom, virtual team-working, etc. New mobile technology and connected devices will give students the opportunity to learn with minimal intervention from teachers and mostly through exploration, discovery and peer coaching [4].[5]

Living in the age of personalized settings, from smartphones and applications, to television and mobility, the 'personal setting' is the new normal, and educational designs need to adapt and incorporate productively the unfolding techno-reality. While the guardians of the traditional educational model still sift through the difference between inevitable and probable, the argument grows stronger for a technologically shaped future. Or, does technology permit for neutrality?

[5]Smart Education as a service has also been recently introduced by Telekom Romania https://www.telekom.ro/business/smart-education/

In many areas, but most especially in online distance learning milieus, educational institutions should, metaphorically, begin to offer an a la carte menu instead of table d'hote menus. In order to take advantage of this wind of change, the authorities should adjust their practices to keep up with today's societies that also exist in virtual spaces. Especially unorthodox learners who do not have the same learning patterns of prevailing teaching methods need to be taken into account [5].

The convenience of personalized settings is gradually inducing a shift in agents' perception. The digital perspective discretely reshapes the universal paradigm of personal preferences into a set user values, mirroring the shift from subjective perception to that of the entitled user rights. The socioeconomic benefits of harnessing the potential of the digital persona significantly favor the early adopters in terms of institutional competitive advantage.

2. Intelligent instruments and devices

a. Artificial intelligence

Over decades of challenges and transformations, some of the earliest computational systems have evolved in state of the art tools for data processing. During the forties, the primary stages were pioneered by Alan Turing, who came to be known as the father of theoretical computer science and artificial intelligence. The second stage was formulated by the stage of machine learning during the early eighties, progress which paved the ground for today's virtual personal assistants such as Siri, Amazon Alexa and Google Assistant. Beginning with two thousand and ten, deep learning emerged as a breakthrough technique for implementing Machine Learning via neural networks. [6] The applications running these architectures are today's recommendation engines, textual sentiment analysis (etc.) with major exponents such as IBM Watson and Google's DeepMind.

While artificial intelligence features great capabilities in terms off task automation, it is still greatly dependent on human input and functions as an adviser for redundant processes:

Housman (2018), "AI is capable of two things: (1) automating repetitive tasks by predicting outcomes on data that has been labeled by human beings, and (2) enhancing human decision-making by feeding problems to algorithms developed by humans" [...] The definition of the concept is multifaceted, however, the essential feature of AI is that it emulates on the natural processes of human biology: Intelligence is the process of thinking, reasoning, perceiving objective facts, comprehension, judgment and conclusion (Uğur and Kınacı, 2006). Artificial intelligence is the intelligence in non-organic systems that can mimic these features. Basically, it works as multi-probability decision-making structures [7].

b. 5G Wireless Networks

As a communication technology development that has recently been launched, competing arguments surface from the private and the public sector, highlighting both the benefits and the risks featured by the revolutionary design. While the risks associated with the new information transmission architecture are still to be fully comprehended, important industrial sectors such as Defense [8], IoV [9] and IoE as part of

IoT, manifest strong interest in adopting and integrating the 5G protocol:

Currently, network communication mainly uses electromagnetic waves to carry information. Different frequencies of electromagnetic waves lead to various transmission speeds of information, of which the main characteristic is: the higher the frequency, the higher the signal transmission bandwidth is, thus the higher the information transmission rate is [...] the transmission rate of 5G network is 100 times faster than that of 4G, and the response delay of 1ms is 30-50 times shorter than that of 4G. In view of electromagnetic wave frequency band, 5G utilizes high frequency band to solve the problem of resource shortage in low-frequency stage. Moreover, according to the analysis of electromagnetic

wave transmission mode, 5G networks communicates directly among devices, reducing the cost of building base stations. In addition to [...] the 5G network also features high reliability and low power consumption. [10]

3. The emergence of ioe designs

Attempts to integrate 5G networks with eLearning designs begin to emerge, and they find fertile grounds under the larger umbrella of the IoT. Smart architectures begin to evolve in a global race of competing designs. As the smart architectures require expert workforce in the process of implementation, exploitation and maintenance, it is very likely they will acquire high adoption rates unless they evolve as a profitable business models. Current independent efforts to develop competitive theoretical designs of nextgen education include both the 5G Smart Campus and the AI powered recommender engine designs. Strengths and weaknesses are identifiable on each side, and it is only when the higher sum of the anticipated or real benefits that overcomes the sum of perceived or real risks. In the following flipped class scenario, the RFID and the IP CAM in the Perception Layer can function both as redundant and complementary physical class login protocols. While the IP CAM may raise deeper personal data privacy issues than the RFID tag tracking.

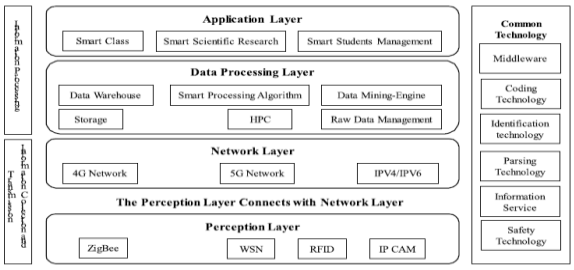

FIGURE 2. Framework model of smart campus IoT. [11]

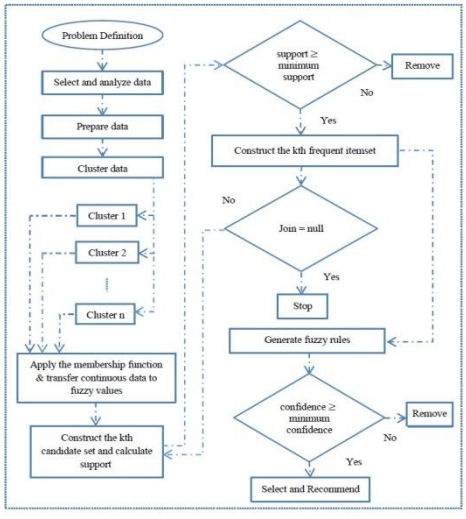

Figure 1. Fuzzy association rule mining model.

As the RFID works on the 4G architecture, the IP CAM when optimized with face detection algorithms works natively with 5G data flows. The complexity of the information collected in the Perception Layer is fed into the Data Mining - Engine and has a conditional impact on the quality of the recommendation. Therefore, the precision performance of both the Smart Student Management and the Smart Scientific Research modules, is directly dependent on the richness of the information fed into the Data Processing Layer. If taken a

step further, the smart architecture can incorporate Face Emotion Recognition technology and can collect the individual and the collective emotional profile of the class and categorize it in different classes of sentiment analysis. While FER requires a 5G, architecture, the 4G version of the procedure can be imported from the social media's model of emotional expression found in text and emoji. It becomes interesting therefore exploring the relevance of the social media model in the forum elearning forum communication design.

4. Discussion and conclusion

The first four questions asked about the impact of platformization (a-d), place education in the fields of those better positioned to benefit from digitalization. The next four questions (e-h) go deeper at the personal level and raise de question regarding the verifiable benefit at the human development level. The question about resistance to AI technologies (i) will be answered by the success or failure of implementing the such designs in viable business models. Regarding the decision making process being outsourced to machines(j-k), at the present the majority of the models function as supervised due diligence designs and do not pose an imminent threat. However, educational programs should not invest in preparing workforce for tasks that are gradually performed better by intelligent designs. Chances are, that all of these questions will be answered by the ultimate economy of scale argument: efficiency.

As smart technologies progressively impact the market verticals and horizontals, the likelihood of a complete alignment in the near future seems inevitable. Education will eventually forego its digital transformation moment under the continuous pressure of market demand and costs. Entrepreneurial universities will adopt performant business models and will offer relevant and competitive products in the educational marketplace. Profitable ventures show favorable associations with Ai and smart designs. Modules such as ToT [12], CSAIL [13], Westlaw Edge [14], ensure fantastic competitive edges in the fields of HR, Radiology and Law. Since highly competitive industries will require equally competitive workforce, it will become the task of the educational field to design and deliver relevant curriculums. The upcoming years will most likely see a redesign of the learning space and will force an entrepreneurial mindset in education. By combining different sets of variables, emerging recommender systems open new and fascinating avenues for personalized educational models:

[...] design a course recommender model that takes the students' characteristics into account to recommend appropriate courses. The model uses clustering to identify the students with similar interests and skills [...] Recommender systems can guide users on a specific path. They may be used to choose suitable alternatives in a large space of options, thus reducing information overload [5]. A course recommender system is a type of recommender system able to suggest the best combination of courses to students and help them plan their educational schedules. Moreover, the system supports students in choosing appropriate courses and provides them with a basic knowledge of past student experiences [6] [...] Recommender systems work with three types of data: (1) social, (2) individual, and (3) content [8]. In order to take advantage of the available information, recommenders employ a number of filtering methods including collaborative, demographic, content-based, and hybrid [9] [...] In demographic filtering, a number of demographic variables such as age, gender, and other individual features are employed [10]. Content-based filtering takes advantage of the previously collected information regarding the user behavior and preferences in the system [11]. Finally, in collaborative filtering, the information and opinions provided by other users are used to make recommendations to the new users [12]. Simultaneous application of these filtering methods is known as hybrid filtering [13] [...] Currently, collaborative filtering, content-based filtering, and data mining techniques are considered as popular and

fundamental methods for constructing recommender systems. Typically, predictive methods in recommender systems utilize classification, whereas descriptive methods rely on the clustering and association rules more than the other methods [7]. [15]

The new architectures are capable of collecting and aggregating ecosystemic data in a way that extracts meaning and provides value at competitive edge levels. Therefore, the bespoke educational curriculums will stay relevant to motivation and engagement and will positively alter the levels of student performance and retention. AI's classification and clustering algorithms enhanced by the high speed processing of 5G networks, will facilitate the rapid and precise value extraction and feedback from the social, content and demographic data. Personalized learning models catering to personal innate abilities and native predispositions, will positively alter the general perception about motivation, perception about the program, perception about classes and teachers and most importantly the perception about the university. Personalized curriculums will stimulate student behavior in ways that are relevant to both his or hers real and digital personas and will fuel higher engagement rates. 5G will also favor innovative learning designs that will engage attention and curiosity at unprecedented level. While AR devices are going to impact educational designs in the long run, the VR instruments are successfully marketed for class formats [16]. The large scale adoption of such paradigms will eventually create demand of qualified instructional designers and will reinforce the economic design behind the workflow of personalized education. In turn, the competitive edge offered by personalized education programs will lead to higher engagement rates financing the development of intelligent course designs. The redefinition of the learning space will also alter the configuration of the educational continuum. Therefore, the entrance and potential adoption of the new models will rewrite the existing status quo.

Face to Face Classes	Flipped Classes: 2G, 3G, 4G	Flipped / Exclusive eLearning Classes: AI and 5G
Old School System	Traditional School System	Recommender / Personalized Learning System

The inception of competing educational recommender systems mark the beginning of personalized learning models, and carry the potential of promoting academic success as an economic model. Although characterized by elementary transhumanist features, the upcoming events will be new opportunities in the saga of continuously transcending our limits through smart learning.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEALTH AND TRUST AS INDIVIDUAL VALUES

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Abstract:*The theory of basic human values measures universal values that are recognized throughout all major cultures. Schwartz's theory has refined the set of 19 basic individual values that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or group, further describing the dynamic relationships among them. The present study presents practical evidence of the dynamics between individual values. We have developed an online questionnaire of 46 items with response options on a Lickert scale from 1 to 6, where 1 represents less important and 6 represent very important. 220 young people from Western Romania voluntarily responded. By testing the hypothesis assuming the dynamic relationship between the two values through multiple regression analysis, the results demonstrate that in Model 1, which involves a linear relationship, health explains 12% of the variance in trust with a F =161,215 significant at p <.01. In Model 2, which involves a curvilinear relationship, health explains 13% of the variance in trust with a F = 35,336 significant at p <.01. The incremental prediction capacity of 1% added by including the squared trust variable accounts for the band in the regression line, indicating the existence of a curvilinear relationship between trust and health. This curvilinear relationship demonstrates that extreme aspects, extremely low and extremely high levels of trust, significantly influence the health value in a negative way. Normal levels of trust trigger a high level of prioritization of health value. The implications of this type of relationship are discussed in explaining the value phenomenon at individual level. The study shows limits due to the selected sample, focusing exclusively on young people with higher education from the Western region of Romania. This sample was the target group of "The National Identity of Romanian Youth" project which funded this research.*

Key words:*values theory; health; trust; dynamic relationship;*

1. Introduction

Values are latent, hidden, unobservable, and impossible to directly measure characteristics. They exist somewhere within the human being, manifested by different attitudes, depending on their degree of generality. The problem of values measurement becomes the problem of identification behaviors and attitudes, relevant to the sphere of influence of each value and thus measuring these attitudes and behaviors, complicated by the generality level of the inclusion of each value.The theory of basic human values measures universal values that are recognized throughout all major cultures. Schwartz's theory has refined the set of 19 basic individual values that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or group, further describing the dynamic relationships among them.

Values have a strong individual dimension, meaning personal values, since people are very different in the way they perceive and define their personal priorities. Similarly, communities and the proximity social environment influence and contribute in a crucial way the individual's value system (Schwartz, 1992, 1994, 2006). Values are organized on several levels: general human values, values specific to a sociopolitical system, values that characterize a certain culture or ethnicity, values of large and average social groups, micro-

group values (family) and individual values (Ilut, 2004). Values also influence both the individual in the choices they make from a relational and professional perspective (Dughi, Bran & Ignat, 2016), and also morally according to them adhering to a certain social, professional and cultural level at different stages of development (Ignat, S., 2017).

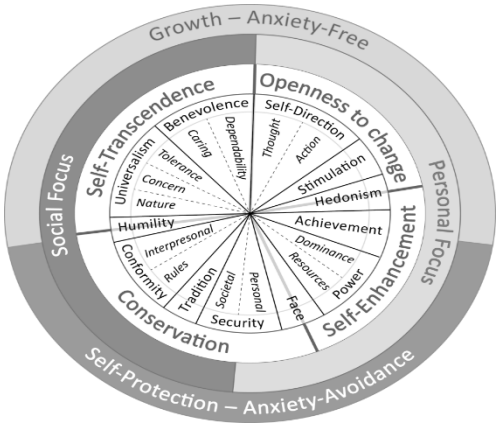


Figure 1 - Circular motivational continuum of 19 values in the refined value theory (from Cieciuch, et al., 2014)

As Schwartz states (Figure 1), openness to change and self-enhancement both focus on the personal side of life, while conservation and self-transcendence focus the interests of others and one's relation to society. Both conservation and self-enhancement express anxiety-driven motivations, to secure oneself against loss, gain power to overcome threats, maintain the current order, and so on. On the other hand, openness to change and self-transcendence both express anxiety-free motivations of growth and expansion.

1. Research methodology

The national project *Identitatea Nationala a Tinerilor Romani*, was developed by our research team with the purpose of deeper understanding the dynamics of national identity aspects and personal values among youth from the West side of Romania. One of the first research questions was the identification of the existent relationship between trust and health, the first being conceptualized as benevolence included in the self-transcendence set of values and the second as security, included in the conservation type values, the first being oriented towards social focus and the second towards personal focus, according to Schwartz (2011). In this regard, we have designed an online questionnaire aiming to gather descriptive data, general perceptions about national identity and values.

Focusing on Schwartz's three axes conservatism / autonomy, hierarchy / egalitarianism and mastery / harmony, we have developed a 46 items questionnaire including the following values: self-determination (items 1, 2, 3), stimulation (items 5, 6, 7), hedonism (8, 9, 10), achievement (12, 13, 14), power (16, 17, 18), security (20, 21, 22), conformity (23, 24, 25), tradition (27, 28, 29), benevolence (30, 31,32), universalism (33, 34), humor (36, 37, 38), trust (40, 41, 42), health (44, 45, 46) and a dissimulation scale (items 4, 11, 15, 19, 26, 35, 39, 43). We have asked respondents to score on a Likert scale from 1 to 6 the importance of that value, where 1 means less important and 6 very important. A total of 220 responses were gathered between November and December 2018, by sharing them on social media groups of youth, for freely and voluntarily answering.

We have calculated the internal consistency of the 46 items scale of values, and we have obtained an alpha coefficient of .839, suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency, a reliability coefficient of .70 or higher is considered acceptable in most social science research situations.

We have then investigated the dimensionality of the scale, using the Principal Component Analysis. The Eigen value for the first factor is twice larger than the Eigen value for the next factor (10.278 versus 5.312). Additionally, the first factor accounts for 71% of the total variance, suggesting that the scale items are unidimensional.

Our hypothesis states that research variables trust and health are in a curvilinear relationship. In order to test our curvilinear hypothesis, we have used SPSS' multiple linear regression analysis, based on multiple regression analysis for curvilinear effects, where health was the dependent variable and the independent variable trust.

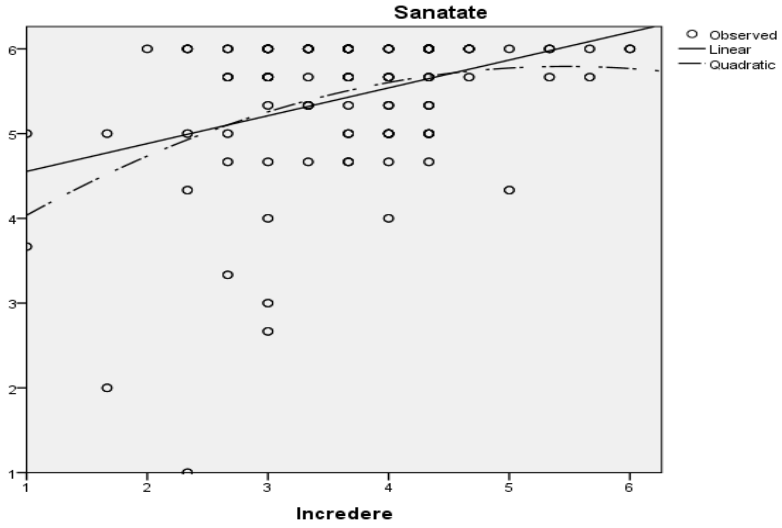
The study was conducted on a random sample of 220 students from the West side of Romania, of both sexes, 17.3% males and 82.74% females, from both rural 42.7% and urban 57.3% environments, with 50% of participants having high school level of education, 35.5% bachelor and 14.5% master degree.

2. Results

In order to test our hypothesis that states that between health and trust, the first being conceptualized as benevolence included in the self-transcendence set of values and the second as security, included in the conservation type values, there is a curvilinear relationship, we have used a confirmatory factor analysis, based on multiple regression analysis for curvilinear effects. We describe a curvilinear relationship as a relationship between two or more variables which can be graphically depicted by anything other than a straight line. A particular case of curvilinear relationships is the situation where two variables grow together until they reach a certain point (positive relationship) and then one of them increases while the other decreases (negative relationship) or vice-versa, the graphically representation of the function being an U or an inverted U shape.

This relationship can be easily identified graphically by a Scatterplot, choosing additional two representations of the regression line: Linear and Quadratic model, for depicting curvilinear effects. The Scatterplot diagram presented in Figure 2 indicates the curvilinear relationship between trust on the horizontal axis and the health, represented on the vertical axis. The sample consists of 220 youth from Romania.

Figure 2 - *Linear and quadratic curve estimation of health (sanatate) and trust (incredere)*



There is a very high correlation between trust (m=3.66, SD=0.93) and health (m=5.43, SD=0.874) of r=.353 significant at a p<.01, which methodologically allows us to proceed with multiple linear regression analysis (Balas-Timar, 2014).

In order to test the curvilinear relationship, the present study proposes a hierarchical multiple regression analysis, the dependent variable being health, and the independent variable in step 1 trust, and in step 2 trust and squared trust.

Table 1 presents the fitting of the two models, linear – Model 1 and curvilinear/ quadratic – Model 2. As we can see in Model 1 the model that supposes linear relationship, health accounts for 12% of the variance in health with an *F*=30.976 significant at a p<.01. In Model 2, the model that supposes curvilinear relationship, health accounts for 13% of the variance in health with an *F*=5.010 significant at a *p*<.01.

Table 1. *The relationship between health and trust as personal values, model summary, ANOVA and coefficients*

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.353[a]	.124	.120	.819	.124	30.976	1	218	.000
2	.380[b]	.144	.136	.812	.020	5.010	1	217	.026
a. Predictors: (Constant), Incredere									
b. Predictors: (Constant), Incredere, sqrt_incredere									

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	20.798	1	20.798	30.976	.000[b]
	Residual	146.371	218	.671		
	Total	167.170	219			
2	Regression	24.101	2	12.051	18.278	.000[c]
	Residual	143.068	217	.659		
	Total	167.170	219			
a. Dependent Variable: Sanatate						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Incredere						
c. Predictors: (Constant), Incredere, sqrt_incredere						

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.225	.223		18.958	.000
	Incredere	.329	.059	.353	5.566	.000
2	(Constant)	3.162	.524		6.038	.000
	Incredere	.962	.289	1.033	3.329	.001
	sqrt_incredere	-.088	.039	-.694	-2.238	.026
a. Dependent Variable: Sanatate						

All standardized coefficients of Beta (β= .353; β= 1.033 and β=-.694) are significant at *p*<.05 which gives a high consistency to our both models. Changing Beta coefficient's sign from + to - means that the effect is growing in the opposite direction, which demonstrates that the relationship between the two variables: health and trust is curvilinear. The additional

incremental predictive capacity of 1 percent, added by including the squared trust variable which is accounting for the band in the regression line, indicates that there is a curvilinear relationship between health and trust.

This curvilinear relationship demonstrates that extreme aspects, extremely reduced and extremely high levels of trust, significantly influences the health, in a negative way. Normal levels of trust triggers a high level of health value prioritization. Thus a too trustfulness oriented person and a low trustfulness oriented person will envisage a low level of health value prioritization, compared to a person with normal trust value prioritization that is associated with a high level of health value prioritization.

3. Conclusions and implications

The theory of basic human values measures universal values that are recognized throughout all major cultures. Schwartz's theory has refined the set of 19 basic individual values that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or group, further describing the dynamic relationships among them. The present study presents practical evidence of the dynamics between individual values, the dynamics theorized by Schwartz in 2012. Following the development of an online questionnaire made up of 46 items with response options on a Lickert scale from 1 to 6, where 1 represents less important and 6 represent very important, 220 young people from Western Romania voluntarily responded.

This study practically shows that two of Schwartz’s ten basic values are in a dynamical relationship. Basic values that are adjacent in the circle have overlapping motivational goals and are mutually supporting, whereas basic values on opposite sides of the circle have competing goals and are mutually opposed. The circle has a 2-dimensional opponent structure. One dimension contrasts basic values of self-enhancement (achievement and power) with basic values of self-transcendence (universalism and benevolence). The other contrasts basic values of openness to change (self-direction and stimulation) with basic values of conservation (conformity, tradition, and security), with hedonism being positively associated with both self-enhancement and openness to change.

The present curvilinear relationship demonstrates that extreme aspects, extremely low and extremely high levels of trust, significantly influence the health value in a negative way. Normal levels of trust trigger a high level of prioritization of health value.

The implication of this finding brings evidence for values interclass dynamic relations. As the present study shows, between health and trust, the first being conceptualized as benevolence included in the self-transcendence set of values and the second as security, included in the conservation type values, there is a dynamic relationship.

The study shows limits due to the selected sample, focusing exclusively on young people with higher education from the Western region of Romania. This sample was the target group of "The National Identity of Romanian Youth" project which funded this research.

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PRACTICAL WAYS FOR PREPARING CHILDREN FOR OPTIMAL ADAPTATION TO SCHOOL ACTIVITY

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Abstract: *The preparatory class has the role of facilitating the child's adaptation to the new conditions and requirements and facilitating its good integration into the classroom and the school and the education process. Difficulties in adapting and integrating may lead over time to an inadequate attitude towards school, considering it to be either too lenient or too severe, and then other serious consequences occur: absenteeism and school dropout. In this regard, we intend to highlight the most frequent and important adaptation difficulties faced by teachers for primary education, as well as to find new ways to facilitate the children's transition from the kindergarten environment to the school environment.*

Keywords: *adaptation; preparatory class; difficulties.*

Introduction

Upon entering the school, the child acquires a new sense of belonging: belonging to a well-defined group, the school, often very different to other similar groups by uniform or other distinct signs specific to each school. The basic activity of the child changes: if during the pre-school period the main activity was playing, during the school period the main activity becomes learning. In addition, this type of activity allows immediate rewarding of the child's activity and the performances obtained through ratings and grades. It also develops the spirit of competitiveness, doing better than others, getting better grades, etc. For most children this process takes place naturally without major problems of adapting to the new program, new location, new colleagues or new teachers. But the achievement of the new status may also be accompanied by certain adaptation problems which, if observed and detected in time, can be diminished and even eliminated. The kindergarten schedule was easier - now they have a much more rigorous program. Directed and organized activities took place for a shorter period of time (about 20 minutes or half an hour) now they are being extended to 45-50 minutes, which requires the child to maintain the same position or to pay attention through the entire duration of the activity. In order for all these new aspects not to disturb the good integration of the new pupil into the school, the ability to adapt must be increased. The more a child is adaptable to new situations, the easier it will be to successfully cope with a new environment and to integrate quickly and smoothly.

The theoretical framework

In order to be fit to enter school, the child is firstly assessed and evaluated from the point of view of physical development: it must have a certain weight, a certain height, it must have a certain degree of development of general and fine motricity, as well and good coordination of movements. We have not thought of making a review of the physical development aspects of children, but of putting more emphasis on mental and social development. Psycho-pedagogical diagnosis attempts to highlight the level of educational maturity of the child, a level that is made up of two sides: intellectual maturity and social

maturity (Maciuc, 2016; Vrasmas, 2014).

One of the conditions related to the psychic field is the degree of educational maturity, which is considered as the child's intellectual development level at which school activity can fully contribute to its further development as a well-defined personality (Cristea, 2016). Researchers in this field (Cristea 2009, Gherguţ, 2011, Munteanu, 2009) consider that this maturity is reached around the age of 6-7 years, which is why this age was chosen as the age of school admission.

It should not be forgotten that this level of intellectual maturity is influenced, in addition to the genetic potential, by the factors of the socio-cultural environment in which the child lives and develops. The family, which plays a primal role in child development, can ease, facilitate, and instigate this development in those cases where parents are mindful about the child, carry out activities together, and respond to all of the child's questions (Cerghit et al., 2001). On the contrary, there are families that can negatively influence this level of development because they do not care much for children, do not engage in any kind of common activities, and generally do not answer the questions they raise.

Children accumulate the knowledge through the answers and explanations they receive on the questions they ask, and the parents' refusal to communicate with the child can lead not only to a baggage of poorer knowledge, lesser developed language, but also to the child's interiorization and retreat in an imaginary world where he/she feels safe (Bontaş, 2008; Stan, 2016, Dughi, 2018). These issues will greatly harm his/her subsequent integration into school activity because knowledge and language are reduced compared to that of other children, and isolation tendencies do not help him/her build friends and adapt to the classroom.

Social maturity - has a much broader sphere, and in its assessment it is necessary to carefully observe the child in the environment in which he/she carries out his basic activity (Stan, 2016, Macavei, 2001, Bălaş-Timar, 2017). In our case the basic activity is the game, so the observation will be done in the kindergarten environment. The longitudinal observation of the child during the kindergarten, with the help of the psycho-pedagogical and development sheets, will highlight whether the level of development of the child in this direction is within normal limits or deviates from them (Roman, 2018, Niţulescu, 2013). We are first and foremost concerned with the child's ability to establish collective relationships with other children, to establish relationships with authority (which in our case is the pre-school teacher), team work, to adhere to the rules of the group set by mutual agreement at the beginning of the year, etc. All these aspects can provide us with useful information about the child's social adaptability, i.e. his ability to create new relationships, to observe new rules, to relate to other people in relation to authority. In a school of diversity, education must emphasize not only the sharing of new models of socialization and perception of one's own, but also the acceptance of different ways of life, situations, views, etc. (Ignat, 2017)

Hypothesis and objectives

The research has been one of a qualitative type and has started from the following assumptions:

H1:*the use of specific methods in the activities of the group of preschool children leads to an enrichment of the language and an improvement of the communicational capacity*

H2: *enriching language leads to better adaptation of the pre-school children in the school environment*

Following the formulation of the hypothesis, the following objectives emerged:

- the choice of methods of assessing the level of language development for pre-school children
- selecting the specific methods that will be used to improve the adaptability of preschool

children to the school environment
- identifying the most frequent difficulties in adapting preschool children to school
- determining the sample on which the actual research will be carried out.

A group of 17 children from the senior kindergarten year was studied.

Methods used

a) methods for evaluating the level of language. Several tests were used for different aspects of the language for which points were awarded according to the number of items correctly solved. *A short answer test* was used which consisted in adding a word to a sentence in order to make sense. The *multiple choice trial* - which consists of counting the words in a sentence; children had to draw a line for each word in the sentence. *The association test* - in which children were given multiple pictures of different stories, and they had to unite with a line the images that were part of the same story. *The filling test* - Children were read a text from a known story that lacked some of the words and they had to say the words that filled the story. Language evaluation trials were used to test the first hypothesis, that the methods used by us lead to the development of language and were applied in the initial testing

b)methods used for language development. For the development of the pre-school children's language, kindergarten-specific methods were used, especially the didactic game: dramatization games, correct pronunciation, story-telling, or image-based games were adapted to the learning units of the second semester. In addition to those, for the development of the other skills needed for a good school integration, other types of games involving teamwork or roles-play (shop, school, etc.) were organized. We also organized a contest *Who knows wins* to stimulate children's team spirit and competitiveness.

c) *methods used to collect data in the pre-experimental phase*. A Likert scale was built for a number of 7 adaptation difficulties, then asking the 10 teachers with whom we collaborated to give a score of 1 to 5 according to the frequency of these difficulties: 1 = very rare, 2 = rare, 3 = medium, 4 = often, 5 = very often.

Results and discussions

A number of 10 teachers from the preparatory class were asked to assess on a Likert scale the frequency of children's difficulty in adapting to the school environment. The scale was the following (table no.1):

Tabel nr. 1

Scala Likert utilizată pentru colectarea datelor

	Dificultăţi	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
a	does not sit at the desk					
b	speaks over others					
c	does not pay attention to the class					
d	does not get along with colleagues					
e	has speech difficulties					
f	does not perform the required tasks					
g	speaks naughty					

The figure below shows that the most common difficulty is that almost all children talk to each other and do not know how to wait their turn. This may be due either to the fact that they are afraid of forgetting what they have in mind and want to respond immediately, or

they want to be the one to answer all questions, in order to draw the teacher's attention and his favorable appreciation.

In the second place as a difficulty is the inability of children to keep their place in the chair or in the desk for a longer time. They always get up, walk through the classroom, or go to other colleagues to see what they do or talk to them. Let's not forget that in the kindergarten, siting in place for a longer time is not required, the children can sit on the carpet, and it is not a problem to walk through the classroom or to interact with the others. At school, however, the discipline rules are different and children have difficulty understanding and respecting them at first.

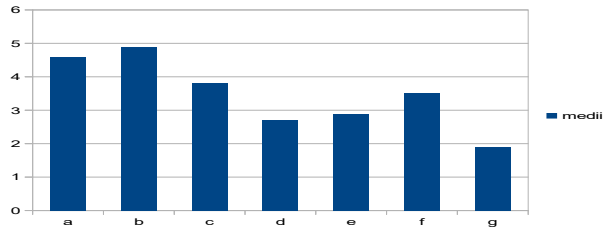

Figura 1. The results obtained after filling the Likert scale
by the teachers of the preparatory classes

In third place we have the distraction during classes. Many children cannot pay attention during the whole class, even if classes are only 45 minutes long. They cannot concentrate for more than 15-20 minutes, and then they are bored of always discussing the same theme and looking for something else to attract them. That is why the activity in the preparatory class must take into account the psychic possibilities of the children, but also the attractiveness with which the material is presented. The child can keep his attention awake for a long time if he is always presented with something new, something interesting, something he has never seen before.

In the middle, to our surprise, it was the fact that they did not fulfill the required tasks. We say to our surprise, because some kind of tasks are required even in the kindergarten, so children should be accustomed to this procedure and be able to execute it. We can explain this, however, by dealing with children who have rarely attended the kindergarten, or with children who have difficulties in completing their tasks at the level of the kindergarten. Spoiled children who are allowed to do anything and who do not perform any kind of task at home within the family will have more difficulty doing something when they are asked because they are not accustomed to it.

In the fifth place we found the difficulty of speaking. Unfortunately, even at this age there are children who have various speech difficulties and who have not been taken to a speech therapist in time when the child was in the kindergarten. It is also the fault of the parents who either consider their child perfect or are unwilling to accept that their son or daughter would need a speech therapist because they are neither ill nor with intellectual disabilities. It is a misguided opinion that still persists in our society and deprives the child of the help of a specialist in that field. But if at the age of the kindergarten these difficulties still seem "cute", at the school age they can be an impediment to the integration of the child into the classroom. The other children may laugh at him and may joke about the speech difficulties he/she has, which may cause inferiority complexes to the child in question.

The 6th place is taken by the difficulties resulting from the fact that he/she does not get along with their colleagues. This is easy to understand, because not all of their current colleagues were with them in kindergarten, so they represent new people with whom they need to establish new contacts and with whom they have to get used. Even if they were

kindergarten colleagues, there may be misunderstandings among the children, in the desire to faster attract the teacher's attention or the desire to compete, to be among the first in the classroom.

Finally, in the last place we find the naughty talk, which is a gratifying fact and demonstrates that the kindergarten has managed to teach children how to control their vocabulary and how to express themselves in their relationships with others. Even if some children hear at home some naughty words, they have been taught in kindergarten their negative social significance and do not use them in their relationships with colleagues.

Comparative assessment initial-final testing

To further demonstrate the validation of our hypothesis in practice, we will present the following comparative assessment of both the initial and the final tests.

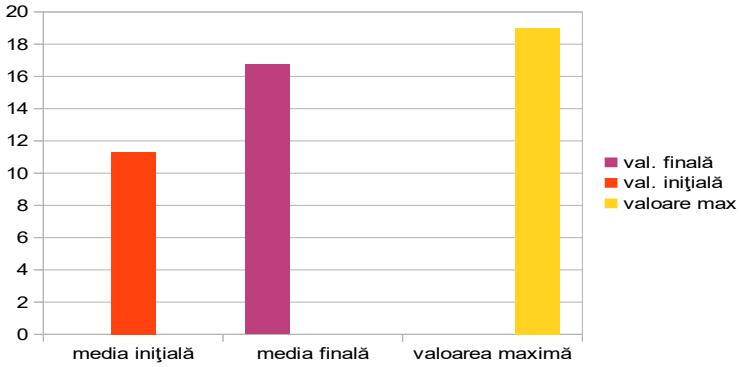

Figura 2. Total average and maximum value compared to initial and final evaluation

We note that if at the initial assessment the values were close to half the maximum value, slightly above the average of 11.32, at the final assessment we obtained values closest to the maximum value i.e. an average of 16.74 compared to the maximum value 19. This shows that in the final testing, improvements were made in all the test used for the assessment of children and that these improvements are largely due to the methods used during the second semester of our work in the group.

Appropriate choice of the didactic games and their selection according to the specific objective pursued is essential in achieving the desired results in the training and education of children. We also believe that the frequency with which these games are repeated over the course of a week is also important in order to develop the right skills to learn and assimilate knowledge. Forming these skills in a correct, error-free way will be essential in adapting the child to the learning activity that takes place in the primary school.

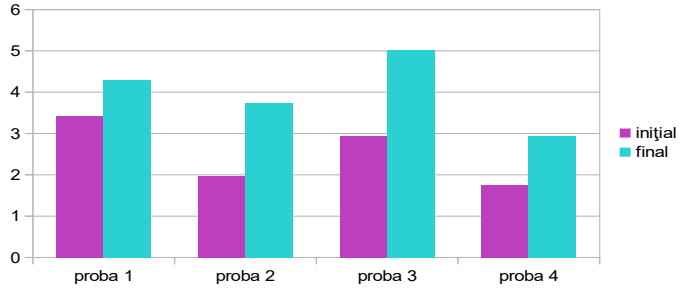

Figura 3. Comparative averages obtained by our group in the four tests used in the initial and final evaluation

For the short-answer task, the average of the group increases from 3.42 in the initial

test to 4.29 in the final test. The difference is statistically significant at a significance threshold of p <.02. Children have, through the use of didactic games, made it easier to establish links between objects, phenomena or animals and their characteristics. In addition, they have deepened the knowledge of these features and fixed them better so that when a response of this kind is required it can be promptly provided.

In the multiple-response test, the averages increase from the initial to the final evaluation from 1.98 to 3.74, also statistically significant at a significance threshold of p <.01. Children have acquired dexterity in mentally counting the number of words in sentences, even if sometimes they also use help with their fingers to make sure the countdown is correct. Being accustomed to sentences of varying lengths, children are able to respond faster and more accurately because of the exercise they have in this direction. We have found that up to six to seven word sentences, the counting is quite easy and the precision is good. The association test also records an average increase from 2.94 in the initial test, to 5.01 in the final test. This increase tells us that children have gradually become more attentive to reading, have focus on the elements of the story, and no longer confuse the characters and the stories they come from. As the maximum value for this sample can be 6, we consider it a significant breakthrough by children whose performance is close to the maximum. And here also the differences between the two averages are statistically significant at a significance threshold of p <.01.

Finally, in the last task, the filling test, the scores are considerably better, 1.76 on the first test, and 2.94 on the second, when the maximum value is 3. This demonstrates once again what we said in the previous paragraph, namely that the members of our test group managed to focus on the story and to better retain the essentials of that story. By gaining a better knowledge of the text, it is much easier to fill in the missing words when it is presented to you again. The attractiveness of the proposed didactic games for better understanding of the story has yielded the expected results, with children achieving performance at this test that is close to the maximum. Here too, the difference between the two tests is statistically significant at a threshold of p <.01. As it is clear from the previous text, all differences between averages were statistically significant at a significance threshold of p <.01 (see figure 3.13).

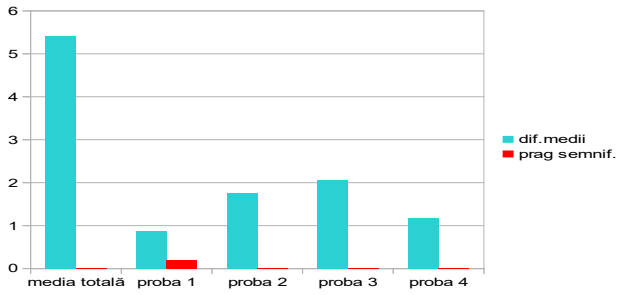

Figura 4. The significance of the difference between the averages of the two evaluations

The comparative results between the first and the second assessment are clear evidence of the effectiveness of the methods used by us and the enrichment of the children's language in the research group. This demonstrates that our first hypothesis has been validated in practice by the results obtained by the children in the two evaluations.

Assessment of adaptation difficulties

To test the second hypotheses that *enriching language leads to a better adaptation of preschool child to the school environment*, it was necessary to expect that the subjects in our test group to enter the school environment and to let pass two months after the beginning of

the school semester so that teachers in the primary education had the time to identify any difficulties in adapting to the school environment.

Most of the children in this study have enrolled in the preparatory class of the school in which the kindergarten also functions. This made it easier for us to keep track of their progress during the first part of the semester and to keep in touch with the teacher who guided them. We asked the primary school teacher to make an assessment on the Likert ladder mentioned at the beginning of our research, on the main difficulties of adaptation that have occurred and the frequency of their occurrence. From the data analysis, it can be noticed that only three of the difficulties still arise with the children who were included in the research, namely: they do not sit at the desk, they speak over others and they are not paying attention to the class.

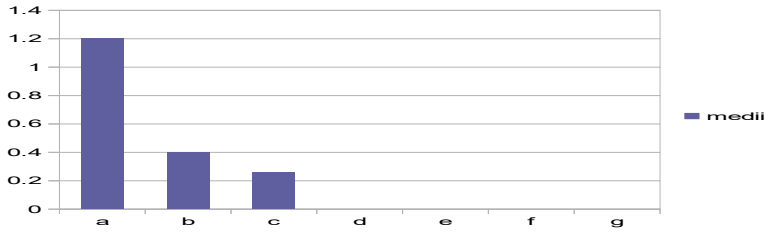

Figura 5. The results obtained for our test group after filling the Likert scale by the primary school teacher

There is still as a problem of adaptation the fact that the new students fail to stay in their place in the desk. It is the difficulty that occurs with the highest average of 1.20 compared to the others. However, its frequency of manifestation is low. We must not forget that at kindergarten children are encouraged to have initiative, to move, to interact with others. For them, going to the colleague's bench to talk to him, or going to the window to look how it's raining is not a violation of discipline. That's how they did before and they got used to in the kindergarten for three years, and there, that did not represent a violation of a rule. However, the exercises made through the didactic game, and especially the school-play, led to a significant reduction of these manifestations compared to what did the teachers pointed out in the pre-experimental stage.

A second problem in terms of size and frequency is that it they tend to speak over other children during classes. It's hard and we assume it’s difficult for children to understand why some things were good up to a point and suddenly they are not. This is what happens with such rules. In kindergarten, it is good to interact and talk to other children and even encourage them to express themselves freely, to expose and support their ideas, and then in primary school this is no longer considered right, but is considered a violation of new rules. Switching from kindergarten to school should focus not only on the knowledge and skills of children, but also on the rules that were right before and are no longer so. Children need to understand why these rules are no longer right and why they have to adopt a different behavior than they had before.

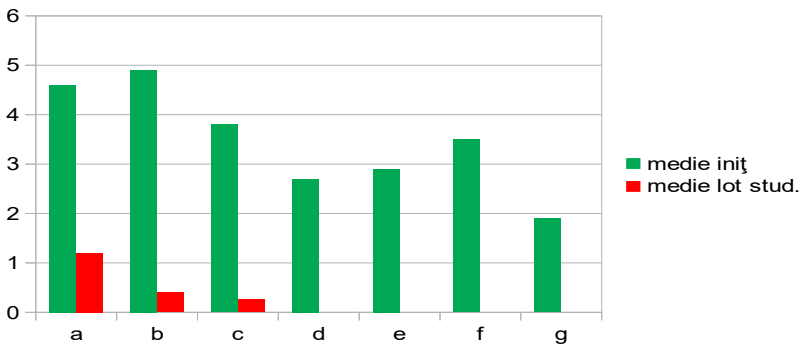

Figura 6. The comparative situation between values and frequencies teachers found in the pre-experimental stage and what was achieved with the children in our group

The desire to affirm themselves, which we have already mentioned in the analysis of the table and the pre-experimental graph, remains present in the children, which in this way attempts to self-indulge and gain a better position in the class hierarchy. Being at the beginning of the road, they do not understand that this hierarchy builds gradually on the basis of acquired knowledge, and not suddenly, based on how quickly you respond. There are many children in the primary school who raise their hands and shake it willing to answer, but when asked they do not know what to say or give the wrong answers. It can also be interpreted by the sense of the flock-spirit, to lift the hand in order to show that they also know the answer, simply because the others raise it. This type of reaction and influence of the others is kept throughout the primary school, but disappears once the children go through the gymnasium.

There is also in the last place in terms of value and frequency, the fact that they are not paying attention in class. Here, we believe, other factors intervene not only those who are strictly bound to inattentiveness and thus to indiscipline. As is well known, child development is not uniform, each child develops in its own style. In this sense, one can behave for a longer period of time, another can pay more attention to what he/she is told, and others cannot. We do not consider those as serious problems that should lead to categorize them as adaptation difficulties. We believe that there are developmental variations specific to children, and that we should wait for one year and then, if these problems persist, they should be included in a group with adaptation difficulties. The pace of children is different, a margin of about 6 months is acceptable at this age.

There are no longer signs of: misunderstandings with colleagues, failure to do the required tasks, speech problems and nasty talk as adaptation difficulties.

The exercises performed and the way of presenting the collegiate relationships increased the tolerance of children towards colleagues and thus significantly reduced the problems of not getting along between them. They have come to understand that every human, and therefore every child, is different, that they must be accepted as they are and that conflicts should not be reached if two people are different. We have put much emphasis on the fact that the opinions of others have to be respected if they want their own opinions to be respected. It has also been a great deal of work to learn to understand some differences between the socio-economic background and the awareness of the fact that a child who comes from a poorer environment does not necessarily mean that it is bad and should not be treated as such. This has led to the creation of a more empathetic attitude towards others and of understanding, of course, of the differences that may occur irrespective of the children's desire.

An important role in preparing the children in our group for the school was taken by the exercises which focused on the prompt and correct fulfillment of the required tasks. The children understood that the tasks of a game or an activity proposed by the educator must be fulfilled as requested and there is a need to the correctness and promptness of their fulfillment. This attitude was later transferred to the tasks that were required in the school environment. They reacted more promptly to their realization and endeavored to fulfill them as accurately as possible. It is very important that the tasks we ask for children are expressed in a clear and concise language so as to eliminate any factor that could lead to their misunderstanding and thus, to their failure.

Speech problems were not an adaptation difficulty for our group and this, we believe, was possible for two reasons. On the one hand, the real difficulty of pronouncing or speech defects could be corrected in time with the help of a specialist in the field, that is, a speech therapist. Our kindergarten benefits from the services of a speech therapist who deals with

early detection and correction of speech defects. We also had the full cooperation from the parents who accepted the speech therapy sessions, especially after explaining to them what negative effects these defects could have in the subsequent evolution of their child. In this way, due to proper cooperation between parents and specialists, the resulting speech defects could be remedied in a timely manner and the children did not suffer from them. On the other hand, weekly exercises of correct pronunciation have also played an important role in assimilating the correct pronunciation by the children and they made significant progress in this direction.

The naughty talk, the last of the issues that we analyze from the list made up by the teachers teaching primary school in the pre-experimental stage, was not reported as an adapting difficulty in to the children of our group. The games we used did not only aim at enhancing pronunciation and enriching language, but also learning and adopting correct conduct rules in dealing with others. Children have realized that talking badly with others is not a sign of power or wit, but instead a sign that you do not know how to behave in society. As a result of the exercises, which focused on civilized behavior in various situations, they came to give up this language and adopt a language appropriate to the game situation. In addition, the other children began to make observations and corrections of the nasty language used, so the feed-back was double: from the educator and from the children. Of course, it is difficult for the child to hear a colorful language at home and not to adopt some terms in the language used by him in kindergarten. But gradually over the semester we found a significant improvement in the quality of the content of the language and the gradual renunciation of inappropriate expressions.

The results presented by us and the comments made on them show that the second hypothesis formulated at the beginning of the research was also validated in practice: the development of language determines a better adaptation of children to the school environment.

Conclusions

In order to avoid the difficulties of adaptation, which later lead to a negative attitude towards school (absenteeism, school abandonment), the kindergarten has the role of making it possible for this adaptation to a new environment to be done as smoothly as possible and in a more natural fashion. Children have to come to school, to consider the school a place where they can learn a lot of new things and can do all sorts of exciting activities. They do not have to come to school from obligation, nor should they feel stressed by their collegues' attitude or the too many tasks they have to fulfill. The work has started from this idea, to find new ways to facilitate the transition of children from the kindergarten environment to the school environment and, moreover, to make it smooth and natural, without involving an emotional trauma for children.

The study confirms that it is necessary for the kindergarten to be actively involved in the development of children's language, their ability to communicate ideas, feelings, opinions. This development will be seen during the preparatory class, when the difficulties of adapting children to the new environment represented by the school and its requirements will almost completely disappear. Consequently, it will also improve the view the children take on school and its activities, and therefore their attitudes towards school and learning.

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VALORISING THE ACTIVE METHODS IN THE STUDY OF PEDAGOGICAL SUBJECTS

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Abstract: *The option for the activating didactic methodology is determined by the real need of the student's involvement in the learning process. In the context of teaching for learning, we choose those methods which will increase the trainees' attention and interest in the conditions of flexibility and individuality of the instruction. The study achieved reveals the fact that the methods based on action such as learning with the help of worksheets, the exercise, the role play, the project or theme of action-research contribute to the creation of an atmosphere which should stimulate the interest and curiosity of those who learn, by their total engagement in the learning experiences.*

Keywords: *active methods; pedagogical skills; involvement;*

1.Active methods in the study of pedagogical subjects

The requirement for action centred methods manifests itself in the context of the student centred education - the key of a qualitative higher education system (Balaș, 2013, pp. 62-72). Action methods require both declarative knowledge (a certain amount of declarative information) and procedural knowledge (the teacher is asking the student *to do* something) – Marzano, 2009, p. 100. "The challenge is to channel children's natural energies toward productive ends, toward conceptual understanding of important content, toward the acquisition of lifelong skills" (Danielson, 2010, pp. 26-27).

1.1. Worksheets

Generically called "*handouts",* these cover a wide range of learning resources distributed on paper, from notes which accompany the teacher's presentation (and which make easier its following, the key-ideas being already grouped there), books lists, vocabulary lists, charts which can be used at courses and at home) up to copies of the presentation in PowerPoint (which often have a space for personal notes), handouts for independent work, photocopies of an article (which is to be analysed, discussed) etc. They can be used in many ways and they are, perhaps, the most used help – resource in learning.

1.2. The exercise method

Coming from lat. *exercitium, exercere* - repeated action having in view the acquirement of skill, effort, exercising functions, it represents a way of conscious and repeated achievement of some operation and mental or motor actions having in view to obtain and/or consolidate some knowledge and abilities, skills, competences. The method of the exercise has mainly an algorithmic character in the way it supposes certain accurate, specified, ordered in a sequence of „steps" which are repeated exactly (Cucoș, 2014).
The effectiveness of the exercise method depends on the characteristics of the educational context (Bocoș, 2017, p. 237): the level and number of students and the organisation form of their activity, the goals followed, the stage they are used in, the familiarity of the students with the metacognitive strategies. For instance, in the teaching-learning of pedagogic subjects, the following types of exercises can be used (idem, pp. 237-238):

a. the analysis of school curricula from the point of view of design principles
b. the analysis of the selection and structuring way of the contents
c. the analysis of the structure, the presentation, the evaluation of the school textbooks'quality
d. the elaboration of the design documents specific for the teachers: calendar planning, the design of the learning units, the design of the lessons/didactic activities
e. the pedagogical derivation, integration of some objectives
f. the conception and operation of educational objectives
g. the identification and correction of mistakes in the operationalization of objectives
h. the approach of some pedagogical concepts, actions, processes, educational phenomena
i. the elaboration of some glossaries of terms or mini-dictionaries
j. the self-analysis of the instruction and formation needs simultaneously with the elaboration of some professional development projects.

1.3. The of the role playmethod

The role play represents a form of application and use in the education system of the psycho-drama – a psychotherapeutic method created by J.B. Moreno in 1921 – and enters in circulation especially after 1934. The role play is based on the simulation of some functions, relations, activities, phenomena, systems etc. By the application of this method, the students become actors of social life for which they prepare themselves; because they will occupy in society positions or professional, cultural, scientific statuses, it is useful to play roles corresponding to these, forming thus certain competences, abilities, attitudes, behaviours, convictions etc. (Ionescu, Bocoș, 2017, p. 264).

The role play „makes explicit the implicit values which orient the different behaviours and human attitudes", in the situation in which for a teacher it is indispensable the formation and ownership of some practice competences and specific behaviours of interaction with the education subjects, the understanding and positive and constructive influence of the students (Bocoş, 2017, pp. 245-246). For instance, the pupils/students, in the preparation for future teachers can interpret the teacher role, initially in simulated situations, virtual – educational activities achieved in front of the colleagues (which play the role of students), subsequently in real educational situations – in front of the pre-schoolers and schoolers. Being put in the position of organiser and coordinator of the educational activity, the one who interprets the role play will acquire a series of transversal competences, will understand what it is expected of him, how can he make himself understood by other people, how to act and speak in front of an audience, how to use the positive component of emotions. All these simultaneously with the formation and development of theoretical and practical competences specific for the pedagogical subjects: to design, develop, regulate the didactic activities.

1.4. The project or the topic of action-research

It is a way of instruction or self-instruction by means of which the pupils but especially the students achieve a research oriented towards practical objectives and finalised in a product which can be object, apparatus, installation, thematic collection, an album, a scientific paper etc. It is specific for this method, the fact that it is a way of learning based on the mental anticipation of an action and its execution independently or in a team. The products obtained by this method are the fruit of research, design and practical action. Thus, the project combines theoretical work) scientific investigation= with practical action of the pupil or the student. The project can have various forms, can be used in various activities and materialised in diverse fields. The achievement of the project is an occasion to objectify the

theoretical preparation, to practise the experimental-constructive thinking, of learning through cooperation and formation of some social-moral qualities (Cerghit, 2006).

	COGNITIVE ACQUISITIONS		ACTIVE SKILLS		ATTITUDINAL SKILLS	
	Conceptual understanding	Problem solving	Procedural knowledge	Pedagogical skills	Involvement in the activity	Interest for the activity
Pre-test	3,8	2,87	1,87	3,53	3,68	3,90
Post-test	4,98	3,51	2,51	4,03	4,06	4,31

”While they are involved in the action-research activities, the teachers understand better the instructional-educational process. The new elements that they learn will have an impact on the situation in the class, school and region. The future directions of the development programs, the curriculum for the preparation of the teachers and the initiatives of scholar improvement will be significantly influenced by the elements that the teachers learn in the action-research activities, which require the critical investigation and rigorous examination of their own practices, of school curricula and school development in general.” (Kovacs, Văcăreţu,apud Nedelcu, 2011, on line, mentoraturban.pmu.ro)

2. The research design

The design of the research required an experimental plan of pre-test/post-test type, the sample consisting of 29 students from the 2nd year of the study program The Pedagogy of Primary and Pre-school Education. On pre-test we have used expositive instruction methods such as the *exposition*, *explanation*, the description, concurrent with the lecture course reading method. On post-test we have used active instruction methods such as the exercise, role play, project elaboration, worksheets for students.

We presented below the results obtained, having in view the comparisons between the pre-test stage and the post-test stage:

Pre-test/post-test comparisons

We observed some significant differences between the pre-test and post-test for the indicators of cognitive development. In the post-test phase, the active skills are improved. The modifications are significant for the attitudinal-behavioural aspects in post-test.

The averages for cognitive development indicators (*conceptual understanding* and *problem solving*) are highlighted in Figure 1:

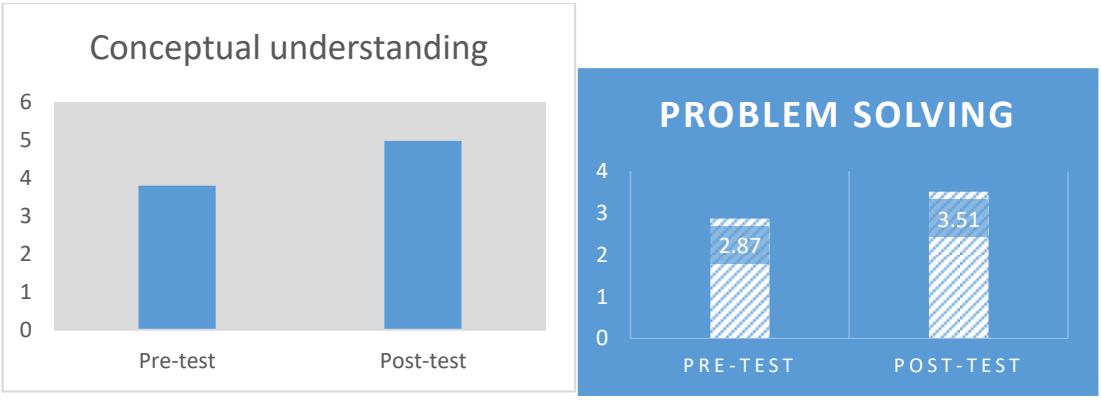

Fig. 1 The averages for cognitive development

In post-test, the averages for active skills shows a real progress of the surveyed indicators: *procedural knowledge* and *pedagogical skills* (Fig. 2):

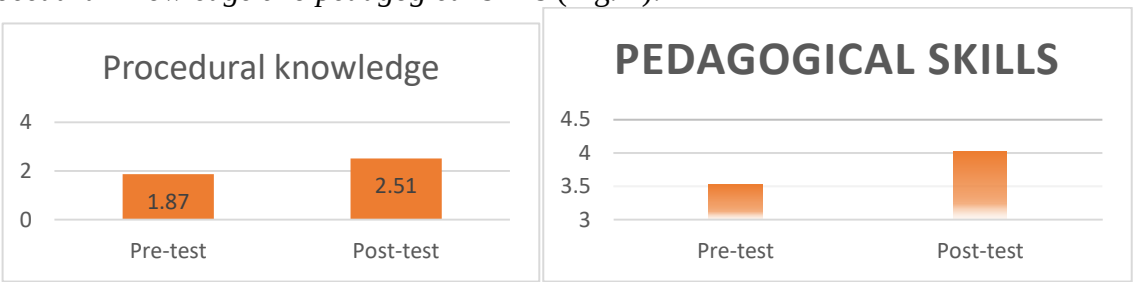

Fig. 2 The averages for active skills

The attitudinalmodifications are significant in post-test for behavioral indicators: *involvement in the activity* and *interest for the activity* (Fig. 3):

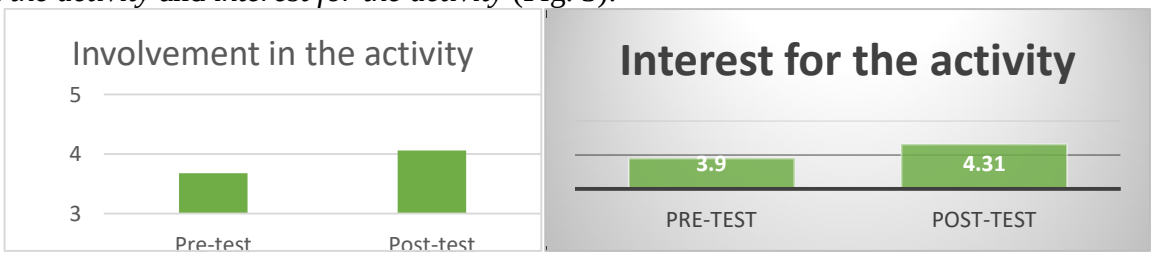

Fig. 3 The averages for attitudinal skills

The conclusions of the study

Being given the frequent use of active methods, we have obtained significant cognitive acquisitions progress for each student. The progress of active skills observed has confirmed the fact that the organisation of the activity in educational contexts based on active methods leads to the formation of pedagogical competences required for future teachers. The trainees' participation in the organised activities in an active manner had as effect a positive attitude towards learning.

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STATISTICS APPLIED IN THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION AND COUNSELING OF TEACHERS

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Abstract: *Starting from stress theoretical presumptions and findings in the practice of the importance of knowing the level of stress in teaching staff, the present study aims to highlight the level of stress in the teaching profession, its implications on professional life, highlighting the reactivity and emotional dynamics, and the development of a teacher counseling plan.*

Keywords:*teaching profession; emotional dynamics; stress;*

The profession, even if it was chosen on the basis of a real vocation, can be a source of stress. Theorell & Karasek's researches, subsequently completed by Siegrist, materialized in a model of professional stress, constituting a three-dimensional situational complex (Theorell & Karasek apud Derevenco, 1998):

- Amplitude and quality of requests (continuity, pleasant-unpleasant)
- possibility of control and decision on the task (active-passive)
- social support as a filter for stress

Some professions are stressful, others less.

Statistics show that, for example, airline pilots, whose decisions involve safety and sometimes passenger life, suffer from hypertension (due to professional stress) at a rate four times higher than other professional categories (long-distance driver, guard night or portrait) or that the period for the preparation of the financial and accounting balance represents for the accounting experts a period of risk for the production of cardiac injuries (Derevenco, 1998).

On the other hand, the research done by S. Kobasa (apud Deverenco, 1998) on a group of 57 lawyers did not reveal any correlation between the frequency of exposure to stress and illness. It seems that we are dealing with an eustres since the mute of the interviewed lawyers have said they get better results when working in some kind of mental tension.

It is considered that work itself is not stress-generating but how we perceive the action of stressors (especially the environmental factors we come into contact with).

The main variables related to the work process that generate professional stress are:

- the level of workload
- Responsibility towards subordinates
- subjective perception that not all the knowledge and skills we possess (sub-load)
- the level of reward for the work done
- conflicts of role in work (conflicts with superiors, colleagues or subordinates)
- role conflicts at the family or social level

- Role ambiguity (ambiguous perception of professional tasks)
- lack of social support (lack of support from colleagues, family, friends or superiors)

S. B. Sells (apud Iamandescu, 1999) considers psychic stress to occur in the following situations:

- circumstances that capture the unprepared person to deal with them
- lack of training
- Physical and intellectual disability, etc.

The stakes are very high, a favorable response having important consequences for the individual, while the failure has a harmful effect, further stressing the psychological stress; the degree of "engagement" of the individual (depending on the stake), the limits of his personality give him an intensity directly proportional to mental stress.

Besides the stressful situations induced by over-stressing, stressful situations are also considered as under-stressing. This is explained by the fact that in man there is an innate need for affirmation of a range of possibilities to highlight its capacity, a need which is satisfied only in an activity during which these possibilities are adequately demanded.

A subtle, but more damaging, form of emotional subsistence, by satisfying social needs, involving inter-human communication processes and implicitly the need for self-affirmation.

Professional stress is determined by a multitude of factors dependent on the physical environment, intrinsic features of the activity and the psychophysiological peculiarities of the individual.

Professional stress sources:

- physical environment - the unfavorable physical environment exerts a stressful effect depending on the duration of the action, the degree of familiarity with the stressors and the type of work to be done;
- the social environment of work - the stressful phenomena from the free time, the lack of harmony in family life, the conditions of inhabitation, etc. reduce the resistance threshold to professional stress;
- the nature and organization of work - the volume of work tasks, the pace of its deployment, the extended working hours, the level of responsibility in the professional activity are factors of professional stress.

Also, the ambiguity of pregnancy and the role conflict can cause occupational stress. Unclear or contradictory information about the nature of the task or the means to accomplish the tasks creates tension and stress. Sometimes conflict arises between superiors' orders and interests or subordinate requirements or in situations where superiors or subordinates are rigid or routine, opposed to change.

A state of dissatisfaction and stress also occurs when the person has a low self-control over the decisions and is not consulted on matters concerning his / her own activity.

- psychological and social factors - are responsible for producing many cases of professional stress due to interpersonal problems. The emotional tension created by professional insecurity, lack of safe income, job insecurity, professional failures, lack of social support, increase vulnerability to stress.

An important approach to psychic stress is to highlight the existence of a relationship between the level of stress and the performances performed by the individual (Lupu, 1999). It has been found that, in general, low levels of stress lead to low performance. Moderate stress stimulates personality and leads to improved performance, while at high levels of stress the performance is dilated.

Low levels of stress result in poor motivation, subservience, lack of involvement, boredom and, implicitly, poor performance.

Very high levels of stress cause anxiety, fear of failure, overuse that have the same purpose: low performance. In the long run, intense stress results in loss of work performance, interest in it and creative capabilities

Instead, moderate stress induces optimal motivation, optimal solicitation, engagement and increased performance, becoming a factor of dynamism, combativeness and creativity in accomplishing tasks

Didactical stress

The concrete tasks of the teacher are found in:

 designing and designing the didactic activity (setting educational and educational objectives and their operationalization)
 observance of the methodologies imposed by updated psycho-pedagogical principles
 using the available material base and promoting all measures aimed at broadening this basis
 stimulate student creativity to the detriment of just their intellectualization
 Education, not just training
 observance of the principles of professional ethics

The effect of stress on teachers has been studied since the 1930s when they began to defend numerous articles about the health and well-being of teachers.

In a study conducted by the American Association of Teachers, 40% of teachers surveyed said they did visit doctor about stress-related problems, occurred in the last year, 20% believe that drinking too much and 15% think they are alcoholics , 25% suffer from health problems such as hypertension, insomnia, depression and gastrointestinal disorders.

Accelerated development of the company, its rapid modernization, more advanced technologies, enhanced mobility, teachers produce a feeling of incompetence and stress due to their inability to stay current in their field of interest (Fimian, 1982).

Criteria for the diagnosis of didactic stress

The stress model closest to the didactic stress is the interactive one. In the case of teachers, stress factors can be divided into three categories:

 Factors intrinsic to the educational process
 cognitive factors (which affect individual vulnerability to stress)
 Systemic factors (linked to institutional level and political level)

The intrinsic factors of didactic stress have been studied by Travers and Cooper (apud Bogathy & Petroman, 1999). They investigated 800 teachers from England and France about the stresses induced by their profession. Thus, 22% of sufferers living in England, compared to only 1% in France, 55% of English teachers, compared with only 20% of the French said they intended to leave the education system soon.

However, there were some common elements regarding the sources of tension in the teaching environment: student discipline, low social status, lack of support from the students' parents. English teachers have reported, however, more problems related to prolonged work, high workload and interference of policy makers in their work. For them, the major sources of stress are low social status and low incomes.

Some professors said they did not think they were recovering during the weekend after their work during the week and are waiting for their holidays. The discipline of students is another source of stress.

Other teachers assert that they fail to master the class properly. For them, classroom management is the second major source of anxiety after evaluating the degree of apprehension.

A high level of stress has been associated with low emotional, appreciative, instrumental, and integrative social support.

Driving style has been identified as a significant organizational factor in the area of stressors. Thus, the director's democratic leadership style reduces the level of stress perceived by subordinates.

The results obtained by Pelsma and Richard (1988) have shown a strong correlation between work satisfaction and the stress of teachers, as well as the fact that stress intensity and work satisfaction is directly influenced by the quality of the didactic act.

Teachers also highlighted a series of life events that influence professional performance: marriage, divorce, pregnancy, someone's death, or home change.

Rotter (1966), shows amongst the first that attitudes and beliefs have an important role in personality development, ultimately crystallizing as a stable feature, which he calls the "Locus of Control" idea. Individuals, characterized by external LOC, are convinced that personal power has a minimal effect on events, caused by destiny, chance or the power of others. Internal LOC implies the belief that personal strength and control can influence events, that their own success is due to the skills and work done.

Effects of didactic stress

These effects of stress are manifested physiologically and psychologically (Bogathy & Petroman, 1999) through somato-physiological and behavioral responses.

Usually, biologic and behavioral changes caused by stress are attenuated with the body's adaptation to stress. However, there are also cases where stress exceeds the average (beneficial) level and then the adjustment is disrupted.

Symptomology of stress manifested by pathological fatigue or overworking is not recovered during or at the end of the day or during holidays. Pathological fatigue is preeminent intellectual that certifies the existence of stress. Thus, the didactic stress has as a first consequence the chronic pathological fatigue of the teachers, which manifests at the emotional and cognitive level, with repercussions on the didactic (and not only) efficiency, and the decrease of the general resistance of the body by affecting the immune system.

In a study by P. Miuţ (Bogathy & Petroman, 1999), teachers' answers to a questionnaire on the consequences of didactic stress confirmed a high level of chronic fatigue, mainly generated by school activity (especially by the number of hours foreseen in framing and the large amount of information included in curricula). The manifestations of this chronic fatigue are: the fluctuation of attention, the decrease of the capacity for engraftment and storage, the inconsistent activity, the diminishing of the concentration power, the inadvertencies.

Under exceptional circumstances, chronic stress can lead to "burn-out", characterized by emotional exhaustion, physical and mental exhaustion, and is expressed through affective flattening, depersonalization, and loss of personal achievement.

Consequently, the teacher's personality, unable to be stress-stricken beyond that medium, stimulating, could have the following characteristics:

 Normoreactive person (Krantz & Manuck apud Băban, 1998), where the differences of psychophysiological activation between resting and post-exposure to stressful stimuli are small.

 Person with positive tropism reactions (Cohen apud Băban, 1998), characterized by search behaviors and subjective state of pleasure in stimulation situations.

 A person with active adaptation reactions (Cohen apud Băban, 1998), characterized by environmental control, information development and behavioral strategies appropriate to the situation.

 Person with tolerance to high ambiguity

 A person characterized by robustness (Kobasa apud Derevenco, 1998), ie through self-employment, a sense of competition and control of the environment and of one's own life.

 Self-conscious person (Mullen & Suls apud Derevenco, 1998), that is, the person who has the mood to focus on internal issues such as "affections, emotions, feelings" to mitigate the impact of life events on homeostasis body.
 A person characterized as having the concept of coherence (Antonovsky apud Derevenco, 1998), characterized by the perception of a finality, the comprehension of the situation and its mastery.

The objective of the research

Starting from stress theoretical presumptions and findings in the practice of the importance of knowing the level of stress in teaching staff, the present study aims to highlight the level of stress in the teaching profession, its implications on professional life, highlighting the reactivity and emotional dynamics, and the development of a teacher counseling plan.

Research hypotheses

In line with the objectives outlined above, I propose the following hypotheses:
1. The level of stress on the staff employed by the state is higher than that of employees in private companies.
2. In both cases - employees in state or private - employees have a good resistance to intense and long-term demands.
3. In both groups there is an increased resistance to stress and a good emotional balance.

Study variables

In order to achieve the research objectives, the variables involved in the present research were established, as follows:

Demographic and socio-occupational variables:Age, Level of education, Type of education and Graduate level

Personality Variables:Employee stress levels, Nerve energy, Nervous mobility, Force inhibition, Reactivity and emotional dynamics

Description of lots of subjects

This research was attended by 50 subjects, employed in the professions of educator and preschool teacher and mayor. They were divided into two equal lots, of 25 employees, the first group of employees of the state education, and the second group of employees of the private education.

In the first batch we only have female employees, and in lot II we have both women and men.

Subjects are between the ages of 23 and 60, with an average age of about 37 years.

Description of methods of investigation and processing of information

To demonstrate the hypotheses, we used two tests: Self-assessment of stress level and RDE questionnaire - Reactivity and emotional dynamics.

In the complete evaluation of the subjects we also used the following tests from the PSITEST battery:
- RCR - Quickness and clarity of reasoning, a test that contains 24 items from the series of figures; he reveals the level of general cognitive aptitude
- MA - Mobility of Attention, contains a table in which 50 numbers must be searched in increasing order within 5 minutes; the ability to move from one information to the next can be evaluated.

- PRAGUE - the ability to distribute attention, includes 4 columns with numbers that have a smaller correspondence that needs to be identified, each column is worked out in a 4 minute interval each.

The stress self-evaluation test contains 20 statements with 3 variants of response: "1 - absent; 2 - sometimes; 3 - frequently ". Every statement is generally addressed. After they have checked the option chosen for each statement, the accumulated scoring is performed.

If the amount is:

• Less than 30 points - the stress level enters a NORMAL beach
• Between 30-50 points - the level of stress is NORMAL.
• Between 50-60 points - level STRES EXTREM.

As a result of the pencil-paper test, a slightly higher average value was observed in the case of group I, even if both fall into the level of a stress level that enters a normal range.

The next relevant test for our study is the RDE Questionnaire - Reactivity and Emotional Dynamics. It includes 75 questions that relate to the ways in which people behave, manifest themselves in certain situations. It is a questionnaire with YES or NO answer questions, and the respondent ticks the answer in the answer sheet. This questionnaire has no time limit. He also has a lying scale: if a score greater than 13 is obtained, the questionnaire is no longer relevant.

The factors studied by this questionnaire are:

- Nervous energy (Eg) - the average value is between 7 and 10. If it exceeds the value of 10, we have an increased force of excitement. If we have a value of less than 7, we have to deal with a person with nervous weakness, low resistance to intense and long-term stress, to stressful, affectionate, predisposition to neurasthenia. In our study, although both groups have values ranging from 7 to 10, those in lot II have a higher average value than those in the first lot, so a better resistance to requests.
- Nervous mobility (Mn) - the mean value is between 5.5 and 8.5. If it exceeds the value of 9, we have an ideative instability, motor and emotional instability, low concentration time; the tendency towards superficiality. If we have a value less than 5, we have to deal with a person with inertia, low reactivity; degree of high inhibition; initiative and reduced promptitude. In our study, both batches have the same average value of 8.2, so a good concentration time over time.
- Inhibition force (Fi) - the mean value is between 8 and 11. If it exceeds 11, we have hyperpredence, excessive delayed reactions, increased sensory thresholds, indifference or emotional flattening. If we have a value of less than 8, we have to deal with a person with an exaggerated impulsivity, the weakness of the self-control mechanisms, balancing difficulties in tensional, affectionate situations. In our study, although both groups have values ranging from 8 to 11, those in group II have a higher average value than those in the first batch, so they have rapid responses and mean sensory thresholds.
- Reactivity and emotional dynamics (RDE) - the mean value is between 10.5 and 15.5. If it exceeds the value of 16, we have low emotionality, increased resistance to stress, good emotional balance. If we have a value of less than 10, we have to deal with a person with fragile emotional balance, instability, predominance of asthenic effect, disruptive emotions on behavior and affections, emotional tension and increased anxiety, predisposition to neurotic and psychotic disorders , emotional hypersensitivity. In our study, although both groups have values ranging from 10 to 16, those in lot II have a higher average value than those in the first lot, so they have a high resistance to stress and good emotional balance.

Working procedure.

The tests were individually shared with each employee by the examiner. During testing it was a quiet atmosphere, no employee refused to answer the questions, the whole procedure proceeding normally.

Employees were promising and receptive to this request to complete the tests; of course, before completing the training they were trained and confidentially informed of the answers and the identity.

After collecting and processing the obtained data it was observed that all the assumptions were confirmed.

1. The level of stress on the staff employed by the state is higher than that of employees in private companies.
2. In both cases - employees in state or private - employees have a good resistance to intense and long-term demands.
3. In both groups there is an increased resistance to stress and a good emotional balance.

Although the assumptions have been confirmed by the results, they cannot be generalized because the batches have a small number of subjects, insignificantly statistically.

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RESEARCH ON THE TEACHERS' NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR COMBATING SCHOOL DROPOUT

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Abstract: *This paper presents a small part from the research conducted within an Erasmus+ project, in six European countries, on reducing early leaving in vocational education and training. Today, at the European level, school dropout or early leaving from education and training is a serious issue and preventing and reducing this phenomenon is a priority. An important role in combatting this phenomenon belongs to the teachers, which need to increase their awareness of the underlying causes and to strengthen their capacity to take action to prevent school dropout and support students who are at risk. Through our research, we aim to discover the real current needs of the teachers for further developing an innovative and competitive training programme, which provide them new and modern supportive strategies and tools. The needs analysis is carried out through two types of researches: background research, and small-scale research, based on answers to questionnaires.*
Keywords: *teachers; needs; school dropout; research; questionnaires;*

1. Introduction

At European level, the phenomenon of school dropout, or early leaving from education and training, is a serious issue, and preventing and reducing early school leaving is a priority. How, unfortunately, Romania, alongside Spain, Italy, and Portugal, is in the top 10 EU countries list regarding the school dropouts rate [8], early school leaving is a worrying phenomenon in our country. In the same time, it is estimated that Vocational Education and Training (VET) has a key role in reducing early school leaving, and has the potential to attract, retain and reintegrate young people in education and training.

In this context, by understanding the important role of VET in combating school dropout, seven partners from six European countries have agreed to develop a project, Reducing Early Leaving in VET (RELiVET). The main aim of the RELiVET project is to develop a course for further training of VET staff, teachers and professionals, that will provide modern supportive strategies and tools to prevent and reduce early leaving from educational and vocational training system. The curriculum of this course will be based on a needs analysis developed in all consortium countries. To be more eloquent, it was decided that this needs analysis should be carried out through two types of researches: a background research, in fact, a desktop and internet research, and a small-scale research, based on answers to the questionnaires completed by the teachers, educators or scientific staff in VET, followed by a feedback analysis.

This paper presents the results of these two types of researches on the Romanian teachers' needs analysis for preventing and combating school dropout.

2. Background research

Initial teacher education offers insufficient training, especially on working with students from disadvantaged backgrounds or with learning difficulties or with VET students.

In this context, attracting high-quality teachers to this kind of schools and their permanent training is a continuous challenge [1].

Developing, improving and updating the teacher training system, alongside by the modernizing school curriculum and elaborating new and modern educational resources, by using the new technologies, and also strengthening technical and vocational education and training system, are key directions and priorities declared and assumpted in the strategic framework for education and professional training in Romania [3, 4], and in all ongoing reforms and policy developments for education [2].

In the actual complex context, the teachers have to act as instructors or facilitators [5] and have to use innovative pedagogies, using an analytical approach located between practice and theory, and traditional resources alongside other modern ones [6], in order to attract students and keep them in school. Especially, to be a great teacher in TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) require a paragon of virtue, knowledge and skills and it requires expertise in both vocational field and in vocational pedagogy. "A great TVET teacher is: passionate and dedicated; a great facilitator; a leader of learning; an excellent communicator; a motivator; a positive thinker; a creative problem-solver; ICT-literate; respectful of learners, prepared to show care for students' well-being and able to identify their needs; a lifelong learner and reflective practitioner; able to evaluate delivery and impact; personally well-rounded – fair, empathic, patient, stable, reliable; kind; a listener; strict and coherent; pedagogically very competent in a wide range of teaching and learning methods." [7]. To offer all these, teachers and professionals need to acquire the necessary skills that can be obtained through non-formal training courses.

In Romania, in each county, respectively in the municipality of Bucharest, there is a Teaching Staff House, a related unit of the Ministry of National Education [9]. They are resource centers aimed at training and professional and personal development of employees of the school education system in Romania. At the level of these centers, regularly are applied some tools for analysis of needs concerning continuous training of the teaching staff. The latest such analyses have led to the identification of the following needs:

- the need for training courses
- ICT / digital competences
- the need for personal development
- productive communication
- exchange of experience in differentiated training
- passion for the teaching profession
- intricate need for training in the teaching profession
- acquiring new knowledge
- the need for socialization
- accumulation of professional credits
- financial resources for the organization of educational activities
- theoretical support - offering courses for continuous training and personal development.

Regarding the types of training required, the participants opted for the following:

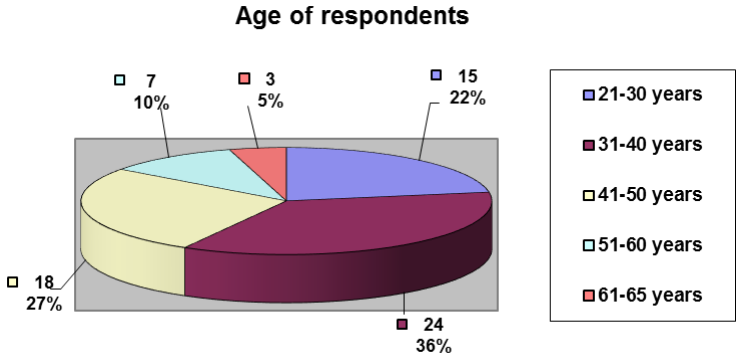
- Preventing school dropout and reducing absenteeism.
- Conflict management training programs in the pupil class.
- Training programs to stimulate school motivation.
- Training programs for counseling children and parents.
- Training programs on educational communication techniques.

From the findings of the background research regarding the requirement and offer of training courses, we can summarise the most important general focal points for designing and developing of the curricular elements and toolkits of a course on preventing and combating the Early Leaving from Vocational Education and Training (ELVET):

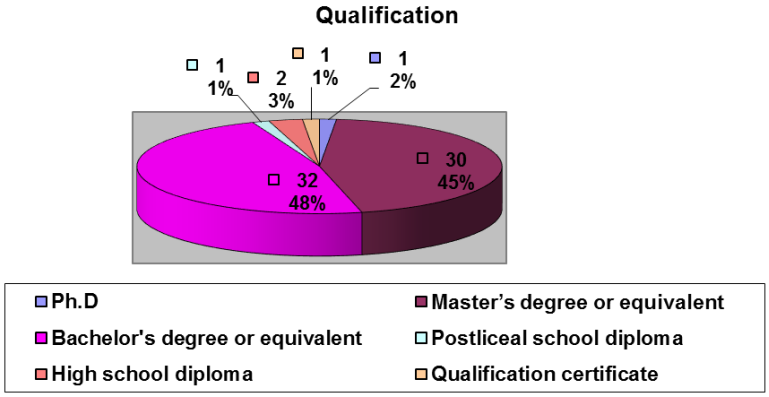
- The course has to contain a presentation of the effective situation of the school dropout phenomenon: definition, causes, consequences, strategies and measures, categories of people at risk, the role of the teachers, parents and community in the prevention of school dropout.
- The training course should develop to the participants that knowledge and skills that make them become: good facilitators and mediators; excellent communicators; positive thinkers; creative problem-solvers; ICT-literates.
- The participants have to learn to use innovative pedagogies, in an analytical approach located between practice and theory, such as: blended learning; gamification; computational thinking; experiential learning; embodied learning; discussion-based teaching.
- The training course has to include modules regarding educational communication techniques, school motivation, integration, orientation and counselling.
- Examples of good practice in reducing school dropout.

3. Small-scale research

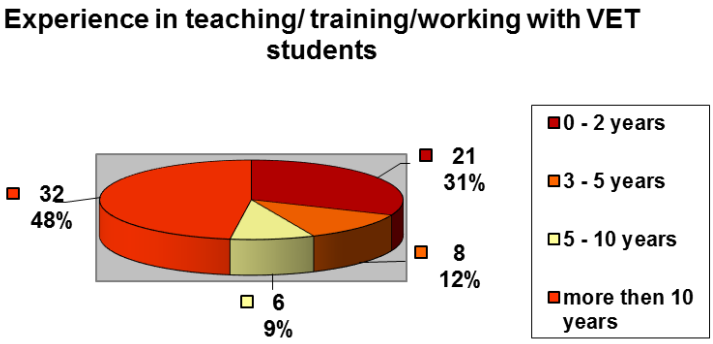
The small-scale research is based on feedback analysis of the 67 answers to questionnaires, completed by teachers, educators or scientific staff in VET in Bihor County of Romania. The background and experience of the respondents are presented in the next charts in fig. 1:



a)



b)



c)

Fig. 1. Background and experience of the respondents: a) age; b) qualification; c) experience.

Regarding the utility of a training on supportive strategies and intervention methods to prevent/ reduce ELVET, 46% of the respondents have appreciated like adequately this kind of training and 42% appreciated it very much.

The respondents require the next skills needed to be enhanced to effectively intervene in countering the dropout phenomenon in schools:

- Promoting creative, good practice activities that highlight student creativity.
- Training professional skills.
- Communication and relationship skills, with family, local council, other involved institutions.
- Mediation and conflicts negotiation abilities between parent and student.
- Motivation and involvement abilities.
- Abilities for a better school and vocational counselling and guidance.
- Skills needed for proactive involvement in the fight against absenteeism.

Regarding the recommendations on the key focal points of the training programme and the relative weight of the curriculum elements, the respondents suggest:

- Presenting concrete cases and solving them.
- Presentation of effective methods to combat school dropout.
- Exchanges of experiences and exchanges of views with the participation of several teachers.
- Focusing the activities on the knowledge of the student, his family and the community from which he/she originates.
- Strategies to be followed in preventing and combating absenteeism.
- Learning strategies for preventing school dropout.
- Modern ways of accepting the school as a way of approaching life and reporting on the development of a career.
- Adaptation to the specific situation of the school/town/village. Possibility to be put into practice in optimal conditions.
- Knowing the environment from which the problem student comes from.
- Effective collaboration methods with students and their families.
- Methods of educating children with problems to avoid school dropout.
- Effective monitoring methods.

The best toolkits recommend by respondents for the training program are:

- Innovative approach.

- Experienced staff with interactive teaching methods.
- Study platform.
- Online courses.
- Distance theoretical training. Practical training in specialized units.
- Questionnaires.
- Debates and workshops.
- Conferences.
- Meeting. Roundtables.
- The computer. Projector. PPT presentations.
- Relevant examples. Examples of good practice.
- Presenting concrete cases and their consequences; discussing them.

4. Conclusion

An important role in preventing and combating the school dropout phenomenon belongs to the teachers, which need to increase their awareness of the underlying causes of this phenomenon and to strengthen their capacity to take action to prevent school dropout and support students who are at risk. The main aim of this research is to discover the real current needs of the teachers for further developing an innovative and competitive training programme, which to provide new and modern supportive strategies and tools on preventing and combating the school dropout. After the needs analysis, carried out through two types of researches, background research, and small-scale research, based on answers to questionnaires, we can conclude that we find approximately the same needs in both types of research. In addition, the participants suggest o set of recommendations on the key focal points of the training programme and the best toolkits to implement it.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF METACOGNITIVE COMPETENCES IN THE PROCESS OF LEARNING ROMANIAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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Abstract: *Current studies present the criteria and conditions for effective learning of Romanian language and literature, these being associated with autonomy in learning, which integrates the efficient use of metacognitions. Exercising explicit metacognitions with students in various learning situations in Romanian language and literature, leads to increased chances of success in learning and transferability of acquisitions, increasing autonomy in learning, optimizing strategic thinking, and building a positive self-image.*

Keywords: *metacognitive strategies; autonomy; responsibility; monitoring; progress;*

1. Introduction

The preoccupation for the process of learning the Romanian language and literature is becoming more and more important, and the responsibility for achieving this goal is equally of educators, pupils, the community and decision-makers in education. Current studies present the criteria and conditions for effective learning of Romanian language and literature, these being associated with autonomy in learning, which integrates the efficient use of metacognitions.

Cognitive psychology defines metacognition through the knowledge that the subject has about the functioning of its own cognitive system and which can optimize its functioning (Miclea, M., 1999, p. 323). The implications for the process of learning Romanian language and literature are obvious: the metacognitive approach to the training process assists students in assuming control over their own learning by formulating learning objectives and monitoring their progress in their realization (Bransford, JD, Brown, A., Cocking, R., 2002).

2. The coordinates of the research

The premise we have started from in the design of this research was that in order to become autonomous in the process of efficient learning of Romanian language and literature, it is necessary for students:

- Be aware of their own learning processes;
- Develop strategies of procedural nature (how do I do to solve the task of learning?);
- Develop strategies of procedural nature (how do I do to solve the task of learning?);
- Use contextual-relational strategies (when and why do I in a certain way? When and why do I change my approach to a work task?).

The overall hypothesis of research was as follows:

Exercising explicit metacognitions with students in various learning situations in Romanian language and literature, leads to increased chances of success in learning and transferability of acquisitions, increasing autonomy in learning, optimizing strategic thinking, and building a positive self-image.

The following specific hypotheses were derived:

- Autonomous students activate their previous knowledge to build a clear and articulate representation of the solving process, perceiving the task of learning as a challenge.
- Students become aware of their own competence in achieving the task, positive attitude conditional on their level of cognitive engagement.
- Students allocate energy to actively monitor their own approach, using cognitive and metacognitive strategies selected by themselves.
- Critical analysis carried out during and at the end of the Romanian language and literature learning process, regarding the degree of accomplishment of the objectives, respectively the way they did, contributes to the diversification of the metacognitive strategies repertoire.

The research targeted a sample of 110 subjects, of which 55 subjects constituted the experimental sample (pupils in grades IX-X). They were trained in a metacognitive development program during the two semesters of the school year 2018-2019, by inserting reflection sequences on learning into Romanian language and literature. Task learning strategies have facilitated the explicit use of metacognitive monitoring / control methods, techniques and tools that do not add cognitive activity to pupils, and can be flexibly tailored to the specifics of the learning situation.

The objectives of the formative experiment are as follows:

- development of the metacognitive skills of students in a complex and dynamic process of learning Romanian language and literature;
- elaboration of metacognitive strategies with adaptive role, marked by originality and uniqueness (through contextualization);
- actively involving students in monitoring and controlling their own learning, increasing autonomy and responsibility;
- creating optimal conditions for the structuring of metacognitive skills in different learning situations;

3. Quantitative and qualitative analysis of research data

The portfolio within the metacognitive development program concentrates a large part of the tools and products of the pupils achieved during the activities on Romanian language and literature, both through personal effort and especially through team work. We focused on the outline of a complex information system on metacognitive training, with data and indicators to provide a clear picture of the progress made by each student in terms of learning autonomy, by reference to his whole educational and educational activity. This portfolio includes the following:

The self-evaluation sheet for the effectiveness of the learning strategies of the Romanian language and literature;

- Self-diagnosis sheet for learning difficulties and improvement needs;
- Protocols for observing metacognitive approaches to learning tasks;
- The self-analysis sheet of the process of solving a learning task;
- Theinventory of cognitive regulation;
- Reflection log on the case study;

Other products and tools used during the formative experiment. We used the portfolios of students in the experimental sample, a multicriteria grid, for the following aspects:

- Systematization and interpretation of collected information;
- Metacognitive approach to learning tasks;
- Relevance and opportunity of methods and tools for monitoring / controlling the learning process;
- Situational adaptation of metacognitive regulation strategies;

- Diversity and complexity of products included in the training portfolio;

Using the t-test for a single sample, averages were calculated, resulting in an average observed (26) significantly higher than the theoretical average (20), demonstrating active involvement of students in metacognitive training in language learning and Romanian literature, but also their effort to elaborate in an original manner the portfolio (table no.1).

Variable metacognitive development portfolio	Theoretical	Observed
Minimum score	8	17
Maximum score	32	35
Average	20	26
Meaning of the difference between environments	t= 6,017 significant for p<.01	

Table no.1. Variable scores for metacognitive development portfolio - comparison of observed and theoretical average

Variable metacognitive development portfolio	
Mediate	23,34
Median	23,40
Module	23
Standard deviation	7,211
Variation	72,143
Minimum	17
Maximum	35

Table no.2. Variable metacognitive development portfolio – sufficiently descriptive

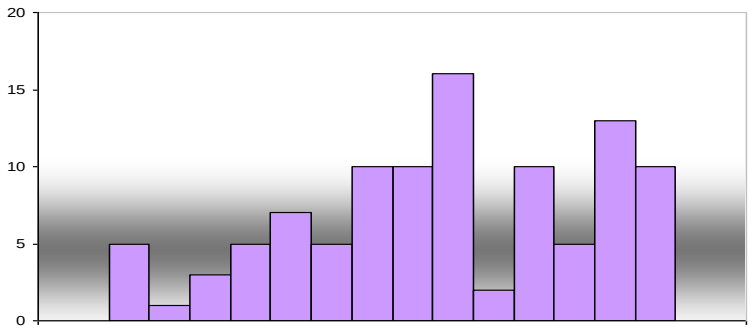

Figure no.1.
Variable metacognitive development portfolio - Score distribution

The central trend values are equal (23), the maximum frequency having the values in the middle of the data series, so the obtained scores are distributed according to a normal and symmetrical curve (Figure 1). We carried out a comparative analysis of the averages obtained by referring to the following independent variables: the type of investigated subjects (table no. 3), the age category (table no.4) and the specialization (table no.5).

In relation to these criteria, we find that there are no significant differences between the averages obtained, this being evidenced by the additional calculations made by SPSS (calculating the variance with the ANOVA method and calculating the partial regression coefficient). Evolution of the variable's metacognitive development portfolio is therefore very poorly predicted by the variables: subject type, age category and specialization.

	Gender		Total
	M	F	
N	17	38	55
Averange	20,81	21,97	21,39

Standard deviation	7,120	8,032	7,576

Table no.3. Differences between averages obtained by the variable - gen

	Age category		Total
	15-16	16-17	
N	26	29	55
Average	20,00	21,57	20,78
Standard	8,062	7,914	7,988

Table no.4. Differences between the averages obtained by the variable - the age category

	Specialty				
	Filology	Social Sciences	Nature sciences	Mathematics-Informatics	Total
N	12	18	16	9	55
Average	20,12	23,85	20,07	22,83	21,71
Standard deviation	5,423	7,201	8,254	9,063	7,485

Table no.5. Differences between the averages obtained by the variable – specialization

The complex quantitative and qualitative analysis of the products included in the metacognitive development portfolio as well as the strategies used during the formative intervention determined among the students in the experimental group the tendency to restructure the way of addressing the learning tasks, in the sense of assuming responsibility, action, but also an intensification of personal efforts for the implementation of metacognitive strategies in the learning of Romanian language and literature.

4. Conclusions

Research has proven the efficiency of engaging capabilities to anticipate learning outcomes, awareness of success or failure in understanding the learning task, learning action planning, time and resource management.

Because metacognitive approaches often take the form of an in-house dialogue, many students are unaware of their importance for organizing, monitoring, and controlling learning. Moreover, the tacit character of metacognitive behaviors leads many educators to assume that students will acquire them by themselves and will use them successfully without their intervention in this respect. That is why metacognitions are often implicit purchases, which are rarely explicit or objectified in visible behaviors, possibly required by the teacher. Without being aware of their ownership and importance in learning, students are likely to access them sporadically and unsystematically and will not be able to successfully transfer them to new learning situations (Lin and Lehman, 1999).

The implicit learning of metacognitions occurs when the teacher does not underline the metacognitive behaviors of the learner (eg, does not ask questions such as: How did you learn this, how did you reach this result?, How long did it take you to learn this? do you already know what you do not know about this subject?) and does not propose new behaviors of this kind (eg, it does not require students to come up with their own learning behaviors), either because he is not aware of the importance of learning and controlling learning and does not have didactic strategies to train them in school, either because it is centered on the acquisition by students of cognitions specific to the given field.

Frequently, students experiencing challenging learning tasks or with the need to scrutinize and assimilate a large amount of information from diverse sources acquire individual strategies to organize, monitor and regulate their own learning. They often remain unconscious or become less well aware, students being unable to verbalize learning or explain how they have achieved their predetermined goals.

The training of metacognitions can be targeted, but metaphysical, unexplained, non-exhaustive metacognitive experiences remain implied and are often based on the student's understanding of effective metacognitive approaches.

As we have already mentioned, studies that support the importance of explicit coaching of metacognitions imply, on the one hand, the explanation of metacognitions acquired implicitly and the increase of pupils' consciousness relative to the holding of metacognitive strategies (approach centered on access) through verbalization (Doly, 1997) , structuring in stages (Borkowsky, 1992, Doly, 1997), guiding and using intuitive support (eg by design), and often by correcting the wrong beliefs about own learning that the student holds (Tirosh, 1994) and, on the other hand, the explicit teaching of metacognitions and their practice in various contexts (structure-centered approach).

The formative experiment demonstrated the efficiency of the reflection activity on the learning of Romanian language and literature as a didactic means of intentional training of students' metacognitions.

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EMOTIONAL FEEDBACK IN ELEARNING INNOVATIVE DESIGNS IN THE ROMANIAN UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS

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Abstract: *Current literature indicates low levels of correlation between science students and emotional engagement during course interactions. While students enrolling humanistic courses tend to display higher levels of correlation with emotional states, it becomes important to identify the extent to which these classifications are gender related. The current investigation will address the first section, and will look at how gender influences emotional engagement of students enrolled in IT courses in a Romanian University. The literature to date highlights a positive correlation between female emotional feedback and academic engagement and a neutral or negative correlation between male students and academic engagement. To advance the discussion, a survey exploring factors of emotional predisposition has been emailed to students enrolled in a graduate programme at the University of Aurel Vlaicu, Arad. It is being hypothesized that gender has a determining influence on emotional relevance, and that results will indicate that academic engagement grows exponentially with female emotional feedback.*

Keywords: *elearning design; FER; emotional feedback; basic emotions; emotional engagement;*

1. Introduction

The following presentation aims to interpret the collected results and suggest further integrations of the framework.

2. Experiment design

A questionnaire set of twenty four questions was emailed to twenty four students enrolled in a second year graduate Information and Security Class, at Aurel Vlaicu University in Arad. The purpose of the experiment is to investigate the relevance of the social-media communication to elearning communication. The main objective consists of observing the types of correlations between the informal socio-emotional paradigms and the formal digital academic communication. The observed parameters, include both the student-to-student and the student-to-professor written communication channels. The questionnaire format incorporates a five point Likert scale design exploring the cognitive dimension of the emotional state and a fifty five emoji independent object set, designed to explore the instinctive emotional reaction to the same stimulus. The Likert section is configured to accept check mark votes, while the emoji section is designed to accept any of the fifty five objects associated with emotions, gestures and objects. The emoji set is available in the MOODLE 3.3 version update, and represents one of the most recent updates available for open source elearning platforms. The responders' range covers ages from 22 to 54 and includes a total of 20 students, 18 males and 2 females. A number of 14 students fall in the age group 22-30 (12 males and 2 females), followed by ages 31- 40 (4 males), and respondents within ages 41-51+(2 males). Students were required to fill out the questionnaire on the grounds of

"improving the educational act in the digital era," with the stated objective of "calibrating elearning programs via emotional feedback design."

No. Crt.	Totally Irrelevant	Somehow Relevant	Neutral	Considerably Relevant	Highly Relevant
1.	○	○	◉	○	○
2.					

3. Data processing and interpretation

Each answer is labeled and classified for the exploration of the cognitive side of the affect on the Likert scale, and for the emotional values of the affect, through the six basic emotions.

1. How do you evaluate the applicability of social-media emotional paradigms (ex. Facebook, Instagram) in the field of digital learning (ex. Moodle /other elearning platforms) through emojis? Males (11) and females (1) ages 20-30 and 41-51+ scored the most votes on happiness with 12 positive emojis labeled as happiness, followed. Considerably relevant ranks with (6m), while feeling mischievous (5m) and positive hand gestures (3m). Neutral r aggregated 11 votes (9m - 2f) and neutral e (2m) Of the negative valences, somehow relevant, ranked the highest with (3m) votes, totally irrelevant (1m), disgusting (1m) and a negative gesture (1f) define the scenario. The aggregated result of both negative and positive valences indicate score of 26 positives versus 6 negative votes. The positive valence of the global sentiment indicates a positive correlation between emoji communication and elearning. (6neg-11neut-26pos)

2. To what extent do you find emotional manifestation useful in the academic environment?

The largest number of positive 17 votes goes to happiness (9m-1f) and extremely relevant with 1 vote (1m), followed by considerably relevant with 6 votes (5m-1f). The next 12 aggregated neutral votes comprised of 9 neutral r votes (8m-1f), neutral e (1m), surprise (1m) and surprise (1f). The list continues with an aggregated negative score of 8 votes, comprised of the highest negative of somehow relevant with 4 total votes (4m), disgust (1m), fear (1m), sadness (1m) and and a negative gesture (1m). The sentiment score of 17 positives to 8 negative indicate a positive correlation between emotional exteriorization and the academic environment. (8neg-12neut-17pos)

3. Which emotional expressions (min. 3 emojis) would you most comfortably use during elearning classes? Evaluate their relevance for the current class.

On the positive valence one may note the aggregated positives ranking at 50, with the highest of 17 happiness votes (16m-1f), followed by positive gesture 12 (10m-2f), considerably relevant (8m), feeling mischievous (6m) feeling admiration/respect (4m) extremely relevant (2m) and feeling strong gesture (1m). Of the neutral valence, neutral r (2m) neutral e (3m), neutral e (1f) and surprise (2m). The negative valences resulted in an aggregated negative of 11 votes, with anger (2m), fear (2m), sadness (2m) and 5 votes for feeling negative gesture (3m-2f). The sentiment score of 50 positive and 11 negative is a strong case, primarily because even if all neutral votes turn negative, the positive valence still remains dominant. This indicates a positive correlation between the intent and comfort of using emojis in the context of elearning classes. (11neg-8neut-50pos)

4. Enumerate one emoji stringset (3-5 symbols) that you would most likely use in the academic relationship with the professor and insert in the most relevant box.

The positive valence is led by an aggregate sentiment score of 44, with happiness (17m), positive gesture 11 (9m-2f), considerably relevant (6m), feeling mischievous (5), extremely relevant (2), feeling positive object 2 (1m-1f), admiration/respect (1f). Neutral states are expressed by neutral r (4m), neutral e (4m) and surprise (4m). The negative valences aggregate a total of 21 votes, with sadness (7m), somehow relevant 7 (6m-1f), fear (2m), anger (2m), negative gesture (2m) and totally irrelevant (1m). This question seeks to explore the status of informal communication between students and professors within a formal setting, and finds a positive correlation between the two. (21neg-12neut-44pos)

5. Enumerate one emoji stringset (3-5 symbols) that you would most likely use on the elearning forums in the academic relationship with the colleagues.

The aggregated data indicates a total of 42 positives, with happiness 17 votes (16m-1f), considerably relevant (8m), feeling mischievous (7m), positive gesture (7m), extremely relevant (1m), positive gesture (1m) and admiration/respect (1f). Neutral scores indicated neutral r 10 (9m-1f), neutral e (2m), surprise (2m). On the low end, the aggregated values indicated a total of 15 votes, with sadness 6 (5m-1f), anger 5 (4m-1f), fear (2m), disgust (1m) and negative gesture (1m). The final results indicate with a score of 42 positive to 15 negative a high degree of comfort in using emojis in the academic exchange between colleagues, resulting in a positive correlation between positive emojis and student-student communication. (15neg-14neut-42pos)

6. Generally speaking, how important is/would be the emotional feedback in the field of digital education?

The aggregated positives count 30 votes, with highest number on happiness with 12 votes (11m-1f), considerably relevant (9m), feeling mischievous 4 (3m-1f), positive gesture 4 (3m-1f) and extremely relevant (1m). Neutral votes rank at neutral r at 6 votes (5m-1f) and surprise (2m). The negative valences have an aggregated number of 5 votes, with somehow relevant (3m), totally irrelevant (1m), irony (1m). The score rapport of 30 positives to 5 negatives, indicates a positive correlation between the relevance of emotional feedback and that of digital education. (5neg-8neut-30pos)

7. To what extent do you find relevant the acknowledgement and validation of the classmate's sentiments towards a successful academic itinerary? Using emoji (2-3 symbols) please express a few emotional states that would help achieving this goal.

The positives indicate and aggregated score of 50, with happiness 19 (18m-1f), feeling mischievous (9m), considerably relevant (8m), positive gestures 7 (5m-2f), admiration respect 3 (2m-1f), extremely relevant 2 (1m-1f) and feeling positive object (2m). Neutral values ranged from neutral r 8 (7m-1f), neutral e 3 (2m-1f), surprise (2m). Negative valences aggregated a total of 12 votes, with sadness 5 (3m-2f), somehow relevant (3m), anger 2 (1m-1f), fear (1m) and totally irrelevant (1m). The use of the positive symbols suggests and a positive to negative score of 50 to 12, and a positive correlation between classmates' sentiments and a successful academic journey. (12neg-13neut-50pos)

8. In the context of forum discussions associated with the class, would you find that emotionally augmented opinions would advance or detract the optimal development of the educational act? The positive valence has an aggregated score of 23 votes, with the highest on happiness (9m), followed by considerably relevant (5m), feeling mischievous (3m), positive gestures (3m), positive object (1m), admiration/respect (1m) and extremely relevant (1m). Of the neutral class, results indicate neutral r 4 (3m-1f) and neutral e 3 (2m-1f). The negative valences have an aggregated number of votes situated at 14, with the highest negative ranking of totally irrelevant 9(8m-1f), somehow relevant (1m), sad 2 (1m-1f) and irony (2m). The score indicates a 23 positive to 14 negative, and therefore suggests an on the edge positive correlation between the relevance of emotionally augmented opinions and the educational process.(14neg-7neut-23pos)

9. If the social media emotional paradigms would be implemented in elearning, their integration would be native or forced? Of the positive associations, the aggregated votes summ 18 positive, with the highest on happiness (8m), followed by considerably relevant 3 (2m-1f), feeling mischievous (2m) positive gesture (2m), positive object (2), admiration/respect (1m). Neutral r (7m), neutral e (4m) and surprise (1m). The negative valences have a total aggregated value of 16, with totally irrelevant at 7 (6m-1f), somehow relevant (2m), anger (2m), sadness (2m), fear (1f), negative gesture (1f) and irony (1m). The positive to negative ratio suggests a positive correlation but a slight change in neutral suggests a scenario of a negative type of correlation. (16neg-12neut-18pos)

10. Please make reference to a possible application of emotional feedback in IT security. How relevant can this aspect become for the future of digital education?

The positive values indicate and aggregated score of 21, with happiness (7m), positive gestures (6m), considerably relevant (5m), extremely relevant (1m), feeling mischievous (1m), positive object (1m), and admiration/respect (1m). Neutral values included neutral r 8 (6m-2f) and surprise (1m). The negative values aggregated a total number of 12 votes, with totally irrelevant (4m), somehow relevant (2m), disgust 1(m), anger (1m), sadness (1m), sarcasm (1m), irony (1m) and a negative gesture (1f). (12neg-9neut-21pos).

While all of the cases indicate, positive correlation between emoji use and academic design, the high scores of neutral in each scenario demands careful investigation. Prone to risk for negative correlation are the score scenarios returned by questions number two, four, eight, nine and ten. The vulnerable responses account for 50% of the total number of answers, and do not contradict the initial estimate of negative correlation between male students and academic engagement. Also, the initial forecast on the positive correlation between female emotional feedback and academic engagement, cannot be sustained. Students find manifest restrained interest in the emotional manifestation in the academic environment. The next point of concern appears to be the student-teacher communication, where students seem hesitant in using emojis in the written communication with the instructor. This dynamic may suggest that that the informal social paradigms of digital communication may not be fully relevant in the student-instructor communication. Regarding the discussion forums, it does not seem that the emotionally augmented opinions would significantly advance the education act. Referring to the top-down integration of social media emotional paradigms in elearning design, the responses seem to see this as a forced move. In terms of relevance towards IT security, students do not seem to find relevant applications of the emotional design. Due to the extended nature of the analysis, only half of the answers were evaluated. The survey was initiated and executed following the prior written acceptance of the university and in accordance with the GDPR anonymization rules.

4. INTEGRATION WITH INTELLIGENT NETWORKS

Emoji Sentiment Ranking v1.0

Char	Image [twemoji]	Unicode codepoint	Occurrences [5...max]	Position [0...1]	Neg [0...1]	Neut [0...1]	Pos [0...1]	Sentiment score [-1...+1]	Sentiment bar (c.i. 95%)	Unicode name	Unicode block
😍		0x1f60d	6359	0.765	0.052	0.219	0.729	0.678		SMILING FACE WITH HEART-SHAPED EYES	Emoticons
😃		0x1f603	1206	0.735	0.072	0.299	0.629	0.557		SMILING FACE WITH OPEN MOUTH	Emoticons
😴		0x1f634	718	0.850	0.422	0.237	0.341	-0.080		SLEEPING FACE	Emoticons
😡		0x1f621	756	0.862	0.532	0.108	0.360	-0.173		POUTING FACE	Emoticons

This type of labeling [1] allows for a precise classification of the sentiment score and it becomes particularly relevant when incorporated in recommender systems. Both the unicode codepoint encoding of emoji and the six basic human emotions are natively compatible with larger intelligent infrastructures. The basic human emotions identified as happiness, surprise, anger, sadness, fear, disgust and neutral [2], serve as the primary classes for classifying observable amygdala based reactions. This is not to be confused with neocortex' feelings which are conscious and self-reporting. The six basic human emotions find applications both in the academic and in the business sectors.

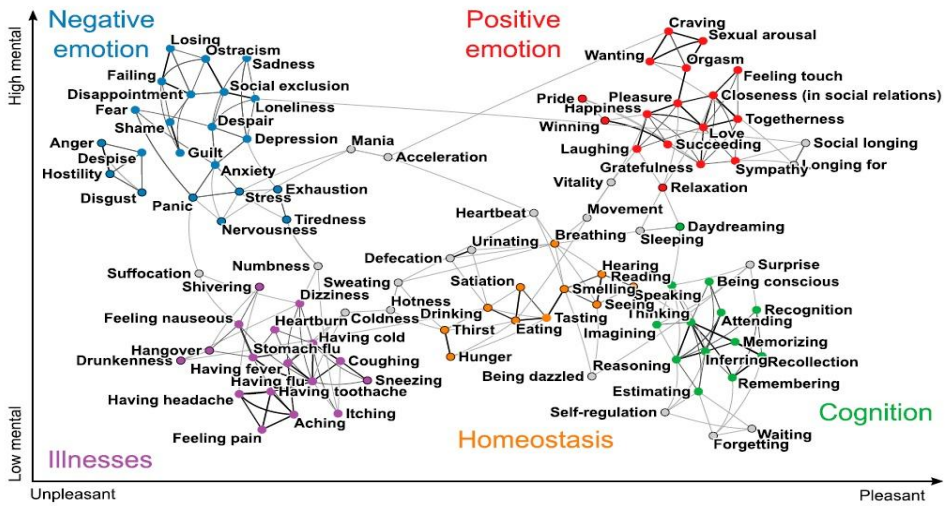
Also known as Facial Expression Recognition or FER, is a popular system capable of processing face expressions on three stages: (1) preprocessing database image and input face detection, (2) feature extraction, and (3) classification [3]. Emoji found in the digital corpus of any digital forums can easily supply unicode classes into the larger smart educational architecture. Theoretically, this can be accomplished by pairing emoji sentiment scores with Facial Action Units (AUs). Byoung, argues that facial action units (AUs) code the fundamental actions (46 AUs) of individual or groups of muscles typically seen when producing the facial expressions of a particular emotion [...] To recognize facial emotions, individual AU is detected and the system classify facial category according to the combination of AUs. For example, if an image has been annotated as having 1, 2, 25, and 26 AUs using an algorithm, the system will classify it as expressing an emotion of the 'surprised' category. (pp.3)

Referencing Benitez-Quiroz et. al (2016), Byoung presents the accepted geometrical emotional associations that become enacted in conjunction with emotional reactions:

Table 1. Prototypical AUs observed in each basic and compound emotion category

Category	AUs	Category	AUs
Happy	12, 25	Sadly disgusted	4, 10
Sad	4, 15	Fearfully angry	4, 20, 25
Fearful	1, 4, 20, 25	Fearfully surprised	1, 2, 5, 20, 25
Angry	4, 7, 24	Fearfully disgusted	1, 4, 10, 20, 25
Surprised	1, 2 , 25, 26	Angrily surprised	4, 25, 26
Disgusted	9, 10, 17	Disgusted surprised	1, 2, 5, 10
Happily sad	4, 6, 12, 25	Happily fearful	1, 2, 12, 25, 26
Happily surprised	1, 2, 12, 25	Angrily disgusted	4, 10, 17
Happily disgusted	10, 12, 25	Awed	1, 2, 5, 25
Sadly fearful	1, 4, 15, 25	Appalled	4, 9, 10
Sadly angry	4, 7, 15	Hatred	4, 7, 10
Sadly surprised	1, 4, 25, 26	-	-

The combination of various AUs can comfortably accommodate the wide range of emotional expressions associated with the growing number of emojis. Emojis can significantly contribute to the development of larger psychosomatic and cognitive maps and facilitate better decision making systems for the personalized learning models.



The map [4] suggests a comprehensive approach of the human ecosystem where emotions are interconnected with bodily functions and cognitive states. Theoretically, the design can be configured to account for the interlinked connections of emotion and cognition with student engagement and motivation.

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RESEARCH ON THE FACTORS LEADING TO EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING

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Abstract: *The consequences of early school leaving affect people throughout their entire lives by increasing their risk of unemployment, poverty, and social exclusion, including through reducing their children's chances of succeeding at school. In the specialized literature, there are several explanatory mechanisms for early school leaving phenomenon, and the factors that influence it are distributed in different orders or on different priority levels. In this paper, we present an analysis of the factors leading to early leaving from vocational education and training, based on two types of research, background research, and through questionnaires, conducted within an Erasmus+ project, in six European countries. In spite of different educational systems, the factors leading to early school leaving do not vary that much from country to country. Some factors sometimes have almost similar values and preferences, and sometimes they differ, less or more, even till the situation they are opposite, from a participating country to another.*

Keywords: *factors; early school leaving; research; questionnaires;*

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of school dropout, or Early School Leaving (ESL), or Early Leaving of Education and Training (ELET) refers to the early school leavers, means the percentage of youth 18-24 years old who did not finalise the upper-secondary education and who are not following any other educational path or are not enrolled in any other vocational training [5]. The consequences of early school leaving affect people throughout their entire lives by increasing their risk of unemployment, poverty, and social exclusion, including through reducing their children's chances of succeeding at school.

Romania continues to have one of the highest early school leaving rates in the EU. The rate of early school leaving decreased slightly, from 19.1% in 2015 to 18.5% in 2016, to 18.1% in 2017, and to 16.4% in 2018, but the target of 11.3%, for 2020, remains far from being reached [9]. In this context, concern for preventing and reducing early school leaving is seen as a priority of the education system, even more as factors of school dropout multiply and diversify, in the current complex context of the social, economic, cultural, and professional environment.

After a period of decline, starting with the year 2011/2012, VET in Romania has an upward trend, both concerning the number of schools and the number of students and teaching staff. The year 2017 was the Year of Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Romania. The staff of school inspectorates, TVET schools, economic operators and consultative partner bodies benefited from training and information sessions on how to organize and operate dual VET in Romania.

Despite recent measures, the quality of Romanian VET system and its relevance for labour market remain mostly insufficient. The attractiveness of VET as a career choice and not mainly as a 'second choice' option remains rather limited. The employment rate of recent VET graduates remains below the EU average, 63.3 % vs. 75 % in 2016 [7]. Despite continued reforms, especially on dual VET, several challenges remain to be addressed [4].

There are many reasons for what some young people give up prematurely to education and training: personal or family problems, learning difficulties, or a fragile socio-economic situation. Education system features and school climate are also important factors in the process of pupil engagement or disengagement.

In this paper, we present an analysis of the factors leading to early leaving from vocational education and training in Romania, based on two types of research: background research, and through questionnaires, conducted within an Erasmus+ project, in six European countries.

2. Analysis of the early school leaving phenomenon

In one of the most recently document in field, "Preventing early leaving from education and training", published by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, on EACEA National Policies Platform [5], is recorded that the Romanian schooling population is less every year and that by 2025 the school population will decrease by 40%. The most exposed groups to the risk of ELET are: the minorities and other marginalized groups; pupils in rural areas; pupils who are not able to pass their studies and have to repeat a class; youth and children with special educational needs.

To prevent and combat early school leaving and to support re-enrolment in school, Ministry of Education carries on its yearly social support programmes, conceived to assist students from disadvantaged areas: School supplies; Money for High-school; Euro 200; the Croissant and milk programme; Reimbursement of travel expenses; School shuttles [2].

The Romanian Government, through the National reform programme 2018, imposes for reducing early school leaving phenomenon, many clear and necessary key directions.

In present, the strategic framework for education and professional training in Romania includes five sectorial strategies:

- Romanian Strategy on the Reduction of Early School Leaving during 2015-2020
- Strategy for tertiary education 2015-2020
- Lifelong learning strategy 2015-2020
- Romanian Strategy on Vocational and Education Training during 2016-2020
- Strategy for modernising educational infrastructure 2018-2023.

To reduce drop out from VET, the National Agency for Qualifications works closely with the Ministry of Labour and Social Justice and with the Ministry of National Education, regarding strategies and policies for human resources training, also coordinating and controlling the activity of the training providers [8].

At the regional level, employer organizations, trade unions, schools, and local authorities, engaged in plan the supply and demand of VET, according to the regional and local plans, include measures to prevent and reduce drop out from VET.

During the period 2016-2018, the Presidential Administration has carried out a large public debate on Education and Research in Romania, under a national project "Educated Romania" [10]. This project intends to encourage the layering of society by value, to develop a culture of success based on performance, hard work, talent, honesty, and integrity. The main result of this project is a strategy for education and research in the time horizon of 2018-2030, with a country vision and specific goals.

There are a lot of national and international research projects related to school dropout phenomenon, which have like beneficiaries or partners different Romanian organisations/institutions.

3. Factors leading to ELVET

In the specialised literature, there are several explanatory mechanisms for early school leaving phenomenon: individual effects, family effects, peer effects, school effects, community effects.

In the study "Theoretical and methodological considerations when studying early school leaving in Europe", conducted within the project "Reducing Early School Leaving in Europe" [6], it is presented a model with three main levels commonly distinguished influencing ESL, but that interact with and influence each other:

- the macro-level of the structural and systemic features and policies: education and social policies; socio-economic context; social imaginaries
- the meso-level of the institutional context such as the policies and capital resources in school, the alternative learning arenas and the family
- the micro-level, which focuses on the individual.

In a research report, Early School Leaving: causes and consequences [3], is said that there is a significant correlation between school dropout and few factors:

- Limited family support (low educational and cultural capital of parents/guardians).
- Unfriendly, non-inclusive school environment (the degree to which the student is pleased to go to school, the extent to which he/she feels integrated, the seating in the classroom, non-involvement or low participation in preschool education).
- Low grades (self-representation and education valuing).
- The transition from one stage of education to another (the highest dropout rate is registered after the completion of the 8th grade).
- Pertaining to a vulnerable group.

But, usually, there is a mix of possible causes for school dropout, that varies from one case to another, depending on the personal situations of each of the students at risk of dropping out.

In table 1 we present the feedback analysis of the 67 answers to questionnaires, completed by teachers, educators or scientific staff in VET in Bihor County of Romania, regarding reasons why students dropping out of school. The model of questionnaires is inspired by [1].

Table 1. Feedback analysis of the questionnaires

Reasons why students dropout of school	*Very much [%]*	*Ade-quately [%]*	*Very little [%]*	*Not at all [%]*
Gender: Students who drop out are more likely to be male. Females who drop out often do so due to reasons associated with pregnancy	5	37	48	10
Ethnicity: The rate of dropout is higher on average for minority groups	42	54	4	0
Disability: Students with disabilities (especially those with emotional/ behavioural disabilities) are at greater risk of dropout	18	34	33	15
Grades: Students with poor grades are at greater risk of dropout	9	64	27	0
Mobility: High levels of household mobility contribute to increased likelihood of dropping out	6	46	46	2
Sense of belonging: Alienation and decreased levels of participation in school have been associated with increased likelihood of dropout	8	55	37	0
Lack of motivation: Students without motivation to study are more likely to drop out of school	27	63	9	1
Region: Students are more likely to dropout if they live in urban settings as compared to suburban or non-metropolitan areas	4	27	48	21
School size and type: School factors that have been linked to	0	7	54	39

dropout include school type and large school size				
School climate: Positive school climate is associated with lower rates of dropout	39	25	21	15
School policies: Alterable school policies associated with dropout include raising academic standards without providing supports, tracking and frequent use of suspension	9	22	55	14
Educational support in the home: Students whose families provide higher levels of educational support for learning are less likely to dropout	51	36	9	4
Parenting: Homes characterised by permissive parenting styles have been linked with higher rates of dropout	20	61	19	0
Family structure: Students who come from non traditional families (single-parent, unmarried, or blended families, tutor) are at greater risk of dropout	33	51	12	4
Socio-economic background: Dropouts are more likely if the students come from low-income families or in which the parents are unemployed	16	54	28	2
Stressful life events: Increased levels of stress and the presence of stressors (e.g. financial difficulty, health problems, early parenthood) are associated with increased levels of dropout	31	61	8	0

Other factors leading to dropping out, presented by the respondents:

- Searching for jobs in other localities. Seasonal work.
- Lack of interest in school.
- Precarious home.
- The material situation of the family.
- Lack of financial support from the family.
- The Roma customs or some Romani traditions.
- Families with parents left abroad or disinterested.
- Children who have their parents abroad have more freedom and they are harder to monitor.
- Disorganized families.
- Entourage.
- Other concerns (sports competitions).
- The health status.

In our both types of researches, background research and small-scale research, we have been identified and hierarchized the following factors conducting to the school dropout or early leaving from VET in Romania:

Table 2. Factors leading to school dropout

Background research	**Questionnaires**
1. Family factors: a) the material situation b) family relationships c) parents' disinterest d) the level of low education of parents e) quality house f) the family environment g) lack of aid to learning h) reluctant parents	***1. Family factors***: a) ethnicity b) educational support in the home c) family structure d) parenting e) socio-economic background of the family f) mobility of household family g) parents left abroad or disinterested h) disorganised families

	i) precarious home
2. School factors: a) organization and teaching methods b) inadequate attitude of teachers c) the material basis of the school d) school disinterest	***2. Individual factors***: a) stressful life events b) lack of motivation c) poor grades d) sense of belonging e) disability f) health status g) entourage h) seasonal work i) other concerns
3. Individual factors: a) psychological state b) personality characteristics c) attitude towards education d) limited potential	***3. School factors***: a) school climate b) school policies c) school location d) school size and type

4. Conclusion

By comparing the results obtained in the researches from those six countries, one can be said that, in spite of different educational systems, the factors leading to early school leaving do not vary that much from country to country. Some factors sometimes have almost similar values and preferences, and sometimes they differ, less or more, even till the situation they are opposite, from a participating country to another.

A 'whole school approach' is needed, where the entire school community (school leaders, staff, learners, and families) engages in a cohesive, collective and collaborative action, with strong cooperation with external stakeholders and the community at large. A good cooperation between VET schools and enterprises places a major role in influencing the decision for staying or leaving /dropping out of VET.

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REFERENTIAL OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES AT THE TEACHING STAFF

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Abstract: *For teachers, to fulfill their high quality, performing, and efficient duty, they must create a vast range of qualities, competencies, used to define them as a specialist, scientist, person of culture, educator, citizen and manager. The teacher meets a somewhat important occupation, to be part of their students or pupils influence when it comes to forming their personality and to prepare them for their future socio-professional, moral and citizen activities. The competencies of the didactic staff represent an ensemble of cognitive, affective, motivational and managerial capacities that interact with their personal traits. These didactic and professional competences are formed throughout the time and are but a combination of everyone's very knowledge, abilities and adequate attitudes. The efficiency of the didactic staff is made up by, firstly, the results of the students' or pupils' instructive-educational processes, and secondly, the competences that define them and are recommended to them, as specialist, with the aim of raising students' or pupils' personalities. These competences, once gained, will face changes and may be enhanced throughout career.*

Key words: *teacher; competencies; professional skills; abilities.*

Theoretical foundation

Pedagogical competencies of the didactic staff call "the capacity of the educator to pronounce upon a pedagogical problem, on the theme of profound knowledge of legalities and determinations of educational phenomena; as narrow sense, it refers to the capacity of a person to realize, at a certain level of performance, all typical tasks, specific to the didactic profession (Diaconu M. in Gliga, 2002, p. 27).

Competence training is given by the ability to apply certain principles of the behavior that should be a model, the preferred teaching strategies. I. Neacșu (1990), teaching skills include:

• organizing and structuring skills (classroom organization, structuring content, work organization, etc.);
• distribution of communication skills (request interactive response request of the front or student);
• resolution and evaluative skills (directing practical activity, cognitive students etc.);
• show potential formative powers (stimulating behaviors direct expression of critical opinion);
• expertise on socio-emotional climate (type influences personality of the teacher within the student);
• stimulating creativity skills (stimulating creativity conduct student) (Neacșu, 1990, p.243-244).

Professional competence is the ability to apply, transfer and combine knowledge and skills in situations and various work environments, to achieve the required activities in the workplace, the occupational standards.

According to the authors Jing E. Istrate I. (1998) "professional competence of teachers in education derives from the roles they perform during school organizations". Professional competence of the teacher represents all the cognitive, affective, motivational, which along with personality traits gives the skills required to perform a teaching that meets the objectives and has very good results.

The author proposes three types of competence forming in his opinion, the professional competence of teachers:

- The expertise (knowledge of materials, ability to establish links between theory and practice and innovation content with new scientific field;
- Pedagogical competencies (the ability to know students, to communicate with them, the ability to design activities of educational, to objectively evaluate programs and training activities to prepare students for self)
- Psychosocial and management competencies (ability to facilitate cooperation in the group of students, the responsibility to organize, guide and motivate students, the ability to assume responsibility, to establish responsibilities within the group of students.

Cristea S. (2010) highlights four types of general skills for teaching staff, namely:

- Political competencies demonstrated receiving and engaging direct and indirect responsibilities correctly transmitted to the macro-structural aims;
- Psychological competencies demonstrated by the reception and employment responsibilities properly transmitted from the micro aims;
- Scientific competencies demonstrated by the quality of projects developed at the line of continuity between basic and applied;
- Social competencies, coping resources dependent by education stakeholders in national educational community needs moving.

Perrenoud (1997) highlighted 10 priority areas of competence in teacher training and teachers:

1. Organization and animation learning situations
2. Management
3. Drafting and improving student progress differentiating devices
4. Involvement students in learning and applying
5. Teamwork
6. Participation in school leadership and parental involvement
7. Information
8. Using new technologies
9. Involvement in duties and ethical dilemmas of the profession
10. Managing your own continuing education.

Making an incursion into teacher competencies, we can conclude that these are not qualities that once acquired remain unchanged, but they are a component of the development of the personality of the individual, who throughout life develops, improves.

But the question arises: what are the basic competencies in the professional training of the teacher? Are these competencies influenced by the teacher's seniority or educational background? Does participation in continuous training facilitate the improvement of acquired skills? Based on these questions, we built a questionnaire with direct questions, multiple choices and hierarchies.

Methodology:

In order to establish a correlation between the seniority in education and the professional competences considered essential in the didactic career, we applied a questionnaire, own conception, among 40 primary school teachers, 3 urban units and 2 rural units.

Of the total number of teachers surveyed, 18 have over 25 years of education, 10 are aged 15-25, 9 are 5 to 15 years old, and 3 are in their early years of study between 0-5 years.

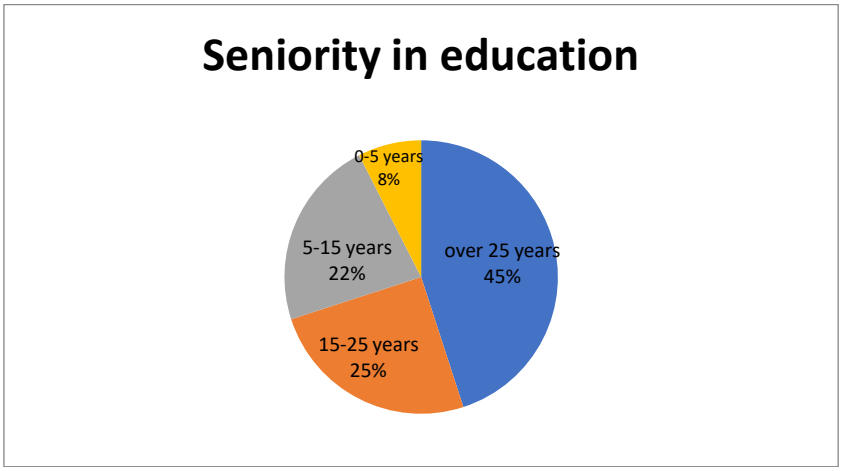

Figure 1: Teachers classification according their seniority in education

According to the centralized data, it emerges that out of the 40 teachers 27 have attended continuous training in the last 3 years. These courses were provided by different educational agents, educational institutions, and the participation of the questioned teachers was a voluntary one, generated by the desire for their own training and improvement. We can conclude that teachers with more than 25 years of age do not have the same interest in attending such courses as the early career teachers.

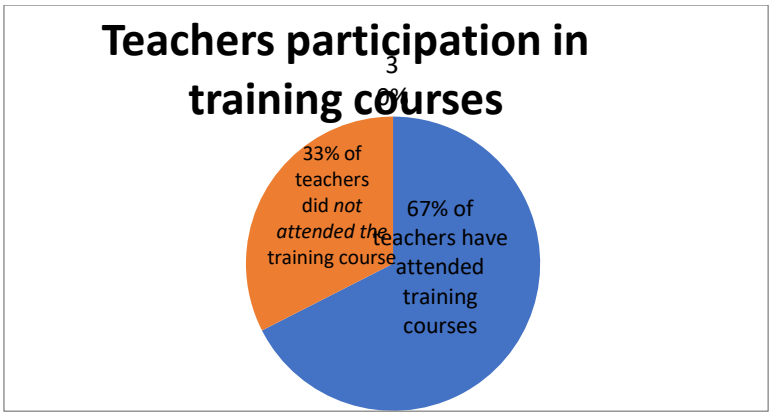

Figure 2: The participation of teachers in training courses in the last 3 years

When asked whether participation in these training courses contributed to improving professional skills in any way, all the subjects stated that these courses only contributed to enriching scientific knowledge, not to developing or improving professional skills.

Another item in the questionnaire asked the subjects to hierarchize, according to their own choices, a series of 15 professional skills that are considered essential in their own training.

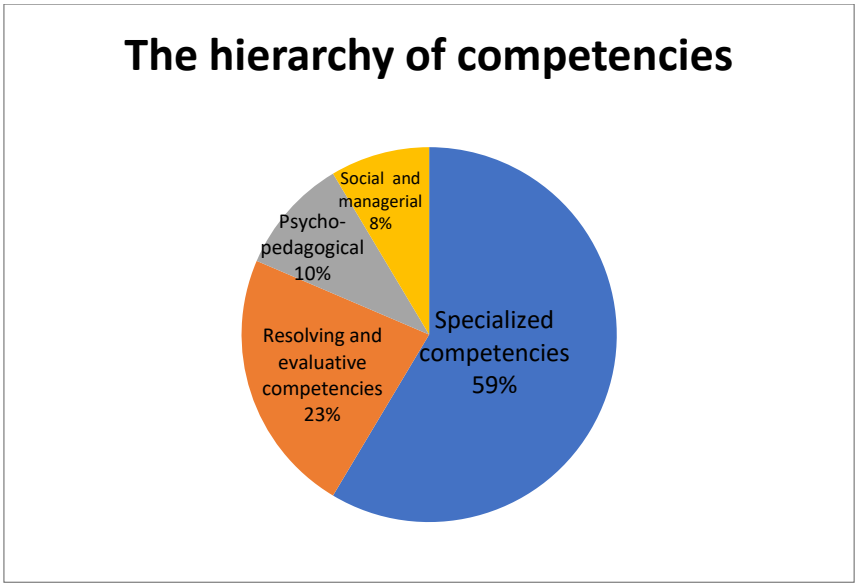

Figure 3: The teachers own options at the importance of professional competencies

Based on the evaluation of the results it was noticed that the questioned subjects considered that the first places of the competence hierarchy lie: the level of specialty (level of knowledge of matter), the resolving and evaluative competence by directing the practical and cognitive activity of the pupils psycho-pedagogical competence knows students, communicating with them, the ability to design instructional-educational activities, to evaluate objective programs and training activities, to prepare students for self-training), psychosocial and managerial competence.

Conclusions:

During the teaching career, the professional competencies of the teaching staff improve, but this performance is not dated by the participation of the staff in training or further training, nor by the age of education. Thus, we can assume that these skills are influenced by the personality of the teacher. By ranking the importance of acquiring professional competencies throughout the teaching career, the questioned subjects support 59% of the need to acquire specialized competencies, followed by 23% resolving and evaluating competencies, followed by psycho-pedagogical and social managerial skills.

By making a portrait of the teacher's competencies using the data obtained from the questionnaires, he must be well prepared theoretically, master the training methods, pedagogical techniques, be able to design activities and have the ability to assertive communication with the pupils.

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INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY IN SOCIAL WORK. NECESSARY DIRECTIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL NETWORKS FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS. ARPA PROJECT

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Abstract: *Aging has important consequences on mental health. In fact, the prevalence of certain mental disorders tends to increase with age: depression, but also dementia, especially Alzheimer's disease, significantly affects people over the age of 65 and is a major public health problem. In the ERASMUS + KA project, Mental Health Professional Networks and Strategic Partnership for Elderly People (ARPA Ageing) Aurel Vlaicu University of Arad is a partner alongside: Center of Psychological and Pedagogical Support in Belgium, Panepistimio Kritis University of Crete, EPSM Lille Metropole and the University of Luxembourg. The project is a follow-up to the project Employment in Europe-Public Health and Mental Health: Urgent Training, Social Integration and Employability Needs (SPSM) project, which had as main objective to improve the practice of professionals and to help the social and occupational integration into the labor market of people suffering from mental disorders.*

Key words: *mental illness; aging, mentality, care, networks, professions, quality;*

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Introduction

If in the previous SPSM project the target group of the beneficiaries was represented by young people who were seeking employment, the beneficiaries of this project are elderly people who have acquired a mental illness at a certain point throughout their lives. The project aims to build a network of professionals to support elderly people with a mental health problem, so as to help them to live a decent life, to socialize, to feel useful and accepted, with special focus on the improvement of their lives. The disengagement theory, the activity theory, age stratification theory, social exchange theory and socio-economic theory are the most widespread sociological theories that explain social aging, but also contain the elements that make up the premise for the action of factors involved in improving or delaying the effects of aging. (La Commission européenne, Eurostat – Edition 2012).

Strategies of ARPA Ageing Project

According to the methodology, the aim of the ARPA Ageing in Europe project is to improve the skills and abilities of professionals, healthcare professionals and social workers to reduce risk situations for older people. This goal is pursued from a dual perspective: improving professional practice networks and improving care for elderly people diagnosed with mental illness.

The specific aims of the project are:

- Conduct a review of the literature on networks of professionals with elderly people with mental disorders,
- Conduct a professional practice analysis survey of professionals working in a network for this population,
- Conduct socio-cultural reflection, on networking in Europe, for the accompaniment of the elderly,
- Design, set up and test a European exchange and communication platform for setting up and monitoring network work,
- Build a guide of recommendations on conditions and parameters favourable to the efficiency of a network of care and follow-up of elderly people with mental disorders,
- Evaluate the project's approach and the tools put in place,
- Promote mental health networking for professionals (European conferences and publications).

Thus, multidisciplinary professional teams have been set up at the level of all partners who have investigated the local situation in relation to elderly people with mental disorders, consultation and analysis of international scientific literature.

Literature research

Mental health networks in France

According to the studies conducted on bibliographic documents and online search in social work networks for elderly people with mental illness, we identified a very well-structured geriatrics network in France. For example, the Alpha geriatrics network is a local network initiated by local actors who identified the need for coordination across the country to promote access to elderly care. Four criteria for inclusion in an internal team have been established to determine the person's entry into the network: 1. to be in a difficult medical or social situation (psychological or physical dependence) in the geographical area of intervention, 2. to be over 60 years old, 3. be in a situation of isolation and high risk, fall, psychological fragility, lack of medical follow-up, social precariousness etc. 4. brutal deterioration of health or autonomy, age-related polypathology

(Christelle Bruyère, 2008, pp.123).

The French Society of Geriatrics and Gerontology is a research society that combines the skills of geriatrics and gerontology: Geriatrics - is a vast domain: medicine for the elderly with complex bio-psycho-social problems or age-related disorders at home or in institutions. Gerontology includes disciplines and various sciences related to aging: biological, psychological, sociological, demographic, public health, health administration, education, law, architecture, etc. For example, Champagne-Ardenne is a company of gerontology and palliative care. For people over 60 years in a situation of addiction and/or a patient in need of palliative care and/or a person with difficulty in accessing healthcare, the Osmose Network is authorized by the Regional Health Agency of Ile- de-France to support adults and is made up of a team of 12 professionals.

Pallia RIVAGE is a support network made up of a doctor, a nurse and a psychologist, closely related to health and social care actors: medical and psychosocial professionals who help improve patients' everyday lives, their and the professionals` entourage.

SPAD-Le Réseau de Santé aims to promote care service coordination and calibrating the skills of selected professionals. It also promotes physical and telephone continuity, from 9am to 6pm, from Monday to Friday, as well as home and structured visits upon request. Health networks aim at promoting access to care through interdisciplinary teams that provide care tailored to the person's health needs, diagnosis and care, but also preventive educational services.

Associations et Sociétés Savantes pour mentale health-Le CNPP-CNQSP (https://www.cnpp-cnqsp.com) is a federation made of 44 academic psychiatric societies whose members advocate for the establishment of a single National Psychiatric Council, which aims to develop skills for professionals to help improve the quality of psychiatric care.

Mental health networks in Luxemburg

In Luxembourg, the network of geriatric and psychiatric care is extremely well implemented. For example, *La Plate-Forms de Concertation en Santé Mentale en Provincia de Luxembourg (http://www.plateformepsylux.be/la-plate-forme)* has the role of mediation and conducts consulting activities to better respond to population`s needs and to improve the quality of care for elderly people with mental health problems. The consultations refer to possible collaboration and division of labour (on integrated mental health care). There is a real collaboration network at national level on the collection and exploitation of data on the needs of carers for people with mental health problems. There is a political dialogue on admission, discharge and transfer, as well as the coordination of medical and psychosocial policies.

COPAS (http://www.copas.lu/locations/centre-de-sante-mentale) are providers that offer care and assistance for the elderly, the sick, the mentally disabled either at home or in institutions. It has 55 members working in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg in nursing homes, integrated centres for the elderly, psycho-geriatric day-care centres, structures and services for people with disabilities, institutions active in the field of extra-hospital psychiatry, support networks, home care and foster houses. To help and support the users of their structures and services, COPAS members have over 11,000 employees. The list of specialized RESOLUX institutions can be accessed at http://www.resolux.lu/imprimer-institutions

Mental health network in Belgium

When dealing with the social network in Belgium, we mention the Brabantul Valon Wallon-Platform(http://www.pfsmbw.be/index.php/nos-membres/services-de-sante-mentale/ssm-jodoigne) which is a non-profit organization that brings together psychiatric

services in general hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, mental health services, foster housing services, and volunteer care. So far, the Platform has 28 partner institutions, as follows:

- 8 hospitals: Psychiatric services in the General Hospital, psychiatric hospitals for children, a neurological centre, a paediatric centre, a functional rehabilitation centre for children
- 10 ambulatory services: 9 mental health services, 1 counselling service
- 6 intermediate structures: 3 foster homes, a Therapeutic Centre, the Day Community Centre and a day care centre for people with double diagnosis (mental and mental health disability)
- 2 psychiatric care teams for home intervention
- 1 S.O.S. Child and family team
- 1 mobile intervention cell and a day care centre for people with double diagnosis

PFRCC-*La Plate-forme de Concertation en Santé Mentale des Régions du Centre et de Charleroi* (http://www.pfrcc.be). This platform is an association created by the joint initiative of mental health institutions and services in its territory, the purpose of which is to promote and organize a dialogue between the mental health care structures (and dependencies) that exert their activities there, as well as with their partners in other sectors. In this respect, it aims to improve access to mental health care for the inhabitants of the region. The platform brings together professionals from 6 mental health services (HP, SPHG, MSP, IHP, SSM, INAMI).

The main activities of the Platform are:

- organization of consultation or intervention groups on its territory
- organization and participation in inter-platform working groups (in the Walloon region, Brussels and the German-speaking community)
- representing its members in the field of mental health in various local and regional authorities
- organizing a mediation service under the 2002 law on patient rights
- the availability of a repertoire of mental health care and other areas.

Sans Souci (https://www.sans-souci.be/fr/Plate-forme-de-concertation-pour-la-Sante-Mentale) is a platform that reunites professionals from 6 mental health systems around Brussels:

- psychiatric hospitals
- psychiatric services in general hospitals
- psychiatric houses
- house protected initiatives
- mental health services
- INAMI psycho-social rehabilitation agreements

In addition, representatives of integrated home care services, mutual societies and patient and family associations are involved in consultation within working groups as an initiative of the Platform.

Le RSM SA (https://sante-mentale.ch/public/personnes-agees) is a platform that offers ambulatory consultations, semi-hospital care and hospital care for people over the age of 65 with a mental health condition.

Ligue Bruxelloise Francophone pour la Santé Mentale (http://www.lbfsm.be) brings together numerous specialized institutions in mental health area.

Mental health networks in Greece

For Greece, we have the CAIRN.INFO Platform (https://www.cairn.info/revue-vie-sociale-et-traitements-2012-1-page-128.htm) with information concerning the psychiatric Reform in Greece: some remarks about the current precariousness caused by the crisis - the economic crisis could also influence the funding of public health services in other European countries and, in addition, become the alibi of the conservative governments that denounce radical change policies of segregated psychiatry (Stylianidiss, Pantelidous, 2007; 83: 682-8)

Ilias Grammatikopoulos, professor at Ioannina University in Greece mentions in his work Mental health in the era of economic crises in Greece (http://www.alliedacademies.org/journal-mental-health-agingthat that the percentage of elderly population will double between 2015 and 2050 from 12% to 22%. The most common neuropsychiatric disorders in this age group are depression, and anxiety disorders that affect more than 20% of adults aged 60 and older. It is therefore necessary to develop networks of interventions in the provision of services and support for the prevention and management of mental and physical disorders (NICE Quideline). Another platform with useful information in the field is http//www.geronlib.gr.

Mental health networks in Romania

In Romania, the main concern of the Ministry of Health is first and foremost to promote the health of the population, especially the prevention of illness. In Romania, 3.2% of the population admits having had mental health issues[8]. There are also some dysfunctions in the care system currently available to people with mental health problems in Romania. The system of services addressed to people with mental health problems is incomplete, having certain weak links or missing links. In this respect, preventive measures are promoted at the level of the health care providers responsible for health education in schools, healthcare organizations and mass media. As such, it is intended to identify the main issues related to mental health and to present viable solutions for improving and resolving these problems as effectively as possible. ″In Romania, in 1965, there were 460,000 psychiatric patients. Of them, 82% (381.000 patients) had organic brain syndromes of elderly, neuroses, alcoholism, personality and behavioural disorders; and 18% (79,000 patients) suffered from severe depression syndrome, psychoses, dementia, and the other and mental diseases. «The epidemiologic studies made were insufficient, lacking in many respects the standards of a reliable statistical outlook» (Donna, 1993)″ (Gavrilă-Ardelean & Gavrilă-Ardelean, 2017).

SenioriNet (http://www.seniornet.org/) is an NGO network created in 2014 and addressed to the elderly. It is financed by Caritas România Confederation in partnership with White Cross Foundation Romania, Habilitas Association- Centre for Resources and Professional Training, ADAM Association and Change Association, CARITAS MITROPOLITAN Greek-Catholic Association BLAJ, the Orthodox Philanthropic Association DEVA.

Estuar Foundation (http://www.estuar.org) is an NGO that developed the project *Social Service for Mental Health* in partnership with the General Direction for Social Work and Child Protection. Its main objective is to extend the access to basic and specialized social services for vulnerable groups with mental health issues and their families.

ASO Romania Centre for Medical-Social Assistance for the elderly– Mogosoaia (http://conaculdinvoluntari.freewb.ro)/

[8] Manuela Sofia Stănculescu,Dana Niţulescu, Mihnea Preotesi,Mugur Ciumăgeanu, Raluca Sfetcu, Persoanele cu probleme de sănătate mintală în Romania: stereotipuri, cauze şi modalităţi de îngrijire percepute, atitudini şi distanţă socială http://www.revistacalitateavietii.ro/2008/CV-3-4-2008/04.pdf

The platform Principesa Margarita de Romania Foundation (https://www.fpmr.ro) is guided by the principle "Never alone" and offers the phone network for the elderly with call-back services.

Conclusions

We can conclude that there is a need to create specialized mental health networks for seniors aged 65 and over. It is necessary to insist on the training of professionals with focus on care services for the elderly and the strengthening of the interventions at home. Emphasis should be placed on integrated care services in close relation to specific mental health issues. Particular emphasis should be placed on the quality of home care, rather than using psychiatric institutions. There is a need for specialized mental health services for the elderly. It is confirmed that professionals need to be trained in prevention as well as in managing different mental health interventions among older people. Knowing the needs of the elderly determines the need to train multidisciplinary professionals to improve local network practices through optimal and concrete strategies.

The development of professional competences and the improvement of professional practice for specialists caring for the elderly with mental conditions is a goal of such projects.

The specific competences acquired by all social actors should also be optimized.

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IDENTIFYING THE PRESCHOOL TEACHERS NEEDS ON TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCES TRAINING CAREER USING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study is to investigate pre-school teachers' training needs according to the actual early childhood curriculum. Using the questionnaire, we draw the recent theory and research of the preschool curriculum that outlines the main teacher`s role on personal professional training. This tool should analise the educators six professional competences - three transversal competences according to the European Qualifications Framework descriptors and minimal performance standards for competences evaluation and RNCIS grid as well. We use the questionnaire to investigate the role of acquiring and developing transversal competences of the educator's profile process who teach in early childhood stage. This will get statistic results regarding their initial and professional training and also of the proces of their self-evaluating performance and the need of improving competences. Teacher`s professional development represents as far as the teaching career the context of Romanian sistem education, legislation and pedagogical science theory and school practice. Professional initial and continue teachers training process always had continuity elements of changing world of teaching and remained open-ended and competency based.*

Key words: *professional training; competences; self-evaluation; early- childhood curriculum;*

This study aims to identify the level of the acquiring transversal competences in forming the competences profile of educators, who teaches in pre-school.

The National Preschool Curriculum is designed to meet the needs of earlychildhood and preschool education care stage. Preschool teachers also need an appropriate trainning for teaching and caring for children from 2 up to 5 years old. RNCIS requires preschool teachers who are highly skilled, knowledgeable, and experienced in teaching and learning to provide knowledges, specific behaviour experiences and required competences. (professional Competences, didactical competences, care and protection children competences). So the effectiveness of teaching and learning in preschool stage depends on the implementation of teaching which involves preschool teachers who really understand, appreciate and able to carry out the teaching and learning as intended. To ensure that teachers in the profession of preschool education have the needing skills this study should be apply to obtain the information on competencies that must be acquired whe attending in earlychood period.

The problem of initial and continuous tranning that requires teachers teaching for implementing The National Preschool Curricullum should be a priority on proffesional development for everyone. So there is a permanent challenge for improving the level of proffesional and didactic aproaches on earlychildhood teaching.

Also the Teaching-Staff Resource Centers as Didactic Corp Houses are authorized to offer professional development courses that regard the system of professional and transversal

skills (RNCIS professional frame standards) necessary to teachers due to the national and european policies and strategies in the field of education.

To ensure that the preschool teachers have lifelong learning competences they should attend initial and continuous tranning to atchieve new teaching aproaches and transversal competences. Lifelong learning is focused on the acquisition and development of key competences and of competences specific to an area of activity or to a qualification in this case earlychildhood period. Also with the fact that the main goals of lifelong learning are concerned with the full development of a person and the sustainable development of society including multiple perspectives as: civic, social, personal proffesional or occupational ones.

Competence or skill delimitation is viewed on different abordation Rothwell (2002) ``is a feature that predisposed individuals toward certain behaviors and skills to achieve exemplary performance``. Tobias Ley and Albert Dietrich (2003) stated that ``the skills and competencies that are used in the organization is to reveal the characteristics of an individual in order to utilize their expertise effectively and smoothly``. Spencer and Spencer 1993 define competencies as ``the capacities that exist within a person and which predict superior performance and accordong to (Lawler and Ledford 1992), a certain combination of individual skills was seen as the determinant of competent job behaviour``.

Background

The study was organizing on the developing preschool teachers lifelong learning competences thru continuous tranning for better implementing pre-school curriculum. For a point of view Didactic Tranning House ``Alexandru Gavra`` from Arad usees questionnaire to gett certain information for designing trainning programs or courses. This investigative tool offers a certain information of education fied regarding their level of personal and professional development. So transversal competences or lifelong learning competences as: communication in mother tongue, science, civic, arts, cultural and learning to learn are always to be improved for offering suitable aproaches for each children and for ensuring an integrated learning. The findings will provide new teaching aproaches that may help increasing the quality of preschool education and care in our educationall system. The quallity in preschool education depends most on teachers. Pre-school teachers should be given adequate training before they undertake the responsibility of nurturing and guiding students. According to Fullan (2000), ``teachers are the heart of educational change and teachers are also the most significant agent``. Their role is to develop the main objectives of the National Preschool Curriculum into integrated learning experiences.

Preschool teachers need to acquire knowledge and improve skills in all child development stages and new teaching approaches in according to the scope and frame objectives that accentuate holistic development providing basic skills and look after positive behaviours of children. They also are responsable for offering the best learning opportunities for children holistic personality development because they are the main decision growers in their classroom. Gaudelius and Speirs (2002) expose that teachers are responsible for implementing the curriculum effectively.

Teachers are the most important education factors along with the family enviroment as they directly contribute and develop children behaviours and skills. So improving teacher professional competences is realy relevant to this research objective because the findings may reflect the competency-bassed profile possessed by trainees in providing professional teachers in early childhood. Lihana (2005) found that preschool teachers' pedagogical practices are alarming. Also preschool teachers face some problems with the important role to be the first modelling factors upon young children behaviours.

Aim of the study

The main preocupation of the Didactic Corp Houses Alexandru Gavra of Arad Romania is to identify the trainning teacher needs to authorize tranning courses for all teachers in this case for pre-school teachers who have to be ``competent`` to deliver the pre-school education and care on this educational segment.

This study describes the process of analizing and interpreting the applied questionnaires on a preschool teachers cathegory who teach in urban and also in rural nursery schools.

Study Objectives

The questionnaire was designed to collect certain information upon their need on professional development stage regarding : ability to plan own professional developmen, knowledges of the system of preschool and care education, professional competence for planning (monitoring and documentation of educational activities), organizational skills and pedagogical guidance of groups, knowledge of developmental and learning needs of children, ability to use information and communication technologies in education, specific competences, knowledge and skills – arts, music, speech, drama, physical and health competence, social inclusion, difference and diversity, transversal /transferable skills. The questionnaire aims to identify the appropiate developing needs of preschool teachers for improving their classroom activity. There have been consulted 240 pre-school teachers and 12 managers of 12 different nursery schools.

The objective of this study

The objective of the study was to identify the early childhood preschool teachers needs seducational segment developing speciffic competences according to children needs using as a tool the questionnaire.

Study Questionnaire

Are students at The Teacher Education Institute of Malaysia have competence in teaching, management, communication, professional development, and the care and protection of children.

Research Interests

According to the identyfing needs of preschool teachers CCD ``Alexandru Gavra`` of Arad institution thru it`s educational specialists as *methodists* teachers will design tranning courses related to their competence development needs.

This study shows on how transversal and professional competences can play an important role in teacher's career and also classroom activity in determining the success on their education intervention.

The findings are also reliable on the development and for improving teaching professionalism at preschool teachers. The results of attending trainning courses specially designed will indicate later the competences improvement thru children performance.

Literature Review

Professional competences development

According to (Brooke, 1994) ``a professional educator needs to develop, to improve, to learn, to inquiry, and to make a research``. He says that ``a professional competence development involves self-development, attend any new knowledge and research, and create a reflection on how the experience of teaching should be checked and fixed in the practice of teaching``.

Early childhood teachers always need to improve their professional competences through early childhood courses or to participate at workshops and speciffic seminars. Barich (2007) notes that ``the professionalism must be customary for teachers with more experience and practice of those who have a willingness to evolve and change``.

Education tranning courses increases reflective thinking, facilitate the development of self-reflective thinking related to professional competence that will increases the teaching qualities of the future classroom. Christensen, and Moravick (2005) emphasized with the ideea that he most important tasks of professional teachers of early childhood education segment must ensure the safety and health of children, which is also the most important aspect that parents and the community ask for teachers.

Bloom (2005) emphasized the ideea that ``the teacher is responsable to the curriculum, supervision, communication with familly and provides a safe learning environment for children`. He acts responsable and requires a continuous professional knowledge base. Bloom (2005) also states that children who have a safe learning environment also showed the better development of cognitive and social skills.

Professional competence for organizing, planning, monitoring of educational activities

Preschool teachers will improve their organizing, planning and monitorizing competences by applying knowledge of planning and implementation of educational tranning programmers in pre-school classrooms. They will monitorizing and documenting the development of individual and groups of children either alone or in teams or small groups. Teachers wiill have the appropriate knowledge and skills to stimulate curriculum that enhances children integrate learning (cognitive, emotional, social, physical learning). They will be able to link knowledges skills and abilities to specialized fields and develop communicative skills the context of comprehensive children's developmen. Preschool teachers will be able to create educational conditions that will integrate all communication activities (oral comunication, language, role-play activities, drama play activities). Teachers will also manage knowledges of how to plan ad organize pre-school documentation and children portofolios.

Organizational and pedagogical skills guidance of groups

After teachers attending specially tranning courses designed for the identified teachers needs, they will be able to use various teaching strategies for planning activity and realization of pre-school educational programs. Improving pedagogical skills will help on group learning while recognizing the individual needs of all children within groups so able to manage inappropriate behaviour in children. Developing organizing competences will be valuing the needs and contributions of parents/careers in their child's learning.

Social inclusion development competences

Attending this area of traning courses teachers learned on showing much respect for differences in family structures different cultural origins or ethnicities also beliefs and ways of life. They were able to integrate pedagogic and methodical procedures for small groups of children from diverse backgrounds for designing the future classroom. There was created a supportive learning environment for children which respects differences and diversity as well. Theu learned and experienced context for engaging with the principles of diversity and multiculturalism in education. It was trained the reespecting of the individual socio-cultural backgrounds of children, children with special needs, and their parents or carers.

Transferable /Transversal Skills

Teachers were able to read analyze and to integrate and transfer in academic literature. Also they improved communicative competence in differnt contexts to a high standard in relation to speaking, presentations and online contexts. They were able to apply critical reasoning to practice evidence and research within the field of early childhood studies. Senior teachers possessed high-level skills in group work and also the capability to work independently on projects. Practicing with PDP plan (Developing Professional Plan) they were able to plan professional and career engagement within the field of employment. There were improved the abilitities to use ICT, the Internet and social media, in professional, for research activities and for knowledge updating contexts.

Method of Study

This study is based on quantitative and calitative information. In this study, was used a questionnaire to identify the needed competences of pre-school teachers. We used questions with five type of answers. CCD Arad always use this tool as an investigative method also most used for education research. The sample was selected from teachers who attend urban and rural nursery schools from Arad, Romania. There were involved 128 teachers and 12 nursery school managers. Respondents involved in this study have the same background identifications (they are qualified or unqualified teachers, debutants and senior teachers)

Assessment Instrument Researcher used was a Likert scale assessment based on the concept of developing professional competence in order to identify the the needed ***generic area competences*** as : ***professional competences development / professional competence for organizing, planning, monitoring of educational activities / knowledge and skills – arts, music, speech, drama, physical and health competence / social inclusion development competences / organizational and pedagogical skills guidance of groups.***

The answers were collected directly from the respondents that were assessed. This type of instrument is accepted to address the quantitative questions to be assessed, to obtain direct information from the respondents and also a descriptive answer. Likert scale is a flexible tool for analyze and have the capacity to contain many answers (Adam and Schvaneveldt, 1991). Babbie (1995) also described that ``Likert scale as a useful instrument to determine the extent to which a particular respondent attitudes and perspectives``.

Data Analysis

This was carried out to identify the professional and transversal competence of preschool teachers from earlychildhood of Arad. It was used SPSS version 16.0 pack tfor the data analyzed. Also on Zikmund (2003) SPSS was used a lot and accepted as a technique for analyzing quantitative data. All respondents were asked to give feedback through "Likert scale" with "5" indicates strongly agree and "1" indicates strongly disagree.

Table 1 ***Interpretative results***

- ***professional competences development***
- ***professional competence for organizing, planning, monitoring of educational activities***
- ***knowledge and skills – arts, music, speech, drama, physical and health competence***
- ***social inclusion development competences***
- ***transferable /transversal skills***

professional competences development	N	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Undecided/ Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5

Able to adress clear rules to create and maintain appropriate and known behaviour in the group	240	0,85,	1,25	2,84	2,38	2,44
Able to adjust selected teaching methods to learning aims within child-integrated learning	240	0,01	1,45	2,12	2,01	5,14
Able to creat a stimulating social and physical learning environment in the nursery class	240	1,21	0,21	0,12	2,12	4,14
professional competence for organizing, planning, monitoring of educational activities	240					
Applying knowledge of organizing planning and implementation of educational courses in pre-school classes	240	1,21	0,47	1,45	5,24	4,51
Organizing and monitoring the development of each individual and small groups of children either alone or in teams along with their colleagues	240	0,12	0,15	1,58	3,45	2,55
Able to integrate knowledges skills and abilities in specific fields and understands	240	1,25	1,24	2,15	3,45	3,14
knowledge and skills – arts, music, speech, drama, physical and health competence	240					
Able to integrate skills and knowledge in their own subject areas specialization to enhance pupils learning experiences	240	1,54	2,15	1,28	1,25	3,45
Able to understand and recognise the impacts of socio-cultural factors as they are related to health, well-being and children care	240	2,14	2,14	1,34	3,41	4,47
Able to understand the need of arts, music, speech, drama or texts in the classroom to meet children learning	240	0,14	0,58	0,25	4,25	3,45

needs						
social inclusion development competences	240					
Able to create a supportive learning environment for children and to acccept the differences and diversity	240	1,25	0,25	1,54	5,25	5,48
Able to respect and understanding of, the individual socio-cultural backgrounds of children their parents or carers.	240	0,56	0,57	1,56	5,48	4,14
Able to design and integrate in the teaching classroom pedagogic and methodical procedures or strategies for individuals or small groups of children from diverse backgrounds or with special needs	240	0,12	0,35	2,45	3,14	4,25
Transferable /Transversal Skills	240					
Able to to communicate in diverse settings enviroments to a high standard in relation with familly or comunity educational contexts	240	0,54	0,14	0,35	4,25	5,14
Able to apply critical reasoning to practice evidence and researches within the field of early childhood stages studies	240	0,64	0,65	0,45	4,35	5,17
Able to planning professional development plan and career engagement within the field of employment	240	0,54	0,46	0,02	5,47	5,24

Findings

Descriptive statistical likert scale results showed that most of beginer teachers group were interested in delevoping competences from all the given five professional areas but with higher scor on transversal skills, communication competences, social inclusion development competences and professional competences. Senior teachers were interested on developing

knowledge and skills – arts, music, speech, drama, physical and health competence, speaking competences and transversal competences too.

Management and leadership competences (organizing, planning and monitorizing in education activities field) had the highest score. The professional and teaching competences categories had a lower score due to the tranning experiences and practices that senior teachers were attending more.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there were statistically significant issues on designing and attending trainning courses for developing professional and didactical competences. Beginer teachers considered an oportunitie for their self-management career so all the educational development fieds on preschool education were interrested on. They passed all the activities proposed with a lot of energy end interest. They manifested the ability to transfer the traninng context situations into various classroom teaching experiences.

Senior teachers were interested on developing management competences and thoughtful on tools for organizing their classroom management. Also senior teachers have manifested an obvious interes on social inclusion and strategies for improving collaborative teaching.

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NOTES ON CHARLES PEIRCE AND WILLIAM JAMES

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Abstract: *This article offers a condensed theoretical foray into the philosophical ideas of Charles Peirce and William James by highlighting some of the main developments and conceptual changes brought about by one of the most important modern philosophical movements, i.e. pragmatism.*

Key words: *pragmatism; idea; education; function; practicality;*

Generalities of American Pragmatism and Education

Pragmatism is a philosophical movement developed in the United States which considers both the meaning and the function of philosophical ideas to be determined as functional when they are primarily useful. Developed mostly in America during the latter part of the nineteenth century and during the first part of the twentieth century, pragmatism is usually taken to be a modern version of empiricism. Like all modern philosophical and social movements, it tended to oppose tradition and based its legitimacy on scientific discoveries and methods of science that were taken to show the role of the individual and the environment that defines him in a new light. Two of the major exponents of American pragmatism that this article focuses on are Ch. Peirce and William James.

One of the most important uses of pragmatism (outside philosophy) is to be found in educational theories. The role of pragmatism in educational models (especially the American educational system) is subject to continuous academic research. John Dewey`s works in particular continue to be at the forefront of the relationship between pragmatism and education. Whether considered valid or contested, the results of Dewey`s work are those of an undoubtedly substantive philosophy that left an important mark across several educational spectrums.

Ties between the American educational system and the American school of pragmatism are identified either at a functional level or are defined from a more general perspective (see Nakinde, 2011). For example, Hao (2017, 378) defines the following generalities pertaining to the effects of pragmatism on education (abbreviated quotation):

Student-centered Education: […] the establishment of the objectives of self-advancement, selection of subjects' autonomous activities and so on/ **Experience Accumulation and Ability Training.** Pragmatic education believes that the real education should be a process of experience accumulation and reorganization, but not a simple system of book studying/ **Committed to Providing Highly Competent People to the Society.** Pragmatism emphasizes efficacy, so the ultimate objective of pragmatic education is to transport "useful" people to the society. / **Impact on American Students and Society.** Undoubtedly pragmatic education improves students' independence, creativity, imagination, and manipulative ability; however, it also has brought many problems to the students and society. First, pragmatic education's overstress of the dominant role of student in study leads to the fact that students are not as assiduous as before.

This article offers a succinct overview of the main concepts developed by two of the most important figures of American pragmatism - Ch. Peirce and William James - in an attempt to offer a more complete perspective on pragmatism, beyond the educational ideas

and commentaries found in the works of the aforementioned authors. (For the latter, extensively covered subject, see for example Plowright David, *Charles Sanders Peirce: Pragmatism and Education*, 2016 and Podeski Ronald, *William James and Education*, 1976). In doing so, this article aims to highlight some of the more complex and original philosophical ideas that defined American pragmatism.

Charles Peirce

In short, my view is the true one, a young man wants a physical education and an aesthetic education, an education in the ways of the world and a moral education, and with all these logic has nothing in particular to do; but so far as he wants an intellectual education, it is precisely logic that he wants; and whether it be in one lecture room or another, his ultimate purpose is to improve his logical power and his knowledge of methods. To this great end a young man's attention ought to be directed when he first comes to the university; he ought to keep it steadily in view during the whole period of his studies; and finally, he will do well to review his whole work in the light which an education in logic throws upon it. (Peirce 1882, p. 337)

Charles Sanders Peirce is considered the founder of pragmatism, although he changed the name of his philosophical position to "pragmaticism". In the late 19th century he tried to change the direction of pragmatism towards a theory of meaning (as opposed to W. James who understood it as a theory of truth), considering that there is a connection between meaning and action, that the meaning of an idea is to be found in its effects manifested through actions and that humans are generating beliefs through their "habits" of conduct. Although not their primary benefit, true ideas are considered to be useful when they provide order and predictability. Therefore, an idea's base of morality shifted towards the domain of *usefulness*, which in this particular case is generating habits of behavior.

Peirce regarded pragmatism as a method to clarify notions considered to be already established by the philosophical tradition. The fundamental principle of pragmatism in Peirce`s vision is that the meaning of an idea is best established by putting it through an experimental test and then observing the results. He focused his attention especially on methodological procedures, as available in sciences, thus exchanging the traditional path with a modern method. He considered that the testing of a certain hypotheses through "laboratory" experimentation will end up in producing a clear type of experience which could be defined through the process of testing and, additionally, it could maintain its logical meaning[9].

Peirce considered that one cannot be sure of a certain belief, that any truth was provisional and non definitive, since in any proposition a coefficient of probability must be taken into account. This theory, called by Pierce *fallibilism* should not be confused with skepticism; skepticism is a type of questioning; *fallibilism* is a provisional belief, one upon which one is prepared to act.

Peirce`s pragmatism, ultimately a logical theory, interprets thought in terms of operation and control, and acknowledges an inseparable connection between rational *knowing* and rational *use*. The whole function of thinking is viewed as one step in the production of what is defined as "habits" of conduct. More to the point, "for Peirce, the law of reason is the

[9] Peirce developed a criterion of meaning in terms of consequences and a view on beliefs defined as *habits of conduct.* His interests however were not limited to philosophy; his areas of interest extended to logic, epistemology, scientific method, cosmology, and semiotics.

basis for regularities or habits. It is subject to both modification and growth. It demands not exact conformity; it does not freeze further modifications of habit" (Velasco, 1978: 15).

William James

The words of a poem, the formulas of trigonometry, the facts of history, the properties of material things, are all known to us as definite systems or groups of objects which cohere in an order fixed by innumerable interactions, of which anyone part reminds us of the others (James, 1883: 66-67).

William James is generally considered to be one of the most influential American philosophers. He graduated from Harvard, obtaining a medical school diploma, and in 1879 began teaching philosophy after working for two years as an instructor of anatomy at Harvard University. His major influences during his formative years were the works of Mill, Bain, Renouvier and most importantly Henri Bergson, whom he knew personally and whose works played an important role during his later years. **Principles of Psychology** (1890) was his first book available to the public, and was considered to have set new directions in this particular field of science.

James dealt with moral, epistemological, and metaphysical problems in a particular way, opposing immediate experience to intellectual idealism. James' philosophy maintains the plurality of realities (which, according to him, experience consists of), against any balancing or simplifying singularity. Pragmatism, as James defines it, has become a pivotal notion in modern thinking. James developed a view, according to which consciousness functions in an active way to relate and organize thoughts, giving them continuity. In psychology, James' theory is called functionalism, and there are clear lines that unite his psychological observations to his philosophical system.

James furthered his theory of pragmatism in books such as **Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking** (1907) and **The Meaning of Truth: A Sequel to Pragmatism** (1909). He described pragmatism as a method for analyzing philosophic problems as well as a theory of truth. He has turned away from abstract theories and fixed, immutable principles, emphasizing the importance of facts and relative principles. James considered philosophies (thus denying an absolute and complete system able to answer all questions) to be mere terminologies of personal temperament, developed a correlation between "tough-minded" and "tender-minded" temperaments (*The Meaning of Truth*) and imposed empiricist and rationalist positions in philosophy. Theories, in James's vision, are nothing else but "instruments" used by individuals to solve problems and should be judged in terms of practical costs for the human conduct. An idea`s or action`s morality, as well as truth, should be judged, according to James, in a way which evaluates its outcome in human experiences.

In **A Pluralistic Universe** (1909) and **Essays in Radical Empiricism** (1912), James developed and underlined his metaphysical position: there is no fixed external world to be discovered by the mind of the individual in search for higher grounds, but instead there is a so called "blooming-buzzing confusion" that one defines through experience. In this case experience is the only factor that has potential for restructuring the world by giving it an organized and harmonious structure.

James believed that the possession of truth is not a means in itself but a preliminary way to satisfaction. Knowledge is no longer described by the traditional "how it is built?" but becomes "how can I make it?"; an instrument existing as a practical utility. True ideas are those we can assimilate, validate, corroborate, and verify, *i.e.* ideas or beliefs are useful and truth happens to an idea and reality is a process that has not got a defined space; it is growing where the mind discovers new territories.

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