EDUCATIA 21 JOURNAL

Issue, No. 16/2018

Indexed in:

cross**ref**

sowiport

ERIH PLUS
EUROPEAN REFERENCE INDEX FOR THE
HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

GIGA
German Institute of Global and Area Studies
Leibniz-Institut für Globale und Regionale Studien

Central and Eastern European Online Library

FACHPORTAL PÄDAGOGIK Erziehungswissenschaft
Bildungsforschung
Fachdidaktik

OCLC WorldCat®

ProQuest.

Issue, No. 16/2018

Contents

Teacher for talented students, a promoter of education for values

Tina Vrabie, Carmen Mihaela Creţu

Teacher for talented students, a promoter of education for values

Tina Vrabie [a*], **Carmen Mihaela Creţu** [b]

[a,b] *Doctoral School of Faculty of Psychology and Education Science, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iaşi, Toma Cozma Street 3, 700704, Iaşi, Romania*

Corresponding author: turiceanutina@yahoo.com

Abstract

Keywords:
talented students, good teacher, values promoting, moral values, education, teaching

The pedagogical story of what the good teacher's characteristics mean is different according to the research findings in the regular classroom situations and, respectively, in the inclusive educational settings. One of such inclusive settings addresses the talented students. They require special attention from teachers and school policy makers in order to fully develop their talent potential. Talented students have specific psycho-behavioural characteristics and special needs that require specialized, differentiated and personalised teaching.

Our work focuses on talented students' moral values and their intense socio-emotional characteristics and needs, such as the receptivity to moral perceptions, the sense of justice, altruism and orientation towards the fulfilment of ideals and the increased general sensitivity. This is the reason their teachers are highly challenged to profess and to promote the education for values.

The methodological approach of this article is based on gifted-education-for-values-orientated literature review. The work provides also a synthesis of the good teacher's competences emerged from the relevant evidence-based research data found in recent literature. We found that most of these research results underline the desirable characteristics and competencies of the talented students' teacher, as a moral beliefs promoter.

Zusammenfasung

Schlüsselworte:
begabte Studenten, guter Lehrer, Werte Förderung, moralische Vorstellungen, Ausbildung, Lehre

Die pädagogische Geschichte von dem, was die Eigenschaften des guten Lehrers bedeuten, unterscheidet sich nach den Forschungsergebnissen in den regulären Unterrichtssituationen und jeweils in den inklusiven Bildungseinstellungen. Eines dieser inklusiven Bildungseinstellungen befasst sich mit den talentierten Studenten. Sie erfordern besondere Aufmerksamkeit von Lehrern und Schule-politischen Entscheidungsträger, um sich voll auf ihr Talent Potenzial zu entwickeln. Talentierte Studenten haben spezifische Psycho-Verhaltensmerkmale und besondere Bedürfnisse, die erfordern spezielle, differenzierte und individuelle Lehre.

Unsere Arbeit konzentriert sich auf den moralischen Werte der begabten Schüler und ihre intensive sozioemotionalen Eigenschaften und Bedürfnisse, wie die Empfänglichkeit für moralischen Wahrnehmungen, der Sinn für Gerechtigkeit, Altruismus und Ausrichtung auf die Erfüllung der Ideale und die erhöhte allgemeine Empfindlichkeit. Dies ist der Grund, ihre Lehrer sehr infrage gestellt werden, die Ausbildung für Werte zu bekennen und zu fördern.

Der methodologische Ansatz dieses Artikels basiert auf der Rezension der begabten-Bildung-für-Werte-orientierte Literatur. Die Arbeit stellt auch eine Synthese der Zuständigkeiten des guten Lehrers, entstand aus den relevanten evidenzbasierte in der neueren Literatur gefunden Forschungsdaten. Wir fanden, dass die meisten dieser Forschungsergebnisse die gewünschten Eigenschaften und Kompetenzen der begabten Schüler Lehrer unterstreichen, als Förderer der moralischen Überzeugungen.

1. Introduction

The actual legislative framework contains provisions regarding the cooperative relationship that should be established between schools and families.

The fact that teaching is a moral approach, which involves performing constructive educational activities based on values and moral principles, has been demonstrated by educational specialists a long time ago. Hansen (2001), in his review of a large number of studies on this subject, draws attention to the complexity of teaching as a moral activity (as cited in Willemse,

Lunenberg & Korthagen, 2004, pp. 205-206). Thereby, the most difficult questions about the education for values that teachers have to answer are: *In what ways should the teachers approach the extent of values in the school context? What methodology should teachers use in teaching students about values? What is the reference system to which they should relate in this regard? What are the most appropriate strategies which could be applied for the development of students' skills to put into practice the values they have internalized in the school context?*

In the attempt to identify the answer to all these questions, researchers in the field of education have studied the strategies and the practices used in school context for preparing students as moral agents, beyond achieving academic performance. The practices that Australian early years' teachers describe as important for teaching moral values consist in engaging students in morally-rooted activities, or with a heightened potential in shaping by way of demonstration, engaging a system of instructive frameworks, advancing in explicit contexts the values of social morality with meanings close to children's understanding. A powerful tool in teaching a moral code to gifted children is involving them in role playing situations (Johansson et. all, 2011), in which they could find a relation to their inner and outer social functioning. In order to be preoccupied and to adopt this sort of strategies and practices for promoting education for values the teacher himself has to have a desirable behaviour and therefore, implicitly, a set of values, a set that must invoke a deep implication, respect for the uniqueness of the student's being, commitment in the development of this uniqueness, and cooperation (Tirri, 2010 as cited in Brady, 2011). These recent researches construct the profile of the modern teacher, one who puts the student before and beyond him/ herself, who understands the role of education as a sum of relationships sustaining the student in challenging his/ her boundaries.

Starting from the premise of the complexity of teaching as a moral activity, we consider that the teacher profile is an essential aspect in approaching the extent of values in the school context. The teacher profile refers to the characteristics and competencies that he / she should possess in order to be a veritable professional and to contribute through his/ her work to the education for values.

The literature approaching the profile of the good teacher, in its attempts to identify the skills and attributes of this challenging educational factor, advanced a number of paradigms. The Behaviourism from 1960s to 1980s, defined a good teacher as being the teacher with good results as reflected in students' learning process; in the 1980s, which marked a shift in the perspective of analysis, to a qualitative assessment, the definition of a good teacher was considering the degree of awareness invested by the teacher in his/ her own values and goals as means for augmenting his/ her efforts in creating a productive teaching practice; in the 1990s the good teachers became mentors or facilitators for a learning process moving beyond the boundaries of the educational establishment into the virtual realm, where the diversity and richness of the information was coming to challenge the organizational qualities of the teacher (Tirri, 2008).

The study of the characteristics and competencies of a good teacher has progressed also over time from the research of these aspects in regular classroom situations to the research of these issues in inclusive educational settings. One of such settings addresses talented students, who require special attention from school policy makers and teachers in order to provide an environment able to develop the students' full talent potential. It is very important for talented students to benefit from specialized, differentiated and personalised teaching, from an optimal learning environment, and the attention of highly trained teachers who feel confident in their ability to respond appropriately to special needs of these children. The teachers of talented students have a significant influence on the curriculum and the learning environment; in this regard, there is a series of studies demonstrating that teachers who have the skills to design and implement educational programs for talented students are also those who contribute to the success of such initiatives. In general, the success of educational programs for talented students depends to a great extent on the support of teachers with a range of competencies in the training/ education of this category of students (Hansen & Feldhusen, 1994).

In this paper, we present a value-oriented synthesis of relevant research that underlines the desirable characteristics and competencies of the talented students' teacher, as a moral beliefs promoter.

2. Characteristics and competencies of a good teacher for talented students

The definition of the good teacher becomes more nuanced when referring to the educational relationship with talented students. In this context, two avenues opened for the analysis of the intellectual and personal/ social qualities of a good teacher: one avenue is constructed by the teachers themselves, and the second one by the talented students. In both cases, the definition is further modulated by the cultural background and personal experiences of the interviewed. In the Israeli study carried out by Miligram (1979) the students strongly favoured the intellectual qualities of the teacher above his/ her personal/ social or creative valences. In another study developed by Maddux et al. (1985), in

which the same instrument as in Miligram's study was engaged, the authors identified among the students a preference for the personal/ social characteristics of the teachers, favouring the social dimension; the intellectual and creative characteristics, while being relevant for the overall profile, were less relevant in delineating a productive teaching relationship (Tirri, 2008, p. 319).

Excellent teachers had to have also a strong and coherent philosophy and positive self-efficacy beliefs. The Scottish government has suggested five essential elements which an excellent teacher should possess:

- A positive attitude to students learning;

- An ability to communicate value to students;

- Good content knowledge and understanding;

- A teaching repertoire of many ways to impart content;

- Knowledge and understanding of connections across curricular areas (Alcorn 2004 as cited in MacDonald Grieve, 2010, p. 266).

To resume other aspects, we made a synthesis of the relevant studies found in the literature of giftedness on the desirable characteristics and competencies of a good teacher for talented students.

Bishop (1968) studied more than 200 teachers of talented students. He administered them psychological tests and observed their behaviour in the classroom and intensively interviewed their talented students also. Bishop concluded that teachers who were identified as exemplary are characterized by the following characteristics: superior intelligence; greater literary and cultural interests; higher achievement needs; stimulating and imaginative; they are student-centred in their teaching style; systematic and orderly.

In 1975 Bishop conducted another study regarding the profile of the teacher for talented students. He applied a series of questionnaires and interviews to: 1) successful teachers of talented students; 2) teachers selected randomly and 3) talented students. According to the results obtained the successful teachers for talented students should have the following characteristics: maturity and experience; high intelligence; intellectual, cultural and artistic interests; they should strive for high achievement; see things from student's point of view;

they should be systematic, orderly, business-like; stimulating, imaginative, enthusiastic; they should encourage and sustain the students in advancing opinions, substantiating and defending them; the god teacher is the educational factor who becomes part of the challenges and the satisfactions a successful sharing in the class activities could bring.

Seeley (1979) carried out a research in the United States of America, in which principals, rectors and teachers/professors involved in talented students' education, from universities and pre-university education institutions were asked to assess the importance of desirable competencies of a good teacher for talented students, based on a given list. The results revealed that the competencies which have been assessed as the most important are: high cognitive skills in the field of teaching and asking questions; the ability to develop core curriculum change/ individualization strategies; the ability to implement special curricular development strategies; teaching and identification of talented students' abilities; student counselling skills.

Interesting findings on the desirable characteristics of talented students' teachers came out from the study developed by Maker in 1975. Based on a review of literature, he includes in his list only two minimal characteristics: 1) the ability to relate well to talented students and 2) openness to change. Less important but desirable are also considered to be the following characteristics: high intelligence, rich imagination, respect for the individual's potential, concerns about the teacher's responsibility towards his students, the belief that he/she can improve the self-image of his/her students (Maker, 1975 as quoted in Feldhusen, 1985, p. 87).

Hultgren and Seeley (1982), on the other hand, have reviewed thirteen studies and reports on the characteristics of a good teacher for talented students and present the following as the most commonly agreed/ preferred characteristics by researchers and specialists in psycho-pedagogy of excellence: maturity, experience, self-confidence; high intelligence; intellectual interests; performance orientation; they should show a positive attitude towards talented students; systematic and organized approaches; a well-developed sense of humour; the ability to facilitate learning; they should be very hard working; and possess extensive knowledge and expertise; belief in individual differences (Hultgren & Seeley, 1982 as cited in Feldhusen, 1985, p. 88).

According to Carmen Crețu, A.Y. Badwin (1989), based on the observations of a case study, proposes the following behavioural characteristics that the teacher should manifest in relation to talented students: maintaining a positive and close relationship with talented students to support the learning process; establishing numerous and qualitative verbal interactions with talented students; using time in a flexible way and connecting the timetable with the needs of these students; concentrating on a final goal, focusing mainly on students' productivity creativity; providing educational contexts appropriate to independent study interests; manifesting exemplary human behaviour (p. 149).

Another interesting research is the one carried out by Ann MacDonald Grieve (2010). The study targeted primary school teachers teaching Scotland, in an attempt to delineate the characteristics of the teacher associated with excellence. The questionnaire applied to the participants focused on a number of 44 characteristics of excellence which the respondents were requested to rate in the order of importance. The analysis revealed that the teachers had a clear perspective regarding the concept of excellence and described it based on a framework forged on two aspects, "personal qualities and interpersonal skills" (Grieve, 2010), intertwining in facilitating the access of the students to information and their discriminative comprehension. The subjects highly favoured those qualities which had the potential to give substance and their expectations regarding "a positive classroom ethos" (Grieve, 2010) and a relationship with the students based on communication skills, the accent on relationships, their development and their sustainability, the productive leadership. Nonetheless, the social skilled teacher must be characterized by friendliness and a deep understanding of the students' personalities in terms of similarities, but also differences. These social skills were considered instrumental in building a strong relationship.

Also, according to David W. Chan, in a recent study conducted in 2011 with 617 students of Chinese origin, nominated by teachers as talented, who evaluated the importance of 25 characteristics and 14 competencies that talented students' teachers should demonstrate; it has been revealed that all of the 39 characteristics and competences proposed for evaluation have been shown to be very important. The characteristics indicated by the students as the most important in this regard are: being imaginative, flexible, stimulating, innovative, facilitative, self-confident, knowledgeable and considerate regarding the

individual differences. As the study highlighted, the characteristics mentioned above construct a profile of a teacher defined by values and ideals of a higher order than one would expect to learn in a good teacher, without taking into account the characteristics and expectations of the student collection he/she must educate. The competencies indicated by the students to be the most important in this sense are, as Chan (2011) has underlined, creativity in the process of teaching, problem solving and developing/ engaging superior curriculum and teaching materials. On the other hand, the characteristics indicated by students to be less important in this respect are: a high intelligence, the ability to be less critical, more approachable and cooperative with the other members of the personnel and having control over one's personal life. The skills indicated by students to be less important in this sense are: career education and training other teachers for gifted programs.

3. The Moral education for the talented students

According to Bebeau, Rest and Narvaez (1999), morality is underlined by four basic component processes: *moral sensitivity, moral judgment, moral motivation* and *moral character* (quoted in Tirri, 2010, p. 59). Instrumental in analysing morality as a concept and a social structure of skills to be improved was considered the cognitive-development theory of Lawrence Kohlberg (1969), which most of the studies engaging in defining and deconstructing morality have employed. In measuring the development of moral judgment, the Defining Issues Test, developed by James Rest, in 1974, has become one of the most intensively used measures on this factor, although the research developed in the age-group of the teenagers indicate that their dilemmas greatly deviate from the hypothetical dilemmas used by Kohlberg and his colleagues in order to assess the moral reasoning. While Kohlberg's dilemmas focus on subjects like ownership, public welfare and life and death, more general approaches of the social domain, in Yussen's study (1997), the subjects of the moral dilemmas expressed by teenagers most frequently are more focused, more individualized, circumscribing in general the interpersonal relations. The same propensity was identified within the studies conducted by Colangelo (1982) and Tirri (1996) on gifted teenagers (cited in Tirri, 2002).

Tirri (2010) presents in her paper the conclusions of some studies focused on the moral development of talented students, as following: (a) the students with high

abilities have shown superior levels on the moral judgment factor compared to the students with average ability, nonetheless, "a high level of academic ability does not always predict a high level of moral judgment" (Narvaez, 1993; Tirri, 2011), (b) "intellectually gifted children appear to reach a relatively high stage of moral reasoning earlier than their chronological peers" (Karnes & Brown), (c) the talented students are supposed to occupy a facilitating position in the process of achieving a mature moral thinking because of their faster intellectual accumulations (Andreani & Pagnin, 1993), and (d) the gifted children demonstrate a marked „maturity in moral development", regarding the selection of activities with a direct social constructive impact; the same advantage of maturity is to be seen in the ratings applied for misbehaviour (Terman, 1925, p. 60).

According to ethical competence theory morality can be taught. Teachers of the talented students are the ethical professionals who can contribute on the development of talented students from the perspective of education for values. They can do this through an individualized and personalized curriculum. The talented students have some special psycho-behavioural characteristics that enable them for example to" read" a moral situation more quickly and accurately in order to determine what role one might play or to prioritize their ethical ideals. This is why empirical studies also point to the need for teachers to discuss moral, spiritual and religious issues; especially those moral dilemmas that concern adolescents. Often talented adolescents are concerned about finding answers to questions such as: "Who am I?", "What is my role/ mission in the world? ", "What are the values that I should follow in my life?", "Does God exist?", "What is death?", "What happens after death?". Moral, spiritual and religious questions are part of talented students' concerns and the pedagogical task of education. Good and meaningful education for talented students should discus and debate questions like that (Tirri, 2007).

The didactics of the moral education for talented students should focus on approaching moral, spiritual and religious dilemmas that concern adolescents in general and talented adolescents in particular. Teachers of the talented students should be willing to discuss such issues in the classroom and to debate them with their students through a deliberative process. In this regard, there are some topics that should be considered, such as: interpretations of the moral issues; justifications of different actions in terms of morality; the profile of "a

good teacher", "a good student", "a good human being"; indicators of commitment to moral ideals; all these in relation to real-life moral conflicts and the interpersonal relationships. In order to be effective in this approach the teacher of the talented students has to create a friendly and positive social environment for learning.

4. Conclusions and discussions

Based on the results of the studies presented above, we can conclude that the combination of the desirable intellectual qualities of a teacher and his/ her personal/ social qualities is the one that may influence the effectiveness of teaching and working with talented students, because in most cases the respondents mentioned aspects that concern both cognitive domain and affective (attitudes) domain. At the same time, the teacher of the gifted students must construct a friendly educational environment, in which the social factor would play a constructive role, facilitating the closeness between the act of teaching and the interaction outside the institutional realm. A positive, permeable, and student-oriented atmosphere will encourage the development at its fullest of the students' potential.

As we can see, one of the desirable characteristics of excellent teachers is "the ability to communicate value to students". From our point of view the reason why successful teachers for talented students are highly challenged to profess and to promote pedagogy for values is that talented students have specific psycho-behavioural characteristics, intense socio-emotional feelings, receptivity to moral perceptions, a sense of justice, altruism and orientation towards the fulfilment of ideals and an increased general sensitivity.

Authors note:

Vrabie Tina is Ph.D. Student, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iaşi.

Crețu Carmen Mihaela is Professor, Ph.D., Psychology Education Sciences, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iaşi.

References

Ackerman, R.A., & Donnellan, M.B. (2013). Evaluating self-report measures of narcissistic entitlement. *Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioral Assessment*, 35(4), 460-474.

Bishop, W.E. (1968). Successful Teachers of the Gifted. *Exceptional Children, 34,* 317-325.

Brady, L. (2011). Teacher Values and Relationship: Factors in Values Education. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 36(2),* 56-66.

Chan, D.W. (2011). Characteristics and Competencies of Teachers of Gifted Learners: The Hong Kong Student Perspective. *Roeper Review, 33(3),* 160-169.

Crețu, C. (1998). *Curriculum diferențiat și personalizat. Ghid metodologic pentru învățătorii, profesorii și părinții copiilor cu disponibilități aptitudinale înalte.* Iași: Editura Polirom.

Feldhusen, J.F. (1985). The Teacher of Gifted Students. *Gifted Education International, 3(87),* 87-93.

Hansen, J.B., & Feldhusen, J.F. (1994). Comparison of trained and untrained teachers of gifted students. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 38*, 115-123.

Johansson, E., Brownlee, J., Cobb-Moore, C., Boulton-Lewis, G., Walker, S. & Ailwood, J. (2011). Practices for teaching moral values in the early years: a call for a pedagogy of participation. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice, 6(2),* 109-124.

MacDonald Grieve, A. (2010), Exploring the characteristics of 'teachers for excellence': teachers' own perceptions. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 33(3),* 265-277.

Mulhern, J.D., & Ward, M. (1983). A collaborative program for developing teachers of gifted and talented students. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 27,* 152-156.

Seeley, K.R. (1979). Competencies for Teachers of Gifted and Talented Children. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted, 3,* 7-13.

Tirri, K. & Nokelainen, P. (2007). Comparison of Academically Average and Gifted Students' Self-Rated Ethical Sensitivity. *Educational Research and Evaluation: An International Journal on Theory and Practice, 13(6),* 587-601.

Tirri, K. (2008). Who should teach the gifted students? *Revista Española de* Pedagogia*, 240,* 315-324.

Tirri, K. (2010). Combining Excellence and Ethics: Implications for Moral Education for the Gifted. *Roeper Review, 33(1),* 59-64.

Tirri, K. (2002). Morality and High Ability. 69-77. *Proceedings of the 8th Conference of the European Council for High Ability (ECHA),* Rhodes, October 9-13, 2002.

Willemse, M., Lunenberg, M. & Korthagen, F. (2004). Values in education: a challenge for teacher educators. *Teaching and Teacher Education 21*, 2005, 205-217.

An overview of research on romantic relationships. The case of negative emotions

Andreea Ursu, Maria Nicoleta Turliuc

An overview of research on romantic relationships. The case of negative emotions

Andreea Ursu [a*], **Maria Nicoleta Turliuc** [b*]

[a,b] *Doctoral School of Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iaşi, Toma Cozma Street 3, 700704, Iaşi, Romania*

Corresponding author: *ursu.anndreea@gmail.com*

Abstract	

Keywords:
emotion, romantic relationships, soft, hard, fear-based, flat emotions

The universal human tendency to form close relationships, the basic needs satisfied by social relationships and the centrality of them to human existence were ones of the most important reasons why people started to research the concept of close relationships and its impact on the daily life.

In the last 4 decades, the studies of the interpersonal relationships have been one of the favorite areas in the social psychology. The several strong theories and highly generative research paradigms on interpersonal relationships are the result of researchers' interest in this concept. A central role was played by the romantic relationships concept. At the beginning of the 1980s, the publication of studies on relationship types began, and later on, articles on theories about factors of formation, development, maintenance and dissolution of one romantic relationship were published. Across time, they discover that social relationships represent the context in which people experience their most intense emotions, both positive and negative. Especially, the experience and expression of emotions are influencing the formation, maintenance and dissolution of close relationships. Thus, based on these assumptions, this paper is an overview of synthesizing (a) how the concept of romantic relationships is view by different theories; (b) what are the benefits of them; and (c) which type of negative emotions are experienced within a romantic relationship.

Zusammenfasung	

Schlüsselworte:
Erregung, Romantische Beziehungen, Weich, Stark, Angst-basierende, Flach Emotionen

Die universelle menschliche Tendenz, enge Beziehungen zu bilden, die grundlegenden durch sozialen Beziehungen erfüllten Bedürfnisse und die Zentralität von ihnen für die menschliche Existenz wurden diejenigen der wichtigsten Gründe gewesen, warum Menschen begonnen, das Konzept der engen Beziehungen und ihre Auswirkungen auf das tägliche Leben zu erforschen.

In den letzten 4 Jahrzehnten haben die Studien der zwischenmenschlichen Beziehungen zu einem der beliebtesten Bereiche in der Sozialpsychologie gewesen. Die mehreren starken Theorien und hoch generative Forschungsparadigmen auf die zwischenmenschlichen Beziehungen sind das Ergebnis der Forscher Interesse an diesem Konzept. Eine zentrale Rolle wurde von den romantischen Beziehungen Konzept gespielt. Zu Beginn der 1980er Jahre begann die Veröffentlichung von Studien über Beziehungstypen und später, wurdenArtikel auf Theorien über Faktoren der Bildung, Entwicklung, Wartung und Auflösung einer romantischen Beziehung veröffentlicht. Über die Zeit, entdecken sie, dass soziale Beziehungen den Kontext repräsentieren, in denen Menschen ihre intensivsten Emotionen erleben, sowohl positive als auch negative.Insbesondere beeinflussen die Erfahrung und Ausdruck von Emotionen, die Bildung, die Wartung und die Auflösung der engen Beziehungen. So auf der Grundlage dieser Annahmen ist dieses Papier ein Überblick über die Zusammenfassung über: (a) wie das Konzept der romantischen Beziehungen Blick durch verschiedene Theorien angesehen wird; (b) was die Vorteile von ihnensind; und (c) welche Art von negativen Emotionen in einer romantischen Beziehung erlebt werden.

1. Introduction

Forming a close relationship represent one of the fundamental social needs. By time, it has been proven that close relationships are influencing in a positive way relationship's outcomes. Due to their impact on mental and physical health, this concept is a central one for Social Psychology. Finkel, Simpson and Eastwick (2017) have reviewed the psychological literature on close relationships

with the goal to extract its core principals. The 14 principles have been organized in 4 sets with topics related to (a) "What is a relationship?" (b) "How do relationships operate?" (c) "What tendencies do people bring to their relationships?" and (d) "How does the context affect relationships?". For the propose of this overview, we will present just the first set with its first 3 principles which are related to uniqueness, integration and trajectory of a relationship. In authors' opinion, the unique character of

one close relationship is represented not only by the specific qualities of each partner, but also by the unique pattern resulted by the intersection of partners 'qualities. Thus, a relationship is more than a sum of its parts. This principle can be also analyzed from the statistical point of view. The Actor-Partner Interdependence Model applied to the dyadic relationships (Campbell & Kashy, 2002) brought in attention the concept of relationship variance and the within variable type. In other words, a relationship is better understood if the dyadic context emerged by partners is also analyzed. Not only the uniqueness principle takes in account the mutual influence of partners, but also the integration principle, meaning that the boundaries between dyadic partners are weak, leading to the difficulty of discerning the measure in which one quality or one behavior is specific to one of partners; it is easier to see it as specific to the relationship. Another point that has to be presented is related to the trajectory principle. Literature of romantic stages suggests that the transition from the forming (the initial stage) to the short-term relationship (if the relationship does end) to the long-term relationship (if the short-term relationship does not end), and the partners desire to produce relationships-specific behavioral tendencies are the main characteristics of the trajectory principle.

Even though we presented the principles related to "What is a relationship?", we still consider important to present the definitions and characteristics of them in a trial of a better understanding of how this concept have been operationalized by different theories during time.

1.1. Theories of romantic relationships

In the late 1970s, Clark and Mills (1979) suggest that all social relationships are based on the principle of giving and receiving benefits between the persons involved. Taking this principle into account, the same authors suggest the existence of two types of interpersonal relationships – communal relationships and exchange relationships. The main characteristic of communal relationship is that members feel the responsibility for the other's needs and welfare. Also, it is not necessary to keep tracking the needs or the benefits because the other will repay in a situation in which that benefit will be needed (Clark & Mills, 1979; Clark, Mills, & Powell, 1986). In other words, in communal relationships, the general norm is to express a general concern for the significant other or to give a benefit as a response to a need (Clark & Mills, 1993). According to Clark, Mills and Powell (1986) the best examples for this

type of interpersonal relationship are the friendships, romantic relationships and family relationships.

The concept of social relationships has been studied, also, based on the principle of interdependence between partners. Kelley and Thibaut (1978) suggest that the interdependence between two or more persons leads to the mutual influence at behavioral, attributional and perceptional level. Especially, Kelley et al suggest that if the behaviors, emotions and thoughts of two persons are mutually and causally interconnected, thus the persons are interdependent, and the relationship exists (Clark & Reis, 1988). Berscheid and Ammazzalorso present that the majority of relationship researchers view the essence of a relationship as "the oscillating rhythm of influence that appers in the partners' interactions" (2001, p. 309). Therefore, if there is no interaction, there is no relationship, because during the interaction, persons involved in a communal relationship influence each other their behavior. Based on this principle, close relationships, especially well-established romantic relationships, are the most representative social relationships.

Attachment theory is another theory which has studied the concept of close relationships. In order to succeed it, Hazan and Shaver adapted the original theory developed by Bowlby (1988) to the relationships' specificity (1994). From this point of view, a close relationship is seen as the emotional bond developed with a significant other and maintained it during time with the goal of satisfying the basic needs of the partners. The emotional bond is represented by the experiencing and expressing the emotions which leads to the intimacy. From the point of view of intimacy theory (Reis & Shaver, 1998; 1988), relationships create the framework of trust, stable acceptations and practices which lead the partners to disclosure the most intimate thoughts, feelings, events with the goal of feeling understood, cared for and validated.

In conclusion, persons in a romantic relationships feel responsibility for the significant other's needs and welfare, they feel no obligation to repay the benefit with a comparable benefit; they are mutually and causally interconnected, maintaining the relationship during time, because during their interactions they develop emotional bond and because they are understood, cared for and validated in their relationships, they will disclose personal thoughts, events, situations being aware that their needs will be satisfied. This is the idealistic situation, in which partners are committed to their relationships, in which

partners perceived the benefits of their romantic relationship.

2. The protective role of romantic relationships

Forming a stable, romantic relationship is a basic human need and it produces positive emotions (Baumeister & Leary, 1995); it provides a social identity, it is a source of social integration during the emerging adulthood and it contributes to a positive self-conception (Meier & Allen, 2008); it satisfies the need for security (Hazan & Shaver, 1994); it protects partners from social isolation; it is a source of emotional and physical support; it has an influence on biological processes (Kiecolt-Glaser & Newton, 2001) and is it one of the most important element of the recovery of environment in case of a trauma (Johnson & Williams-Keeler, 1998). Other positive impacts to the individuals' lives are related to companionship, friendship, love, security, and happiness (Markey, Markey & Gray, 2007). In addition, married people live longer, are less likely to engage in risky behaviours, recover more quickly from mental and physical illnesses (Coombs, 1991).

In this part of our overview, we will present the impact of romantic relationships on mental and physical health of partners by taking in account variables as gender and marital status. Also, we will present the mechanisms (selection, social support, behavioral regulation and belongingness hypothesis) which influence the link between romantic relationships and mental and physical health.

2.1. Romantic relationships' benefits

Some preliminary work related to the benefits of romantic relationships on well-being was carried out in the early 1990s by Coombs (1991) who presented in his literature review the link between marital status and several wellbeing' indices as: alcoholism, suicide, morbidity and mortality, schizophrenia, other psychiatric problems, and self-reports of happiness. As he was predicting, the conclusions of the study suggested that high rates of alcoholism, suicide, mortality and morbidity, schizophrenia, others psychiatric problems (mental hospital admissions; mental disorders) and low rates of self-reported happiness are more likely to occur within unmarried individuals, especially men. Besides this, unmarried individuals experience also more stress and emotional pathology than the married ones.

A well-known aspect studied in the context of romantic relationship and well-being link is represented by gender. Although, its impact on romantic relationships has been intensely studied during the last 3 decades and the results are suggesting that interpersonal relationships have a more positive impact on men' health than on women' health (Coombs, 1991), Markey, Markey and Fishman Gray (2007) suggested that these results should be interpreted with caution because the way in which women and men are affected by their relationships in specific health area still has to be explored. In their study, they address the question of gender and individuals' perception of their romantic partners' influences on their health. Their results suggest that both genders tended to perceive their partner as having more positive than negative influences on their health; contrary to the literature, women, more than men, tended to perceive more positive influences on their health caused by their partner; more precisely, women tended to think that their partner have an influence on health's domains as physical activities and self-esteem, while, both genders tended to think that their partner has positive influences in domains as healthy eating habits, seeking medical help, developing traits/ characteristics which enhanced their sense of health and wellbeing. Also, Simon and Barret (2010) suggest that being in a romantic relationship has more positive impact on women' mental health than on men 'mental health.

On account of the assumptions presented upper we can say that the gender roles are in a continuous change and men are influencing positively the woman's health with whom they are in a relationship, in an intent to reduce the persistence of gender inequality in interpersonal relationships.

Recently, several attempts started to be made in order to address another important aspect in the studying of romantic relationships and health link, namely the benefits' differences between people involved in commitment non-marital relationships and single (Braithwaite, Delevi, & Fincham, 2010), and marital and non-marital relationships (Uecker, 2012). These authors make reference to the benefits related to physical, mental health and well-being. Comparing with other times, curent women and men are involved in more non-marital relationships. The age when people are getting married is increasing, non-marital sex and cohabitating with the partner are more accepted by the society, partners' focus on developmental of social and job necessary skills for work, non-traditional attitude toward

marriages and the need of them, all of these lead to the increasing of involvement in non-marital relationships. To address this aspect (to cover this gap) research has been conducted it and it has been shown that individuals involved in non-marital commitment relationships experience less mental health problems, more precisely, fewer depressive symptoms, than those not involved in relationships (Simon & Barrett, 2010), were less likely to be overweight and they have less problematic behaviors because of the reduced number of sexual partners which leads to a reduction of involvement in risky behaviors (Braithwaite, Delevi, & Fincham, 2010). Not only the non-marital romantic relationships versus singles has been study but also marital versus non-marital ones. Recent research suggests that people involved in one romantic relationship and not cohabiting have lower level of psychological distress than the married ones; people involved in one relationship (cohabiting or not) and married people may have less drinking habits; married young adults and those involved in a non-marital relationship and living together have the higher level of satisfaction (Uecker, 2012). In other words, forming any type of romantic relationship has a positive impact on mental or/ and physical health of partners. Still, these results should be interpreted with caution. Coombs (1991) in his review concluded that being involved in unhappy relationships can have a negative impact on partners' health by creating high level of psychiatric distress, development of mental illness. As well, Markey, Markey and Fishman Gray (2007) have gone as far as to assert that both, women and men who perceived positive impact on their health because of their partners, tended to be involved in more communal relationships.

2.2. Mechanisms of romantic relationships

Research on the protective impact of marriage suggests that selection, social support, behavioral regulation and belongingness are the mechanisms that might influence the relation between marriage and well-being. Firstly, the selection hypothesis suggests that there is a greater possibility for individual with a better physical and mental health to get married and to remain married (Braithwaite, Delevi, & Fincham, 2010; Uecker, 2012)), because they are least likely to die (Lillard & Waite, 1995) and that emotionally mature people are more likely to get married, to be happy and to live healthier (Coombs, 1991). Secondly, the social support hypothesis suggests that one of the benefits of romantic relationships is that provides to persons emotional satisfaction and protect them against

daily life stressors (Braithwaite, Delevi, & Fincham, 2010), within romantic relationships, people find companionship with a spouse who provides emotional gratification (Coombs, 1991). Thirdly, the behavioral regulation hypothesis suggests that people involved in one marriage are less likely to assume and be involved in risky behaviors (Braithwaite, 2010). Finally, the belongingness hypothesis suggests that the need to form and maintain significant interpersonal relationships is a fundamental human motivation and by studying this, it can be understood better the human interpersonal behavior (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

In conclusion, taken together, these findings suggest that the link between romantic relationships and its benefits on mental and physical health of partners still has to be studied due to of its complexity which it is greater than what it was predicted by literature.

3. Emotions and romantic relationships

A great deal of work has been done showing the associations between emotions and romantic relationships. Literature suggests that in the context of romantic relationships, people experience the most intense emotions, both negative and positive (Fitness & Fletcher, 1990) because of the partners' highly interconnected behavior (Berscheid & Ammazzalorso, 2001), which leads to the idea that emotions are not context free as it has been suggested across time (Fitness & Fletcher, 1993).

In the following section of this overview we will present the specificity of emotions in the context of romantic relationships; a categorization which divides them in soft, hard, flat and fear-based emotions, and in emotions caused by the events within or outside of relationships; in which situations the negative emotions have a positive impact on the romantic relationships and which negative emotions are felt within a couple (hurt, anger, disinterest, boredom).

Emotion, in the context of a romantic relationship, is seen as the leading element, which "organizes key responses to intimate others, acts as an internal compass focusing people on their primary needs and goals, and primes key schemas about the nature of self and other" (Jonhson, Makinen, & Millikin, 2001, p. 147). Furthermore, because emotions have a central role in developing and maintaining of romantic relationships, studying them within a couple leads to better understanding of emotional experience in intimate relationships (Schoebi

& Randall, 2015). It is worth noting that some researchers suggest that when people refer to emotion in couples, they are talking about the emotions which have a high level of arousal, defining them using physiological characteristics as knees tremble, flushed faces, hearth pound (Berscheid & Ammazzalorso, 2001).

3.1. Categorization of emotions

Early evidence suggest that most studies have been focused on the emotions' valence, positive and negative (Berscheid & Ammazzalorso, 2001) without taking into account other types of categorization. But this gap started to becovered in the last few years, with researchers' focus on this topic. For example, Integrative Behavioral Couple Therapy (IBCT) and Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy (EFT) focused more on negative emotions felt within couples, because the early literature has emphasized the important role of negative emotions in couples (Johnson, 2008). IBCT (Dimidjian, Martell, & Christensen, 2008; Christensen, Jacobson, & Babcock, 1995) have categorized negative emotions felt within romantic relationships in soft and hard. Moreover, Sanford and Rowatt (2004) have suggested the existence of fear-based emotions and Sanford (2007) has suggested another type of negative emotion, the flat emotions.

Buck (1999) has proposed to replace the positive-negative distinction with selfish-pro-social one. He has suggested that selfish emotions are the negative ones, associated with the right hemisphere and with amygdala and they are related to the self-preservation, competition, conflict and fighting, while the pro-social ones have a positive valence, associated with the left hemisphere and are related to the maintain of interpersonal relationships, focused on attachment and cooperation. Buck's approach of emotions could have been the base for the categorization of negative emotions in soft and hard made by IBCT. Hard emotions are selfish emotions include anger and close emotions to anger, associated with the assertion of power and control in one relationship, whilst soft emotions are the pro-social ones, including sadness, hurt and other negative emotions associated with the vulnerability experienced and expressed in one's relationship. Besides this, fear-based emotions are a mixture between soft and hard emotions. For example, anxiety, a fear-based emotion, is similar to the soft emotions because is suggesting a degree of vulnerability and weakness but is it similar also to hard emotions because it involves a high level of tension and arousal. As opposed to hard and soft emotions, flat

emotions are negative emotions, which include emotions as apathy, boredom, disinterest characterized by a low level of arousal and withdrawal from conflict (Sanford, 2007).

Based on the assumption that hard, soft and fear-based emotions have different impact on romantic relationships outcome as dyadic satisfaction and even the literature suggests that they share the same variance because all of them are placed in the negative emotions category, Sanford and Rowatt (2004) tested this issue and they found that soft emotions predicted positive functioning (high satisfaction, low conflict, and low avoidance) whereas hard emotions predicted negative functioning (low satisfaction, high conflict, and high avoidance) and fear-based emotions were associated with poor relationship functioning, predicting relationship anxiety. In other study, Sanford (2007) suggest that increases in hard emotions lead to increases in negative communication and decreasing in positive communication and they are associated with detrimental changes in the behaviour of both partners. By way of contrast, soft emotions have a less detrimental impact on partners' behaviour and increases in soft emotions were associated with increases in their positive communication style and decreases in their partner's negative communication style which leads to the conflict resolution.

It has been suggested that hard emotions are not negative for a relationship all the time and soft emotions do not have a positive impact in all the situations and this seems to be a reliable approach for studying the impact of these types of emotions on romantic relationships. Literature suggests that emotions can be multifaceted, and it can have both positive and negative impact for a relationship. For example, Sanford (2007) mentions that in a situation of partners' withdrawn or continually conflict, increasing conflict can have a positive impact, helping to solve the conflict, leading to positive changes for meeting the partners' needs. In comparison with hard emotions, soft emotions have a negative impact when they are chronic or extreme. Kashdan (2006) indicates that partners which listen everyday soft emotions which require responsiveness, provision of reassurance and comfort will feel fatigue, burnout and negative mood contagion. Moreover, McNulty (2010) suggests in his review that the majority of interventions for treating marital distress are tending to use thoughts and behaviours associated with positive emotions, but these positive processes tend to have results in the case of relatively healthy couple, while for

couples with severe problems, the more-negative processes tend to be more efficiently.

In conclusion, taken these together, the relationship between soft, hard and romantic relationships is more complex than it has been predicted and the results related to the beneficial impact of soft emotions or the negative impact of hard emotions should be interpreted with caution. Related to flat emotions, we found the absence of the research surprising on this topic in the light of their importance in the dissolution of romantic relationships. Tsapelas, Aron, & Orbuch (2009) suggest that not just conflict has a negative impact on relationships, but also boredom, seen as the lack of excitement, it seems to shape relationships over time and to predict less satisfaction and Sanford (2007) suggested that flat emotions are associated with detrimental types of communication and men tend to report more flat emotions than women. Literature presents that flat emotions have a negative impact on relationships, in the context of a severe conflict, but they can be perceived as appropriate in the context of a mild one.

4. Conclusions

This overview adds to a growing body of literature findings related to how was operationalized the concept of romantic relationships by different theories; benefits of them; and which type of negative emotions are felt within a romantic relationship.

In the first part of our research, we underlined the most important theories related to the concept of romantic relationships. Across time, the romantic relationships have been seen as (a) communal relationships, in which people feel the responsibility for expressing concern for the other one and for his/her welfare, satisfying the significant other's needs, but they do not feel an obligation for repaying the benefits; (b) an interdependency between partners, their behaviors, emotions and thoughts being mutually and causally interconnected and their interactions are the proof that the relationship exists; (c) an emotional bond developed with a significant other and its maintenance is satisfying the basic needs during time; (d) the disclosure of sensible and vulnerable events in a context in which the person which disclosures, will feel understood, cared for and validated. As we can see, satisfying the needs of a significant other, in a context of mutually and causally interconnection and disclosure the sensible events to a person in which they will find trust and understanding are the main characteristics of a romantic relationship.

In the second part, we presented the benefits of romantic relationships on partners' wellbeing, physical and mental health. Although, early literature suggests that the positive impact of romantic relationships is greater for men, recent research suggests that both, men and women report more positive influences than negative, but they report different domains of health in which they felt the influences. Another important variable which has been studied in this context is represented by the marital status and it has been suggested that forming any type of romantic relationship has positive impact on personal outcomes, namely, people involved in one romantic relationship and not living together have the lower psychological distress; married people and people involved in one committed relationship have the less drinking habits and, moreover, the higher level of satisfaction has been found at married and at those involved in a non-marital relationship and living together. Regarding the distinction between single/ involved in a committed relationship, we can say that those involved in a committed relationship have fewer depressive problems. Despite of the evidence for the benefits and the protective role of romantic relationships on personal outcomes as wellbeing, physical and mental health, we have to interpret these results with caution because people which report a positive impact of their relationship have at least a medium level of dyadic satisfaction. Also, there are studies which report a negative impact of relationship when people are unhappy and unsatisfied.

In the last part of this paper, we presented how are emotions analyzed in the context of romantic relationships, some new typologies and types of emotions, their impact, and a focus on four negative and destructive emotions which can be sometime felt within a couple. There are therapies which have been seen the emotion as an important element for restabling the emotional bond which have been felt at the beginning of the relationship. Soft emotions are emotions which help the restabling of the emotional bond while hard, flat and fear-based emotions have a negative impact. Even, there are studies which suggest the positive impact of soft on relationship functionality, we have to interpret these results with caution because not all the time a soft emotion will have a positive impact and a hard or flat emotion will have a negative impact. Emotions, in the context of romantic relationships are multifaceted and their impact depends on the context also.

The majority of research which has been studied emotions in the context of romantic relationships has used

a quantitative approach. We recommend, for future studies, a qualitative approach for a better understanding of their effects on romantic relationships. Also, emotions, more specifically, the negative soft, hard, fear-based and flat emotions, have been studied in transversal studies. Although relevant, this kind of research does not offer sufficiently information about the impact of emotions on relationship's outcomes. To cover this gap, we think that is it important to assess the impact of emotion and the impact of its related processes (recognition, expression, regulation) using repeated measures or longitudinal approach. Moreover, because of the interdependency between partners, it would be interesting to assess how partners influence their emotions and how the influence is felt on the dyadic satisfaction using a dyadic approach for interpreting the data.

In summary, emotions are an important aspect in the landscape of romantic relationships and emotions can shape the link between relationships and health outcomes.

Acknowledgments

Authors note:

Ursu Andreea – Ph.D. student, Doctoral School of Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", University of Iași, Romania.

Turliuc Maria-Nicoleta – Professor, Ph.D., Psychology Department, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", University of Iași, Romania.

References

Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 497-529.

Berscheid, E., & Ammazzalorso, H. (2001). Emotional experience in close relationships. In G. J. Fletcher, & M. S. Clark, *Blackwell Handbook of Social Psychology: Interpersonal processes*, pp. 308-330. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

Braithwaite, S. R., Delevi, R., & Fincham, F. D. (2010). Romantic relationships and the physical and mental health of college students. *Personal Relationships, 17*, 1-12.

Buck, R. (1999). The biological affect: a typology. *Psychological Review 106 (2)*, 301-336.

Campbell, L., & Kashy, D. A. (2002). Estimating actor, partner, and interaction effects for dyadic data using PROC MIXED and HLM: A user-friendly guide. *Personal Relationships*, 327-342.

Christensen, A., Jacobson, N. S., & Babcock, J. C. (1995). Integrative Behavioral Couple Therapy. In N.S. Jacobson, & A.S. Gurman, *Clinical Handbook of Couple Therapy*, pp. 31-64. New York: Guilford Publication, Inc.

Coombs, R.H. (1991). Marital status and personal well-being: a literature review. *Family Relations*, 97-102.

Dimidjian, S., Martell, C.R., & Christensen, A. (2008). Integrative Behavioral Couple Therapy. In A.S. Gurman, *Clinical Handbook of Couple Therapy*, pp. 73-106. New York: Guilford Publications, Inc.

Finkel, E.J., Simpson, J.A., & Eastwick, P.W. (2017). The psychology of close relationships: fourteen core principles. *The Annual Review of Psychology*, Vol. 68: 383-411.

Fitness, J., & Fletcher, G.J. (1993). Love, hate, anger and jealousy in close relationships: a prototype and cognitive appraisal analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 65 (5)*, 942-958.

Fitness, J., & Fletcher, J. (1990). Emotion labelling in close relationships. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology, 19*, 63-69.

Hazan, C., & Shaver, P.R. (1994). Attachment as an organizational framework for research on close relationships. *Psychological Inquiry*, 5(1), 1-22.

Johnson, S.M. (2008). Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy. In A.S. Gurman, *Clinical Handbook of Couple Therapy*, pp. 107-137. New York: Guilford Publications, Inc.

Johnson, S.M., & Williams-Keeler, L. (1998). Creating healing relationships for couples dealing with trauma: the use of Emotionally Focused Marital Therapy. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 24 (1)*, 25-40.

Jonhson, S.M., Makinen, J.A., & Millikin, J.W. (2001). Attachment injuries in couple relationships: a new perspective on impasses in couple therapy. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 27 (2)*, 145-155.

Kashdan, T.E. (2006). Social anxiety and romantic relationships: The costs and benefits of negative emotion expression are context-dependent. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, 1-19.

Kiecolt-Glaser, J.K., & Newton, T.L. (2001). Marriage and health: his and hers. *Psychological Bulletin*, 472-503.

Lillard, L.A., & Waite, L.J. (1995). Till death will do us part: marital disruption and mortality. *American Journal of Sociology*, 100(5), 1131-1156.

Markey, C.N., Markey, P.M., & Fishman Gray, H. (2007). Romantic relationships and health: An Examination of Individuals' Perceptions of their Romantic Partners' Influences on their Health. *Sex Roles, 57*, 435-445.

McNulty, J.K. (2010). When positive processes hurt relationships. *Current directions in psychological science 19 (3)*, 167-171.

Meier, A., & Allen, G. (2008). Intimate relationship development during the transition to adulthood: differences by social class. *New Dir Child Adolesc Dev., 119*, 25-29.

Sanford, K. (2007). Hard and soft emotion during conflict: investigationg married couples and other relationships. *Personal Relationships, 14*, 65-90.

Sanford, K. (2007). The couples emotion rating form: Psychometric properties and theoretical associations. *Psychological Assessment, 19 (4)*, 411-421.

Sanford, K., & Rowatt, W.C. (2004). When is negative emotion positive for relationships? An investigation of married couples and roommates. *Personal Relationships, 11*, 329-354.

Schoebi, D., & Randall, A.H. (2015). Emotional dynamics in intimate relationships. *Emotion Review, 7 (4)*, 342-348.

Simon, R.W., & Barrett, A.E. (2010). Nonmarital Romantic Relationships and Mental Health in Early Adulthood: Does the Association Differ for Women and Men? *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 51(2)*, 168-182.

Tsapelas, I., Aron, A., & Orbuch, T. (2009). Marital boredom now predicts less satisfaction 9 years later. *Psychological science, 20 (5)*, 543-545.

Uecker, J.E. (2012). Marriage and mental health among young adults. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 53(1)*, 67-83.

Motivational beliefs among nontraditional prospective teachers from the United States: expectancies and values

Margareta M. Thomson, McClannon Julia

Motivational beliefs among nontraditional prospective teachers from the United States: expectancies and values

Margareta M. Thomson [a*], **Julia McClannon** [b]

[a] *Educational Psychology Program, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, North Carolina, 27695, United States*
[b] *Fuquay-Varina High School, 201 Bengal Boulevard, Fuquay-Varina, North Carolina, 27526, United States*

Corresponding author: *mmpop@ncsu.edu*

Abstract	

Keywords:
teacher education, motivations, values, expectancies, beliefs

The current study analyzed three prospective teachers' career path using an Expectancy-Value model. All participants were nontraditional college students, enrolled in a master's of teaching program (MAT) in the United States, and participated in an in-depth interview about their teaching goal. Study results summarize the commonalities and differences among participants using a cross-case study analysis. The major categories from participants' interviews were related to their *expectancies* (i.e., expectations, ability beliefs), *attainment values* (i.e., importance), *intrinsic values* (i.e., enjoyment), *utility values* (i.e., practical significance) and *cost* (i.e., time, money) about the teaching goal. Implications for teacher education and practice are discussed.

Zusammenfasung	

Schlüsselwörter:
Lehramtsstudium, Motivation, Werte, Erwartungen

Die vorliegende Studie analysiert die Laufbahn dreier Lehramtswärter mithilfe des Erwartung-mal-Wert-Modells. Die Teilnehmer sind nicht-traditionelle Studierende, die ein Master-Programm für Lehramt (MAT) in den Vereinigten Staaten belegt haben, und die an einem ausführlichen Interview über ihre beruflichen Ziele teilgenommen haben. Die Resultate fassen mithilfe der Cross-Case-Analyse Ähnlichkeiten und Unterschiede zwischen den Teilnehmern zusammen. Die Hauptkategorien aus den Teilnehmerbefragungen werden mit ihren beruflichen Erwartungen als Lehrer (z.B. Erwartungen, Selbstbewusstsein), Leistungswerte (z.B. Bedeutung), intrinsische Werte (z.B. Freude), Brauchbarkeitswert (z.B praktische Bedeutung) und Kosten (z.B. Zeit, Kosten) verbunden. Es wird deren Auswirkungen auf das Lehramtsstudium und den Beruf diskutiert.

1. Introduction and Purpose

Using an Expectancy-Value model (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000) we analyzed in the current study nontraditional preservice teachers' (i.e., career switchers) motivations, expectations of the career, planned instruction and their views of the profession. Contributions from such research could lead to reforms in educator preparation programs as well as preparing more effective and committed teachers (Manuel & Hughes, 2006). Since many of the teaching population among Australia, the United States, and several European countries are aging (Thomson & Palermo, 2014; Thomson & Palermo, 2018; Watt & Richardson, 2007), research conducted now will be influential in policymaking, teacher training and recruitment for the future. If there are trends in motivations and expectancies, researchers can draw conclusions about those trends and give suggestions for teacher education programs in terms of recruitment of new students. Research on teacher motivation describes three main factors illustrating why

teachers choose to teach: perceived benefits of the career or reasons why one would want to teach, perceived negative aspects of teaching or why one would not want to teach, and various other factors such as commentary on the profession, working conditions (Thomson, 2018; Thomson & McIntyre, 2013; Thomson & Palermo, 2014; Thomson & Palermo, 2018). Common reasons listed for choosing the teacher career include the love for working with children, personal fulfillment, job security, having a calling to teach, and being able to influence others as a role model. Schutz et al. (2001) found several specific factors for joining the career, including altruistic motives, as has been already reported, past experiences, and past teachers. Other studies propose that people might join teaching due to their personal philosophies about education that teachers who feel a calling to the profession would be even more motivated to stay in teaching if they felt they could be recognized for their calling (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012; Backes & Burns, 2008; Curtis, 2012).

The purpose of the current study was to analyze individuals' motivations and views about teaching using an Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT) approach. Data from three case studies about pre-service teachers' motivations for teaching, expectancies about the teaching profession, and values for the teaching profession were analyzed. Our study is an important addition to existing research, as most EVT research is done primarily in terms of students in a classroom (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000; Eccles et al., 1983; Wigfield, Tonks, & Klauda, 2009), and not in terms of teacher motivation. Also, unlike our study in which we use a qualitative approach using the EVT model to analyze prospective teachers' (career switchers) teaching path, most of the existing research in this area consists of quantitative studies (i.e., Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2012; Kilinc et al., 2012; Konig & Rothland, 2012; Watt & Richardson, 2012). The current study analyzes a collective instrumental case study, designed to illustrate unique differences and similarities in terms of teacher motivation and beliefs about teaching among participants. Qualitative data (pre-service teacher interviews) from this study were collected as part of a larger study (Thomson & Palermo, 2018) investigating motivations and views about teaching. Ten pre-service teachers enrolled in a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program with an Elementary Education focus were interviewed during their first year of study (Thomson & Palermo, 2018). After all data was coded, three case studies were purposefully selected to illustrate unique stories about choosing the teaching career path in the current study. The following research questions were addressed:

1. In what ways are the three case study participants similar in their motivators for teaching and views about the teaching career? Do these participants share common motivators and beliefs about their chosen teaching path?

2. In what ways are the three case study participants different with respect to their motivations for teaching and their views about teaching?

2. Methodology

The current study is part of a larger phenomenological study (Thomson & Palermo, 2018) investigating motivations and expectations about teaching of ten elementary pre-service teachers interviewed during their teacher preparation program. Data analysis in the current study includes a within-case analysis and then a cross-case analysis to compare and contrast three case studies (Molly, Molly, Tracey, and Mia, pseudonyms) using an EVT model. The three case studies have been chosen from the ten participants (in Thomson & Palermo, 2018) with a purposeful maximal sampling approach, selecting thus case studies that seem to have the most to discuss and analyze in terms of findings (Creswell, 2007). Interviews consisted of 30 questions focused around teacher motivation, expectancies and beliefs about effective teachers, future plans, and coursework to prepare participants for teaching as a career. Sample questions can be seen in Appendix A.

3. Results

Results are discussed for the three case studies from an EVT approach, describing five major themes from participant's interviews: expectancies, attainment value, intrinsic value, utility value, and cost.

3.1. Case Study 1: Molly

Molly was a single 26-year-old student without children at the time of the original interview. Molly had previously received an undergraduate degree in athletic training, graduating with honors, but decided to teach because she enjoyed her position as a nanny so much, apart from the hours worked.

3.1.1. Expectancies

In terms of expectancies for the career, Molly stated that she hoped she would be a good teacher and fair: "I believe in say what you mean and mean what you say, so I hope that the children will have a respect for what I'm saying and they listen to me, but I don't have to be mean and forceful to get my point across." Molly hopes to have a classroom that feels like a team. Her perception of herself as a future teacher is that she will be very relatable to kids. She says, "…make my lessons things that children are going to want to do. And just, they're easy for them to understand, not using a lot of big words, and have…make things seem like they're on their level so that they can excel without really knowing that that's what they're doing." Molly wants to encourage students to do their best and to tell them that they are smart. She said she thinks she will use positive reinforcement to motivate students.

When asked about confidence to teach, Molly said she felt "pretty confident." She mentions nervousness about having to teach to the Common Core (recently introduced in the US) as part of the educational reform to improve education in classrooms:

"The only thing that makes me a little nervous is that the things we are learning this year are for the [university] Standard and next year we're going to be teaching the Common Core; classroom-wise it's going to be a little different because kids are going to be moving even more and discussing even more and doing more research and free thought than they are now. So, I'm kind of concerned on how I'm going to manage that."

She also mentions that she knows she will need to improve with organization and time management when she actually becomes a teacher. However, early in her interview, she said that she thought she would be good at teaching, and again at the conclusion of her interview, she ends with: "Once I get used to it I think it will be a smooth transition; I'm sure I'll be stressed out the first week or two while I'm trying to figure out all the policies and practices that I need to do at my certain school. But other than that, other than just learning the rules and the guidelines, I'm not too concerned about it."

Molly seems to understand that there will be some challenges getting used to her new school when she eventually gets a job. She also seems to realize the challenges she will face with incorporating the new Common Core curriculum, but she remains confident that she will be a positive and effective teacher. Her expectancies do not seem too muddied with potentially difficult situations.

3.1.2. Attainment Value

Molly describes how she enjoyed working with elementary school children while she was in high school, and loving working with the kids she nannies for now. She said that nannying, combined with "having the experience in the classroom, has made [her] feel like it is something [she] would like to do." School experiences mentioned were that the fun activities in school helped her learn the most because the teacher did such a good job of making class fun that she didn't even realize she was learning, "Most of my public school I did have good teachers and I think they modeled a very professional way to teach. I felt comfortable around them."

Molly's belief is that an effective teacher "is someone who cares about her students just as much as she cares about herself." She mentions that a quality teacher is not looking to get tenure and summers off. Molly says, "I think a teacher needs to have calm qualities and that's about it."

Later in her interview, she mentioned that a good teacher treats all students equally and does not let stereotypes or favorites get in the way of teaching: "I believe that all the students should be treated equally. It's really hard not to do stereotypes and judging and picking favorites, but that's something I think all teachers need to work for. And most kids have the potential to success or actually all kids have the potential to succeed and I just want to treat them the best that I can and encourage them to do their best."

Molly places heavy emphasis on the importance of treating students equally and giving them a fun atmosphere in which to learn. She believes that a quality teacher will embrace these characteristics and almost 'trick' students into learning, just like her teachers did for her.

3.1.3. Intrinsic Value

Molly was influenced to choose teaching because of other friends who enjoy teaching. She described how she helped the children she was a nanny for with their homework and how it felt great to see the progress that they made. She says: "I work with an eight-year-old and a thirteen-year-old, so it's very different subject ranges, but they bring home their homework...the younger one struggled a lot with reading, I helped the older one with math. He was struggling in Algebra...once you find [a concept] that works, it's nice to see that the light really does go on; they actually get it and they can continue working successfully after that point."

Molly's personal fulfillment from helping these two children made her want to help other children, as well. She mentions using her own methods to help these particular children from her quote, since, in her own words, "Obviously I had no clue what I was doing, 'cause I didn't have any teaching classes yet." Even without teacher training, Molly knew she personally enjoyed figuring out ways to help a child understand a concept. When asked specifically how she came to the choice of deciding to teach, Molly answered: "What attracted me to teaching was that I loved tutoring the kids that I work with. Both of my parents work in the school system. I think it's fun; I was really nervous to go into it, at first when I was in college, because there are so many horrible stories about it: the government, the pay, and the parents. But I realized with any job there's going to be stuff like that. And all my friends that teach seem like they enjoy it and I think I will be good at it."

3.1.4. Utility Value

In her interview, Molly did not mention much in regard to utility value; however, she did mention a couple of times in her interview ways in which she could fulfill a need in the position with character traits or her personality: "My friends who teach said that they really liked it and they thought I would be good at it; they know my personality and they said it would match well with the younger elementary school kids, and I agreed…I think the main thing that life experiences teach is the character traits needed for teaching, which are patience and understanding and empathy, and certain things like that." It appears that Molly thinks she has these ideal character traits herself, which helps solidify her confidence in her future career path.

3.1.5. Cost

Cost is mentioned in several ways in Molly's interview. She mentions at the beginning of the interview that her parents discouraged her from teaching "just because they are so fed up with all the politics of it." She also mentions how much of a responsibility it is to be a teacher, and that teachers don't get enough support from the administration because the administrators are also caught up in the politics of teaching: "I don't feel like teachers get enough support from the administration because they're trying to follow the politics of teaching, which don't really correlate with the purpose of teaching. So that's got to be hard, to be trying to teach your students, but your administration is telling you that you have to move on even if [the kids are] not getting it."

Another cost associated with the teaching career for Molly is literal monetary cost. She discusses finances: "Financially, I don't think it's so great at all. You're spending a lot of your money on materials. A lot of times you don't have parents who can help aid the classroom, so you're going to be spending money out of your own pocket, which you really don't have a lot of because, you know, you're not getting paid very much at all."

This literal cost of teaching is one of the things Molly realizes she may have to give up in order to fulfill her goal of becoming a teacher. Another cost mentioned by Molly is the way society views the career of teaching: "a lot of people view teachers as babysitters and a lot of people view teachers as complete idiots and a lot of people view teachers

as very smart people. I don't think there really is a generalized society view."

Molly does not seem to think that there is a huge cost in the way society views the profession of teaching; she believes that society has many different views toward teaching as a career, so she does not seem to be worried about that cost of her goals. In terms of the costs being worthwhile, Molly lists several advantages of teaching that would make the costs bearable: "I feel like it's great hours, the classroom sizes are limited – I mean, I know they can get big – but they're not going to get too big, and that's going to help with teaching. A lot of schools have a lot of extra resources, which will also be helpful in teaching…[another advantage is] being on a hall, which I'm sure I'll be collaborating with a bunch of different teachers with different experience ranges who can give me different information that can help me further my career and reach my students the best way I can."

With her teaching program being worth the costs, Molly mentions that the reason she loves the program at her university so much is because a lot of other programs meet mostly online, and the one she was in is mostly in person. She says: "I liked that because it allows you to collaborate with your classmates and think of new ideas and promote critical thinking."

3.2. Case Study 2: Tracey

Tracey was, like Molly, a 26-year-old single woman with no children at the time of her interview. She had an undergraduate degree in journalism and mass communications and three years of experience working in retail and fundraising.

3.2.1. Expectancies

Tracey expects that her teaching will involve having a close relationship with her kids while keeping a professional line between them. She says, "I want to know my kids, I want to know their families, I want to know what's going on in their lives." She describes her perception of her future classroom as one that would seem a little bit like chaos. She sees herself giving a lot of hands-on activities and doing a lot of small group work: "I'm not the type that wants to get up and stand in front of my kids and lecture all day and have them sit quietly. I want them engaged in hands-on activity and doing a lot of small groups work. Working together a whole lot…collaboration

I think is key…it's sort of organized chaos. I don't want it to be silent; I want them to feel free to talk to one another."

In addition to the types of activities that she feels she will ask students to complete, Tracey also describes that she expects she will be a very laid-back teacher: "I guess I'm a little bit more liberal in that respect, you know. I don't feel like I'm going to be super strict…they're going to know the boundaries, and they're going to know what it is that I expect of them. But I want them to be able to feel free to be kids at the same time and not just sit there like robots."

Tracey says that she hopes she will be happy teaching and that she thinks she will be. She also expects that it will be "the hardest job there is." She explains a lack of autonomy for teachers, saying: "As a career, [teaching] is always changing. I think, a lot of teachers I talk to feel like they finally have perfected their lessons and they've got this great unit and then the county or the state, they change the standards on them and they're not teaching that. So I think because it's always changing that, you know, its' a little bit of a disadvantage…I think my biggest concern is juggling everything that's expected of [me]…Especially, you know, with a lot of emphasis on EOGs and AYP [state standardized tests] … So, I think that's going to be the struggle, just balancing all that other stuff with what you're really there to do, which is to teach the kids."

Finally, Tracey explains, like Molly, that she knows she will face challenges in her teaching career, but she feels confident that she can handle them. She explains: "I feel confident that I can do this. I mean, I recognize that it's going to be challenging and I recognize that I don't know everything. I think as I progress, I'm just going to be more and more confident in my ability to teach kids. And I think, you know, that in general I'm about ready to start student teaching. I am pretty confident."

3.2.2. Attainment Value

In terms of attainment, Tracey speaks of her love of working with children and how it shaped her goal of becoming a teacher: "I've always liked working with young kids. When I was in undergrad, I nannied for a family part time for years and I loved it. But somehow, I always sort of talked myself out of it…And I just kept thinking, what do I want to do with my life, and it always just kept coming back to working with kids…and really that's what motivated me to come back. Just, I love kids, I love working with them."

She mentions how when she was a nanny, she loved helping the kids with homework and projects. Tracey admits that being a nanny was probably the most critical influence on her decision to teach, saying how much she loved being in an environment with children. Tracey also mentions past teachers as an influence on her decision to teach, and how she has kept in touch with one teacher in particular. She says: "I've also kept in touch with a lot of my teachers that have meant a lot to me. I think they have made such an impact in my life and I would like to, you know, do the same for other kids. Specifically, my fourth-grade teacher and I are still in contact; I actually babysit her children right now and um, she's just been a great encouragement. So, I've grown up sort of around a lot of teachers, a lot of my mom's friends are teachers…I've sort of been in that environment my entire life."

Another piece of evidence for attainment value found in Tracey's interview was her experience in school growing up. She remembers being bored in middle school during lecture after lecture and decided she would be a different type of teacher. Further, Tracey goes on to describe the importance of being a good teacher to reach every student. She describes an effective teacher as one that knows the material and is willing to be a learner, as well. She also says that an effective teacher has to know his/her kids individually: "I think quality teaching has a lot to do with customizing your lessons to each individual child, making sure that every child's individual needs are met. And I think that that's obviously quite a challenge. Especially when you have a classroom full of 25 students. But I think the best…the best way to do that is through small groups…and then being able to pull small groups and work with kids one-on-on as best you can."

Tracey speaks of a quality teacher as realizing that sometimes "the kids know more than we do", and that a good teacher will always put the emphasis on her students. At the end of her interview, she reiterates, "I want to make a difference… And I think as a teacher, we have the opportunity to change the world. And that's why I'm in this." Tracey places a lot of attainment value on her choice to go into teaching. She wants to make a difference for students, loves working with students, and enjoys the fact that she'll have a chance to change the world.

3.2.3. Intrinsic Value

Tracey says that she thinks a major advantage of the career is changing the lives of the children that she teaches.

She says: "Well, I think some of the advantages are just in an essence of what you do every day. You know, you really are changing the lives of the children that you teach. And you have an opportunity to make a difference in the life of a child and I think that, that in itself is the greatest reward out there."

Tracey thinks that the most rewarding part of her teaching job will be when she sees a child really get a concept and apply it. She mentions the light bulb going off in someone's head. She also mentions the personal reward of having students come back to visit and say that she has made a difference for them: "I think for me it's going to be that moment when a child gets it. When they finally, when that light that goes off and they're like, I get it. And then they start applying it and they use it. And I think that's going to be the most rewarding. I also think when they come back and visit you after having left your classroom, you know years, years ago and they come back, and they say, you know, you made a difference. I think that's going to be some of the most rewarding times."

3.2.4. Utility Value

Tracey's interview does not give a lot of evidence for the utility value she sees in the teaching career. She does not mention any personal ideal teaching qualities or characteristics other than saying what type of teacher she expects she will be, nor does she explain that she will be able to fill a need in the profession, other than to say that her methods courses have given her "practical solutions to everyday problems."

Tracey does believe that the teaching profession would provide utility value in the sense that it might aid in sustaining the life of someone who wanted to have a family. She explains, saying, "And I think, you know, for someone who does want to have a family and does want to have kids, being a teacher is nice, because you have the same holidays, you know; the same breaks that your children will have, you will have as well. And so, I think that is a definite advantage." Her intrinsic value does seem to be high, though, so perhaps for Tracey, gaining intrinsic value and happiness from teaching could help sustain her life or help her develop those ideal qualities in a teacher.

3.2.5. Cost

Tracey mentions many costs of teaching as a career. She says that she never realized how much teachers have to actually do that takes away from their normal lives. In fact,

she mentions "juggling everything that's expected of them" as a cost for teachers and lists it as one of her greatest concerns about the profession: "I think it's probably one of the toughest jobs there is. They don't just teach anymore, there are so many other things that go into it. There's so much paperwork and there's so many county and state expectations, school expectations, managing parents, working with administration, and working with your teachers. Most teachers stay till six or seven at night, so I definitely think it's the hardest job there is."

Tracey says that she does feel like teaching is respected in general. She explains, "I feel like it's a respected job…I do feel like some people may say, 'Oh, well, they're not a doctor or a lawyer,' but I think in general people respect teachers." Tracey also mentions that although teaching is a societal respected career, it is a job that is very under paid, which is a cost when considering how many expectations teachers have placed on them. In this sense, Tracey does see that teachers are experiencing a 'cost' in terms of pay. However, Tracey feels that the pay is not enough of a cost to keep her from teaching: "I do think it's completely underpaid…especially with how much they [teachers] have to do every day…To me, that wasn't really a consideration. I think when I got out of college, I was kind of like, 'I want to make $50,000 a year or I want to do this.' It was very focused financially and then when I got out, I realized, okay, I'm doing pretty well financially, but I'm not happy…I wish teachers were paid more, they deserve to be paid more, but again, that wasn't really something that I think much about." Tracey believes that the costs or sacrifices for getting her degree are worth it. She mentions classes like methods courses in math and social studies, a class in diversity, and says that these have all prepared her to teach better and that they have helped develop her content knowledge.

3.3. Case Study 3: Mia

Mia was a 34-year-old mother of three girls at the time of the interview. Her background in undergraduate study was in Psychology, with some law school and work after earning her Psychology degree. After natural disaster Hurricane Katrina relocated her family, Mia began substitute teaching and found great enjoyment in working with children in a classroom setting.

3.3.1. Expectancies

Mia perceives herself as a "silly" teacher who uses humor to get to kids. She explains how her subbing experiences have helped shape this expectancy: "I know that when I'm subbing, I can be a little silly, so I tend to use humor a lot when I'm working with children. But I also tend to be a little strict. I know when I first started subbing, I had a lot of real high demands of the children and they didn't really like me very much. And I saw that I could be strict, and the kids wouldn't even mind if I was using humor, so I could use both and kids really would respond to that."

Mia also expects that along with being funny and strict, she will have a lot of technology use in her classroom. She speaks of several examples and mentions that other countries are also starting to use a lot of technology with students: "I know I like to bring a lot of technology into the classroom; I'm big on student blogs and things like that. I do see on Twitter that a lot of other countries are using internet sources…Wiki-ing, blogging, and kids are interacting with their classroom websites, so I like a lot of the technology stuff and I think that's important for the kids to learn, and so I want to bring that in."

Mia believes that she will use small groups in order to teach differentiated lessons. She describes that giving a lesson to the whole class leaves too many students out or leaves children behind others. She describes her expectancies: "Because kids learn at different levels and you have a huge range of kids in the class who are at different levels in the material and so I don't really like doing the whole group lessons. I used to think it would be impossible to do all small groups for everything. But my teacher that I have been observing this semester is able to do it; so that has given me a little bit of hope."

Emotions related to teaching for Mia are positive. She said, "I know there are going to be times when it's stressful…but overall I just think it's going to be an enjoyable experience." She expresses nervousness about not having a lot of autonomy or choice in her classroom and what/ how she wants to teach "I think the biggest drawback is lack of control over what and how you teach." Finally, in regards to confidence, Mia mentions that she feels prepared to teach the content, even though she knows she still has more to learn. She says: "I think that I could learn the basis of what I need to teach quickly in order to delve into those contents or subjects that I would need to teach, especially in science. I think I still need to learn to remember a lot of the science concepts, but I feel confident that when I grab a book or research, I'll be able to learn it quickly to teach the basics."

3.3.2. Attainment Value

Mia explains in her interview that she wants to make a difference from the strict classrooms she grew up in and allow students to have positive reinforcements and "happier schooling." She says of her childhood and teaching beliefs: "I don't like the strictness from when I was in elementary school… That just made me want to avoid school at that age. My later schooling wasn't as strict…I think that influenced me in the fact that I really don't like the negative reinforcements. I prefer to try to use positive reinforcements 'cause it just makes for more happier schooling and I think it's more effective."

Mia describes effective teaching as being able to connect with each student. She said that with differentiation a teacher can reach each student and at their own pace. She thinks that an effective teacher doesn't necessarily have the best scores, but that the students are learning skills and information to use in the future. She also says that "as a teacher, you need to be constantly learning, and there are ways to get deeper in it." Towards the end of her interview, Mia repeats how much she enjoys working with children and suggests that she probably will still be teaching years from now: "I don't really see myself doing anything else at the moment, so I imagine I will still be teaching. I know I considered whether or not I would want to go back to college and become a college professor. But I think that from my experience, where I really enjoy working with the children themselves, I don't really see myself changing that."

3.3.3. Intrinsic Value

Mia describes that substitute teaching was a huge motivator for her and that teaching her own kids made an impact, as well: "I took a year off [from law] and I decided to give teaching a shot…so I became a substitute and I really enjoyed it. Teaching my own kids was a big factor. Some people would say I was obsessed with it, because I was teaching them pretty much from when they were born, and I really enjoyed doing that."

She also explains how her former job teaching a computer class to English Language Learners was very enjoyable for her, leading to her decision, as well as working with children in a preschool while she was in high

school. When asked what the most crucial influence was on her decision to teach, Mia answered, "Just a strong desire to work with children. I find that I'm happiest when I'm around and working with kids as opposed to the different jobs I've had working with adults. I get a lot of pleasure around children and I do enjoy teaching."

Finally, when asked about how family or friends have shaped her decision to teach, Mia lists one particular friend who supported her decision. She also mentions that her family was pretty discouraging in her goal to become a teacher: "Family – I would pretty much say everyone was against it. My mother was very concerned about the pay. My husband still doesn't like it; he, as well, is concerned about the pay. And so I would say support from family, not so much. I have some friends who are teachers from New Orleans. One in particular was a close friend of mine and um, she's a teacher in New Orleans and really enjoys it and speaks highly of it and so that helps give some support to it, to know that…I just feel better knowing that I'm doing something I enjoy."

Mia believes that the greatest reward from teaching would be seeing the children grow intellectually. She said that when a kid "gets it" is a powerful feeling for her, even as a substitute teacher: "Even as a substitute there are opportunities when I'll go in a classroom and the teacher provided the material and the kids really don't get it and if I leave the classroom feeling like, 'Wow, I've only been with these kids for a day and they've actually learned something and they understand it now,' that's always a powerful feeling. And so, I think the most rewarding thing is watching the children learn something, and they really understand it."

3.3.4. Utility Value

In terms of utility value, Mia does see one important way that teaching can help sustain her life: it will give her a chance to be free when her children are free. She explains how much it burdened her to further her education while her children were young and in school, so she only ever went part-time: "I think while even though [law] was part time, it still pretty much took all my time and the fact that I had a nine-month-old was really hard emotionally. I knew I didn't want to work that much and not have the time with my children…although I know teachers work a lot, and they work long hours, they do get a lot of time to spend with their families as well, especially in the summers when the kids are off…and so I think that's a big influence – I know

I'm going to have time with my kids because their breaks coincide."

Along with fulfilling her need to be with her children, Mia also sees needs in the profession that she feels she can fulfill, including the use of technology in the classroom and the need for teachers to constantly be learning. She mentions studying other cultures' ways of teaching content and how she will continue to do that in her career. In addition to her thoughts on fueling the need for technology, Mia speaks about her passion for fulfilling the need in education of continuing to learn as a teacher, including learning about cross-cultural methods of teaching. Mia explains: "But in the math class something that was really inspiring was because of the way that other countries teach that are doing well…the teacher is never really finished studying. They have to, in other countries, they use a lot of time – they give the teachers a lot of time during the day to actually learn further in the academics of the material themselves. So, I like the whole looking at the way other countries do it that was taught in math. That was very inspiring."

Mia realizes that teaching will be useful to her in her life and feels that she can be instrumental as a teacher through her implementation of technology and her willingness to always continue to learn.

3.3.5. Cost

Costs of the profession mentioned in Mia's interview are low pay, a lack of autonomy, and getting moved from different grade levels or content areas. She mentions finances several times in her interview. Mia says early on in her interview, "Well, from high school I had wanted to be a teacher, and I had chosen against it because of the pay. And a lot of people were discouraging me from doing it, so it was mostly the pay."

She also mentions in her interview that her family and husband were against her choice due to the salary. Later in her interview, she mentions finances again, saying, "I did mention the financial. Although overall, I don't really think the financial is as bad as people tell me…I know if my husband wasn't bringing anything to the table and was laid off of work, we would seriously be struggling." During Mia's interview, however, she does mention that her happiness is worth the 'cost' of the low pay: "I just feel better knowing that I'm doing something I enjoy, even if

I'm not getting the money that everyone seems to want me to get."

Ironically, Mia does not see time as a cost of teaching, because she feels that teaching will give her ample time to spend with her children since they will have the same breaks from school as she will. She found that time was a great cost in her previous jobs, with going to school and doing work in law and various other positions. The final drawback to the profession found in Mia's interview is a lack of autonomy for teachers. Mia mentions that a teacher can be moved very suddenly from a grade level or subject. Although there are some negative costs that Mia associates with teaching, she believes that her preparation program costs have been worthwhile; she says her program has done well to train her for the classroom.

4. Discussion

Several themes emerge from these case study participants' interviews. There is a common thread of a lack of control in the classroom, the politics of teaching, and low pay. Another trend is the intrinsic motivation for teaching – all three participants chosen stated that they want to teach because of personal enjoyment or making a difference in student lives. All three participants look forward to students finally understanding material – Tracey and Molly both mention the application of information, as well. Both Mia and Tracey mention individualized instruction and differentiation in quality teaching when speaking in terms of attainment value. Another similarity includes societal views on teachers – none of the participants seemed to feel a strong negative or positive view from society. Molly and Tracey specifically mention social status of the teaching career, while Mia does not mention it at all. Molly believes that society has a mixed view of teachers, with some respecting the career and others not respecting the career or thinking teachers are not very special or important. Tracey believes that as a whole, society respects teaching as a profession, even though society may place more importance on being a doctor or lawyer or similar position. Mia, when asked about her thoughts on teaching as a career, was probed to speak about social status but instead focused on financial aspects of the job, as well as how tough it is to accept all the constant changes in what a teacher must teach to students. This could be just an oversight on Mia's part, or it could suggest that social status is not important enough to her to mention.

Interestingly enough, none of the participants seem to have much to say about utility of the position. This would indicate that they saw a great usefulness for the profession in relation to their own lives, or that they saw how they could fill a need in the profession. In coding, utility value was not found abundantly in any of the three interviews: Molly speaks of how her friends believe she has the right personality to teach, Tracey explains that she believes teaching would provide utility for someone with a family and that having breaks would be useful, and Mia comes from both a family and worldly standpoint, explaining that, as Tracey suggested, time off from school will help her spend more time with her children. She also talks of being able to fill the need in the profession of staying on top of technology and exploring how other cultures do things in education. Perhaps the lack of usefulness explained by these three participants is made less important by the fact that they all three mention meaningful intrinsic value of the profession.

All three participants expressed in their expectancies that they want students to be free, to have individualized and small group work, independence, etc. Since all three participants come from the same teacher preparation program, it is difficult to tell if the education program has been a factor in shaping their ideas similarly about what kind of teachers they will be. All three participants also mention how hard the work of being a teacher is – dealing with parents, administrators, paper work, politics of teaching, long hours, etc. Molly is the only participant who mentions having to pay for materials and resources out of her own pocket – the other two participants do mention finances but do not give specific examples of financial situations as a teacher. Although all three participants mention altruistic reasons for going into teaching, they each have different influences for choosing to teach. Mia's family did not support her decision due to the pay; she was influenced by a teacher friend and by substitute teaching. Tracey was influenced positively by her experience as a nanny and from several old teachers, her family, and friends. Molly's family, like Mia's, also discouraged her from joining the school system, but she was influenced positively by friends who teach and from tutoring and babysitting students. It is noteworthy that both Molly and Tracey had similar influencing factors (e.g., babysitting) in wanting to become teachers and are both the same age, whereas Mia, whose influences were different, is almost ten years older and has had more life experiences. Mia's age could also potentially play a role in the fact that Mia's

interview listed different 'costs' of the teaching career: she mentions mainly teacher pay and a lack of autonomy, and ironically differs in respect to Tracey's perceived costs of the career. Tracey mostly mentions time as a cost of teaching, in terms of losing time due to all of the expectations placed upon teachers. Mia seems to believe that she will have more precious and valuable time with her children if she teaches – perhaps because Tracey and Molly are not in a family mode at their age of 26, they do not see this time off from school to be as important as Mia does, since they may have no one precious to them to share the school breaks with.

Another interesting theme is that both Tracey and Mia specifically mention a drawback to the teaching career in terms of having a grade or subject changed after getting comfortable with one's subject area or grade level and lesson plans. Molly mentions changes like state standards changing and being nervous about the common core, but she does not specifically mention the type of change in situation that both Tracey and Mia do – she just mentions the politics of teaching in terms of a lack of administrative support.

Finally, when asked if they plan on staying in the profession, both Molly and Mia mention that they want to stay in the profession until retiring. However, they both also mention that they have considered going back to school for a doctoral degree or becoming a college professor. Tracey says that she wants to stay in education in some way, whether she's in the classroom or not. She mentions possibly becoming involved in school politics or becoming a school administrator. So, although all three participants have different end goal possibilities, they all do seem determined to at least stay in the field of education. Molly, Tracey, and Mia all echo what research says on teacher motivation – they all have expressed a need for personal fulfillment, a desire to give back to the community, and a joy for working with children. All three participants also seem to echo the research that states teachers are not compensated enough for all they have to do, and that teachers see a lack of administrative support and educational politics as a drawback to the profession.

Though some research has found that a commonality among teachers joining the profession is job security and benefits (Backes & Burns, 2012; Ramirez, 2010), Molly, Tracey, and Mia do not seem to be in agreement with this notion. In fact, Mia even mentions in her interview that previously she would have mentioned job stability as an advantage of the profession, but now she has heard more and more of veteran teachers being laid off. Another difference between research findings and the three participants of this case study is that Molly, Tracey, and Mia all have a pretty neutral view of how teachers are viewed in society. They do not seem to see the lack of respect that many research reports have discussed.

These similarities and differences show the still-important need for even more research in the areas of teacher motivation and retention. Individualized and specific studies, as well as broad and general teacher studies, must be conducted in very specific conditions to get at the heart of reasons for motivation. For instance, the findings of these three case study participants show that there are many similarities and differences among them and what much research reports – and although these are just three women being compared to thousands of other participants, one wonders what data would be found with more in-depth case studies and qualitative research on teacher motivation and satisfaction.

Limitations of this study include limited data in terms of gender, thus the need to include more male teachers in the study. All of the original interviews for this study were with female pre-service teachers. Future research might include stages of the family life cycle as an important factor to study in terms of teacher motivation. Research findings could help teacher preparation programs become more in tune with their students and more research should examine why people are choosing *not* to teach. Such research could lead to gains in the education field in terms of teacher training, recruitment, and retention.

Authors note:

Dr. Margareta M. Thomson, Ph.D., obtained her doctoral degree (Ph.D.) in Educational Psychology and Learning Systems at Florida State University and currently is an Associate Professor of Educational Psychology at North Carolina State University. Her research investigates teachers' motivations, expectations, values and classroom practices using primarily mixed-methods approaches.

Julia McClannon, M.S., obtained her master's degree (M.S) in Educational Psychology at North Carolina State University. She is currently teaching at Fuquay-Varina High School in North Carolina. Her research focus is on teacher burn-out, well-being and motivations.

References

Ashiedu, J.A. & Scott-Ladd, B.D. (2012). Understanding teacher attraction and retention drivers: addressing teacher shortages. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 37*(11),17-35. http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2012v37n11.1.

Backes, C., & Burns, J. Z. (2008). New career-technical teachers – what gets them, and why is it important to know? Career motivations of trade and industrial healthcare science second-career teachers. *Journal of Industrial Teacher Education, 45*(1), 100-112.

Bandura, A. (1997). Self-efficacy: The exercise of control. New York, NY, US: W H Freeman/Times Books/ Henry Holt & Co.

Curtis, C. (2012). Why do they choose to teach – and why do they leave? A study of middle school and high school mathematics teachers. *Education, 132*(4), 779-788.

Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.

Eccles, J.S., Adler, T.F., Futterman, R., Goff, S.B., Kaczala, C.M., Meece, J.L., & Midgley, C. (1983). Expectancies, values, and academic behaviors. In J. T. Spence (Ed.), *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation* (Vol. 32, pp. 97-132). Lincoln, NE: Univ. of Nebraska Press.

Fokkens-Bruinsma, M. & Canrinus, E.T. (2012). The factors influencing teaching (FIT)-choice scale in a Dutch teacher education program. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 40*(3), 249-269. https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2012.700043.

Kilinc, A., Watt, H.M.G., Richardson, & P.W. (2012). Factors influencing teaching choice in Turkey. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 40*(3), 199-226. https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2012.700048.

Konig, J., & Rothland, M. (2012). Motivations for choosing teaching as a career: effects on general pedagogical knowledge during initial teacher education. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 40*(3), 289-315. https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2012.700045.

Manuel, J., & Hughes, J. (2006). 'It has always been my dream': exploring pre-service teachers' motivations for choosing to teach. *Teacher Development: An international journal of teachers' professional development*, *10*(1), 5-24.

Ramirez, A.Y. (2010). Why teach? *Multicultural Education, 17*(3), 29-35.

Richardson, P.W., & Watt, H.M.G. (2005). 'I've decided to become a teacher': influences on career change. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 21,* 475-489.

Richardson, P.W., & Watt, H.M.G. (2006). Who chooses teaching and why? Profiling characteristics and motivations across three Australian universities. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 34*(1), 27-56.

Schutz, P.A., Crowder, K.C., & White, V.E. (2001). The development of a goal to become a teacher. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 93*(2), 299-308.

Thomson, M.M. (2018). Identifying and Examining Motivational Profiles: Distinct Typologies with Blended Motives. In M. Gill (Ed.), *SAGE Research Methods Psychology* (pp. 1-13). London, UK: Sage Publications. http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526449177.

Thomson, M.M., & Palermo, C. (2018). Using an Expectancy-Value Model to understand teaching motivation among nontraditional preservice teachers: A phenomenological study approach. *Action in Teacher Education, 40* (2),151-168. https://doi.org/10.1080/01626620.2018.1424050.

Thomson, M.M., & Palermo, C. (2014). Preservice teachers' understanding of their professional goal: Case studies from three different typologies. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 44,* 56-68. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2014.08.002.

Thomson, M.M., & McIntyre, E. (2013). Teachers' professional goals: An examination of different teachers' typologies with respect to motivations and beliefs about teaching. *Teacher Development, 17*(4),409-430. https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530.2013.804001.

Watt, H.M.G., & Richardson, P. (2008). Motivations, perceptions, and aspirations concerning teaching as a career for different types of beginning teachers. *Learning and Instruction, 18,* 408-428.

Watt, H.M.G., & Richardson, P. (2007). Motivational factors influencing teaching as a career choice: development and validation of the FIT-choice scale. *The Journal of Experimental Education, 75*(3), 167-202.

Watt, H.M.G. & Richardson, P.W. (2012). An introduction to teaching motivations in different countries: comparisons using the FIT-Choice scale. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 40*(3), 185-197. https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2012.700049.

Watt, H.M.G., Richardson, P.W., Klusmann, U., Kunter, M., Beyeer, B., Trautwein, U., & Baumert, J. (2012). Motivations for choosing teaching as a career: an international comparison using the FIT-choice scale. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 28,* 791-805.

Wigfield, A.L., & Eccles, J.S. (2000). Expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *25*, 68-81. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2012.03.003.

Wigfield, A., Tonks, S., & Klauda, S.L. (2009). Expectancy-value theory. In Wentzel, K.R. & Wigfield, A. (Eds.), *Handbook of Motivation at School* (55-70). New York, NY: Routledge.

The relation between the personality factors extraversion, neuroticism, general cognitive aptitude and critical thinking

Andreea C. Buzduga

The relation between the personality factors extraversion, neuroticism, general cognitive aptitude and critical thinking

Andreea C. Buzduga [a*]

[a] *Doctoral School of Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iaşi, 3 Toma Cozma Street, 700704, Iaşi, Romania*

*Corresponding author: acbuzduga@gmail.com

Abstract

Keywords:
critical thinking, general cognitive aptitudes, personality factors, intelligence, EPI, WGCTA

This research aimed to study the relationship between the personality factors extraversion, neuroticism, the general cognitive aptitudes and the critical thinking. The research group consisted of 709 participants, with the mean age of 19.59 years ($SD = 4.72$) of which 463 university students and 246 school students. The following tests were applied to the participants: Eysenck's Personality Inventory (EPI) form A, a Romanian version of Watson-Glaser's critical thinking test, and the East-West IQ test for evaluating the general intelligence. As far as the Introversion–Extraversion dimension is concerned, our results ($p < 0.001$) showed that the introverted participants have significant better results at the critical thinking test. Participants who scored low on neuroticism had significantly higher scores ($p < 0.001$) on the critical thinking variable compared to those who had high scores for the neuroticism variable. Significant differences had been observed between different levels of IQ and critical thinking. There is also a significant relationship ($r = 0.31$; $p < 0.001$) between the age of the participants and the result on critical thinking. The conclusions lead to the possibility of highlighting the importance of some personal aspects, as personality, in order to identify the potential to achieve a reasonable (focused on compare and decide) way of thinking.

Zusammenfasung

Schlüsselworte:
kritisches Denken, allgemeine kognitive Fähigkeiten, Persönlichkeitsfaktoren, Intelligenz, EPI, WGCTA

Diese Forschung hat dem Ziel, die Beziehung zwischen der Persönlichkeit Faktoren Extravertiertheit, Neurotizismus, die allgemeinen kognitiven Fähigkeiten und das kritische Denken zu studieren. Die Forschungsgruppe bestand aus 709 Teilnehmern, mit dem Durchschnittsalter von 19,59 Jahren (Standardabweichung = 4,72), von denen 463 Studenten und 246 Schüler. Die folgenden Tests wurden an die Teilnehmer angewandt: Eysencks Personality Inventory (EPI) Form A, eine rumänische Version von Watson-Glaser kritischen Denken Test und der Ost-West-IQ-Test für die Auswertung der allgemeinen Intelligenz. Soweit die Introversion-Extraversion Dimension betrifft, unsere Ergebnisse (p <0,001) zeigten, dass die introvertierten Teilnehmer signifikant bessere Ergebnisse bei dem kritischen Denken Test haben. Die Teilnehmer, die niedrig auf Neurotizismus erzielt hatten signifikante höhere Werte (p <0,001) auf der kritische-Denken-Variable im Vergleich zu denen, die für die Neurotizismus-Variable hohe Werte hatten. Signifikante Unterschiede waren zwischen den verschiedenen Ebenen von IQ und kritisches Denken beobachtet. Es gibt auch eine signifikante Beziehung (r = 0,31; p <0,001) zwischen dem Alter der Teilnehmer und dem Ergebnis auf kritisches Denken. Die Schlussfolgerungen führen zu der Möglichkeit, die Bedeutung einiger persönlichen Aspekte - als Persönlichkeit - hervorheben, um das Potenzial zu identifizieren, um eine angemessene Denkweise zu erreichen (Schwerpunkt vergleichen und entscheidet).

1. Introduction

The worldwide phenomenon named critical thinking, has been listed in the education field as an important asset to be cultivated in countries like United States, United Kingdom, Australia or Romania (Ciascai & Haiduc, 2009). Similarly, Asian countries like Hong Kong and Japan, had suggested the development of critical thinking for the future education of the student in the liberal society spirit (Ku, 2009). According to the Romanian Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports (2018), critical thinking is founded at lyceum upper cycle, on the history curriculum,

as a general skills, value and attitudes area, associated with the reflective thinking. Thus, on the social science area, proponents remembered the necessity of forming and developing the critical thinking skills through developing self-consciousness by internalizing the values of democratic citizenship and value-related relationships with other community members - school, local, national, European level; Moreover, within philosophy the need for critical thinking is justified as a tool necessary for students to develop their own system of values, the cognitive potential and the cultural horizon formed in previous years of study. The main purpose of this research was to explore

the relationship between critical thinking and personality factors (as extraversion and neuroticism), but also between the first aforementioned variable and the general cognitive aptitudes.

Despite the lack of agreement in defining the critical thinking, the numerous specific definitions presented a significant overlap. The intellectually engaged, responsible and very skilful thinking is named critical thinking. This leads to a better judgment, based on the application of assumptions, competence, knowledge, and the ability to keep under control one's own thinking (Niu, Behar-Horenstein & Garvan, 2013). Critical thinking skills allow students a careful and fast assimilation of a subject-specific content in any discipline and provide the ground that allows students to be engaged in offering solutions to definite problems (Tsui, 2000; Butler, Pentoney & Bong, 2017). Hence, critical thinking skills are important for students in order to perform well at school, but also for their future work performance, and in social and interpersonal context, where daily decisions have to be made independently on a main basic understanding worldwide (Ku, 2009; Gunn, Grigg & Pamahac, 2007). The critical thinking is wide known in the adult education field for its practical implication in the professional and personal development as a lifelong process of learning. In conclusion, the superior level of thinking can be defined as critical thinking formed in personality dispositions and skills.

Researching the scientific literature about the importance of personality disposition for understanding how individual ability to think critically differs, we find only few studies as Clifford, Boufal & Kurtz (2004); an exploratory study where the researchers applied the Five Factor Model of personality to the disposition model of critical thinking to find which personality traits can predict the critical thinking performance. The results revealed that Openness to Experience explained 11.8% of the critical thinking variance. Instead, the theoreticians offer qualitative studies in which they describe the personality traits of a critical thinker (Beyer, 1995; Paul, 1992).

In the continuous search of a response for "what constitutes the critical thinking", philosophers and psychologists had different beliefs about the acquisition of the skills needed, as a developmental process regulated by motivations, personality traits and dispositions.

Over the years many studies have shown that IQ scores are related with academic success and the academic achievement is related with critical thinking (Burbach,

Matkin, & Fritz, 2004; Aksu & Koruklu 2015; Nusbaum & Silvia, 2011; Katrevich & Aruguete, 2017). Nonetheless, based on the hypothesis proposed by a number of researchers, the intelligence and critical thinking may be the same construct due to their higher correlation (McPeck, 1990). Though, Elder' s research (1996) revealed the fact that intelligence and critical thinking are independent constructs. Other empirical studies show that critical thinking skills do not depend on the cognitive ability. Equally, Macpherson and Stanovich (2007) argued that cognitive ability is not a sustained predictor for the critical thinking. This was the base for our study, to investigate if the intelligence is related to the critical thinking, using two instruments of measuring (Eysenck Personality Inventory and Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal), adapted to the Romanian specific culture.

2. Method

2.1. Participants and procedures

University students and secondary school students (n = 709) from the city of Iasi took part in this research (34,7% secondary school students, 65,3% university students). A majority of the sample was female (87,2 %). The participants ranged in age from 14 to 50 years old (M = 19.59, SD = 4.72). The secondary school students were recruited from their Information and Communication Technology classes at a large public college and received participation credit as compensation. The university students were recruited from History of Psychology, Fundamentals of Psychology and Personality Psychology classes at a large public university and they also received participation credit as compensation.

2.2. Instruments and procedures

The participants completed a personality assessment inventory, a cognitive aptitude test, and a critical thinking test. All of these data were collected online. The university students were asked to take as many breaks as needed between measures, but to complete all the measures within the same day. The secondary school students completed the assessments in two steps, first, the critical thinking test and the personality assessment and second the cognitive aptitude test. The initial sample size was 791, but 82 participants were excluded either because they did not complete all three assessments, or they scored three standard deviations over or below the mean on one or more of the assessments.

2.2.1. Personality assessment inventory

The Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI), a Romanian unpublished translated version, was used to measure the two broad dimensions of personality, Extraversion-Introversion and Neuroticism-Stability, with an additional Lie scale. We calculated the reliability through Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and the results are 0.72 (Extraversion-Introversion) and 0.82 (Neuroticism-Stability). We verified the partial correlation controlling the age and the results showed a statistically significant (p < .001) between Extraversion-Introversion and Critical Thinking zero-order correlation showed -0.20, and -0.17 for Neuroticism-Stability beside a significant (p < .001) age influence of 0.30 (p < .001; rECT.age = 0.23).

The instruments are composed of 57 "yes" or "no" items, according to the Hans J. Eysenck personality theory.

2.2.2. Cognitive Aptitude Test

The East - West IQ test (Sava, Constantin, Măricuțoiu, Rusu, 2014) short version was used to measure the fluid intelligence, the crystallized intelligence and the visual processing. EVIQ-S is based on the Cattell-Horn-Carroll hierarchical intelligence model and it has 30 items with multiple choice questions. The test range was assigned as follows: lower IQ, low IQ, medium IQ, high IQ, higher IQ, and very higher IQ. The authors report the split-half internal consistency corrected by Spearman- Brown with values between 0.82 and 0.90.

2.2.3. Critical Thinking Test

The Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal (WGCTA) was used to measure critical thinking skills. The test has 81 items that were adapted for the Romanian cultural specific, split into five sections, each assessing a particular skill; as inference, recognition of assumptions, deduction, interpretation and evaluation of arguments. WGCTA includes multiple choice questions and "yes" or "no" items. The main manual reports corrected split-half reliability coefficients ranging from 0.69 to 0.85 (Watson & Glaser, 1980, cited in Clifford et al., 2004, p. 171).

3. Results

The purpose of this research was to explore the relationship between the personality factors extraversion, neuroticism and critical thinking, the general cognitive

aptitudes and the ability to think critically. The pattern of the results was similar for university students and secondary school students.

The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed a significant effect F(2, 706) = 14.126, p < .001 for introverts (M = 48.82; SD = 5.66) which had better outcomes on critical thinking than extravert (M = 45.30; SD = 6.37) and ambivert participants (M = 46.80; SD =6.08).

The Independent Samples T-test revealed a significant difference t (707) = 3.76, p < .001 on the stability variable for the participants (M = 48.04; SD = 6.04) obtaining better outcomes on critical thinking than on neuroticism (M = 46.21; SD = 6.17).

For the intelligence variable the ANOVA one-way analysis revealed a significant effect F(5, 703) = 16.736, p < .001 for the participants with very high IQ (M = 52.36; SD = 5.73) who had better outcomes on critical thinking than for the participants with a lower IQ (M = 37.63; SD = 5.63), low IQ (M = 43.47; SD = 6.86), medium IQ (M = 45.89; SD = 6.01), high IQ (M = 48.01; SD = 5.33) and higher IQ (M = 49.75; SD = 5.98).

A Pearson correlation was computed to assess the relationship between the participants' age and the critical thinking outcomes. The analysis revealed that there was a small and positive but statistically significant correlation r (709) = 0.31, p < .001 between age and the critical thinking outcomes. These results support the hypothesis that age can influence the critical thinking.

4. Discussion

The main goal of our study was to examine how critical thinking relates with personality factors (extraversion and neuroticism) and with intelligence.

Overall, our study supports the literature that the introvert participants tend to have the best outcomes on critical thinking. These results are explained by the Eysenck's theory in which the introvert persons tend to dedicate their time to studying and that they are habituated to think more than the extroverted persons who prefer to spend more time being with others and socializing. Moreover, the emotional stable participants had significant better results in critical thinking. These results are also consistent with Rammstedt, Danner and Martin (2016) and Eysenck's description of an emotional stable person, as well adapted to the social life, peaceful in any situation, who deals with unforeseen situations through a high self-

confidence. Also, many researchers (DeNitto & Strickland, 1987; Zechmeister & Johnson, 1992; Facione et al., 1994; Halpern, 1998) framed the personality trait of a critical thinker, under the dimension of conscientiousness, such as the diligence, carefulness, systematic problem-solving styles and need for order.

In addition, our results showed that the participants with a very high IQ level, had the best critical thinking, results supported by Clifford, Boufal and Kurtz (2004).

Finally, several limitations should be mentioned. Our research is exploratory, and the results do not lend themselves to any deeper interpretations. Future studies could research the possibility of predictive models for a better critical thinking. The significant positive correlation found between age and the critical thinking does not provide evidence for causal connections between these variables. Longitudinal studies with more detailed observations should be conducted in order to understand the critical thinking concept. Our future research will focus on the importance of the participants' age in the relationship between the personality and the critical thinking.

Despite these limitations, the current findings advance the critical thinking literature on exploring the relationship between personality variables and the cognitive aspects as critical thinking, measured with instruments adapted to the Romanian specific culture.

Our current investigation offers some insights into the relationship between personality (measured by the Personal Inventory of Eysenck) and critical thinking and the same variable and intelligence. Our future direction will be an investigation of the importance of the participants' age in the relationship between personality and critical thinking. We are keen to provide an understanding of how personality influences the critical thinking once the age increases.

Acknowledgments

Authors note:

Buzduga C. Andreea is currently a Ph.D. student at Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași. Research interests in critical
thinking, developing critical thinking and teaching methods.

References

Aksu, G. & Koruklu, N. (2015). Determination the Effects of Vocational High School Students' Logical and Critical Thinking Skills on Mathematics Success. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 59, 181-206.

Beyer, B.K. (1995). Critical thinking. Bloomington, In: *Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation*.

Burbach, M. E., Matkin, G.S. & Fritz, S.M. (2004). Teaching critical thinking in an introductory leadership course utilizing active learning strategies: A confirmatory study. *College Student Journal*, 38(3), 482.

Butler, H.A., Pentoney, C. & Bong, M.P. (2017). Predicting real-world outcomes: Critical thinking ability is a better predictor of life decisions than intelligence. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 25, 38-46.

Ciascai, L. & Haiduc, L. (2009). Is Romanian Science School Curricula Open towards the Development of School Students' Critical Thinking Skills? *Acta Didactica Napocensia*, 2(3), 9-18.

Clifford J.S., Boufal M. M., & Kurtz J.E. (2004). Personality Traits and Critical Thinking Skills. In *College Students: Empirical Tests of a Two-Factor Theory. Assessment*, 11(2), 169-176.

DeNitto, J. & Strickland, J. (1987). Critical thinking: A skill for all seasons. *College Student Journal*, 21, 201-204.

Elder, L. (1996). Critical thinking and emotional intelligence. *Inquiry: Critical thinking across the disciplines*, 16(2), 35-49.

Facione, N.C. Facione, P.A. & Sanchez, C.A. (1994). Critical thinking disposition as a measure of competent clinical judgment: The development of the California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 33, 345-350.

Gunn, T., Grigg, L. & Pomahac, G. (2008). Critical Thinking in Science Education: Can Bioethical Issues and Questioning Strategies Increase Scientific Understandings? *The Journal of Educational Thought (JET) / Revue de la Pensée Éducative*, Vol. 42, No. 2, SPECIAL ISSUE. Calgary: Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary.

Halpern, D.F. (1998). Teaching critical thinking for transfer across do- mains: Dispositions, skills, structure training, and metacognitive monitoring. *American Psychologist*, 53, 449-455.

Henderson Hurley, M. & Hurley, D. (2013). Enhancing Critical Thinking Skills among Authoritarian Students. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 25(2), 248-261.

Katrevich, A.V. & Aruguete, M.S. (2017). Recognizing Challenges and Predicting Success in First-Generation University Students. *Journal of STEM Education: Innovations and Research*, 18(2), 40-44.

Ku, K.Y.L. (2009). Assessing students' critical thinking performance: Urging for measurements using multi-response format. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 4(1), 70-76.

Macpherson, R. & Stanovich, K.E. (2007). Cognitive ability, thinking dispositions, and instructional set as predictors of critical thinking. *Learning and individual differences*, 17(2), 115-127.

McPeck, J.E. (1990). *Teaching critical thinking: Dialogue and dialectic*. Routledge.

Niu, L., Behar-Horenstein, L.S. & Garvan, C.W. (2013). Do instructional interventions influence college students' critical thinking skills? A meta-analysis. *Educational Research Review*, 9, 114-128.

Nusbaum, E.C. & Silvia, P.J. (2011). Are intelligence and creativity really so different? Fluid intelligence, executive processes, and strategy use in divergent thinking. *Intelligence*, 39(1), 36-45.

Rammstedt, B., Danner, D. & Martin, S. (2016). The association between personality and cognitive ability: Going beyond simple effects. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 62(Supplement C), 39-44.

Sava, F.A., Constantin, T., Măricuțoiu, L.P., Rusu, A. (2014). *Proba EVIQ-S de evaluare a inteligenței generale*, Timișoara: Editura ArtPress.

Steward, R.J. & Al-Abdulla, Y. (1989). An Examination of the Relationship between Critical Thinking and Academic Success on a University Campus. Reports - Research/Technical. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED318936.pdf.

Stanovich, K.E., & West, R.F. (2008). On the failure of cognitive ability to predict my side and one-sided thinking biases. *Thinking & Reasoning*, 14(2), 129-167.

Tsui, L. (2000). Effects of Campus Culture on Students' Critical Thinking. *The Review of Higher Education*, 23(4), 421-441.

Walker, J., Langan, E., Kemp, A., Pagnotti, J. & Russell, W. (2016). Theoretical Cognitive Principles Observed in the Social Studies Classroom. *Journal of International Social Studies*, 6(1), 143-159.

Watson, G. (1980). *Watson-Glaser critical thinking appraisal*. San Antonio, TX: Psychological Corporation.

Zechmeister, E.B. & Johnson, J.E. (1992). *Critical thinking: A functional approach*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Ministerul Educației, Cercetării, Tineretului și Sportului (2018). Aria curriculară Om și societate - Proiecte de programe școlare pentru clasa a XII-a (în vigoare începând cu anul școlar 2007-2008). [online] edu.ro. Available at: http://oldsite.edu.ro/index.php/articles/6916 [Accessed 9 Jan. 2018].

Preliminary results on the cultural adaptation of assessment instruments for distress and psychological well-being on Romanian population of parents having children with disabilities

Carmen Costea-Bărluțiu, Andrea Hathazi, Cristina Bălaș-Baconschi

Preliminary results on the cultural adaptation of assessment instruments for distress and psychological well-being on Romanian population of parents having children with disabilities

Carmen Costea-Bărluțiu [a*], Andrea Hathazi [b], Cristina Bălaș-Baconschi [c]

[a,b,c] *Special Education Department, Babeș-Bolyai University, 7 Sindicatelor Street, 400029, Cluj-Napoca, Romania*

Corresponding author: carmen.costea@ubbcluj.ro

Abstract

Keywords:
parental distress, well-being, culturally adapted measures, disability

Parental involvement in the lengthy and complex process of rehabilitation of children with various disabilities is essential for the effectiveness of the interventions. Parental involvement was associated with the levels of parental distress and well-being and parents of children with disabilities often demonstrate a higher level of distress and lower level of well-being, compared to parents of typically developed children. Careful consideration of the parents' needs holds high relevance in the rehabilitation process and, subsequently, there is a need to assess both parental well-being and distress using reliable and culturally adapted measures. Our paper reviews the results of several studies concerning parental distress and well-being and presents the results that we obtained in the attempt to culturally adapt two measures of the constructs on Romanian population, so that professionals in the field of special education can have the opportunity to use these measures in their work with parents, in order to help them cope with their child's disability and motivate them to better participate in the rehabilitation process.

Zusammenfasung

Schlüsselwörter:
Elternleid, Wohlbefinden, kulturell angepasste Instrumente, Behinderung

Die Elternbeteiligung am schwierigen und langen Erholungsprozess von behinderten Kindern ist entscheidend für die Wirksamkeit der Maβnahmen. Die Elternbeteiligung steht in enger Verbindung mit dem Belastungsniveau der Eltern sowie mit Behaglichkeit; die Eltern von behinderten Kindern weisen oftmals höheren Leidungsgrad und niedrigeren Behaglichkeitsniveau als Eltern von normal entwickelten Kindern auf. Ein sorgsamer Umgang mit den Bedürfnissen solcher Eltern ist entscheidend für die Erholung des Kindes; daher ist die Beurteilung des Wohlbefindens sowie des Leids der Eltern anhand von wirksamen und kulturell angepassten Instrumenten äuβerst wichtig. Unsere wissenschaftliche Arbeit ist ein Überblick über die Ergebnisse des Anpassungsversuchs zweier Instrumente an die rumänische Bevölkerung, nämlich ein Leitfaden für die im Bereich der pädagogischen Psychologie tätigen Fachleute in der Zusammenarbeit mit Eltern, die im Umgang mit der Behinderung ihres Kindes sowie in der Beteiligung am Erholungsprozess eingewiesen werden.

1. Introduction. The role of parental distress and family well-being in the educational process of the child with disabilities

In the complex process of rehabilitation of children with disabilities, the family holds an essential role, therefore the complete involvement of the family needs to be taken into consideration by the special education teachers involved in the education of children with disabilities. The increased level of parental distress influences the parents' capacity to adapt to the needs of their children and to offer a proper care (Agazio & Buckley, 2012), thus influencing the frequency of the behavioral problems of children with intellectual disability (Beck, Hastings, Daley, & Stevenson, 2004).

Parental distress has also been related with the parental involvement in the education process of children, as well as with their academic performance. In the case of a group of children with ADHD, the higher level of parental distress was related with the increased use of strategies of child control, and the decreased level of parental distress was related with the supportive style of the parents regarding the child's education. In the first situation, the child with ADHD showed a more severe symptomatology and reduced academic success, while in the second situation, the child's ADHD symptoms were less severe, and the performance level was higher (Rogers, Wiener, Marton, & Tannock, 2009).

In the family, the child's disability can be an important distress factor, influencing the adaptation to the challenges

of daily life, the well-being of both the family as a system, and the individual members. The burden of several roles, the fears about the child's future, the multitude of difficult experiences that the family transitions across different life cycles can significantly influence family life, and their effect can be felt in the involvement of parents in their child's education and in the relationship they have with the school system. It is also important to mention that in a more recent perspective of family resilience (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000, Walsh, 2003), the experience of parents raising children with disabilities has also been seen through the lens of the positive changes that a child with disability can determine in a family system. As a consequence of major distress, crisis, difficult challenges, the family can become stronger, can develop its resources and can grow.

Given the need to develop an accurate image of parental characteristics, the use of valid measurements for parental distress and psychological well-being becomes of high importance for professionals. The present study discusses the results obtained in two researches we conducted, regarding the cultural adaptation of two assessment scales of parental distress and psychological well-being, tools that proved increased potential to be used in research and clinical and psychopedagogical practice.

2. Parental distress and its assessment

The challenges and emotional demands of parents raising children with disabilities are higher compared with the challenges of parents with children without disabilities, which means that the level of parental distress is higher. The parents' burdens derive from the contextual barriers that they encounter in raising the child, but also from other sources referring to parental characteristics, as well as those of the child with disabilities. In the classical definition of Lazarus and Folkman (1984), distress appears when the perceived demands of a situation overcome the perceived coping resources of the system (individual, family, group, community), especially when the well-being of the system is perceived and evaluated as being threatened. The authors emphasize the critical role of the cognitive and affective evaluations and other coping strategies in the regulation of distress level. Using adaptative coping strategies lowers the distress level and the nature of cognitions moderates the person's adjustment.

According to Crnic and Low (2002), stress is defined as an emotional and behavioral response of the individual to an unpleasant event. According to Abidin (1995), parental distress represents the level of dysfunction within the parent-child system, mainly related to the level of parental functioning. Parental distress includes subjective feelings of emotional availability towards the child, trust and level of investment in the relationship with the child. A large number of studies conducted in the last decades examined parental distress in mothers and fathers of children with disabilities. A certain level of distress is considered normal and even adaptive for all the parents (Crnic, Gaze, & Hoffman, 2005), but parents of children with neurodevelopmental disorders reported higher levels of distress at different ages of the child: early childhood (Jeans, Santos, Laxman, McBride, & Dyer, 2013) and adolescence. These higher levels of distress proved to remain stable or increased during child development.

Parental distress remains a subject of debate for many researchers, as it is associated with other aspects of parental psychological well-being, including depression, marital conflict and precarious physical health (Woodman, Mawdsley, & Hauser-Cram, 2014).

In parents of children with disabilities, the level of distress is directly related with the level of the child's functioning, his behavioral problems and the lack of pro-social behaviors. Parental distress correlates with the level of parental quality of life, on a physical, but also psychological level. The difficulties encountered by the parents of children with disabilities depend mainly on the type of disability. Children with developmental disorders, physical disabilities, visual and hearing impairments, chronical medical conditions, challenging behaviors require a higher level of parenting skills, compared to those required for children with typical development. Studies showed an increased level of parental distress in parents of children with behavioral disorders (hyperactivity, oppositionism) and visual and hearing impairments (Hilliard, Monaghan, Cogen, & Streisand, 2011; Quittner, Barker, Cruz, Snell, Grimley, & Botteri, 2010).

The situation of parents with children with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) remains particular, given that the specialized literature reports extremely high levels of parental distress, thus making them the subject of a problematic clinical domain, despite the numerous scientific researches, diverse therapies and raised awareness in the population. Studies in which the target group was constituted by mothers of children with ASD, showed that 75% presented a very high level of distress, with scores above the clinical cut-off point (Hastings, 2008). Moreover, this distress level is maintained for a period of two years, emphasizing the importance of

maintaining factors related to distress within the families of children with ASD (Dabrowska & Pisula, 2010; Hastings, Daley, Burns, & Beck, 2006; Hastings, 2008). Some researches found similar levels of distress in mothers and fathers from families of children with ASD (Hastings, 2003), while other more recent studies show a higher level in mothers (Dabrowska & Pisula, 2010).

Maternal distress is related mainly with the problems of the child in the areas of feeding, sleeping, emotional regulation, while paternal distress is associated mainly with the problems of externalizing behavior manifested by the child (Davis & Carter, 2008).

Despite these elements that differentiate the levels of maternal and parental distress, the negative consequences of distress are similar, manifested objectively at the level of relationship with the child, at the level of well-being and the parental quality of life. The negative effects of distress include mental health problems, influencing interpersonal relationships and the level of social adaptation. A meta-analysis of 18 studies showed a significant increase of the incidence of depressive symptoms in parents of children with disabilities and neurodevelopmental disorders (Singer, 2006). The negative influences overcome the preoccupations related to mental health (symptoms of anxiety and depression) and extend to more general problems of the quality of life, including parental competence and, in some cases, the incapacity to consider the positive aspects of being a parent (Tomanik, Harris, & Hawkins, 2004).

In this context, we can mention the results obtained by Kayfitz, Gragg and Orr (2010), in a study that investigated the perspectives that parents of children with ASD had on parenting, referring to a reduced number of positive experiences and a high level of distress. The positive experiences included some direct contributions from the child (improvement of family relationships, source of happiness), and some indirect contributions of the child for the parent (personal development, a better understanding of life goals).

Parents of children with ASD showed a lower level of adaptation (pessimism, distant relationships with the child, the absence of opportunities for socializing) compared with parents of children with Down syndrome, X fragile syndrome and other disabilities (Abbeduto, Seltzer, Shattuck, Krauss, Orsmond, & Murphy, 2004).

Another result worth mentioning is that a higher level of parental distress was found to be associated with a higher incidence of behavioural problems of the child, with the progress and the response of the child to intervention and therapy (Costea-Bărluțiu, Bălaș-Baconschi, & Hathazi, 2014). One of the causes for lower outcomes can be related to the decreased availability for therapy. In the case of parents confronted with higher levels of distress, the cognitive and emotional resources they can use are greatly diminished, affecting their ability to continue and generalize the components and requirements of the therapy that the child follows (Rao & Beidel, 2009).

Another related variable is the social support, that was considered an important mediator in the management of distress, but, as studies demonstrate, many families of children with disabilities find it difficult to visit their friends, mentioning the loss of many friendships due to the problems. The parents report being confronted with perturbances within daily routines, such as going to shopping, in order to avoid the public exposure of disruptive behaviors manifested by their children (Costea-Bărluțiu, Bălaș-Baconschi, & Hathazi, 2014).

Many parents and siblings of children with different disorders are obliged to face a real social stigma associated with their particularities (Francis, 2012). Some of the parents try hard to keep an adequate job and a subsequent satisfactory life standard, aspects that can be challenging due to the presence of a child with disability in the family (McConnell, Savage, & Breitkreutz, 2014). Many parents are really overwhelmed by the challenges of finding jobs that are sometimes very rigid or provide minimal resources (Browne, Rokeach, Wiener, Hoch, Meunier, & Thurston, 2013).

Parental distress was used as a mediating factor for determining the level of psychological well-being in parents of children with intellectual disabilities. According to a study by Cramm & Nieboer (2011) parental distress is a strong predictor of psychological well-being, leading sometimes to the parents' decision to apply for placement services for their children. The authors specify that it is extremely important to identify the factors that influence psychological well-being in those parents that manifest the highest distress levels, with the aim to identify various services that could support the needs of the parents and their children, thus leading to avoidance of the placement of the child outside the family environment.

2.1. The assessment of parental distress

Although some assessment measures for the level of distress include items concerning parental distress, most of these measures do not explicitly operationalize the distress associated to the parental role. The Parental Stress Scale (PSS, Berry & Jones, 1995) is a measure with a wide applicability whose items are formulated in an accessible way (Oronoz, Alonso-Arbiol, & Balluerka, 2007). The scale assesses the level of distress associated with raising a child, generated by the parental role itself.

The validity of the original version of the scale was tested on several groups of parents (Berry & Jones, 1995). In order to elaborate the measure, the authors conducted a review of the literature and identified several relevant themes and concepts involved in the operational definition of the construct, both from the point of view of the satisfaction and the difficulties encountered as a parent.

Therefore, the scale includes positive items, concerning emotional benefits (love: "My child(ren) is an important source of affection for me"), happiness ("I am happy in my role as a parent"), amusement ("I enjoy spending time with my child(ren)"), feeling of personal development and growth ("Having child(ren) gives me a more certain and optimistic view for the future") as well as negative items referring to the high amount of time and energy ("Caring for my child(ren) sometimes takes more time and energy than I have to give"), financial costs ("Having child(ren) has been a financial burden") and restricted opportunities ("Having child(ren) has meant having too few choices and too little control over my life"). The scale includes 18 items, half of them are associated with high levels of distress and the other half with low levels (Berry & Jones, 1995).

From the point of view of the psychometric properties, the authors (Berry & Jones, 1995) found an appropriate level of internal consistency for a group of 125 parents of typical children (alpha Cronbach .83), as well as the ability of the scale to discriminate between the parental distress of parents of children with behavioral and developmental disorders and the parental distress of parents with typical children.

The psychometric properties of the Romanian version of the scale was tested as part of a study conducted in order to assess the level of parental distress in parents of children with Down Syndrome and with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (Costea-Bărluţiu, Bălaş-Baconschi, & Hathazi, 2014). The Romanian version was tested on 32 biological parents of children with ASD and Down Syndrome, with ages between 31 and 55 years (M=40.1, st. dev.=6.08), most of them from urban areas, married, highly educated, employed as personal assistants for their children with disabilities aged between 4 and 16 years (M=9.8, st. dev.=3.04), most of them having typical siblings.

The psychometric properties of the Romanian version were adequate, the internal consistency being .84, which shows that the scale could be a valid measure of parental distress for the Romanian population, also suitable for the assessment of parental distress of parents with children with disabilities. Given the small sample size, we recommend caution in the interpretation of results, as well as further testing of the validity of the scale.

3. The psychological well-being and its assessment

The concept of well-being was introduced by the World Health Organization in 1948, through the classical definition for health, focused on the individual assessment of well-being and, recently, on the well-being of children and the role played by the family in the provision of an optimal level (Wollny, Apps, & Henricson, 2010). Well-being is a dynamic concept including subjective, social and psychological dimensions, as well as behaviors related to health (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Colomeischi (2015) introduces a discussion concerning a social approach on well-being, mentioning that well-being means being with the others, satisfying one's own personal needs, fulfilling one's objectives and ensuring one's quality of life. Aked, Marks, Cordon, and Thompson (2008) state that well-being compresses two elements: positive emotions and optimal functioning. Happiness, contentment, pleasure, curiosity and engagement are defining persons who live positive experiences, the level and the way of functioning having an equally important role. The authors claim that living positive experiences, controlling one's own life and assuming goals in life are attributes of well-being.

Subjective well-being produces individual and social benefits, and therefore a major objective is, from this perspective, increasing the level of well-being (Zhong & Mitchell, 2010). The predictors of well-being can be divided in genetically determined factors, contextual factors and cognitions and positive intentional behaviors (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005, cited by Zhong & Mitchell, 2010). Genetic factors and character are responsible for 40-55% of the variance in well-being, while contextual factors such as marital status and profession are responsible for 8-15% of the variance, explained by the hedonic adaptation,

through which persons are rapidly adapting to life's circumstances by accepting constant and quite stable characteristics. Two general perspectives on well-being are mentioned as co-existing elements in contemporary psychological studies: the hedonic approach, concerning happiness, which defines well-being as a state of pleasure seeking and pain avoidance and eudaimonia approach, which focuses on meaning making and self-actualization, the degree of personal functioning (Ryan & Deci, 2001). The hedonic vision views well-being as pleasure and happiness, while eudaimonia views well-being in terms of cultivating personal abilities and the contribution to a high level of well-being, according to the human nature and values, to the fulfillment of an authentic potential and the experience of a meaningful life (McMahan & Estes, 2011).

Various studies emphasized that positive subjective well-being corelates with different aspects of spending free time, including visiting family and friends, playing sports and games, listening to the radio, travelling, using internet (Newman, Tay, & Diener, 2014). The authors mention the triadic model of subjective well-being, proposed by Diener in 1984, consisting in life satisfaction, high positive emotions and low negative emotions (Newman, Tay, & Diener, 2014). Life satisfaction consists in a general evaluation of life as more or less satisfactory, while the positive or negative emotions are connected to positive or negative experiences in life. Emotions are adaptive experiences with physiological and subjective components, reactions and behavioral responses with an adaptative value (Charles, 2010). The emotional well-being depends on the emotional regulation, which includes external and internal individual physiological, cognitive and behavioral processes. The processing and emotional regulation models concern voluntary activities; therefore, the individual is behaving as a result of the exposure to relevant events, which produce an emotional response.

According to Bujor and Turliuc (2016), the predictors of well-being can be included in three over ordinate variable categories: personality, family and emotional regulation mechanisms (Bujor & Turliuc, 2016). Therefore, well-being is influenced by the joint action of different factors involved in different stages of each person's life: personality factors, representing the internal dimension, family, related to the strategies used by parents for the socialization of emotions in the children's early life, as well as the quality of interactions during adolescence and youth. In their study, Bujor and Turliuc (2014) found that emotional stability becomes a significant predictive factor

for all the dimensions: positive emotions, negative emotions, emotional distress and life satisfaction. Well-being is also tightly connected to an optimal quality of life; one of the concepts proposed by Aristotle, eudaimonia refers to the encouragement of individuals to use their potential to the maximum, in order to have a "good life". Diener and Suh (1997), citing Brock (1993), identify three major philosophical approaches of the quality of life, related to well-being: the first approach describes the characteristics of a satisfactory life conducted by norms and ideals that are religious, philosophical or based upon other systems. The second approach consists in satisfying preferences, namely within the constraints of resources, individuals are expected to select those things that would increase their quality of life. The third approach is constructed in individual terms, namely the extent in which individuals experience their life as satisfactory and pleasant, while factors as happiness, content and life satisfaction are considered relevant.

In the context of the constrains determined by the available resources, well-being also refers to the individual abilities, to authentic qualities that occur naturally, the inner motivation of each person that lead to a growth of the expected results (Brdar & Kashdar, 2010). The two authors refer to the studies that identified the most relevant positive character features for a high level of well-being, for rehabilitation in illness states, as well as for the subjectively perceived psychological growth after the exposure to adversity (Park et al., 2004; Peterson et al., 2007, Peterson, Park and Seligman, 2006, Peterson et al., 2008, cited by Brdar & Kashdar, 2010). These positive features offer a better understanding of what contributes to self-achievement, to satisfactory relationships, to self-organization, subjective vitality and satisfying psychological needs, such as autonomy, affiliation and competence, motivation for a pleasant, significant and engaging life. Park, Peterson, and Seligman (2004) proposed the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths, through which they identified the criteria and the classifications of those character features, connected to well-being. Out of the 24 features proposed by Park, Peterson and Seligman (2004), we can recall: curiosity, bravery, honesty, teamwork, leadership, humility, hope, gratitude, humor, and spirituality. Related to subjective well-being, a plethora of studies approached human happiness, determined by contextual and personal factors, as well as integrating, contextual and individual factors (Galinha & Pais-Ribeiro, 2011).

An initial classification of psychological processes (affiliation, control, meaning and autonomy) includes several theories: Maslow (1954), Ryff and Keyes (1995), Ryan and Deci (2001) and Csikszentmihalyi (1990) (cited by Galinha & Pais-Ribeiro, 2011), and stresses out the need for the fulfillment of psychological needs in connection with these processes. Therefore, Maslow's theory regarding the hierarchy of needs claims that affiliation is necessary in different stages of individual well-being; the six factor model of subjective well-being proposed by Ryff and Keyes (1995) supports experiences of autonomy, control, meaning and affiliation, while Ryan and Deci (2001) mention that reaching autonomy, closeness and competence leads to a state of psychological well-being.

Assessment of the psychological well-being

The instrument adapted for the assessment of psychological well-being, the Ryff Scale for Psychological Well-Being, PWB, developed by Ryff (1989), is based on the author's theory on eudaimonic well-being and it operationalizes the construct on the six dimensions of the model (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Several versions of the instrument were developed and tested on various cultures and we chose to adapt for the Romanian population the medium 54-item version, with 9 item on each subscale. Each item is scored on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strong disagreement) to 6 (strong agreement), with some of the items reverse scored.

A brief description and some examples of items for each of the 6 subscale are listed below:

1. Self-Acceptance: a positive regard on oneself and acceptance of past life experiences, eg. "When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out";

2. Positive relations with others: a general satisfaction with one's relationships, profound connections, empathy and care towards others, eg. "Most people see me as loving and affectionate";

3. Autonomy: independence, self-determination, liberty regarding rules and norms, eg. "My decisions are not usually influenced by what everyone else is doing";

4. Purpose in Life: a perspective on life as being meaningful, eg. "I enjoy making plans for the future and working to make them a reality";

5. Environmental Mastery: a sense of competency in managing challenges, taking actions and problem solving, eg. "In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live";

6. Personal Growth: the openness towards new experiences, progress, self-actualization, self-efficacy, eg. "I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how you think about yourself and the world".

The scale was widely used in research on psychological wel-being, but its psychometric properties and factor structure are still being disputed. The version we adapted for the Romanian population was tested on a sample of 239 participants, out of which 148 were students with an average age of 20.13 years (SD 1.81) and 91 were parents of children with disabilities (Autistic traits and Down's Syndrome), with an average age of 39.72 years (SD 7.42). The sample was heterogenous, most of the participants were women, living in urban areas, involved in a couple relationship (either married couple or romantic relationship).

Although the correlated six-factor model proved to have several problems on the sample we tested it (a higher than accepted error of approximation and lower goodness-of-fit), it proved to be a better fit for the data, compared to the uncorrelated 6-factor model, a result similar to the one that other authors found on different cultures. The internal consistency was lower than the one reported by the authors of the original version of the scale. Alpha Cronbach was .76 for "Self-Acceptance" subscale, while for "Positive relations with others" we obtained a value of .695, for "Autonomy" a value of .65, for "Purpose in Life" a value of .63, for "Environmental Mastery" a value of .75 and for "Personal Growth" a value of .65, some of them acceptable, but others questionable values. All the six subscales were significantly intercorrelated, but the correlation between "Purpose in Life" and "Autonomy" subscales was weak (Costea-Bărluțiu, Bălaş-Baconschi, & Hathazi, 2018). Although we found and discussed several problems of the scale adapted for the Romanian population, the 6-factor model was considered acceptable, and the scale was considered fit to be used on the Romanian population, given the strong theoretical support of the underlying construct. However, we recommend the further testing of the scale and its cautious use until the model is fully validated.

4. Conclusions

Despite the limitations we found for the two scales, both the instrument for the assessment of parental distress and the one for the psychological well-being were considered useful in practice and research for parents of children with disabilities. Given that parental health and the way in which the parents adapt to the child's disability are relevant aspects for the parental involvement in the child's education and rehabilitaton, the need to adapt measures that help monitor the intervention is crucial.

Based on the assessment, the professionals can develop intervention programs targeting the optimal stress management (by using such techniques as Stress Inoculation, Meichenbaum, 1977, 1985, cited by Meichenbaum, 2007, according to which the short term, gradual exposure to stress contributes to the development of corrective mechanisms that buffer against more intense stressors, by the development of coping strategies and resilience and the Self-instructional training, developed by the same author, that represents a simple "mental repetition" method, using internalized, indirect self-assertions, aimed at self-guidance in difficult situations and behavior modification, as well as the development of coping strategies that approach the problematic internal dialogue and the formulation of more positive self-assertions), as well as the increase of psychological well-being, in order to prevent the fatigue, the debut of psychopathology and to optimize functioning.

Such programs as the support groups for parents, the "School for Parents", counselling for parents, meetings with parents and psychoeducation on the role of parental well-being in the approach that parents have with their own child, in the cooperation between parents and schools, can use the assessment instruments adapted in our research, in order to monitor the parents' progress regarding their distress level and their psychological well-being.

Authors note:

Carmen Costea-Bărluțiu, Ph.D. is Lecturer at the Special Education Department, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, with PhD in Psychology and Psychotherapist in private practice. Her research interests include: individual and family mental health and well-being, attachment, effect of disability and illness on adjustment.

Andrea Hathazi, Ph.D. is Associate Professor at the Special Education Department, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, with PhD in Psychology. Her research activity is centered around: children with multiple disabilities, with Down Syndrome, alternative and augmentative communication, visual impairments.

Cristina Bălaș-Baconschi, Ph.D. is Lecturer at the Special Education Department, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, with PhD in Psychology. Her research interests include: autistic spectrum disorders, social and emotional disorders, intellectual disabilities.

References

Abbeduto, L., Seltzer, M., Shattuck, P., Krauss, M., Orsmond, G., & Murphy, M.M. (2004). Psychological well-being and coping in mothers of youths with autism, Down syndrome, or fragile X syndrome. *American Journal on Mental Retardation, 109,* 237-254.

Abidin, R.R. (1995) *Parenting Stress Index manual*. 3rd ed. Odessa, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources.

Agazio, J.B., & Buckley, K.M. (2012). Revision of a Parental Stress Scale for Use on a Pediatric General Care Unit. *Pediatric Nursing, 38(2)*, 82-87.

Aked, J., Marks, N., Cordon, C., & Thompson, S. (2008). Five Ways to Wellbeing: The Evidence. *New Economics Foundation*, neweconomics.org.

Beck, A., Hastings, R.P., Daley, D., & Stevenson, J. (2004). Pro-social behavior and behavior problems independently predict maternal stress. *Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability, 29(4),* 339-349.

Berry, J.O., & Jones, W.H. (1995). The Parental Stress Scale: Initial psychometric evidence. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *12(3),* 463-472.

Brdar, I., & Kashdan, T.B. (2010). Character strengths and well-being in Croatia: An empirical investigation of structure and correlates. *Journal of Research in Personality, 44,* 151-154.

Browne, D.T., Rokeach, A., Wiener, J., Hoch, J.S., Meunier, J.C., & Thurston, S. (2013). Examining the family-level and economic impact of complex child disabilities as a function of child hyperactivity and service integration. *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities, 25(2),* 181-201.

Bujor, L., & Turliuc, M.N. (2016). Predictors of well-being: An examination of age differences. *Annals of A.I. Cuza University Psychology Series, 25(1),* 5-16.

Charles, S.T. (2010). Strength and vulnerability integration: a model of emotional well-being across adulthood. *Psychological Bulletin, 136(6),* 1068.

Colomeischi, A.A. (2015). Emotional Life as Influence on Work Satisfaction. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 159(23)*, 350-354.

Costea-Bărluțiu, C., Bălaș-Baconschi, C., & Hathazi, A. (2014). A Preliminary Investigation of a Parental Stress measure for Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Down Syndrome. *Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai, Psychologia-Paedagogia, 59(2),* 25-40.

Costea-Bărluțiu, C., Bălaș-Baconschi, C., & Hathazi, A. (2018). Romanian Adaptation of the Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale: Brief Report of the Factor Structure and Psychometric Properties. *Journal of Evidence-Based Psychotherapies*, *18(1),* 21-33.

Cramm, J.M., & Nieboer, A.P. (2011). Psychological well-being of caregivers of children with intellectual disabilities: Using parental stress as a mediating factor. *Journal of Intellectual Disabilities, 15(2),* 101-113.

Crnic K.A., Gaze C., & Hoffman C. (2005). Cumulative parenting stress across the preschool period: Relations to maternal parenting and child behavior at age 5. *Infant and Child Development. 14(2),* 117-132.

Crnic, KA., & Low, C. (2002) Everyday stresses and parenting. In Bornstein, M.H. (ed.). *Handbook of Parenting, Volume 5: Practical Issues in Parenting*. 2nd ed. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum, 243-268.

Dabrowska, A.A., Pisula, E.E. (2010). Parenting stress and coping styles in mothers and fathers of pre-school children with autism and Down syndrome. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research, 54(3),* 266-280.

Davis, N., & Carter, A.S. (2008). Parenting stress in mothers and fathers of toddlers with autism spectrum disorders: Associations with child characteristics. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 38(7), 127.

Diener, E., & Suh, E. (1997). Measuring quality of life: Economic, social, and subjective indicators. *Social indicators research*, 40(1), 189-216.

Francis, A. (2012). Stigma in an era of medicalization and anxious parenting: How proximity and culpability shape middle-class parents' experiences of disgrace. *Sociology of Health & Illness, 34(6),* 927-942.

Galinha, I.C., & Pais-Ribeiro, J.L. (2011). Cognitive, affective and contextual predictors of subjective wellbeing. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 34-53.

Hastings, R.P. (2003). Child behavior problems and partner mental health as correlates of stress in mothers and fathers of children with autism. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, *47(4-5),* 231-237.

Hastings, R.P. (2008). Stress in parents of children with autism. In E. McGregor, M. Núñez, K. Cebula, & J. Gómez (Eds.). *Autism: An integrated view from neurocognitive, clinical, and intervention research*, 303-324.

Hastings, R.P., Daley, D., Burns, C., & Beck, A. (2006). Maternal distress and expressed emotion: Cross-sectional and longitudinal relationships with behavior problems of children with intellectual disabilities. *American Journal on Mental Retardation, 111,* 48-61.

Hilliard, M.E., Monaghan, M.M., Cogen, F.R., & Streisand, R.R. (2011). Parent stress and child behavior among young children with type 1 diabetes. *Child: Care, Health and Development, 37(2),* 224-232.

Jeans, L.M., Santos, R.M., Laxman, D.J., McBride, B.A., & Dyer, W.J. (2013) Examining ECLS-B maternal stress and depressive symptoms when raising children with ASD. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 33(3),*162-171.

Kayfitz, A.D., Gragg, M.N., & Orr, R. (2010). Positive experiences of mothers and fathers of children with autism. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities, 23(4),* 337-343.

Lazarus, S.R., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, Appraisal, and Coping*, New York: Springer Publishing Company.

Luthar, S.S., Cicchetti, D., & Becker, B. (2000). The Construct of Resilience: A Critical Evaluation and Guidelines for Future Work. *Child Development, 71(3),* 543-562.

McConnell, D., Savage, A., & Breitkreutz, R. (2014). Resilience in families raising children with disabilities and behavior problems. *Research in Developmental Disabilities, 35,* 833-848.

McMahan, E. A., & Estes, D. (2011). Hedonic versus eudaimonic conceptions of well-being: Evidence of differential associations with self-reported well-being. *Social Indicators Research, 103(1),* 93-108.

Meichenbaum, D. (2007). Stress Inoculation Training: A Preventative and Treatment Approach. In Lehrer, P.M., Woolfolk, R.L., & Sime, W.S. (eds.). *Principles and Practice of Stress Management*, 3rd ed., New York: Guilford Press.

Newman, D.B., Tay, L., & Diener, E. (2014). Leisure and subjective well-being: A model of psychological mechanisms as mediating factors. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 15(3),* 555-578.

Oronoz, B., Alonso-Arbiol, I., & Balluerka, N. (2007). A Spanish adaptation of the Parental Stress Scale. *Psicothema*, *19(4),* 687-692.

Park, N., Peterson, C., & Seligman, M.E. (2004). Strengths of character and well-being. *Journal of social and Clinical Psychology*, *23(5),* 603-619.

Quittner, A.L., Barker, D.H., Cruz, I., Snell, C., Grimley, M.E., & Botteri, M. (2010). Parenting stress among parents of deaf and hearing children: Associations withlanguage delays and behavior problems. *Parenting: Science and Practice, 10(2),*136-155.

Rao, P.A., & Beidel, D.C. (2009). The impact of children with high-functioning autism on parental stress, sibling adjustment, and family functioning. *Behavior Modification, 33(4),* 437-451.

Rogers, M.A., Wiener, J., Marton, I., & Tannock, R. (2009). Supportive and Controlling Parental Involvement as Predictors of Children's Academic Achievement: Relations to Children's ADHD Symptoms and Parenting Stress. *School Mental Health, 1*, 89-102.

Ryan, R.M., & Deci, E.L. (2001). On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Annual Review of Psychology, 52,*141-166.

Ryff, C.D. (1989). "Happiness is everything, or is it?" Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 57,* 1069-1081.

Ryff, C.D., & Keys. C. (1995). The structure of psychological well-being revisited. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 69:* 719-727.

Singer, G.S. (2006). Meta-analysis of comparative studies of depression in mothers of children with and without developmental disabilities. *American Journal on Mental Retardation, 111(3),* 155-169.

Tomanik, S., Harris, G.E., & Hawkins, J. (2004). The relationship between behaviors exhibited by children with autism and maternal stress. *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability, 29(1),* 16-26.

Walsh, F. (2003). Family Resilience: A Framework for Clinical Practice. *Family Process*, *42(1),* 1-18.

Wollny, I., Apps J., & Henricson, C. (2010). *Can government measure family wellbeing?* London: Family and Parenting Institute.

Woodman, A.C., Mawdsley, H.P., & Hauser-Cram, P. (2014). Parenting Stress and Child Behavior Problems within Families of Children with Developmental Disabilities: Transactional Relations across 15 Years. *Research in Developmental Disabilities, 36*, 264-276.

Zhong, J.Y., & Mitchell, V.W. (2010). A mechanism model of the effect of hedonic product consumption on well-being. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 20(2),* 152-162.

Requirements and modalities of ensuring success in academic learning

Florentina Mogonea, Florentin Remus Mogonea

Requirements and modalities of ensuring success in academic learning

Florentina Mogonea [a*], Florentin Remus Mogonea [b]

[a,b] University of Craiova, 13, A.I. Cuza Street, Craiova, 200585, Romania

Corresponding author: mogoneaf@yahoo.com

Abstract	Over time, the notion of learning has evolved, first of all under the influence of psychological theories, which address this fundamental human activity. Consonant with the current psychological and pedagogical conception on school learning, making it more effective is an important concern of every person preocuppied with personal development and success securement. This goal can be viewed from the perspective of both the learner and the teacher, who must facilitate this activity and provide the right scientific reference points, models, appropriate support, effective feedback and also support the learning process as a guarantee for the quality of the product.
Keywords: success; academic learning; intellectual psychohygiene; mnemotechnics; stress management	The study aims to analyze the problematics of the factors and modalities that ensure or condition the efficiency of academic learning from the perspective of the future teacher students. The investigation was carried out on a group of subjects, consisting of 69 master students from the Faculty of Letters, who are in their first year of master's degree studies and who, at the same time, attend the Psycho-pedagogical Training Program, level II. The research method used was the survey based on the questionnaire, the applied tool being an opinion questionnaire with 16 different items: closed, semi-closed and open answers. The research results have identified the factors, conditions and modalities that ensure the students' success in learning.

Zusammenfasung	Im Laufe der Zeit hat sich das Konzept des Lernens unter dem Einfluss psychologischer Theorien entwickelt, die sich hauptsächlich mit dieser grundlegenden menschlichen Aktivität befassen. Im Einklang mit der gegenwärtigen psychologischen und pädagogischen Konzeption des schulischen Lernens ist es ein wichtiges Anliegen jeder Person, die sich mit persönlicher Entwicklung und Erfolg beschäftigt, diese effektiver zu machen. Dies kann aus der Perspektive des Lernenden und dem Lehrers angesehen werden, das diese Tätigkeit erleichtern soll, Sehenswürdigkeiten wissenschaftliches Wissen, Modelle, eine angemessene Unterstützung, Feedback effektiv den Lernprozess zu unterstützen, als Sicherheit die Qualität des Produkts.
Schlüsselworte: Erfolg; akademisches Lernen; intellektuelle Psychologie; Mnemotechnik; Stressmanagement.	Die Studie zielt darauf ab, das Problem der Faktoren und Modalitäten zu analysieren, die die Effizienz des akademischen Lernens aus der Perspektive zukünftiger Lehramtsstudenten sicherstellen oder konditionieren. Die Untersuchung wurde an einer Gruppe von Probanden durchgeführt, bestehend aus 69 Master-Studenten an der Fakultät für Literatur- und Sprachwissenschaften, im ersten Jahr der Master-Studiengänge -und zugleich die das psycho-pädagogisches Programm, II. Tiefebene besuchen. Die verwendete Forschungsmethode war die Umfrage basierend auf dem Fragebogen, wobei das angewandte Tool ein Fragebogen mit 16 verschiedenen Fragebögen: geschlossen, halbgeschlossen, offen Antworten war. Die Forschungsergebnisse haben die Faktoren, Bedingungen und Modalitäten identifiziert, die den Lernerfolg der Schüler gewährleisten.

1. Introduction

The learning activity, regardless of the age at which it occurs, is conditioned by a series of factors, from different categories, from the individual to the ones regarding environment, context, or the pedagogical ones. The complexity of the learning activity, the multitude of variables involved, sometimes make it difficult to manage. Knowing these factors, whether internal or external, can be an important step in trying to maximize their potential for a successful learning activity.

Academic learning allows perhaps more than other forms, the expression and interaction of numerous factors and various conditions that act together to ensure success. We are concerned with the analysis of this form of learning, especially for future teacher students, given their subsequent role in helping to educate students about their learning style, to teach them how to learn.

In the case of the students, we can speak of showing autonomy in learning, cognitive flexibility, an already formed learning style, whose effectiveness has been tested

but which is permanently nuanced. The success of this activity is conditioned, in addition to the already mentioned elements, by the learner's level of expectancy, his expectations, how he relates to the learning task.

We consider it useful to take a look at the inventory of intellectual psychohygiene requirements, the modalities that contribute to the accomplishment of this activity from the perspective of the learners, in order to achieve a picture of the factors that ensure efficiency, quality and performance.

2. Theoretical foundation

The studies over the last decades have specified many factors that influence the academic performance of the students. According to (Shujaa, 1996, apud Mutsotso & Abenga, 2010), they can be grouped into three categories:

- family background: socio-economic status, expectancies, involvement, parental support;
- student traits: adaptation skills, expectancies;
- school factor: high expectations, curriculum, teacher culture.

A large number of studies approach the individual learning conditions, given their variety and the rather large number. They can be cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, volitional, behavioral, attitudinal (Bannert & Reimann, 2012, apud Backhaus, Jeske, Poinstingl, Koeni, 2017).

Motivation is one of the essential conditions of learning, as well as of any human activity. The students' motivation for learning has always been a challenge for any teacher and one of the causes that has led to difficulties in teaching. It is dependent on various age factors, the general psychological features specific to it, the specificity of each individual.

According to Keller (1984), motivation involves four key elements that interfere with the learning process: attention, relevance, confidence and satisfaction (ARCS model). Taking up Keller's model, later, Kahveci (2010, apud Yau, Cheng, Ho, 2015) adds 4 more elements to the already existing ones: Relevance, Interest, Confidence, Satisfaction, Personal Ability, Social Influence and Perseverance.

The Keller model was completed by Vincent (2003) and by Weibelzahi and Kelly (2005), as it can be observed in Figure no. 1.

Strongly related to motivation is also the value attributed to the working task, that is the interest in the task, its importance for the individual and its usefulness (Wigfield et al., 1997, apud Peklaj & Levpušček, 2007).

In a diachronic and synchronic analysis of the reasons that determine students to learn, we are able to notice differences that can be characterized as belonging to that generation. Recent studies (Johnson & Aragon, 2002, apud Razak, See, 2010) consider that the use of online learning environments can be a way to stimulate the students' motivation as it stimulates social interaction and manages to value the inter-individual differences.
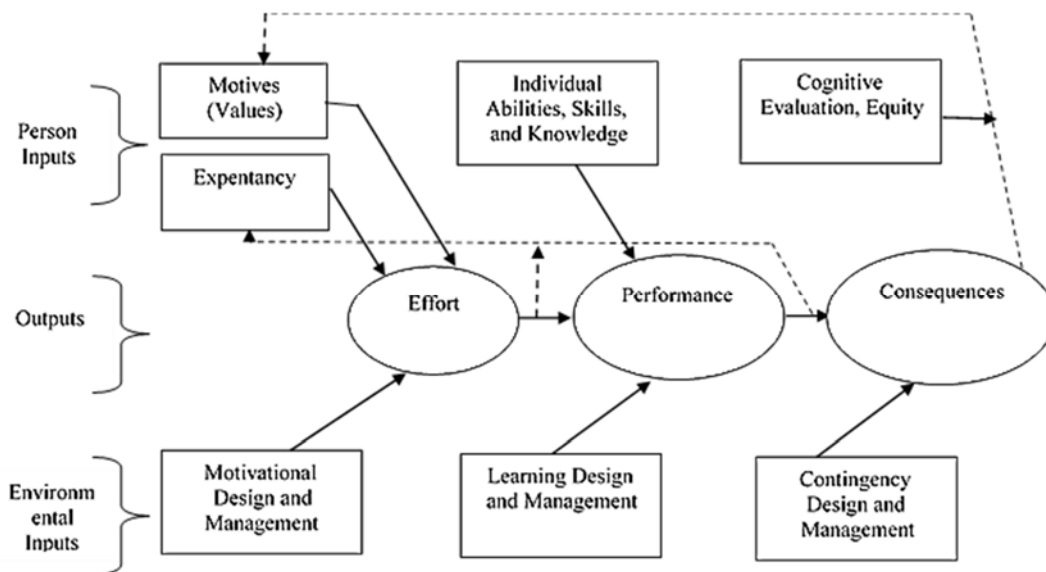

Figure no. 1. *The Keller model, completed by Vincent (2003) and by Weibelzahi & Kelly (2005), apud Bates, 2015, p. 167*

In academic learning there are also a number of factors and variables that condition efficiency, that need to be known in order to be controlled. Based on these variables, specialized literature records different intervention models, such as Hirsh's model (2001, apud Henning, 2009), a multiple intervention model that involves diagnosing problems and building an intervention plan.

Williams & Williams (2011) mentions five important elements which are vital for improving the student's learning motivation: student; teacher; content; method/ process, and environment.

There are studies and research that investigate the effect of social motivation on the academic motivation of the students (Pânişoară, Duţă, Pânişoară, 2015).

The educational environment is also one of the factors that condition effective learning. It has also evolved, over time, from the classical face-to-face type, to the virtual or blended learning one (Renner, Laumer, Weitzel, 2014).

The theory of social constructivism values the role of social learning, along with the individual one (Mogonea & Mogonea, 2014a). The promotion of the students' engagement and the learning communities can also increase learning efficiency (Henard & Leprince-Ringue, 2008).

The constructivist theory is also the one that promotes the role of experience in learning, which can be both a starting and a final point in a learning cycle (according to Kolb's model) (Fry, Ketteridge, Marshall, 2009, p. 15) (Figure no. 2).
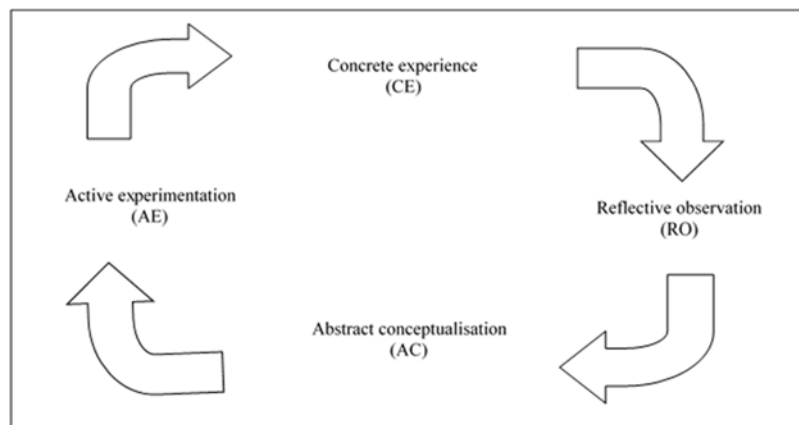

Figure no. 2. *The Kolb Learning Cycle (apud Fry, Ketteridge, Marshall, 2009, p. 15)*

The modality of stimulating motivation also requires instructional design principles. Hoskins & Newstead (2009) propose a series of such principles (Table no. 1):

Table no. 1. *Motivational generalisations and design principles (Pintrich, 2003, apud Hoskins & Newstead, 2009, pp. 35-36)*

Adaptive self-efficacy and competence beliefs motivate students.	• Provide clear and accurate feedback regarding competence and self-efficacy, focusing on the development of competence, expertise and skill. • Design tasks that offer opportunities to be successful but also challenge students.
Adaptive attributions and control beliefs motivate students.	• Provide feedback that stresses process nature of learning, including importance of effort, strategies and potential self-control of learning. • Provide opportunities to exercise some choice and control. • Build supportive and caring personal relationships in the community of learners
Higher levels of interest and intrinsic motivation motivate students.	• Provide stimulating and interesting tasks, activities, and materials, including some novelty and variety in tasks and activities. • Provide content material and tasks that are personally meaningful and interesting to students.

	• Display and model interest and involvement in the content and activities.
Higher levels of value motivate students.	• Provide tasks, materials, and activities that are relevant and useful to students, allowing for some personal identification with learning. • Classroom discourse should focus on importance and utility of content and activities.
Goals motivate and direct students.	• Use organisational and management structures that encourage personal and social responsibility and provide safe, comfortable and predictable environment. • Use cooperative and collaborative groups to allow for opportunities to attain both social and academic goals. • Classroom discourse should focus on mastery, learning, and understanding course and lecture content. • Use task, reward and evaluation structures that promote mastery, learning, effort, progress and self-improvement standards and less reliance on social comparison or norm-referenced standards.

Schwartz, Son, Kornell and Finn (2011) propose four principles for improving memory as a condition for making learning more effective: 1) process material actively, 2) practice retrieval, 3) use distributed practice, and 4) use metamemory.

Group learning, carried out in a virtual environment, improves learning outcomes, collaboration, critical and reflective thinking, communication skills and understanding (Boud, 2001, apud Razak & See, 2010). Some studies (Singh, Rylander, Mims, 2012) even make comparisons between students' outcomes in a virtual or a face-to-face learning environment.

The effectiveness of learning is also determined by the affective-emotional dimension of this activity. Controlling emotions and stress are requirements for success and performance in the academic activity, too (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, Schellinger, 2011, Van Daele, 2013, Ketonen, 2017, Hj Ramli, Alavi, Mehrinezhad, Ahmadi, 2018).

There are studies exploiting one of the ideas of constructivism regarding the role of error and even failure in learning (van der Helden, Boksem, Blom, 2009).

There are numerous models of techniques, effective learning tools. In Table no. 2, we present some of these:

Table no. 2. *Efficient Learning Techniques (Dunlosky et al, 2013, p. 6)*

Technique	Description
1. Elaborative interrogation 3. Summarization Writing summaries (of various lengths) of to-be-learned texts	Generating an explanation for why an explicitly stated fact or concept is true
2. Self-explanation	Explaining how new information is related to known information, or explaining steps taken during problem solving
4. Highlighting/ underlining	Marking potentially important portions of to-be-learned materials while reading
5. Keyword mnemonic	Using keywords and mental imagery to associate verbal materials
6. Imagery for text	Attempting to form mental images of text materials while reading or listening
7. Rereading	Restudying text material again after an initial reading

8. Practice testing	Self-testing or taking practice tests over to-be-learned material
9. Distributed practice	Implementing a schedule of practice that spreads out study activities over time
10. Interleaved practice	Implementing a schedule of practice that mixes different kinds of problems, or a schedule of study that mixes different kinds of material, within a single study session

Another condition for success in learning, especially in the academic one, is the capitalization of metacognition, of personal reflection (Mogonea & Ștefan, 2014, Zhao, Wardeska, McGuire, Cook, 2014, Mogonea, 2014), of cognitive flexibility, of autonomy in learning (Kormos & Csizér, 2014, Ștefan, 2014), of cognitive and socio-cognitive conflicts (Mogonea & Popescu, 2015). In addition to the metacognitive dimension, equally important is the non-cognitive dimension of personality, which often makes the difference between a successful or unsuccessful learning activity (Ștefan & Mogonea, 2015).

Mnemotechnics, the use of graphical organizers, and cognitive maps can give consistency to certain learning strategies designed to ensure success (Mogonea & Mogonea, 2014b). All these aspects are about ensuring a good self-management of the learning activity. (Frăsineanu, 2012).

Cohen (2006, p. 211), quoting Hunter (2005), mentions six principles of teacher-students collaboration that can provide a beneficial psycho-educational climate:

1. Comprehensive student screening for emotional, behavioral, and learning difficulties. 2. Full assessment of at-risk individuals and their environments. 3. Schoolwide early intervention efforts that focus on prevention of more serious behavioral problems. 4. Comprehensive intervention carefully matched to the needs of the individual student. 5. evidence-based intervention strategies that are continually monitored for effectiveness. 6. Educational programs in which parents play an active and ongoing role.

Concluding, we can assume that, in order to achieve effective learning, we must follow the important variables of this activity, which arise as a response to some essential questions: Why? What? How? Where? When? Who with? We synthesized the answers to these questions in Figure no. 3, which are as many conditions, efficiency factors.
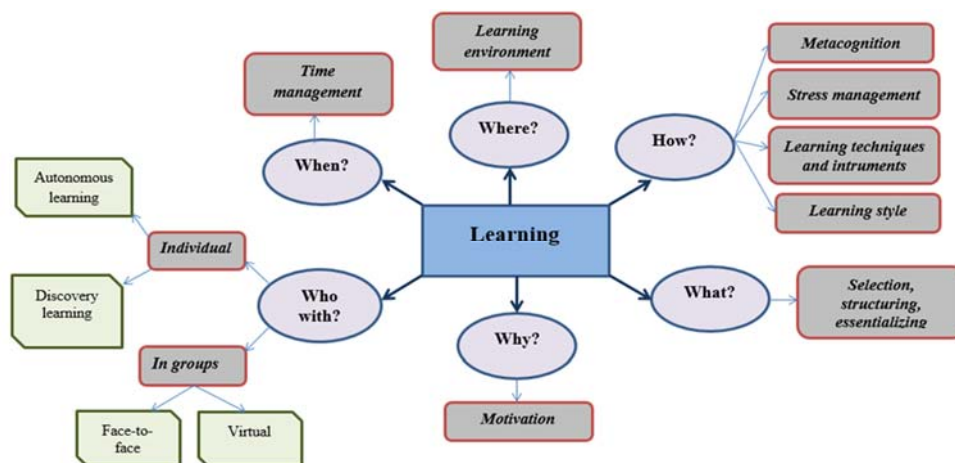

Figure no. 3. *Variables of the learning activity*

3. Research methodology

The purpose of the research was to identify the factors and the conditions of efficiency in academic learning. Derived from this purpose, the research objectives were:

1. The knowledge of the reasons that determine the students' involvement in learning

2. The identification of the students' learning style characteristics

3. The establishing of the time management modalities

4. The knowledge of the conditions that ensure success in examinations

According to the above-mentioned goals, we verified the following hypotheses:

1. The knowledge and conformation to the factors and the internal and external learning conditions determine the success of the students in the exam.

2. The student's learning style is significantly determined by the specificity of the university specialization.

The research was carried out on a sample of 69 first year master students, from the Faculty of Letters, attending in parallel the Psycho-pedagogical Training Program, level II. The students included in the research sample have different specializations: Romanian, English, French, translators, music, acting.

The research method used was the survey based on the questionnaire, the tool being a questionnaire of 16 items, which allowed us to know the opinion of the subjects on the factors and conditions that provide an efficient learning, on their learning style, the learning techniques used, the modalities of managing time , stress, of monitoring and activity regulation. Most of the items were closed-ended, simple-choice but also multi-choice, and an open-response item as well.

4. Results and discussions

In order to verify the hypotheses of the research, we present the results obtained after applying the opinion questionnaire.

The first hypothesis of the research was as follows:

1. The knowledge and conformation to the factors and the internal and external learning conditions determine the success of the students in the exam.

To verify this hypothesis, we present the answers of the students to items 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15.

The first item of the questionnaire investigated the opinion of the subjects on the rhythm of preparation for exams.
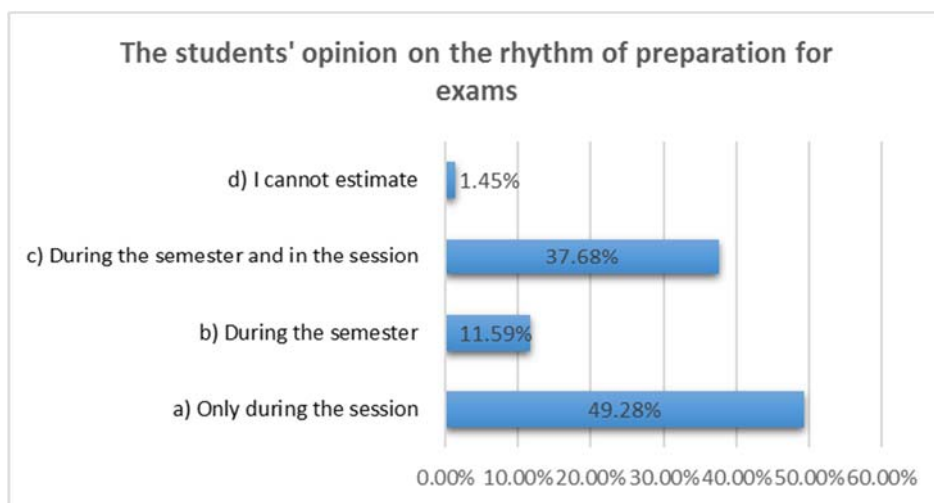

Figure no. 4. *The students' opinion on the rhythm of preparation for exams*

As there can be seen in chart 4, almost half of the students admit that they prepare for exams only during the session, and only 37.68% admit that they also do this during the semester. External environmental conditions are also important for the success of learning.

Figure no. 5 presents the hierarchy made by the students for some of the external learning conditions.
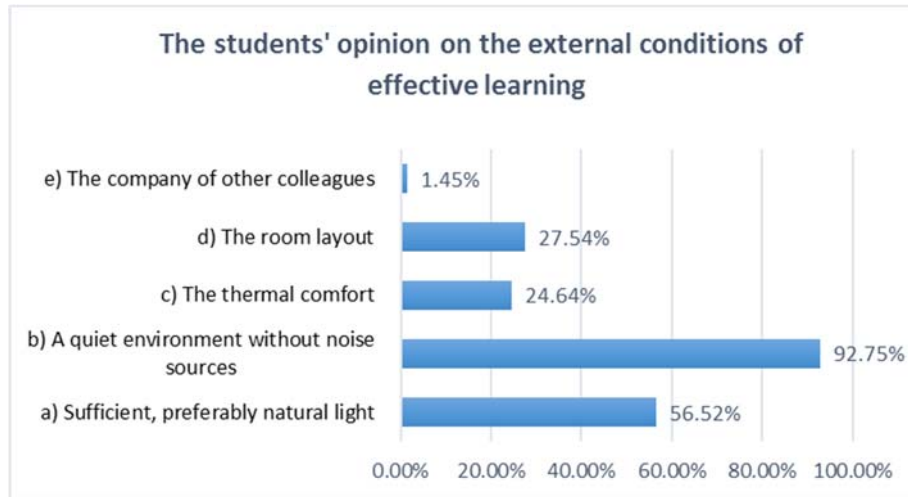
Figure no. 5. *The students' opinion on the external conditions of effective learning*

Almost all students (92.75%) felt that a quiet environment without noise sources is the most important condition of learning. Also, good light and the aspect of the room are conditions to be followed.

Also related to the learning environment, most students think (81.17%) that this should be done in any space where you feel comfortable, only 14.49% considering the place must be fixed, for example in the study, at the desk (Figure no. 6).

According to the students' answers, they sometimes make a day or hour planning of learning.

Figure no. 6. *The subjects' opinion on the most proper place for learning*

Item 6 was an open-ended one, asking students to mention 3 conditions that ensure effective learning and success in exams.
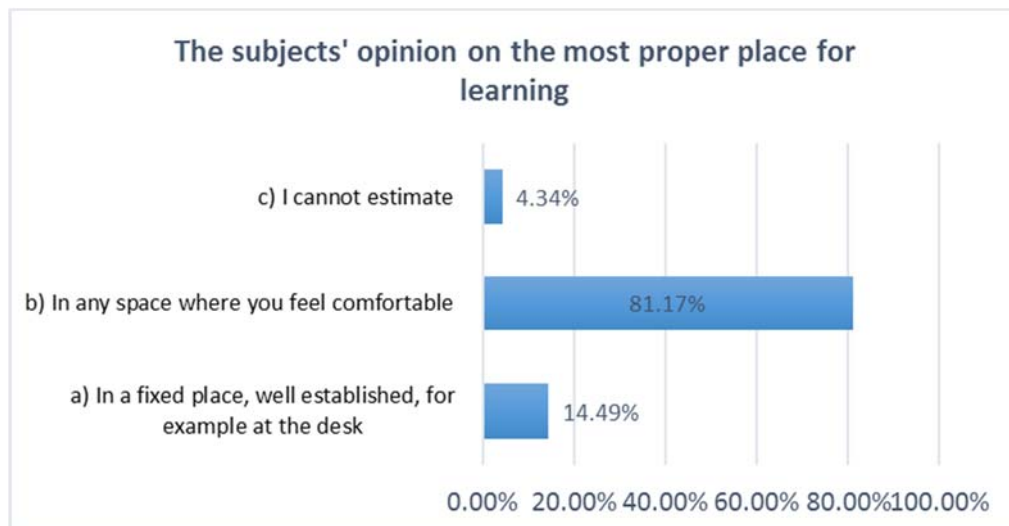
The most frequently mentioned efficiency conditions were:

- Emotional stability;
- Structuring the subject;
- Making a sufficient number of repetitions;
- Using memory techniques, such as: using patterns, highlighting essential information, reading loudly;

- Understanding the notes;
- Rhythm in learning;
- Sufficient rest;
- Attending courses;
- Physical and mental comfort;
- Quiet environment;
- Qualities, features such as: spontaneity, intelligence, creativity, logical thinking, motivation, ability to concentrate.
- According to the students' answers, they sometimes make a day or hour planning of learning.
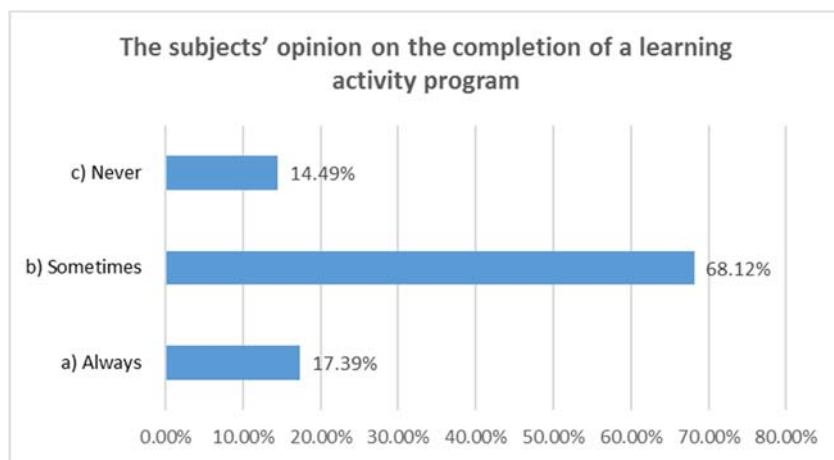

Figure no. 7. *The subjects' opinion on the completion of a learning activity program*

The same answers were also given to item 8, on the frequency of self-evaluation at the end of a learning activity.
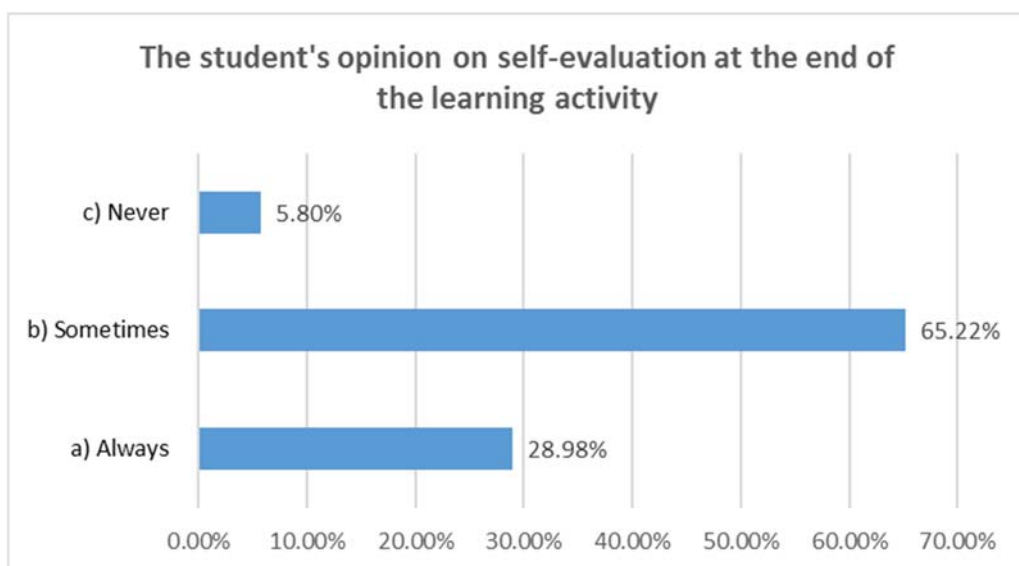
Figure no. 8. *The student's opinion on self-evaluation at the end of the learning activity*

More than half of the surveyed students consider that they can only sometimes succeed to fit in time when they learn (Figure no. 9).
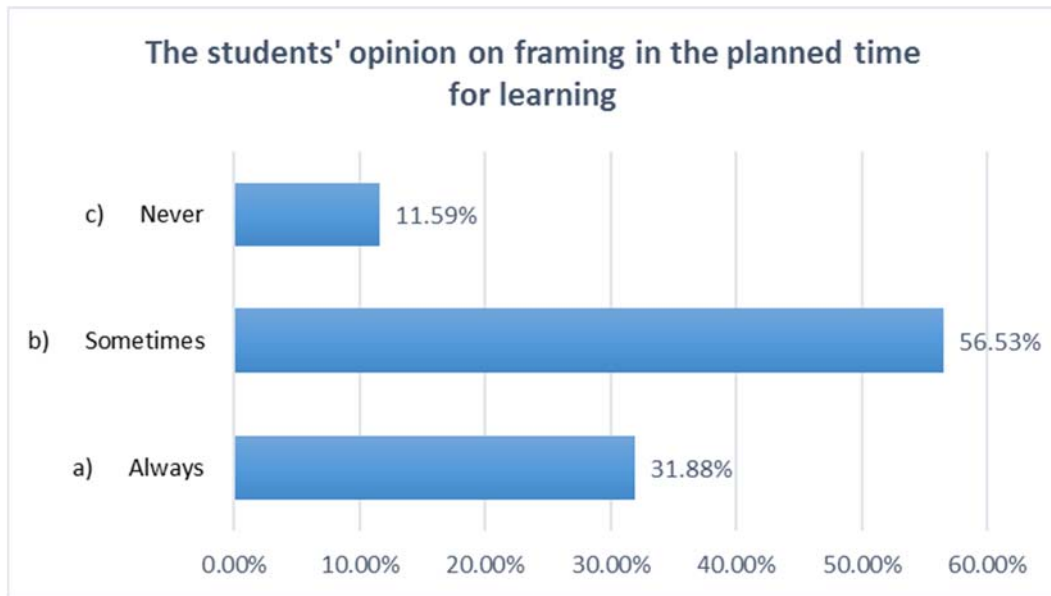
Figure no. 9. *The students' opinion on framing in the planned time for learning*

According to the answers given to the previous items, the students appreciate that they only sometimes manage to self-analyze their learning activity in order to establish its effectiveness. The distribution of responses on the three response variants is as follows: a) Always - 28.98%; b) Sometimes - 65.22%; c) Never - 5.80%.

The students mostly admit that there are events, situations that may affect their learning activity, their ability to concentrate. The answers to this item are shown in Figure no. 10.
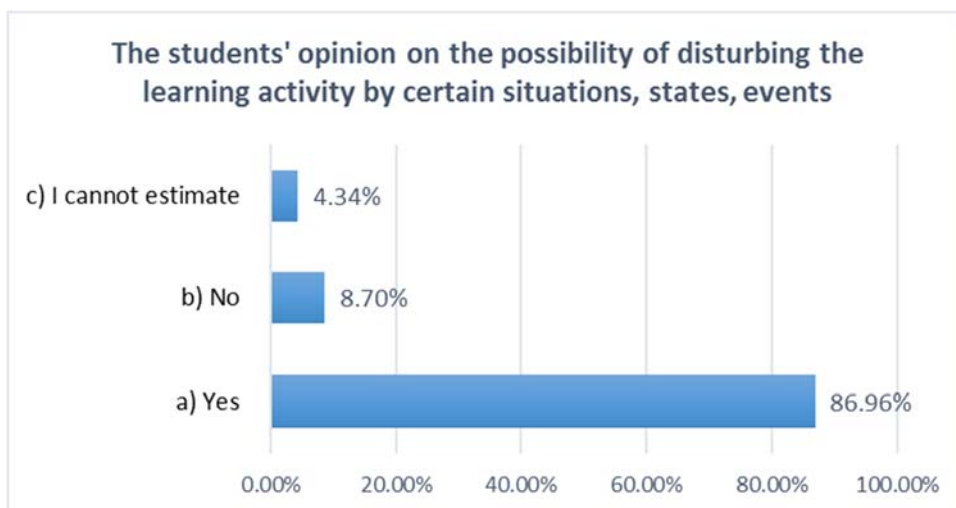
Figure no. 10. *The students' opinion on the possibility of disturbing the learning activity by certain situations, states, events*

One of the items of the questionnaire aimed at knowing the motivation of learning.

Their answers are shown in Figure no. 11.
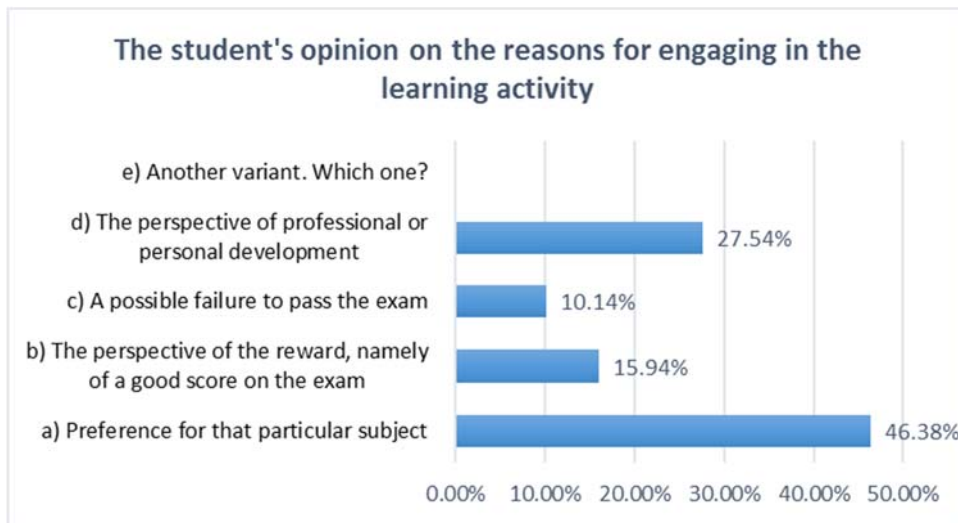
Figure no. 11. *The student's opinion on the reasons for engaging in the learning activity*

As you can see, the preference for a certain subject is the most powerful reason for learning.

Hypothesis no. 2 of the research was as follows:

2. The student's learning style is significantly determined by the specificity of the university specialization

In order to verify this hypothesis, we present the students' answers to items 2, 4, 12, 13, 14, 16.

Item 2 wanted to identify the students' learning techniques. Their answers are shown in Figure no. 12.
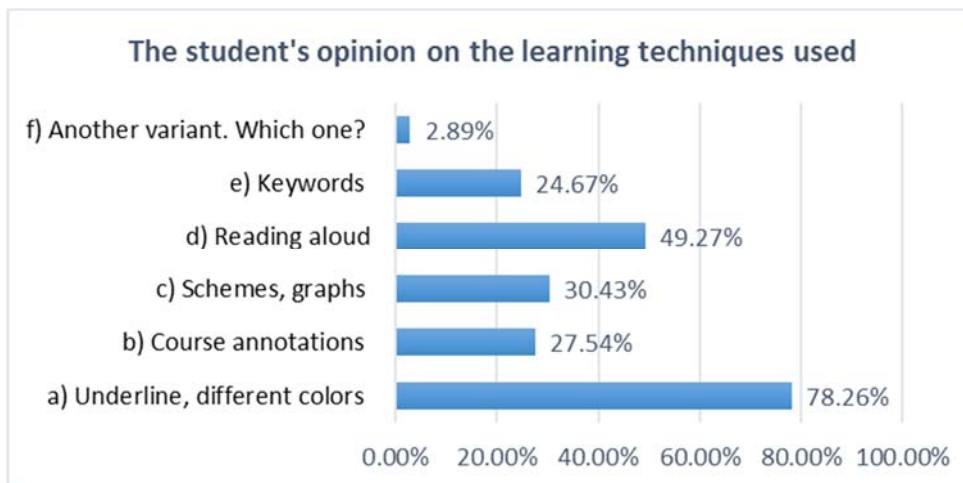
Figure no. 12. *The student's opinion on the learning techniques used*

For most of the students questioned the underlining is the way considered the most effective. Another option appreciated by the students is the one about the annotations on the courses. Surprisingly, there is the reading aloud version that has gathered the appreciation of almost half of the subjects. The explanation for this choice is related to the specifics of the specializations to which the students in the sample of subjects belong to, all of whom are students at the Faculty of Letters.

78% of the students believe that their learning style is effective, as shown by their answers to item 4.

Also related to the students' learning style, one of the items of the questionnaire aimed at gathering information about how students learn, alone or in the company of other colleagues.
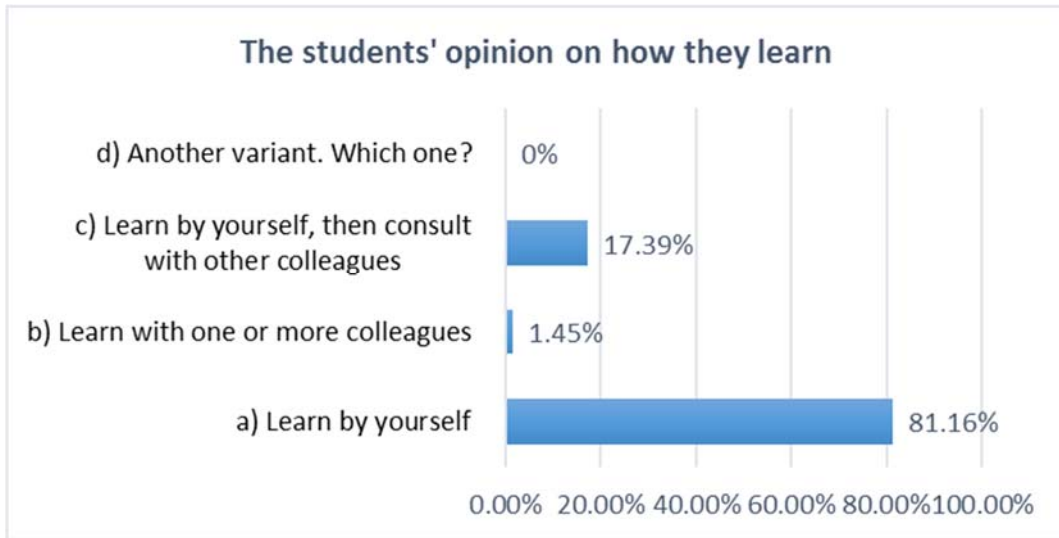
Figure no. 13. *The students' opinion on how they learn*

Most of the students said that they learnt alone.

If they have learning difficulties, they are turning to ... (see Figure no. 14).
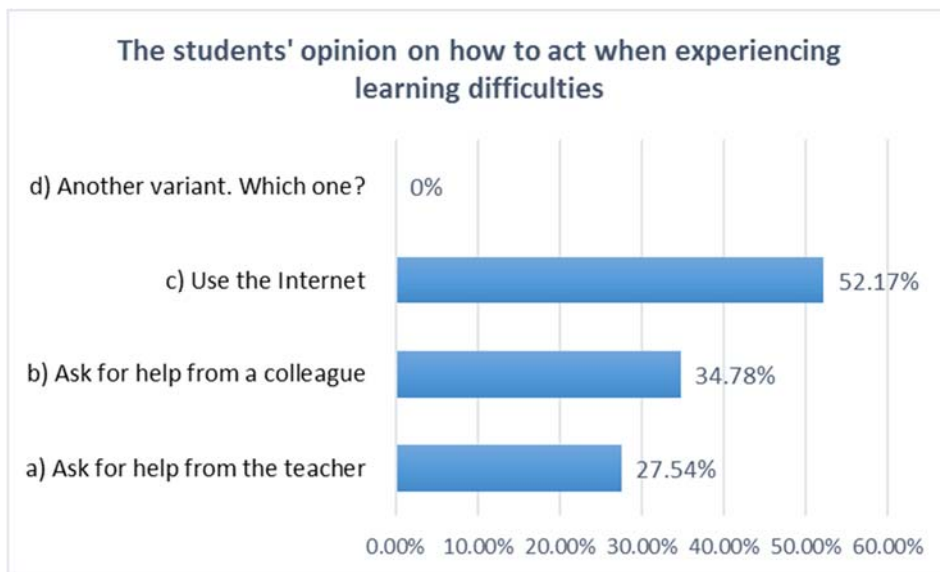
Figure No. 14. *The students' opinion on how to act when experiencing learning difficulties*

As there can be seen in Figure no. 14, the most frequent option in the students' choices was the appeal to the possibilities offered by the Internet, but this can also be explained by the specificity of the students' specialization, preponderantly theoretical.

Their answers are presented in Figure no. 15.

Item 16 of the questionnaire asked students to estimate the conditions for successful examinations. Being a multiple-choice item, students were able to choose several variants.
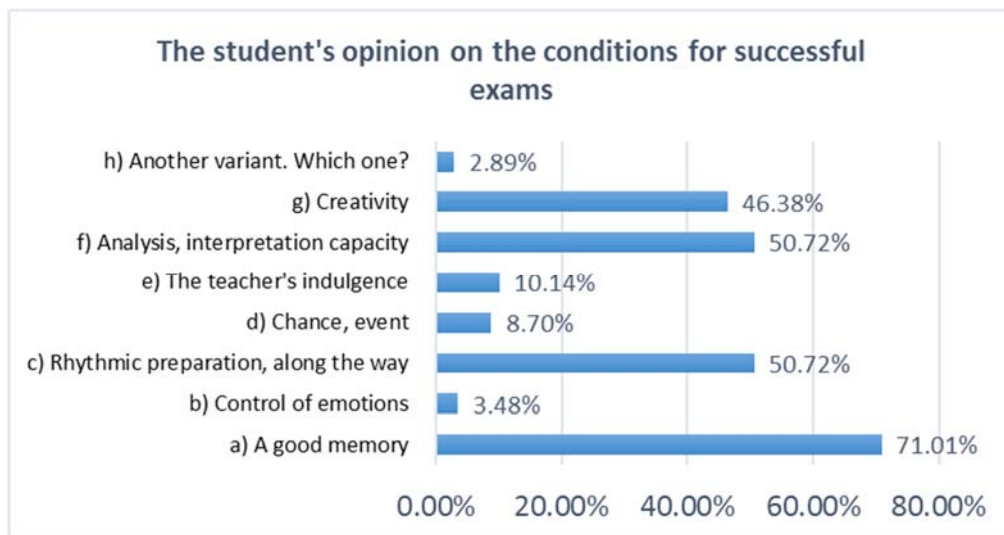
Figure no. 15. *The student's opinion on the conditions for successful exams*

As you can see, many of the surveyed students (71.01%) consider the memory capacity as the most important condition for success. Good values have also been recorded in the variants referring to the rhythm of preparation, the ability to analyze and interpret and also creativity.

5. Conclusion

The learning activity is characterized by a special complexity, being sustained, determined by a series of factors, conditions, from the ones of an external nature to the internal ones. The way all these variables combine and how they influence the quality of this activity determines the level of success.

Our study has highlighted the specificity of academic learning, which are the conditions that, in the students' opinion, ensure efficiency. We have thus been able to identify the elements that ensure success in the exams, which underlie an effective learning, to what extent external or internal conditions may influence the quality of the service. Our conclusions support the idea that the students' choice for a particular learning style, whose effectiveness has been tested, is clearly influenced by the specificity of the specialization. We have also found that, if the internal and external learning conditions are known and respected, it can have great chances of success.

Efficient learning is clearly conditioned by good management of time and emotions, stress, good self-monitoring and self-regulation of it, and also an adequate motivation.

The investigation made it possible to formulate relevant conclusions, but also outlined certain limits, related to the sample of subjects, which can be extended, by also including some students from other faculties, specializations, and thus being able to perform comparative analyzes.

Authors note:

Florentina Mogonea is Ph.D. Associate Professor, Teacher Training Department, University of Craiova, Director of the Psycho-pedagogical Research Center, Editor in-chief of the Academic Publication Annals of the University of Craiova, Psychology-Pedagogy series. Competence fields: Pre- and in-service training of teachers; theory and practice of school assessment; management and leadership of the class of students; educational research; sociology of education.

Florentin Remus Mogonea is Ph.D. Associate Professor, Doctor of Education Sciences, Teacher Training Department, University of Craiova, permanent member of the Psycho-pedagogical Research Center, Editor of the Academic Publication Annals of the University of Craiova, Psychology-Pedagogy series. Competence fields: Pre- and in-service training of teachers; theory and practice of school assessment; management and leadership of the class of students; educational research; sociology of education.

References

Backhaus, J., Jeske, D., Poinstingl, H., Koeni, S. (2017). Assessing Efficiency of Prompts Based on Learner Characteristic. *Computers*, *6* (7), 1-15. Available at: doi:10.3390/computers6010007, [online, 01.06.2018].

Bates, C.M.F. (2015). Learner Characteristics and Motivation: How to Achieve Efficient and Effective Learning. *Collected Essays on Learning and Teaching, VIII*, 165-170. Available at: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1069721.pdf, [online, 01.06.2018].

Boud, D. (2001). Introduction: Making the move to peer learning. In D. Boud, R. Cohen, & J. Sampson. *Peer Learning for Higher Education*, pp. 1-20. London: Kogan Page Limited.

Cohen, J. (2006) Social, Emotional, Ethical, and Academic Education: Creating a Climate for Learning, Participation in Democracy, and Well-Being. *Harvard Educational Review*, *76* (2), 201-237. Available at: http://ww.ijvs.org/files/Publications/Social,%20Emotional,%20Ethical.pdf, [online, 01.06.2018].

Durlak, J.A.,Weissberg, R.P., Dymnicki, A.B., Taylor, R.D., Schellinger, K.B. (2011). The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions. *Child Development, 82* (1), 405-432. Available at: https://novofoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Meta-Analysis-Child-Development-Full-Article.pdf [online, 01.06.2018].

Frăsineanu, E.S. (2012). *Învăţarea şi self-managementul învăţării eficiente în mediul universitar*. Craiova: Universitaria Publishing House.

Fry, H., Ketteridge, S., Marshall, S. (2009). Understanding student learning, in H. Fry, Ketteridge, S., S. Marshall (eds.). *A Handbook for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Enhancing Academic Practice*, third edition. New York: Routledge, 8-26.

Henard, F., Leprince-Ringue, S. (2008). *The path to quality teaching in higher education*. Available at: http://www.oecd.org/education/imhe/44150246.pdf, [online, 01.06.2018].

Henning, M.A. (2009). Students' Motivation to Access Academic Advising Services *NACADA Journal, 29* (1), 22-30. Available at: http://nacadajournal.org/doi/pdf/10.12930/0271-9517-29.1.22?code=naaa-site. [online, 01.06.2018].

Hj Ramli, N.H., Alavi, M., Mehrinezhad, S.A., Ahmadi, A. (2018). Academic Stress and Self-Regulation among University Students in Malaysia: Mediator Role of Mindfulness, *Behavioral Sciences, 8* (12), 1-9. Available at: doi:10.3390/bs8010012, [online, 01.06.2018].

Hoskins, S.L., Newstead, S.E. (2009). Encouraging student motivation, in H. Fry, Ketteridge, S., S. Marshall (eds.). *A Handbook for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Enhancing Academic Practice*, third edition. New York: Routledge, 27-39.

Keller, J.M. (1984). The use of the ARCS model of motivation in teacher training. In K. S. A. J. Trott (Ed.). *Aspects of educational technology, volume XVII: Staff development and career updating*. London: Kogan Page.

Ketonen, E. (2017). The Role of Motivation and Academic Emotions in University Studies The short- and long-term effects on situational experiences and academic achievement. Helsinki Studies in Education, 18. 5-10. Available at: https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/228581/TheRoleo.pdf?sequence=1 [online, 01.06.2018].

Kormos, J., Csizér, K. (2014). The Interaction of Motivation, Self-Regulatory Strategies, and Autonomous Learning Behavior in Different Learner Groups. *Tesol Quarterly, 48* (2), 275-299. Available at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/tesq.129, [online, 01.06.2018].

Mogonea, F. (2014). *Premise teoretice şi metodologice ale valorificării metacogniţiei în activitatea didactică*. Craiova: Sitech Publishing House.

Mogonea, F. R., Mogonea, F. (2014a). Constructivist teaching and valorization of the independent activity based on collaboration and cooperation. *Procedia Social and Behavioral sciences, 127,* 184-188. Available at: http://ac.els-cdn.com/S1877042814023283/1-s2.0-S1877042814023283-main.pdf?_tid=e66e0b58-d794-11e3-b5dc-00000aab0f6b&acdnat=1399652207_d59b496b6a0cd2181bcaec5b371f0fa0, ISSN: 1877-042, [online, 01.06.2018].

Mogonea, F.R., Mogonea, F. (2014b). The Constructivist Teaching and the Optimization of Learning through Cognitive Maps. *Procedia Social and Behavioral sciences, 128,* 164-168. Available at: http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042814022289, [online, 01.06.2018].

Mogonea, F., Popescu, A.M. (2015). The role of socio-cognitive conflict in academic-type learning. *Procedia Social and Behavioral sciences, 180,* 865-870. Available at: http://ac.els-cdn.com/S1877042815015748/1-s2.0-S1877042815015748-main.pdf?_tid=4996180a-0a03-11e5-bdea-00000aacb362&acdnat=1433344674_5fd3ff033f73b7e8e88e6ac71d8eec9f, [online, 01.06.2018].

Mogonea, F., Ştefan, M.A. (2014). Personal reflection and learning efficientization. *Journal Plus Education, 10* (1), 298-311. Available at: http://uav.ro/jour/index.php/jpe/article/view/239/253, [online, 01.06.2018].

Mutsotso, S.N., Abenga, E.S.B. (2010). Study methods for improving quality learning and performance in higher education. *Educational Research and Review, 5* (12), 808-813, Available at: http://www.academicjournals.org/ERR, [online, 03.06.2018].

Pânişoară, G., Duţă, N., Pânişoară, I.-O. (2015). The influence of reasons approving on student motivation for learning. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 197,* 1215-1222. Available at: doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.07.382, [online, 03.06.2018].

Peklaj, C., Levpušček, M.P. (2007). Students' motivation and academic success in relation to the quality of individual and collaborative work during a course in Educational Psychology. *Association of Teacher Education in Europe, 31st Annual ATTEE Conference.* University of Ljubljana,

Slovenia. Available at: http://www.pef.uni-lj.si/atee/978-961-6637-06-0/147-161.pdf, [online, 02.06.2018].

Razak, R.A., See, Y.C. (2010). Improving academic achievement and motivation through online peer learning. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences, 9*, 358–362. Available at: doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.12.164, [online, 03.06.2018].

Renner, D., Laumer, S., Weitzel, T. (2014). Effectiveness and Efficiency of Blended Learning – A Literature Review. *Twentieth Americas Conference on Information Systems, Savannah,* 1-13. Available at: https://aisel.aisnet.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1286&context=amcis2014, [online, 01.06.2018].

Singh, S., Rylander, D.H., Mims, T.C. (2012). Efficiency of Online vs. Offline Learning: A Comparison of Inputs and Outcomes. *International Journal of Business, Humanities and Technology, 2* (1), 93-98. Available at: http://ijbhtnet.com/journals/Vol_2_No_1_January_2012/12.pdf [online, 01.06.2018].

Schwartz, B.L., Son, L.K., Ko.rnell, N., Finn, B. (2011). Four Principles of Memory Improvement: A Guide to Improving Learning Efficiency. The International Journal of Creativity & Problem Solving, 21(1), 7-15. Available at: https://sites.williams.edu/nk2/files/2011/08/Schwartz.Son_.Kornell.Finn_.2011.pdf, [online, 05.06.2018].

Ștefan, M.A. (2014). *Dezvoltarea competenței de învățare autonomă la studenți.* Craiova: Sitech Publishing House.

Ștefan, M.A., Mogonea, F. (2015). Non-cognitive determinants of the academic learning. *Asian Academic Research Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, 1* (34) (April-2015), Online ISSN: 2278 – 859X, 123-140. Available at:

http://www.asianacademicresearch.org/current.html, [online, 01.06.2018].

Van Daele, T. (2013). *A Psychoeducational Approach to Stress Management. An Implementation and Effectiveness Study*, doctoral dissertation. Faculteit Psychologie en Pedagogische Wetenschappen. Available at: https://www.kuleuven.be/lucas/nl/Publicaties/publi_upload/Doctoral_dissertation_TomVanDaele.pdf, [online, 03.06.2018].

van der Helden, J., Boksem, M.A.S., Blom, J.H.G. (2009). The Importance of Failure: Feedback-Related Negativity Predicts Motor Learning Efficiency. *Cerebral Cortex, 20*, 1596-1603. Available at: doi:10.1093/cercor/bhp224, [online, 01.06.2018].

Williams, K., Williams, C. (2011). The influence of reasons approving on student motivation for learning. *Research in Higher Education Journal, 11*, 1-23. Available at: https://scholarsarchive.library.albany.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.ro/&httpsredir=1&article=1000&context=math_fac_scholar, [online, 01.06.2018].

Yau, H.K., Cheng, A.L.F., Ho, W.M. (2015). Identify the Motivational Factors to Affect the Higher Education Students to Learn Using Technology. *TOJET: The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, *14* (2). Available at: http://www.tojet.net/articles/v14i2/14212.pdf, [online, 07.06.2018].

Zhao, N., Wardeska, J.G., McGuire, S.Y., Cook, E. (2014). Metacognition: An Effective Tool to Promote Success in College Science Learning. *Journal of College Science Teaching, 43* (4), 48-54. Available at: http://deltastate.edu/PDFFiles/Academic%20Affairs/teaching-and-learning-resources/metacognition-an-effective-tool.pdf, [online, 07.06.2018].

Pedagogical Aspects Concerning the Student Assessment Process

Dana Jucan

Pedagogical Aspects Concerning the Student Assessment Process

Dana Jucan [a*]

ª Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Babeş-Bolyai University, 7 Sindicatelor Street, 400015, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Corresponding author: dana.jucan@ubbcluj.ro

Abstract	
Keywords: assessment, assessment methods, assessment strategies, oral assessment, written assessment	In the present study, we aim to identify the methods of assessment employed in universities in order to evaluate the academic performance of students and the efficiency of said methods. To this end, we have applied a semi-structured interview to the third-year students of the Faculty of Psychology and Sciences of Education, specializing in Preschool and Primary Education – a total of 72 subjects. The interview included ten questions concerning the methods of assessment used by teachers during the examination period. To illustrate our point, we will be presenting and analyzing the answers obtained in five of the questions asked. The analysis of the answers given by the students show that the most common method of assessment is the written one, i.e. through exams in the examination period. Students consider this assessment method to be objective because it measures the level of knowledge and skills acquired, but they also consider that the oral assessment method would be more effective because it would measure the level of academic performance in a more precise manner. As such, the present study proposes concrete ways to streamline the assessment process of student learning.

Zusammenfasung	
Schlüsselworte: Bewertung, Bewertungsmethoden, Bewertungsstrategien, mündliche Bewertung, schriftliche Bewertung, Lebensqualität	In der vorliegenden Studie wollen wir die Bewertungsmethoden an Universitäten ermitteln, um die akademische Leistung der Studierenden und die Effizienz dieser Methoden zu bewerten. Zu diesem Zweck haben wir ein Semi-strukturiertes Interview mit den Studenten des dritten Jahres der Fakultät für Psychologie und Erziehungswissenschaften mit den Schwerpunkten Vorschule und Grundschulbildung durchgeführt - insgesamt 72 Fächer. Das Interview enthielt zehn Fragen zu den von den Lehrern während des Prüfungszeitraums verwendeten Bewertungsmethoden. Um unseren Standpunkt zu veranschaulichen, werden wir die Antworten, die wir in fünf der gestellten Fragen erhalten haben, präsentieren und analysieren. Die Analyse der von den Schülern gegebenen Antworten zeigt, dass die am häufigsten verwendete Beurteilungsmethode die schriftliche ist, d. H. Durch Prüfungen im Prüfungszeitraum. Die Studierenden betrachten diese Bewertungsmethode als objektiv, da sie das Niveau der erworbenen Kenntnisse und Fähigkeiten misst, sie sind jedoch auch der Ansicht, dass die mündliche Bewertungsmethode wirksamer ist, da sie das Niveau der akademischen Leistung genauer messen würde. Daher schlägt die vorliegende Studie konkrete Wege vor, um den Bewertungsprozess für das Lernen von Schülern zu rationalisieren.

1. Introduction

The assessment process consists of checking, measuring, marking, and justifying the academic results of the students by contrasting them with the initial objectives, in order to take decisions for the improvement of the activity in the following stages (Bocoş & Jucan, 2017). Evaluation represents the knowledge of the effects of the didactic activity, of the students' performance, respectively of the ratio between their performance in a determined timeframe and in a determined pedagogical context and the performances projected by the didactic framework. The main goal of the didactical evaluation is to sustain and support the learning activity of students, the progress of their learning and their knowledge (Stan, 2001). As a complex didactic activity, organically integrated in the teaching process, the assessment aims at identifying the effects of the actions undertaken by the teacher together with the students, so that, based on the information obtained, these actions may be improved over time (Bocoş & Jucan, 2017). Thus, the teacher's purpose is to obtain and capitalize on information about a number of aspects, in the context of capitalizing on certain didactic activity resources, mainly concerning: obtaining knowledge about student performance, the qualitative and quantitative description of their intellectual, practical and behavioral skills and abilities (Jucan, 2009), making value judgements about them, respectively regarding the concordance between the achieved performance and the one anticipated when the operational objectives were designed, obtaining information about the performance of the teaching staff, about its competencies, obtaining information about the educational curriculum, about its quality, relevance and effectiveness, capitalizing on all the information obtained

in order to formulate some appreciations and value judgments, making decisions concerning future educational approaches.

2. Problem statement

At the moment of assessment, the teacher is permanently referring to the evaluation standards, which express in a concise and clear form the level at which the cognitive and behavioral abilities of the students must be in order to achieve precisely determined educational goals and objectives (Chiş, 2005). In other words, the evaluation standards have normative significance and represent standards in relation to which the teachers can accurately determine the level of training achieved by the students, being able to formulate value judgments and objective comparisons related to their school performance based on them. Aiming at establishing the relationship between the results obtained in the educational process and those expected when designing the operational objectives, the evaluation strategies represent the component of the educational action that validates, namely confirms or denies the attainment of the performances pursued in the instructive-educative activity (Ionescu, 2005). Evaluation methods are means, tools, ways of acting, through which the evaluator obtains information about student performance, their knowledge, their skills, etc., in relation to the objectives proposed and the scientific content studied (Manolescu, 2006). The traditional evaluation methods used in higher education are oral, written, and practical assessment. Using oral assessment, the degree of acquiring knowledge, its correctness, the skill level, the ability to interpret and process the data, the operability of the acquisitions, the applicability of the learned content - these are all verified (Păun & Potolea, 2002). Written assessment is done with the help of written evaluation papers, which ask the students to express and put down their ideas in writing and to deal with written tasks. The evaluation through tests is a form of modern written assessment, due to the speed of implementation and accuracy / precision in measurement. The test is a written evaluation tool with specific structure, qualities and attributes, among which we mention: it is a complex tool which, through the items it contains, can cover a large area of content and consequently can check the achievement of a large number of objectives of the teaching activity; it offers the possibility of a more accurate, more objective measurement of the performances of the students compared to other evaluation methods, hence the large spread of the tests in the assessment practice; it operates with clear and operational scales for the

processing and interpretation of answers. Practical assessment involves the use of practical tasks and occupies a significant place in verifying students' abilities, skills and habits, formed during practical activities.

3. Purpose of the study

In the present study, we aim to identify the methods of assessment employed in universities in order to evaluate the academic performance of students and the efficiency of said methods.

4. Methodology

To this end, we have applied a semi-structured interview to the third-year students of the Faculty of Psychology and Sciences of Education, specializing in Preschool and Primary Education – a total of 72 subjects. The interview included ten questions concerning the methods of assessment used by teachers during the examination period. To illustrate our point, we will be presenting and analyzing the answers obtained in five of the questions asked.

5. Findings

The first question referred to the evaluation method used most often in the examination period by the teachers. The answer options offered to the students were: oral assessment, written evaluation, practical assessment.
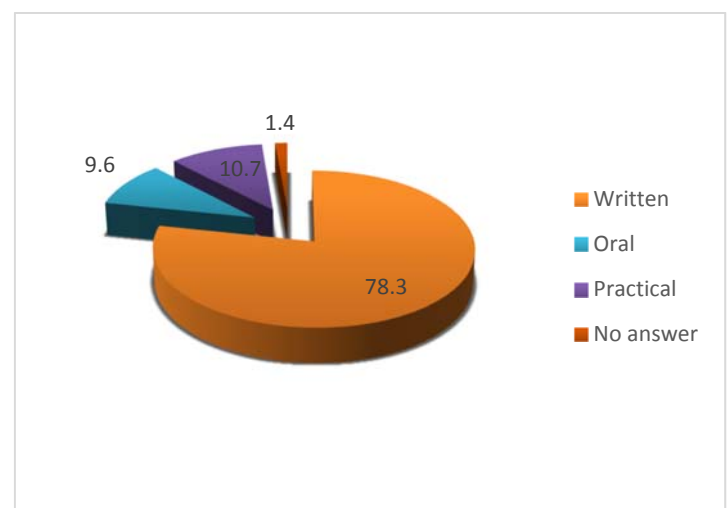
Figure no. 1. *The students' replies concerning the methods of assessment in university*

Table no. 1. *The students' replies concerning the methods of assessment in university*

Generally, at university, what method of assessment is used?	Answers (%)
Written	78,3
Practical	10.7
Oral	9.6
No answer	1,4

Analyzing the students' responses to this question, we found that the most commonly used assessment method by teachers is the written assessment method, with 78.3% of the answers pointing to this, the practical assessment method is used in 10.7% of cases, and the oral method in 9.6% of cases. We consider that the written evaluation method is preferred by the teachers, perhaps because of the large number of students in a department or faculty. In this case, written exams require less time for grading than an oral examination would require.
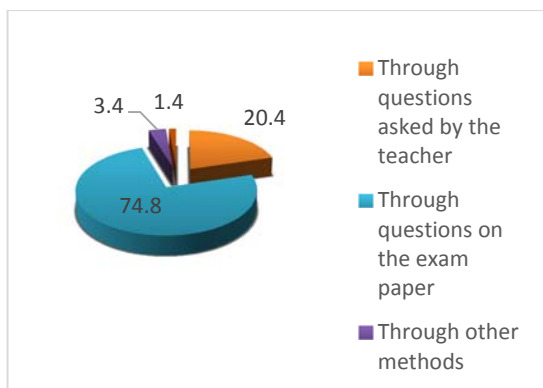
Figure no. 2: *The students' replies concerning oral assessment methods*

Table no. 2. *The students' replies concerning oral assessment methods*
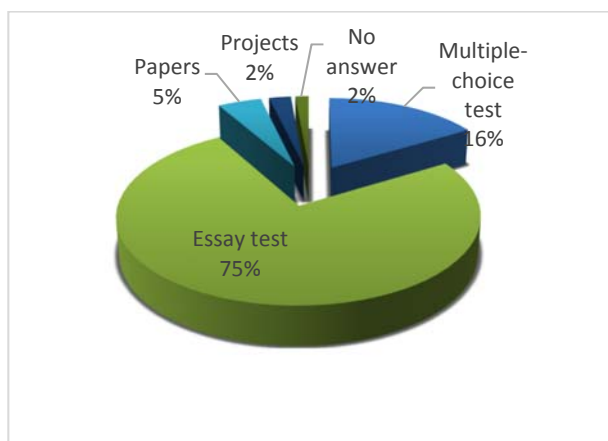
Table no. 3. *The students' replies concerning written assessment methods*

What are the written assessment methods through which you are most commonly evaluated?	Answers (%)
Essay test	75,3
Multiple-choice test	16,4
Papers	4,6
Projects	2,3
No answer	1,4

The written assessment methods through which the students are most often evaluated are the written tasks during the examination period – essay tests (75.3% of the answers), multiple choice tests (16.4% of the answers), papers (4.6% of responses), projects (2.3% of responses).
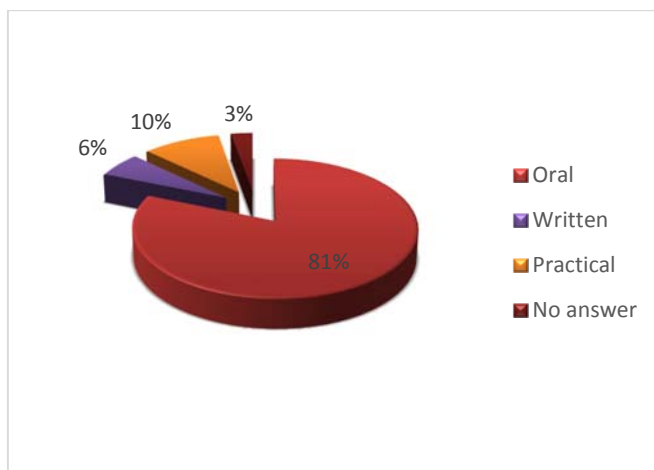
Figure no. 4. *The students' replies concerning the efficiency of assessment methods*

Table no. 4. *The students' replies concerning the efficiency of assessment methods*

Which method of assessment do you consider to be the most objective?	Answers (%)
Oral	81,2
Practical	10,1
Written	5,9
No answer	2,8

Students consider oral assessment as the most objective (81.2%), and practical and written assessments are considered less objective (10.1% and 5.9% respectively).

Figure no. 5: *The students' replies concerning their reasons for preferring a certain method*
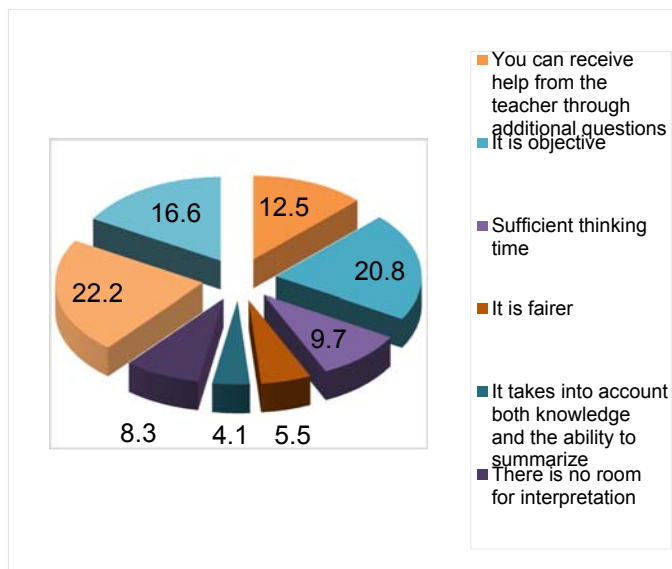
Table no. 5: *The students' replies concerning their reasons for preferring a certain method*

Explain your choice for the previous item.	Answers (%)
It is a more precise measurement of the level of knowledge	22,2
It is objective	20,8
No answer	16,6
Additional questions (help from the teacher)	12,5
Sufficient thinking time	9,7
There is no room for interpretation	8,3
It is fairer	5,5
It takes into account both knowledge and the ability to summarize	4,1

Students consider that oral assessment is objective because it measures the level of knowledge more precisely (22.2%), teachers are objective (20%), students that are stuck can get helpful questions, there is more time to think, etc.

Analysis of students' answers denotes the fact that they are most often evaluated in the examination period through written evaluation methods, i.e. exams with essay subjects or multiple-choice tests. Students consider this method of

assessment to be objective. However, we find that students want to be evaluated more often by way of oral examinations because they measure the level of knowledge and skills acquired in a more precise manner. Through oral assessment, students undertake a self-questioning, a cognitive self-evaluation and self-assessment of acquired competencies.

Taking into account the results obtained in this interview, correlated with the performance generally obtained by the students, we advocate rather for an ongoing evaluation, not just a final one, i.e. in the examination period. Students' grades obtained during the semester express the quality and the degree of improvement, since they are constantly adjusting their learning efforts, reducing the gap between the amount of knowledge taught and the amount of developed skills. Regardless of the evaluation method used in verifying students' knowledge, we consider it useful to place a special emphasis on the development of the student's thinking by asking for critical answers based on logic, trying to give a formative value to the moment of assessment (Iucu, 2001). We note that the periodical evaluation of the students, i.e. during the entire semester, at each class, ensures their active participation in courses and seminars and, thus, their complete involvement in the learning process. The frequency of the assessment contributes to the improvement of the intellectual activity style, it better outlines the activity of the students and, implicitly, of the teacher. The contribution of the assessment to improving the students' level of knowledge must be seen in various contexts, the assessment only fulfilling its purpose through the creative application of the principles of modern didactics and the achievement of unity between the students' capacity for intellectual activity and the effort made (Jucan, 2009).

In order to influence students in a positive way, in order to achieve a formative assessment, learning and teaching, we consider it necessary to use subjects that require the students to make a selection of the studied material, giving it new meaning and a new structure in the sense of grouping and essentializing the information and presenting it in a personal, original, even creative form. We note that, along with the elements and aspects based on memory and memorization, which are inevitably part of any test, an appropriate place must be reserved for subjects that require critical thinking and relevant intellectual activity. These are questions that require students to perform analyses, comparisons, and classifications, to reveal causal relationships, to provide substantial reasoning, to formulate

explanations, to make generalizations, abstractions, etc. When grading, the evaluator will discern between the memorizing exercise and the involvement of thinking, appreciating and encouraging any progress made by the student. Special attention will be given to encouraging students towards operationalizing the content studied, applying it in different and varied contexts, practicing mental operations, manifesting originality and personal creativity.

In order for teachers to achieve an assessment of the students that is as objective as possible, we consider the following important: clear and rigorous clarification of the didactic objectives pursued through the evaluations; the level of the minimum admitted performance and the explanation of the criteria on which the appreciation of the actual performances of the students will be based; combining several assessment techniques (written, oral, practical tasks) in assessing the extent to which one and the same teaching objective has been achieved, which must be doubled by informing the students of the deficiencies recorded after each of these tests; the split-half method consisting of dividing the examination/ test in two equally relevant and difficult parts, each part being evaluated separately, with the separate assessments then combined and correlated; explaining and using grading scales, namely unitary grading scales based on the breakdown of the task to be solved in clear subtopics to be marked according to a prior agreement established between the teacher and the student.

6. Conclusions

We recommend the practice of a formative assessment of the students that would facilitate learning, providing each student with information about the evolution of their learning and the opportunity to monitor their own progress, to consciously build the progression of knowledge, and in which the adjustment of the activity is foremost aimed at the educational strategies employed by the teacher.

We also find that the objective didactic assessment of the students' performance needs to be continuous, systematic, flexible, and based on a variety of methods, techniques and assessment tasks.

Authors note:

Jucan Dana is Lecturer in the Department of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, Babeş-Bolyai University, PhD in Education Sciences. Her research is in the field of university education, more precisely focused on teaching, learning, evaluation, didactic strategies, intellectual activity, taking notes.

References

Bocoş, M., Jucan, D. (2017). *The theory and methodology of teaching. The theory and methodology of assessment*. Piteşti: Paralela 45 Publishing House.

Stan, C. (2001). *Self-evaluation and didactic evaluation* Cluj-Napoca: Cluj University Press.

Jucan, D. (2009). *Students' intellectual activity strategies.* Cluj-Napoca: House of the Scientific Book Publishing House.

Chiş, V. (2005). *Contemporary pedagogy – competency pedagogy*. Cluj-Napoca: House of the Scientific Book Publishing House.

Ionescu, M. (coord.). (2005). *Current concerns in the education sciences, volume I.* Cluj-Napoca: Eikon Publishing House.

Manolescu, M. (2006). *Educational assessment. Methods, techniques, tools.* Bucharest: Meteor Press Publishing House.

Păun, E., Potolea, D. (2002). *Pedagogy. Theoretical basis and applicative approaches.* Iaşi: Polirom Publishing House.

Iucu, R.B. (2001). *Teaching in school. Theoretical and applicative perspectives.* Iaşi: Polirom Publishing House.

Operational instrument for primary assessment of intrinsic quality of open educational resources

Ciprian Baciu, Mușata Bocoș, Daniel Andronache, Victor Bocoș

Operational instrument for primary assessment of intrinsic quality of open educational resources

Ciprian Baciu [a*], **Mușata Bocoș** [b*], **Daniel Andronache** [c*], **Victor Bocoș** [d*]

[a,b,c] *Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Babeș-Bolyai University, 7 Sindicatelor Street, 400015, Cluj-Napoca, Romania*
[d] *Faculty of Environmental Science and Engineering, Babeș-Bolyai University, 30 Fântânele Street, 400294, Cluj-Napoca, Romania*

Corresponding author: *ciprian.baciu@ubbcluj.ro, musata.bocos@ubbcluj.ro, daniel.andronache@ubbcluj.ro, victor.bocos@ubbcluj.ro*

Abstract

Keywords:
web educational resources, open educational resources, evaluation of web educational resources

The open educational resources (OER) are those resources which make reference to categories of educational materials which are in the public domain or which are available to readers by open licenses, so for which the access is free. A few examples of OER are school textbooks, curriculum, syllabi, course supports, audio-video resources.

Given the multitude, diversity and complexity of OER, and the fact that many times there are no objective and thorough conventions and regulations of selection, access, filtration and evaluation of them, specific selection and evaluation strategies must be identified.

This article is guided by the following questions:

a) What are the intrinsic qualities that the web educational resources should have?

b) How could we support with instruments the persons interested in the selection, study, and evaluation of web educational resources?

Starting from these questions, we offer an operational instrument/checklist of evaluation of the intrinsic quality of OER, and a series of landmarks for the primary evaluation of OER, as a component of the primary evaluation of e-resources.

Zusammenfasung

Schlüsselworte:
Web-Bildungsressourcen, Offene Bildungsressourcen, Bewertung von Web-Bildungsressourcen

Offene Bildungsressourcen sind frei zugängliche Lernmittel, die gemeinfrei sind oder auf Basis freier Lizenzen die Verwendung erlauben. Beispiele offener Bildungsressourcen sind: Schulbücher, Bildungsinhalte, Lehrpläne, Lernmittel, Audio- und Videoressourcen.

Wegen der Vielzahl, Vielfalt und Komplexität der offenen Bildungsressourcen sowie aufgrund dessen, dass keine gegenständliche und präzise Auswahl-, Zugangs-, Filtrier- und Auswertungsregelungen dieser Ressourcen zur Verfügung stehen, kommt die Ermittlung spezifischer Auswahl- und Beurteilungsstrategien infrage.

Folgende Aufgabenstellung ist Grundlage dieser Arbeit:

a) Welche wesentliche Qualitäten sollten Web-Bildungsressourcen aufweisen?

b) Wie könnte das Instrument die Interessenten in Auswahl, Studium und Bewertung von Web-Bildungsressourcen unterstützen?

Ausgehend von dieser Aufgabenstellung, stellen wir ein operatives Instrument/ eine Kontrollliste zur Qualitatsbeurteilung von offenen Bildungsressourcen sowie Meilensteine zur Grundbeurteilung von offenen Bildungsresoourcen, als wesentlicher Bestandteil der Grundbeurteilung von E-Ressourcen zur Verfügung.

1. Argumentation of theme relevance

The unprecedented technological and socio-economic changes which characterized the last years, the whole rhetoric, and the real movement to the knowledge-based and learning-based economy and society, as well as the perspective, overturns regarding the production and distribution of knowledge in contemporary society brought the educational systems to new series of complex problems and challenges. For example, the evaluation of the Strategic Framework "Education and training 2020" (http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework_en) (ET 2020) for the European cooperation in education and professional training highlighted a priority field: the opened and innovating education systems, including by the maximal valorization of digital age.

Our work represents a pleading in favor of the idea that in a digital age, the change, development and general progress are inseparably connected to the digital field and the technological tools. It changes the frames, contexts, and pace of macrosocial development, which assures the successive passage from information society to the society of knowledge, to the learning society and to the digital society, the affirmation of digital field in the context of globalization phenomenon.

We live in the knowledge society, a society founded on knowledge and its dissemination, by taking into account the specific dynamism and the necessity of its prospective orientation. The knowledge society was gradually configured, as a result of information explosion, generator of a huge volume of scientific acquisitions; practically, knowledge means the accumulation of data and information, actions of information and dissemination of resources and knowledge. In other words, knowledge society is founded on information society, which crystallized after the computerization due to the realization of industrial revolutions which led to the development of NICT (New Information and Communication Technologies), automation and robotics. Thus, information society represents the foundation of the knowledge society. The latter generates knowledge and organizes it by transformation, processing, and articulation of information in knowledge resources. They become common, universal assets from which all the society members can benefit with the purpose of assuring the general human progress. As part of the knowledge society, the information society represents a new stage of human evolution, a new lifestyle, superior in quality, which involves the intensive use of information in all the spheres of activity and human existence, by promoting the opening and democratization of access to information. Thus, we consecrated the term *Open Educational Resources (OER)*, which was defined in specialized literature in several ways to which we will refer below.

Before defining OER, we propose to offer our own definition of educational resources and open educational resources, by valorising the definition of the term "resource", from the field of economic sciences and connecting it with definitions from the education field: education, educational goals, educational resources (see the taxonomy offered by Bocoş, 2017).

Thus, in our vision, the educational resources represent the totality of material, human, financial, procedural, instrumental and time elements which can be attracted/made/elaborated and used for instructive educational purposes, in view of forming and developing the intellectual, moral or physical traits of students, according to the educational goals pursued.

A pedagogic analysis of educational resources involves the clarification of some issues such as: establishing the categories of resources involved in the educational process; estimation of the weight of each category; identification of specific teaching potential; establishing the methodical

requirements in use etc., compared to the teaching objectives pursued. A taxonomy of educational resources which envisages the epistemological criterion and the specific contribution to the structure of instructive educational activity distinguishes the following five large categories: human resources, material resources, financial resources, procedural resources and time resources (Bocoş, 2017).

2. Material resources related to the Internet

We propose below to focus on a significant component of material resources, respectively on those categories of specific resources related to the Internet: *Internet resource, digital educational resources, open educational resources (OER)*.

2.1. Internet Resource

The term Internet is indispensable in the information society, it practically became an omnipresent resource. In order to try to configure the specificity of this resource in the educational field, we reiterate the following work premises regarding the technical and material perspective of analysis:

a) The Internet represents an autonomous educational resource similar to financial, human, procedural resources etc. The existence and use of the Internet are closed conditioned by the existence of equipment (computers, smartphones, tablets, routers, servers etc.).

b) The Internet is a resource which offers us a virtual space which allows for carrying out online educational activities, with the valorization of facilities provided – databases, online platforms, software, open educational resources etc. Therefore, it is justified to include the Internet in the material resources, the virtual space can be seen as an extension of the physical school space in cyberspace.

By completing this technical and material perspective with the curricular perspective, we offer the following educational developments:

a) *From an architectural point of view*, respectively the physical components which form the Internet (a huge network of computers, of world scope), the Internet represents the means of education which offers a communication environment as support for carrying out instructive educational activities. A relevant educational activity specific to this environment is the dissemination of

digital teaching materials (textbooks in digital format, videos, software etc.). These materials are components of educational means, respectively educational resources which can be used for multiple purposes: information, study, problem resolution, experimentation, learning, application of acquisitions, dissemination of information etc.

b) *From the point of view of dissemination of resources*, the Internet is the component of material resources which offers the virtual educational space necessary for the carrying out of the online instructive educational process, the online teaching, learning and evaluation processes.

In conclusion, from a pedagogic perspective, the Internet has a dual status, being at the same time a means of education and communication environment/ virtual educational space. That is why, we could say that the Internet represents more than what its classical definition contains – the international network of computers formed by the interconnection of local and global networks, designed to facilitate the exchange of data and information in various fields (DEX, 2009). By customizing this definition for the educational field, we can say that the Internet represents the material educational resource and means of education formed by the world information network which offers a virtual communication environment/ virtual space necessary for the design/ elaboration, study, storage, dissemination of materials and digital learning resources, exchange of data and information, carrying out of educational processes.

2.2. Digital Educational Resources

The digital educational resources represent the assembly of teaching materials drawn up in digital format (graphic images, photographs, animations, audio and video files, games, software etc.) which the educational agents use in instructive educational processes, for achieving the preestablished educational objectives.

The use on a wide scale of digital educational resources is possible because of development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), which offers a variety of instruments that can open up new possibilities in the classrooms. They can help in particular to differentiate and customize training, depending on the educational needs of each student and they can also offer them crucial digital competences, necessary in our knowledge-based economy (Negruţ & Arsith, 2013, Eurydice, 2011).

The major characteristic of digital educational resources is that they condense processed and structured information, which helps the students develop mental representations by a combination of multimedia elements: text, image, audio and video presentations, films, elements of virtual and augmented reality, for the purpose of efficient presentation of information. Digital educational resources can include digitalized contents and sequences of educational activities (Eady & Lockyer, 2013, p. 71).

2.3. Open Educational Resources (OER)

2.3.1. The notion of *open educational resource*

The term Open Educational Resources (OER) refers to educational materials for which the access is free and free of charge; this term was adopted in UNESCO Forum in 2002, following the analysis of the Open Courseware projects impact in higher education.

According to UNESCO, open educational resources (OER) are those resources which make reference to categories of educational materials which are of public domain or which are made available to readers by open licenses. These open resources give all those interested the opportunity to access them, copy, use, adjust and transmit them legally and free of charge. In the composition of open educational resources, we can include the school textbooks, curriculum, syllabuses, course supports, homework, tests, projects, audio-video resources and resources based on animation techniques (UNESCO, 2002 apud Wiley, 2007, Hylén, 2006).

From a technical point of view, those which assure access to these resources by their distribution at world level. Thus, the educators and educable children have the opportunity to identify, take up, change and exchange online resources, depending on own educational needs, for the purpose of reaching the educational goals. Thus, the educable children will form competencies which allow them efficient social and professional insertion and the active participation in knowledge-based society.

From teaching perspective, open educational resources favour the active, interactive, heuristic and experiential learning, facilitate interpersonal communication, enhance the freedom of expression, contribute to the mediation of learning activity, to a better illustration and structuring of contents depending on the study pace of each educable child, assure an efficient management of contents, develop the comprehension capacity by undertaking the responsibility regarding what is learned, how is learned and

when is learned, and by focusing the educational processes on the learning subject.

The open and flexible nature of OER contributes to the generation of a major change by realization of adequate and accessible learning systems regardless of the age of educable children, their financial possibilities, the space and time coordinates, by providing them with access to a multitude of instructive educational opportunities. Also, depending on the way in which these resources are licensed, the users can contribute to their updating or they can generate new OER both online and offline.

2.3.2. Argumentation of the necessity of OER selection and evaluation strategies

The exponential amplification of the number of educational resources of different kinds, their existence in the virtual space without the individual or institutional assumption of their quality represents a critical problem. For example, we mention the following problematic situations:

• most websites do not offer data about the author/editor or do not include sufficient data to check/ evaluate the quality of content of information provided;

• some users do not know how to search efficiently on the Internet;

• some users do not know how to evaluate objectively the resources found;

• there are web pages in which persons who do not have expertise speak with determination and authority about complex research themes;

• practically anyone can make and publish a website, can post information from/in any field, including false information, which was noticed by the UNESCO Report from Paris: "according to estimates, half of the information circulating on the Internet is false or inaccurate" (UNESCO, 2005, p. 47). Also, according to Gartner (2018), it is predicted that by 2022 more than 50% of the population of economically developed countries will consume more false information than true information;

• unlike the similar information found in the printed resources – books, articles in magazines (or radio/ television shows) which go through a process of analysis and filtration, such as editing and peer review, most of information on World Wide Web is published without

going through this process, being non-filtered information; as they are not subject of regulatory measures, this date cannot be always accepted as real and true information and must be evaluated carefully before being included in the teaching-learning-evaluation or research activity.

Thus, the information which is in the virtual space, taken as such, in raw state, is just the basic material, which has the potential to lead to the generation of knowledge. The transformation of information into knowledge is only possible after a process of selection, evaluation, analysis, reflection, and processing.

Under these conditions, as OER and their forms of presentation multiply and diversify, the concerns for identification of strategies of selection, change, adjustment, valorization and evaluation of them in educational activities are justified and necessary. In view of configuring these strategies (Conole & Ehlers, 2010, Caswell et al. 2008), we will envisage teaching variables such as: the age of educable children, their digital competences, the educational goals pursued, the specificity of study subject and its educational dominance, specificity of curricular contents circulated, teaching strategies used, characteristics of specific educational backgrounds, the complexity degree of educational activities.

3. Own contributions to the selection and use of OER

In order to offer operational support to the users of OER resources, we propose to answer the following general critical questions related to the selection and use of Web educational resources:

a) What are the intrinsic qualities that the web educational resources should have?

b) How could we support instrumentally the persons interested in the selection, study, and evaluation of web educational resources? In the attempt to answer these questions, by valorizing the specialized bibliography, we conclude that there are eight criteria involved in the selection and evaluation of web resources:

1. "Professional prestige of the author" criterion
2. "Accuracy" criterion
3. "Objectivity" criterion
4. "Updating" criterion

5. "Informative potential" criterion

6. "Audience" criterion

7. "Design" criterion

8. "Accessibility, Navigability and Costs" criterion.

Between the eight criteria for selection, study and evaluation of OER there are intercorrelations and interdependences, which can be highlighted under the form of a rosette formed by eight connected petals, as you can see in Figure no. 1:

Figure no. 1. *Rosette of selection and evaluation criteria of OER*

To continue our step of proposing strategies for selection and evaluation of OER, we propose an operational instrument for evaluation of intrinsic quality of these resources, data, and information of a web resource. This instrument represents a *checklist* which can guide the evaluation process. From a structural point of view, this checklist is formed by a series of intercorrelated dimensions, to which correspond operational indicators that quantify the OER features, easy to apply by the users (Table no. 1):

Table no. 1. *Checklist – instrument for evaluation of intrinsic quality of OER*

No.	*Dimensions of web resources analysis*	*Operational indicators for quantification of dimension*	*YES/NO*
1.	**"Professional prestige of the author" Dimension (PP)**	Is the name of author specified in the page?	
		Is the author qualified to write about that subject?	
		Does the Web document you read offer biographic information, including the position of the author, institutional affiliation and address?	
		Is there in the page contact information, at least a name and email address?	

2.		If it is a website, is there the page "About"?	
		Is there on the page a link which redirects you to the home page? If this link exists, when you access it, does it redirect you to the page of an institution or to the personal page of a user?	
		Check the domain of website/ page where the document is. To which type of institution does the domain of web address indicate: .edu, .gov, .org, .com etc. – that this address belongs? As basic rule, the domains .gov, .mil and .edu are reliable and offer accurate information, the chances that the information on these websites is reliable are very high, they are checked before they get to the wide audience.	
		If it is the official website of an institution or organization, is there on the page the logo or other data which show that this document is part of the official website of an academic or scientific institution? Does it make reference to copyright? Is it an organization recognized in the field which you want to study?	
		In what country does the geographic domain show that that page is? (.ro, .fr, .ca, .uk, .au, .it etc).	
	"Accuracy" Dimension (A₁)	If it is research, are the collected data included and is there explanation of research method(s) used for the collection and interpretation of data?	
		If facts and numbers are presented, are there quoted sources so that they can be checked in another article or in another printed book? If there are quotations or statements, can you check them by other means? Can you check the information provided?	
		If there are statistical data under the form of diagrams and/ or charts, are they clearly named and easy to read? Is the information in line with other pieces of information published on the same theme?	
		Is the methodology presented in document adequate to the research subject and does it allow that the study is repeated for checking purposes?	
		Is the document based on other sources which are listed in the bibliography (or does it include links to the specific documents)?	
		If a magazine was converted from the publication format on paper to the publication format online (web), is the web version the same as the printed edition, does it offer the same content?	
		Is there offered information about peer-review?	
	"Accuracy" Dimension (A₁)	Are there in document grammar mistakes, spelling or typing mistakes?	
		Are there links to other sources to check the statements from the document? To what sources does the link redirect?	
		If links to other sources are offered, are there links which do not work?	
		What institution (university, research institute, government, company etc.) validates this kind of information?	
3.	**"Objectivity" Dimension (O)**	Objectivity refers to the bias/ discrimination in relating the information. Thus, you have to pay a special attention to the objectives of the author and the purpose of the website, by taking into account:	

		For what purpose was the information published? Was it written for informative purpose, persuasion or promotion/ sale of a product?	
		The server on which the document is belongs to an organization which has a political agenda or a certain philosophical/ social/ educational/ religious doctrine?	
		If the web document is about a political personality (or a political party), does it make reference to the opinion of opposition, are there links?	
		Is the website the reflection of interests of an individual or an organization?	
		If the website accepts advertising, does it offer information about the advertising policy? Is advertising clearly differentiated from the content of information?	
4.	**"Updating" Dimension (A₂)**	If the updating of information is important, is the content updated?	
		Is the page dated and updated?	
		Is there an indication when the last update took place?	
		Are there other clues that the material is updated?	
		How often is it updated?	
		Are the older documents archived and can they be easily accessed?	
		If the information is published in several editions, does it say to which edition this document belongs?	
		Are there links which do not work or references to websites which were moved?	
5.	**"Informative potential" Dimension (PI)**	Does the document answer the needs/ purposes of your research?	
		Is the information too technical or too complicated?	
		Are there links to other relevant websites which provide further information or are they just a collection of other websites?	
		Does the author study/ cover the subject properly?	
		Is it a finished website or is it under construction?	
		Is it sufficiently detailed?	
		How different is the coverage of theme on the website from the coverage offered by other sources?	
		Does it stimulate further discussions regarding this subject?	
		Does it summarize the current status of a research subject?	
		Does it support a certain position towards the research theme?	
		Does the website have its own search engine?	
		Can the website be easily explored?	
6.	**"Audience" Dimension (A₃)**	Who is the target audience? Is the target audience to which it addresses clearly indicated? What is the foreseen age or the academic level? (beginners, experts, professionals etc.)	
7.	**"Design" Dimension (D)**	Are resources organized and presented logically? Is it easy to get to the necessary information?	
		Are the background and text color well-chosen so that you can easily read?	

8.	**"Accessibility, Navigability and Costs" Dimension (A₄)**	What is the quality of images? Is the graphic clear and representative? Is the graphic functional or decorative?	
		Is the graphic too complex, which leads to a slow loading?	
		Do these images help explore the resources or do they distract your attention from the content?	
		Does the website have a design which allows the disabled persons to surf, understand and interact with the web pages efficiently?	
		Is the website available consistently?	
		Does it have a fast response time?	
		Does it have an alternative based on the text?	
		Does it require you to be registered with username and password in order to have access to information?	
		Is the website open to anyone or is the access to some sections charged with a fee?	
		Do the non-registered users have access to a part of the website?	
		If the information is offered in another language, is it an accurate translation?	

By performing a deeper study of specialized bibliography, it seems that the most relevant criterion in the evaluation of OER is the **professional prestige of the author of web sources**. The professional prestige of the author is his/ her own personal construction, a continuous construction, based on active and interactive involvement in design, experimenting, and validation of web resources, in the acquisition of expertise in this field. Such a prestige is gradually acquired, by successive accumulations, which equip the author of web resources from cognitive, affective, attitudinal and social perspectives. Practically, the professional prestige of the author represents the value and consideration which the author holds in the social, professional, academic, school, cultural community etc., as a result of distinction, qualities and competencies declared. Thus, the author's prestige represents the vectorial component of the quality of web resources. Thus, in the determination of the quality of web resources (CR) in mathematical language, the professional prestige of the author (PP) occupies a privileged position, as can be seen in the mathematical equation below:

$$CR = PP + \frac{A_1 + A_2 + A_3 + A_4 + O + PI + D}{7}$$

Beyond the mathematical meanings, this mathematical equation suggests the complexity of the evaluation process of web resources. For an objective evaluation, we propose the staging of this process in two large evaluation sequences:

1) Primary evaluation

2) Complex evaluation.

In this article we are interested in the primary evaluation of OER, as component of primary evaluation of e-resources, along with the primary evaluation of web sources and the primary evaluation of e-resources protected by copyright – Figure no. 2, in which we highlighted the privileged status of the author's prestige in the evaluation process:
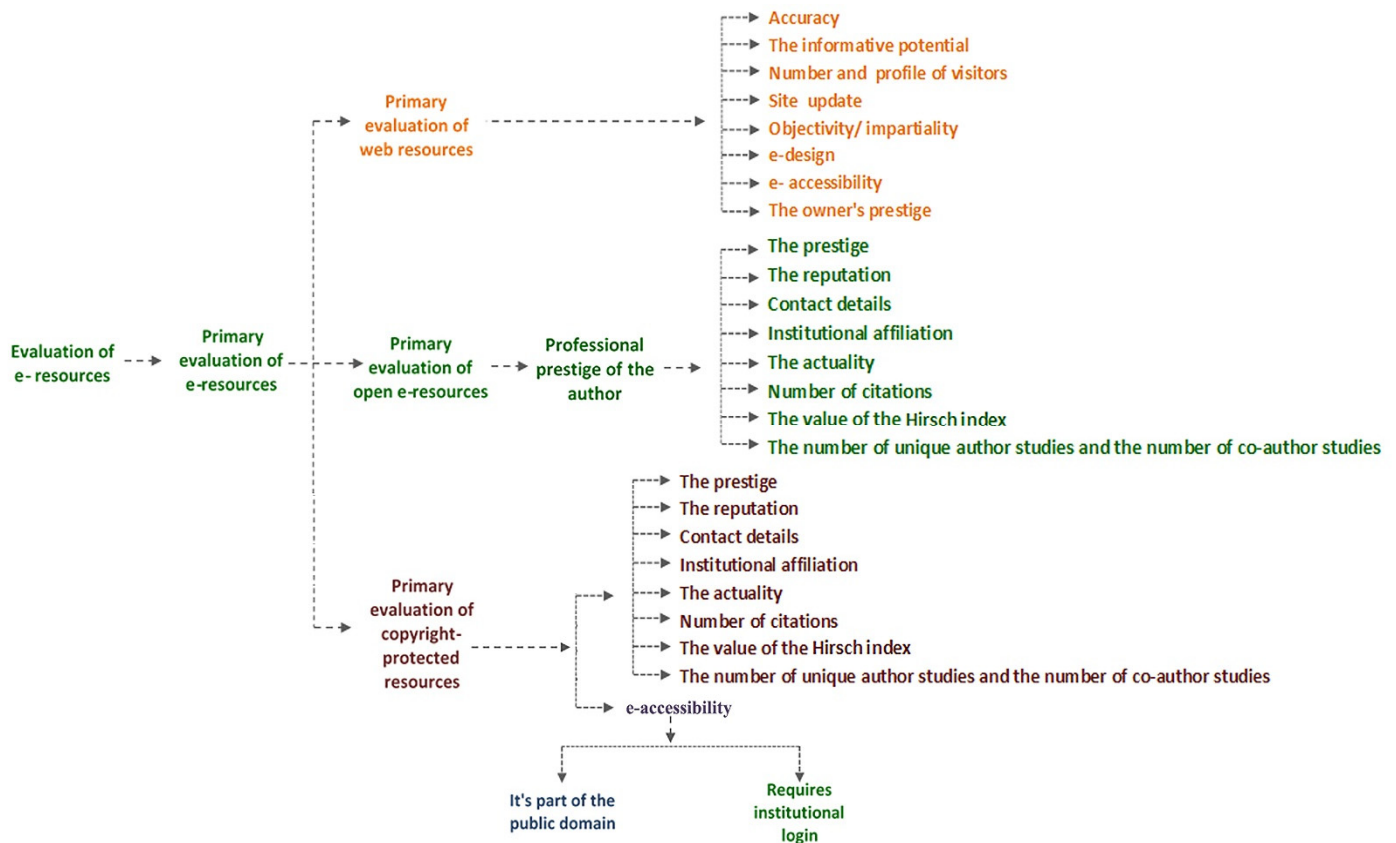
Figure no. 2. *Status of the author's prestige in the evaluation process*

4. Conclusions

Considering the multitude and diversity of web resources, and their forms of presentation, we ask the following critical questions: "What are the intrinsic qualities that the web educational resources should have?", "How could we support instrumentally the practitioners in the selection of web educational resources?". In the attempt to answer these two questions, we offered in this article a checklist, which can be valorized as an operational tool for evaluation of the intrinsic quality of web educational resources. We also elaborated a mathematical expression for the quality of web educational resources, an expression which valorizes the dimension "Professional Prestige of the author of web educational resources", a dimension which, in our vision, is central and referential.

Authors note:

Ciprian Baciu is Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, Babeș-Bolyai University, Ph.D. in Education Sciences. His research is in the field of ICT, more precisely focused on e-teaching and e-learning.

Mușata Bocoș is University Professor and Ph.D. Coordinator at the Faculty of Psychology and Sciences of Education (Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania). She has obtained a Ph.D. in Educational Sciences in 1997 at Babeș-Bolyai University. Her research interests are reflected in a series of studies and articles published in important national and international journals. Her teaching activity covers several domains such as the theory and methodology of curriculum, general didactics, and educational research.

Daniel Andronache, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Educational Sciences, Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania. He is graduate in Pedagogy (since 2008), master's degree in School Counseling (since 2010) and Ph.D. in educational sciences (since 2013). He made a research internship at the University of Vienna and in 2014 he received a Research Fellowship in educational sciences at Babeș-

Bolyai University. Daniel Andronache' main fields of interest include: curriculum design, competence-based curriculum, systemic pedagogy, and teacher training.

Victor Bocoș is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Environmental Science and Engineering, Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania. He holds a Ph.D. in Chemistry at Babeș-Bolyai University, since 2000. His principal research interests are related to trace detection of chemicals using advanced analytical techniques based on atmospheric pressure ionization of chemicals, such as ion mobility spectrometry. Additional research interest – in neuroscience and education science. Teaching activity is focused onto inter-disciplinary fields, such as trace detection of chemicals and the application of advanced detection technologies for population protection.

References

Bocoș, M-D. (2017). *Didactica disciplinelor pedagogice. Un cadru constructivist*, ediția a IV-a revizuită. Pitești: Editura Paralela 45.

Caswell, T., Henson, S., Jenson, M., & Wiley, D. (2008). Open Educational Resources: Enabling Universal Education. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*, 9/1.

Conole, G.C., Ehlers, U.D. (2010). Open Educational Practices: Unleashing the power of OER. Paper presented to UNESCO Workshop on OER in Windhoek, Namibia.

DEX (2009). *Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române*, ediția a II-a, revăzută și adăugită. București: Editura Univers Enciclopedic, Academia Română.

Eady, M.J. & Lockyer, L. (2013). Learning to Teach in the Primary School. *Tools for learning: technology and teaching strategies*. Queensland University of Technology, Australia.

Hylén, J. (2006). *Open Educational Resources: Opportunities and Challenges*. OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation. Paris, France.

Negruț, V., Arsith, M. (2013). *Proiectarea și implementarea curriculumului centrat pe competențe*, Călinești: Editura Delta Cart Educațional.

Strategic Framework "Education and training 2020" (ET 2020). http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework_en.

Wiley, D. (2007). *On the Sustainability of Open Educational Resource Initiatives in Higher Education*. Paris: OECD, Centre for Educational Research and Innovation.

UNESCO (2005). *Towards knowledge societies*, United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Report. Paris, France: UNESCO Publishing.

UNESCO (2009). *Open educational resources: conversations in cyberspace*. D'Antoni, S. & Savage, C., (Eds). Paris: UNESCO.

Internet resources

http://guides.library.cornell.edu/c.php?g=32334&p=203767

http://libguides.southmountaincc.edu/CRAPtest

http://mitiq.mit.edu/iciq/documents/iq%20conference%202004/papers/websitequalityassessmentcriteria.pdf

http://www.ala.org/rusa/sections/history/resources/primarysources/evaluating

http://www.pages.drexel.edu/~dea22/print.html

https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/library/evaluating/websites

https://guides.library.jhu.edu/evaluate/internet-resources

https://libguides.asu.edu/c.php?g=264095&p=1763442

https://libguides.colostate.edu/howtodo/evaluatewebpage

https://libguides.libraries.wsu.edu/c.php?g=294158&p=1959604

https://libguides.uta.edu/researchprocess/sources

https://library.elmhurst.edu/c.php?g=294877&p=1964895

https://library.uaf.edu/ls101-evaluation

https://libraryguides.lanecc.edu/c.php?g=391374&p=2658455

https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/11912873_38

https://www.library.georgetown.edu/tutorials/research-guides/evaluating-internet-content

https://www.library.kent.edu/criteria-evaluating-web-resources

https://researcheracademy.elsevier.com/publication-process/open-science/publishing-open-access

https://researcheracademy.elsevier.com/publication-process/open-science/open-science

https://www.gartner.com/newsroom/id/3811367

https://www2.kenyon.edu/Depts/Religion/Fac/Adler/EvaluatingWebsites1.htm

http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/access-to-knowledge/open-educational-resources/what-are-open-educational-resources-oers/

Perception of primary school teachers about the specifics and the role of communication skills

Delia Muste

Perception of primary school teachers about the specifics and the role of communication skills

Delia Muste [a*]

[a] Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Babeş-Bolyai University, 7 Sindicatelor Street, 400015, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Corresponding author: delia.muste@ubbcluj.ro

Abstract	
Keywords: communication; learning process, teacher's perception, communication skills, interpersonal process	Communication between people or groups is one of the most complex human processes. It is so important and useful to human existence that without its understanding we cannot have access to the understanding of the individual and the social structures. From a psychological perspective, communication is a dynamic and complex phenomenon, which involves the simultaneous development of several psychological processes and functions, used for the interaction, through the exchange of messages between two subjects. It can be, at the same time, a human need or a source of conflict and dissatisfaction in interpersonal relationships. Ability to speak is characterized by: clear and concise expression, well-chosen words and expressions, direct expression, logic and no exaggeration; all matched with the ideas presented. Communication contributes to the coherence and logic of group and team formation processes, the exteriorization of emotions, perceptions and expectations, so that we can, on the one hand, achieve our personal goals and, on the other hand, live together harmoniously at the social level. The ability to communicate is a very broad concept, often studied and often overlaid on interpersonal skills. Researches in the field highlight various abilities, so the purpose of the research was to investigate aspects specific to educational communication, which are supporting factors or barriers in the teacher-student relationship. The main objective was to investigate the perception of primary school teachers about the current level of development of their own communication skills required by didactic work through in-depth interviews.

Zusammenfasung	
Schlüsselworte: *Kommunikation; Lernprozess, Wahrnehmung des Lehrers, Kommunikationsfähigkeit, zwischenmenschlicher Prozess*	Die Kommunikation zwischen Menschen oder Gruppen ist einer der komplexesten menschlichen Prozesse. Es ist für die menschliche Existenz so wichtig und nützlich, dass wir ohne ihr Verständnis keinen Zugang zum Verständnis der individuellen und sozialen Strukturen haben können. Aus psychologischer Sicht ist Kommunikation ein dynamisches und komplexes Phänomen, das die gleichzeitige Entwicklung mehrerer psychologischer Prozesse und Funktionen, die für die Interaktion verwendet werden, durch den Austausch von Botschaften zwischen zwei Subjekten beinhaltet. Es kann gleichzeitig ein menschliches Bedürfnis oder eine Quelle von Konflikten und Unzufriedenheit in zwischenmenschlichen Beziehungen sein. Die Fähigkeit zu sprechen ist gekennzeichnet durch: einen klaren und prägnanten Ausdruck, gut gewählte Wörter und Ausdrücke, direkten Ausdruck, Logik und keine Übertreibung; alles abgestimmt auf die vorgestellten Ideen. Kommunikation trägt zur Kohärenz und Logik von Gruppen- und Teambildungsprozessen, zur Äußerung von Emotionen, Wahrnehmungen und Erwartungen bei, so dass wir einerseits unsere persönlichen Ziele erreichen und andererseits im sozialen Zusammenleben harmonisch zusammenleben können Ebene. Die Fähigkeit zu kommunizieren ist ein sehr breites Konzept, das häufig untersucht und häufig mit zwischenmenschlichen Fähigkeiten überlagert wird. Forschungen auf diesem Gebiet zeigen verschiedene Fähigkeiten auf. Ziel der Forschung war es daher, spezifische Aspekte der Bildungskommunikation zu untersuchen, die unterstützende Faktoren oder Hindernisse in der Lehrer-Schüler-Beziehung sind. Das Hauptziel bestand darin, die Wahrnehmung von Grundschullehrern bezüglich des aktuellen Entwicklungsstandes ihrer eigenen Kommunikationsfähigkeiten, die für die didaktische Arbeit erforderlich sind, durch eingehende Interviews zu untersuchen.

1. Introduction

Communication that takes place in an educational context can be defined as a form of instrumental communication, directly involved in supporting a systematic learning process (Ciobanu, 2003).

This is explained by the fact that human communication has the intention of influencing - qualitatively and

quantitatively - man's existence and producing behavioural changes, being an active process of identifying, establishing and maintaining social contacts. It is present in all areas of social life, including school, where it manifests itself as a particular and personalized form of teaching. When we communicate, it is very important to be able to build a common bridge with our partners. It is built up step by step, trying to understand others, put them in their place, and anticipate how they relate to what surrounds them, including how they relate to our person.

The power of the words is very large, they can have a major impact on those who communicate, can generate strong feelings, or they can be simple statements of objective facts. The personality of verbal communication is provided by the speaker depending on how he decides to choose his words and to relate his message.

Didactic communication can be considered a specific form of teacher-student communication. It has been studied mostly from a pedagogical point of view, as the main theoretical model is the schema of communication between two or more persons and the transmission of information with educational specifics. In classical communication, communication is the process of transmitting an informational message between a transmitter and a receiver (student or teacher) through a specific channel or communication code (verbal, nonverbal, para verbal). The process is continuous and allows for feedback that has a regulatory and formative role.

2. Theoretical foundation

Scientific literature (Shaunessy, McHatton 2009, Bruschke, 1991) mentions various research that examines in-depth the teachers' communication abilities, their ability to transmit clear messages, to provide feedback, to listen actively. Yuksel-Sahin (2008) highlights empathy, active listening, feedback as attributes of effective communication in an educational context, by increasing confidence and the level of school motivation (Muste, 2012).

Also, Foss and Keinsasser (1996) emphasizes the positive communication with the student, the reformulation of what he said, the manifestation of his interest in his concerns, the behavioural modelling and the doubled strategies of non-verbal language appropriate to the situation.

In our appreciation one of the most complete synthesis is that of Burleson (2003). According to them, in the

educational context, student-teacher communication relates to the teacher's communication skills, the appreciation of the level of interest towards the pupils and the development of student independence and responsibility. This highlights the link between the communication skills of the teacher and his/ her efficiency, indicating that these skills play a role as important for the education as the teacher's scientific training and the teaching methods used (Farr, 2010).

3. Research methodology

The ability to communicate is a very broad concept, often studied and often overlaid on interpersonal skills.

Researches in the field highlight various abilities, so the purpose of the research was to investigate aspects specific to educational communication, which are supporting factors or barriers in the teacher-student relationship. The main objective was to investigate the perception of primary school teachers about the current level of development of their own communication skills necessary for the didactic activity, through in-depth interviews.

The target group was made up of 14 primary school teachers (exclusively teachers for primary education, with a professional experience of more than 10 years, all with the highest teaching degree) because in primary education, the level of communication is considered one of the main factors influencing teaching and children academic performance.

The advantage of conducting an interview, which is a continuous dialogue, is that the interviewer and the interviewee can deviate from the initial questions and the interviewee can express their opinion without constraints. A direct interview also allows the interviewer to also perceive non-verbal impressions, including mimic, voice and tone, to better understand the reasons. The disadvantage of an interview is that the interviewer will not always receive the answers he expects. Moreover, the interviewee will sometimes try to thank the interviewer

The elaboration of the interview guide started from the study of the pedagogical scientific literature and the identification of the abilities facilitating the teacher-student communication. The construction of the questions started from the establishment of the communication skills investigated and the development of behavioural descriptors for each skill or attitude towards communication. Thus, the themes approached during the interviews were:

• General perception on the role of communication

• Teachers' self-perception of communication skills

• Empathy role in communication

• The value of the explanations offered

• Active listening skills

• Feedback offered

• Acting skills

According with the above-mentioned discussion directions, we conducted both group and individual interviews when the context allowed. We considered it useful to structure the questions in line with specific guidelines in order to support the interviewed teachers and then to outline some directions.

4. Results and discussions

Following the interviews, several recurring ideas have been structured, in line with the directions of our research. Thus, in each category, the discussions led to responses that were concentrated in some guiding ideas, according to the frequency of their occurrence.

- *General perception on the role of communication*

o an effective communication in educational context leads to increased satisfaction with the student-teacher relationship, a sense of trust and the level of school motivation;

o emphasis on positive communication with the pupil, on the importance of paraphrasing the student's words, showing interest in his / her preoccupations, offering a behavioural model;

o the use of various teaching methods and mainly classroom control, non-verbal language duplication strategies appropriate to the situation is necessary;

o the quality of communication leads to the increase of the didactic performances and to the developing process of the pupils as persons open to their communication;

o flexibility and creativity in dealing with unexpected elements that may appear during the lesson.

- *Teachers' self-perception of communication skills*

o communication skills improve during the acquisition of didactic experience, in relation to students, after solving conflicts;

o an image that you create through communication is very important and this aspect should not be missed;

o communication skills are acquired through exercise, training and self-training.

- *Empathy role in communication*

o empathic communication skills are those that make the difference between an effective and inefficient teacher so that students benefit more from interacting with high-skill teachers;

o empathy is the ability to transpose into the subjective world of the communication partner in order to see the situation with his eyes; through empathy, we have the opportunity to better understand the dialogue partner and his affective experiences, anticipate his behaviour and act accordingly;

o a "teacher-student approach" refers to the perception of empathy by the teacher doubled by a high degree of promptness of the teacher's reactions to student behaviour.

- *The value of the explanations offered*

o the role of communication is also to teach students to look for the information or formulate the interrogations appropriate to an effective learning;

o a teacher who has developed communication skills and who knows how to explain according to the pupils' needs is the one that makes them happy to attend classes, listen to them, understand them.

- *Active listening skills*

o a process which involves keeping the attention, understanding the message, understanding the interlocutor through empathy, asking open questions in order to encourage the speaker to continue;

o student-teacher communication is facilitated if students perceive the didactic framework as being close to them, and this feeling can be achieved through the process of listening to students by the professor and vice versa;

o listening is the fundamental feature of effective communication. Knowing when to shut up can sometimes bring you more than you imagined;

o the ability to listen effectively and to understand clearly the message is the key in building relationships and getting professional and personal success;

o it is important to focus our attention on the speaker; the more empathic we focus on and the more the partner and the message, the more we can understand the content and it will be easier for us to communicate.

- *Feed-back offered*

o the need to develop communication discipline skills;

o the significance of the correctness and consistency of the feed-back offered is emphasized;

o this feedback must be integrated in a predefined but flexible plan at the same time;

o from the perspective of teachers, the most important factor that maintains the pleasure of teaching is feedback, especially the one directly provided by students.

- *Acting skills*

o being a good storyteller is an effective teacher's attribute;

o teachers emphasize the dramatic dimension of the educational act;

o beyond the contents of the communication, the emotions that the educator manages to convey to children through non-verbal means of communication, the way they play their roles are very important;

o it also emphasizes the importance of teachers finding creative methods of interacting with children to facilitate the educational process;

o humour is a significant part of the teaching activity.

5. Conclusions

The first step in developing communication skills is awareness. Be aware of which of these communication abilities you lack and need to study, develop them to better master them.

The assumption from which the analysis is based and which is the basis for most of the respondents' answers is that an efficient communication process takes place in a favourable communication environment and is intended to have a positive impact on both actors, involves a consistent message exchange, roughly as coded and decoded by both partners and power ratios understood equally between the transmitter and the receiver.

The results of the study will be used to define and construct specifics of the training program.

Authors note:

Delia Muste, Ph.D. is Senior Lecturer at the Educational Sciences Department, Faculty of Psychology and Sciences of Education, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania. His teaching and research activity cover several domains (including interdisciplinary ones), such as the educational communication, educational alternatives, civic education, time management applied in education and teacher training pedagogical discipline. She is doctor in Science of Education from 2011 at the Babes-Bolyai University.

References

Bruschke, J., Gartner, C. (1991). Teaching as communicating: Advice for the higher education classroom. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 19, 3, 197-216.

Burleson, B. R. (2003). Emotional support skills. In J.O. Greene & B.R. Burleson (Eds.), *Handbook of communication and social interaction skills*, pp. 551-594. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Ciobanu, O. (2003). *Comunicare didactică*. Bucureşti: Editura ASE.

Farr, S. (2010). *Teaching as leadership*. New York: Wiley.

Foss, D.H., & Kleinsasser, R. (1996). Preservice elementary teachers' views of pedagogical and mathematical content knowledge. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 12*(4), 429-442. https://doi.org/10.1016/0742-051X(95)00049-P.

Muste, D. (2012). *Stimularea motivaţiei la elevi prin intermediul unui program educaţional specific*, Cluj-Napoca: Editura Presa Universitară Clujeană.

Yuksel-Sahin, F. (2008). Communication Skill Levels in Turkish Prospective Teachers. *Social Behavior and Personality, 36*(9).

Shaunessy, E., & and McHatton, P.A. (2009). Urban students' perceptions of teachers: Views of students in general, special, and honours education. *The Urban Review*, 41, 486-503. doi:10.1007/s11256-008-0112-z.

The developement of personal skills by collaborative learning activities

Constantina Catalano

The developement of personal skills by collaborative learning activities

Constantina Catalano [a*]

[a] Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Babeş-Bolyai University, 7 Sindicatelor Street, 400015, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Corresponding author: *constantina.catalano@ubbcluj.ro*

Abstract	
Keywords: soft skills, collaborative learning, teamwork abilites	The aim of our study is to highlight the potential of using the blended-learning, flipped classroom, learning strategies in developing the students' competences in the subject of Visual Arts and Practical Abilities within the framework of European school partnerships. The practical and process-oriented research will investigate and describe the gains of flipped classroom strategy in improving the artistic-plastic performances of young students aged 7-9 years, participants in the eTwinning Programme. By means of comparative analyses, we will bring out the effects of applying this strategy to students from Romania, Poland, Turkey and the Republic of Moldavia with regard to forming and developing their visual art competences. We framed these specific competences present in the 4 European countries'curriculum into the plastic theme category, with the subcategories of observing the artistic movement, selected technique, type of chosen tools and materials, lines diversity and expressivity, diversity and complexity of shapes, chromatic harmony, colour surface, ornamentation of composition.

Zusammenfasung	
Schlüsselworte: Soft-Skills, Kollaboratives Lernen, Teamwork Fähigkeiten	Die Zusagen für die Zusammenarbeit sind in akademischen Lerngemeinschaften sehr üblich. Daher betonen wir in diesem Artikel die Tatsache, dass das Vorhandensein der Soft Skills die Qualität der den Schülern erteilten Leistungen verbessert. Persönliche und soziale Kompetenzen wie "Soft Skills" beziehen sich auf persönliche Attribute, die die Interaktion mit den einzelnen Personen, die Arbeitsleistung und die Karrierechancen verbessern. Persönliche Fähigkeiten werden oft mit Persönlichkeitsmerkmalen wie Optimismus, Verantwortung, Integrität, Humor, Unterscheidungsvermögen, Weisheit, Klugheit, gesundem Menschenverstand usw. in Verbindung gebracht. Einige persönliche Attribute können durch Übung und Praxis verbessert werden: gutes Benehmen Fuhrungund Teamgeist, Verhandeln oder Geselligkeit. Die Generierung und Aufrechterhaltung kollaborativer Aufgaben im akademischen Umfeld umfasst eine Vielzahl von Anliegen und spezifischen Ansätzen, die auf verschiedene Weise behandelt werden können.

1. Introduction

Current policies of education, such as the constructivist model of training or interactive pedagogy, increasingly raise the concern of electing active strategies for including collaborative learning in current school, practice at all levels of education, from pre-school to university.

Education in Romania still kept, sometimes, excessive intransigence specific for competitive environments. It is not claimed that being competitive, as a personality attribute, would have a negative connotation, but it is considered that school environments that continuously rely on student or student competition will fail to form or consolidate many of the specific features or teamwork, that is so necessary for any field of work.

Personal skills and social skills such as "soft skills" have been increasingly highlighted in modeling skills in any field of activity. In the first instance, the term "soft" is opposed to "hard", by "hard skills" understanding the technical skills, namely computer operation, calculus, language knowledge etc.

The soft skills phrase has benefited from several other substitutes, including: "life, social and personal skills", "transferable skills", "life skills" etc. Of these, the closest to the profound meaning of what these skills imply would be their quality to be socially and personally useful, therefore transferable.

We define personal and social skills as intra and interpersonal (socio-emotional) characteristics, essential for personal development, social participation and success in the field of activity. The most often mentioned are: communication skills, ability to work in team or adaptability. Regarding the special attributes that any person should have in general, in addition to the formal

competences indicated, at the level of professional, technical, ethical, etc., we should identify them in the area of transferable competences and personal and social characteristics, those which are indeed of great importance in the selection of future teachers. This set of features is, in fact, the superior ability to apply existing skills under the conditions of a possible change and can be grouped into the following categories: analytical, communication, interpersonal, organizational, problem-solving etc.

Social skills such as "soft skills" refer to personal attributes that enhance individual interactions, workplace performance, and career prospects. Unlike technical abilities, which relate to the set of specific capacities of a particular field of work (for example, the professional technical skills of a surgeon, architect or dentist) that a person has, social skills and personal data are transferable and have very wide applicability.

Personal skills are often associated with personality traits such as: optimism, responsibility, integrity, sense of humor, discernment, wisdom, prudence, good sense, etc., but also with other personal attributes that can be improved through exercise and practice: empathy, team spirit, leadership, communication, assertiveness, good manners, negotiation, sociability or the ability to learn.

In the academic environment, especially in the faculties that form future teachers, the proposal to work and learn collaboratively should become a frequent practice. Teamwork and collaborative learning become imperative for the training of the teaching staff at present.

2. Collaborative learning approaches and implications of personal skills in the process

Collaborative learning is an educational approach to teaching and learning that involves groups of students working together to solve a problem, complete a task, or create a product (Gerlach, 1994, apud McLaren, 2014). Collaborative learning is defined generally as the form of group learning in which there are significant interactions between students.

Collaboration also supports stimulating students and enhancing their performance, as it offers them the opportunity to make their own contribution when it comes to the task being done. Exploiting the contributions of each member of the group may lead to the emergence of ideas that group members did not have before, in other words, one group comes up with an idea and departs from the

collective discussion with several, taken from other members of the group.

Collaborative learning can also be a didactic strategy that aims to raise cognitive and social interdependence among participants by taking into account inter-individual differences and investing educational agents with an active role. This articulates the individual approaches of each student with those of the membership group. Knowing each other better, students have no restraint in asserting their own knowledge. They learn to listen to the views of those in the group, even if they are different from their own, to support their knowledge by arguing them, engaging in critical and creative thinking, and openly engaging in dialogue.

The essential components of a collaborative learning activity in groups of students are (Nicu & Conţiu, 2010, p. 42):

1. Grouping of students
2. Face-to-face interaction
3. Positive interdependence
4. Individual responsibility
5. Training and development of cognitive and cooperative skills
6. The role of the teacher
7. Social interactions

1. *Grouping the students* usually remains the task of the teacher or coordinator of the collaborative learning activity. There are two central milestones in the grouping of learners: roles and tasks. Also, the major coordinates in creating cooperative learning situations are: motivation, communication and mutual acceptance.

2. *Face-to-face interaction* requires effective contact with group colleagues. Students or students work together, promoting everyone's successes, sharing resources, helping, supporting and encouraging each other's efforts.

In this process of face-to-face interaction, cognitive processes and elements of interpersonal dynamics arise, which activate when those involved support each other in the learning process. This translates into practices such as: oral explanation of how to solve a problem, teaching knowledge in pairs, providing feed-back, recapping knowledge and making connections between old and new knowledge.

3. *Positive interdependence* occurs when group members work together to achieve the intended goal by participating equally and actively in the task, sharing their knowledge, experiences and resources.

Knowing that the task assigned to them cannot be done individually, they are aware that they need the others to succeed. The solid structure of positive interdependence leads learners to realize that the success of the group depends on the effort made by all members to carry out the task, each contributing their own contribution, making a joint effort to fulfill its role and responsibilities.

4. *Individual responsibility* (roles and tasks) refers to the fact that each member of the group assumes responsibility for the task to be solved by helping the other members of the group to learn. Each group is responsible for the achievement of the set goal and each member is responsible for his or her personal contribution to achieving the goal of each individual's acquisition.

5. *Training and development of cognitive and cooperative skills* is necessary for cooperative situations. Groups cannot exist and cannot function unless students have and do not use certain cognitive and social skills that are essential to the functioning and achievement of the goals of cooperation.

6. *The role of the teacher* is described on two main coordinates (Clarke, 1992, apud Nicu & Conțiu, 2010): observation of working groups and support. As role assigned to the teacher, it is recommended: the role of planning, the role of observation, the role of intervention and the role of reflection (Howden, 1997, apud Nicu & Conțiu, 2010).

7. *Social interactions* capture the efficiency of learning in a collaborative context, demonstrated by the innumerable results of the research that goes in this direction, especially those related to the constructivist approaches of cooperative learning.

Therefore, it is visible that real contribution in collaborative tasks given to students involves their active participation in them, and by interacting with colleagues, these personal and social skills will develop.

The soft skills needed for collaboration: respect for others, acceptance of differences, political expression of disagreement, description of feelings, manifestation of preoccupation with others, etc. Among the cognitive abilities proposed by him are the following: evaluation of ideas, analysis, justification of opinions, comparison and opposition, the question of deepening the meaning, proposing solutions for change, the integration of ideas, etc. (Abrami, Poulsen & Chambers, 2004).

Social skills can also be shared in this way: tasks related to assignment (questioning, requesting clarification, checking the understanding, tracking of notes etc.) and skills related to working realities (encouraging, recognizing contributions, affective participation, maintaining calm etc.).

All of these group skills are learned, they are not instinctive, so the teacher's task is to ensure that they assign precise roles to each student or student within the team to perform the proposed collaboration or cooperation.

The essential features that we will continue to address are represented in the area of collaboration and cooperation, areas involving a wide range of specific abilities, such as: line waiting, information communication, helping, reformulating, summarizing ideas out loud, criticizing and also team spirit, empathy, adaptability, or willingness to engage in collective tasks.

Interactivity, interpersonal, problem-solving, and communication skills are needed for a group engaged in a common task that has complementary roles, pursues the same goal, accomplish a task that has to be performed far beyond what he would do it individually.

We enumerate the important features that we identify at the personal level, the students who are to be involved in collaborative tasks, to maintain a working group (Crebert et al., 2011):

- Ability to communicate effectively orally with others;

- Ability to communicate effectively in writing with others;

- Ability to communicate effectively with ICT, multimedia etc. with others;

- Ability to interact and collaborate with others effectively, including in teams, at work or in various cultural or linguistic contexts.

Moreover, we believe it deserves to be reminded of another feature that helps, through its presence in the construction of a study group or an efficient working team, namely *flexibility*. This quality refers to the adaptability to

the group itself, to its members, to the profile of the work tasks or to their volume, to the changes that may occur in its dynamics etc.
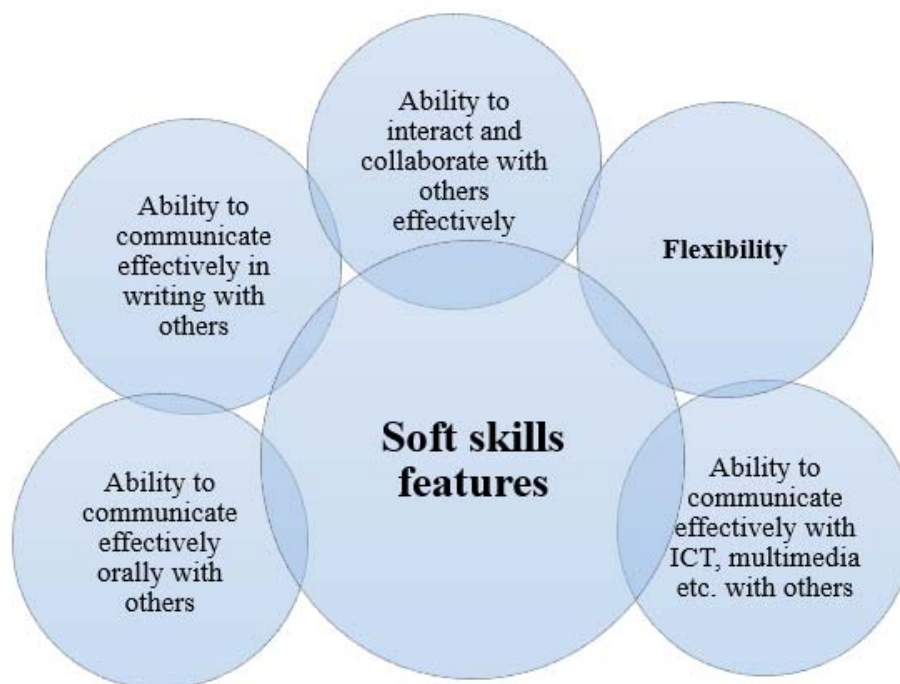

Figure no. 1. *The dynamic of the soft skills features*

The above features may be operationalized at the level of the qualitative analysis of the performance and presence of the students in a work team or in a study group.

Also, we want to emphasize some argumentative circumstances that support collaborative learning activities to strengthen transversal transfer skills over the long term (Laister & Kober, 2002):

A. *Daily practice:* In day-to-day collaboration, collaboration typically occurs in projects involving student groups or students who engage in cooperative activities to solve a problem or write research papers with colleagues. Contextual contexts in which collaborative learning must be encouraged or guided, but sometimes also as a result in everyday activities are identified. (Dillenbourg, 1999).

B. *Organizational Context*: Collaboration is a common practice for achieving objectives by bringing together experts, multidisciplinary teams, etc. The challenge in these formulas is to motivate each member to contribute with his expertise in order to achieve a commitment to learning and working together. Once the person is accustomed to engaging in collaborative

activities in the student or student life environment, in the long run, as an employee, he / she will have the ability to make faster decisions within the organization. We can therefore say that training in such tasks prepares the ground for later, at work, for working with colleagues, managers etc.

C. *Empirical Research:* Research shows that collaborative learning compared to individual or competitive learning brings students to a higher level of achievement, i. e their problem-solving skills (acquired in the collaborative register), gives them cognitive advantages, which (Tozer, 1995, Webb, 1984, Bargh & Schul, 1980 apud. Laister & Kober 2002) have positive influences in consolidating the personality traits, beneficial to the future learning, whether autonomous or cooperative, and engaging in related work tasks.

As a consequence of all these theoretical researches that we studied, in order to encourage collaborative activities and the soft skills development, for a few years now, the themes we propose for the student seminars are designed to be prepared in working groups. The involvement of students in solving the projects and works given for the seminars was impressive. If in the first year of study we had to propose collaborative learning

activities, in the 2nd year of study, those who were already familiar with our work style, this idea came from the students themselves, and they propose to work in the groups. They were very enthusiastic about this approach and made out projects and papers of great value, didactically and scientifically.

3. Conclusions

As a conclusion of all aspects presented, we argue that the foundation of a modern, high quality education cannot be produced in the absence of collaboration at all levels, either at the micro group level or at macro level education, or globally, of everything that means education in the world.

Therefore, university teachers should systematically train students to develop and strengthen transferable personal and social skills such as soft skills by proposing specific activities and tasks that aim at collaborative learning.

Soft skills can be developed by interacting with others. These must always be practiced being redeemed, so an easy opportunity to help students for improving their skills is to generate cooperative learning tasks for seminar activities. This is why we assume the fact that in any learning community it is mandatory to challenge the students for working together to accomplish their tasks: papers, projects etc.

It is said that technical skills will make you win an interview for employment and getting a job, but then personal skills are required to keep it.

Authors note:

Constantina Catalano is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Babeş-Bolyai University, Ph.D. in Educational Sciences. Her research is in the field of academic learning, focused on collaborative learning strategies, CSCL, alternative education**.**

References

Abrami, P. C., Poulsen, C., Chambers, B. (2004). Teacher motivation to implement an educational innovation: factors differentiating users and non-users of cooperative learning. *Educational Psychology*, 24:2, 201-216. http://doe.concordia.ca/cslp/cslp_cms/sites/all/themes/jframe/downloads/PDF/Abrami_EP04.pdf.

Clarke, J., Wideman R. et Eadie, S. (1992). *Apprenons ensemble: l'apprentissage coopérative en groupes restreints*. Montréal: Les Éditions de la Chenelière.

Crebert, G., Patrick, C.J., Cragnolini, V., Smith, C., Worsfold, K., & Webb, F. (2011). *Griffith Graduate Attributes Teamwork Skills Toolkit*. http://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/290870/Teamwork-skills.pdf.

Dillenbourg, P. (1999). What do you mean by "collaborative learning"? In P. Dillenbourg (Ed.), *Collaborative learning: Cognitive and computational approaches*, Amsterdam, NL: Pergamon, Elsevier Science.

Gerlach, J. M. (1994). Is this collaboration? In Bosworth, K. and Hamilton, S.J. (Eds.), *Collaborative learning: Underlying processes and effective techniques. New directions for teaching and learning*, No. 59.

Laister, J., Kober, S. (2002). *Social Aspect of Collaborative Learning in Virtual Environments*. http://www.networkedlearningconference.org.uk/past/nlc2002/proceedings/papers/19.htm.

McLaren, B. (2014). *What happens when we learn together*. https://www.cs.cmu.edu/~bmclaren/pubs/Wiley-ColaborativeLearningWhitePaper-2014.pdf.

Nicu, A., Conţiu, E.R. (2010). *Instrumente pentru învăţarea prin cooperare*, Aramis, Bucureşti.

Tozer, S.E., Violas, P.C., Senese, G.B. (1995). *School and Society. Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

The legislative framework concerning family involvement in children's education

Diana-Crina Marin, Mușata Bocoş

The legislative framework concerning family involvement in children's education

Diana-Crina Marin [a*], Mușata Bocoș [b]

[a] *Doctoral School "Educational, Reflection, Development", Babeș-Bolyai University, 7 Sindicatelor Street, 400029, Cluj-Napoca, Romania*
[b] *Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Babeș-Bolyai University, 7 Sindicatelor Street, 400015, Cluj-Napoca, Romania*

Corresponding author: *Diana.PANCU@ubbonline.ubbcluj*

Abstract	

Keywords:
school-family partnership, Romanian primary educational system, family involvement, legislative framework

In order to understand the factors that significantly influence the quality of the school and family partnership, we have consulted some of the most important national and international legislative documents concerning the families' attributions in the process of raising and educating the children. We have discovered that each of these documents promotes the achievement of children's rights and values such as solidarity, tolerance, equal opportunities between boys and girls, mutual respect, positive attitudes, free access to compulsory education, permanent support for the families. The main responsibility of the parents is to provide the best living and educational conditions and to ensure the health of children. Each parent should offer financial, affective, cognitive and social support for their children. The legislative framework of Romania is in accordance with the international legislation and recommendations. The superior interest of the child should guide the actions of all the educational actors. Parents have the obligation to act as real partners of educational institutions and should be actively involved in their children's education. Teachers and family members have the responsibility to join their forces in order to maintain a high-quality cooperation and a constant and bidirectional communication. The legislation of Romania had a positive evolution and encourages the parents' participation in the process of decision making and in school life.

Zusammenfasung	

Schlüsselworte:
Partnerschaft Schule-Familien, rumänische Grundschulbildung, Familienbeteiligung an der Kindererziehung, Rechtsrahmen

Um die Faktoren zu verstehen, die die Qualität der Partnerschaft zwischen Schule und Familie maßgeblich beeinflussen, haben wir einige der wichtigsten nationalen und internationalen gesetzlichen Bestimmungen über die Aufgaben von Familien in dem Prozess der Erziehung und Bildung von Kindern analysiert. Wir haben festgestellt, dass jede dieser Bestimmungen die Gewährung der Rechte von Kindern sowie Werte wie Verbundenheit, Toleranz, Chancengleichheit für Jungen und Mädchen, gegenseitigen Respekt, positive Einstellungen, freien Zugang zum Pflichtschulunterict und dauerhafte Unterstützung für Familien fördert. Die grundsätzliche Verantwortung der Eltern ist es, die besten Lebens- und Bildungsbedingungen zu bieten und für die Gesundheit der Kinder zu sorgen. Jeder Elternteil muss seinen Kindern finanzielle, affektive, kognitive und soziale Unterstützung bieten. Der rumänische Rechtsrahmen entspricht den internationalen Rechtsvorschriften und Empfehlungen. Das beste Interesse des Kindes sollte das Handeln aller Bildungsakteure leiten. Die Eltern sind verpflichtet, als echte Partner der Bildungseinrichtungen zu agieren und sollten aktiv in die Bildung ihrer Kinder einbezogen werden. Die Lehrer und die Familienmitglieder tragen die Verantwortung, ihre Kräfte zu bündeln, um eine qualitativ hochwertige Zusammenarbeit und eine ständige und bidirektionale Kommunikation aufrechtzuerhalten. Die rumänische Gesetzgebung hat sich positiv entwickelt und ermutigt die Eltern, am Entscheidungsprozess und am Schulleben teilzunehmen.

1. Introduction

The actual legislative framework contains provisions regarding the cooperative relationship that should be established between schools and families. Considering that the positive evolution of students during the entire period of their studies is necessary, it is important to understand all the factors that can influence their school results. The national legislative framework of Romania contains provisions regarding the way that families and school should cooperate. At the same time, understanding of the international provisions regarding school-family partnership is very important for each person who works with the children. The purpose of this study is to summarize the most important legislative provisions regarding the school-family partnership

2. Theoretical foundation

A constant and high-quality involvement in children's education at home and at school and an effective communication between schools and families influences in a positive manner the school evolution of the children (Fantuzzo, Gadsden, Sproul, McDermott, Hightower & Minney, 2013; Fantuzzo, McWayne, Perry, & Childs,

2004; Jeffries, 2012, Fisher, 2009). Recommendation no. 1501/ 2011, published by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, contains relevant information about the significant impact of school and families in children's development and education. On the one hand, the family is considered an educational institution which is responsible for raising and educating the children. On the other hand, the school provides formal learning contexts, relevant for the harmonious development of each child. The vision through only one of the institutions is considered responsible for the children's success at school is considered wrong and with negative effects on the quality of the school and family partnership.

According to Răduț-Taciu, Bocoș, Chiș (coord.) (2015), the main functions of the family are the following: the biological function, the educational function, the socio-emotional function, the economic function, and the legal function. Stăiculescu (2011) states that the school-family partnership is guided by the actual legislative framework. Joint efforts of school, family, and communities are necessary in order to offer to each student relevant learning opportunities, according to their educational interest and learning needs.

Romanian legislation regarding school-family partnership sets out obligations and rights of each educational part. Romania's Law of National Education (Law no. 1/ 2011) encourages the creation of genuine partnerships between school and family. Transparency of decisions and results, bidirectional communication, and support for parents are some of the directions of action suggested in order to increase parents' participation in school's life. The Romanian legislation on children's protection and education had a positive evolution

(Rădulescu, 2011). The educational system of Romania is facing real problems, despite the continuous efforts and reforms applied over the last years. In this context, we consider that research concerning the effective strategies to strengthen the school-family partnership should be continued.

3. Research methodology

Our investigation was oriented towards the following research question: "What are the most relevant legislative provisions that parents, and teachers should take into consideration in the education process of the children?" The answer to this question helps us to better understand the parents' and teachers' obligations in order to maintain an effective and strong cooperation between schools and families.

In the process of selection of the relevant legislative national and international documents we have used the following premises:

- legal provisions should be applicable to the primary educational level;

- documents should be part of the Romanian legislative framework or should be relevant international legal instruments as treaties, conventions, charts, declarations, and recommendations.

Table no. 1 contains a list of some of the most relevant international legislative documents regarding the school and family responsibilities concerning children's education. Some of these documents were included in the legislative framework of our country.

Table no. 1. *Important legislative documents and provisions regarding the responsibility of the school and the family in regard to children's care and education*

Document's name	Examples of important legislative provisions
Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) World Declaration on Education For All (1990) The Salamanca Statement (1994) European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights (1996) The Revised European Social Charter (1996) Recommendation 1286 adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (1996) Convention 182 on The Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999) Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union United Nations Millennium Declaration (2000)	✓ Free access to compulsory education and support throughout the period of studies; ✓ Parents' responsibility to take educational decisions in the interest of their children, including the ones regarding the type of education that shall be given to them; ✓ Parents' and educators' obligation to ensure the necessary factors for the full development of children; ✓ Obligations concerning the respect for the children's rights and their fundamental freedoms;

Recommendation 1501 adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (2001)
A world fit for children (Resolution adopted in 2002 by the General Assembly of the United Nations)
Convention on Contact concerning Children (2003)
Recommendation 19 adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (2006)
The Treaty of Lisbon (2007)
The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015)

✓ The responsibility of both parents regarding the care and education process of the children;

✓ Creating effective school-family-community partnerships in order to offer the best educational opportunities and learning contexts for each child;

✓ Ensure the factors for a good health and start in life for each child, financial support, protection and positive socio-emotional climate.

The main responsibilities of the teachers are included in their individual employment contract and are mentioned in their job descriptions. The content of the documents complies with the content of Romania's Law of National Education (Law no. 1/ 2011) and the Framework Regulation for the Organisation and Functioning of the Secondary School Units approved by Order no. 5079/ 31.08.2016 issued by the Minister of National Education. Table no. 2 includes a list of the most important responsibilities of the parents in the education and development process of children, based on the content of the national legislative framework.

Table no. 2. *Responsibilities and duties of parents concerning the development of children*

Name of document	Parent's responsibilities and duties
The Constitution of Romania (completed by the Law No. 429/ 2003)	✓ Respect and promote the realization of all children's rights;
The National Education Law (Law no. 1/ 2011) and Law no. 84/ 1995	✓ Provide best living conditions and financial support;
Law no. 272/2004 on the protection and promotion of the rights of the child	✓ Create conditions for a harmonious physical, intellectual, emotional and social development of the children;
The Civil Code of Romania (Law no. 287/ 2009)	✓ Ensure children's health and wellness;
Law no. 292/ 2011	✓ Offer access to education and professional training;
Law no. 61/ 1993	✓ Represent the interests of the child;
Law no. 286/ 2009	✓ Act as real partners of school institutions.
Framework Regulation for the Organisation and Functioning of the Secondary School Units approved by Order no. 5079/ 31.08.2016 issued by the Minister of National Education	
Student's statute, approved by Order no. 4742/ 10.08.2016 issued by the Minister of National Education	

4. Results

For the purpose of highlighting the modifications of the legislative framework in Romania, concerning the school-family partnership, we have consulted the Law no. 84/1995 and the Law no. 1/ 2011, as amended. The results of this diachronic study were included in Table no. 3. The actual Law of National Education in Romania encourages the parents' participation in children's education and in school life. Between the educational institutions and the families

should be signed a contract, which lists the rights and obligations of each of the educational agents (see the article 86 from the Law no. 1/ 2011).

Table no. 3. *Comparative analysis between the contents of actual and of the old version of the Law of National Education*

Common provisions	Distinctive contents
Parents or legal representatives of students have: - the obligation to ensure the school frequency during the compulsory education; - the right to be actively involved in the process of decision making concerning the education of their children.	The Law of National Education, Law no. 1/ 2011 has the following characteristics: - highlights the importance of the active involvement of parents in children's education (Article 3 (q)); - establishes the obligation of signing a contract between the school and the family, which includes the right and the duties of each of the educational partners; - highlights the importance of total transparency in the process of decision making and the communication of the results obtained.

In 2018 the Ministry of Education in Romania proposed for public debate the draft of the project of a national strategy concerning the parental education. In July, the Minister decided not to assume the content of this document. The draft of the strategy was resent to the initiators for modifications because of the negative feedback received. We consider that a national strategy in the domain of school-family partnership is welcomed if its content is accepted by all the social partners. The content of the educational activities should be in accordance with the parents' and future parents' interests and training needs. At present, formal institutions of education, medical centres, and social assistance centres are the main institutions which offer assistance and support for parents for improving their knowledge and abilities.

5. Discussions

During this study legislative documents have been consulted in regard to parents' and schools' responsibilities concerning the children's development. The legislation in Romania is in accordance with the values promoted by the international legislative framework. The actual legislative framework in Romania promotes the achievement of all children's rights, facilitate parents' participation in the educational process, and encourage the consolidation of the school-family partnership. Future studies should be focused on understanding the legislative framework concerning the children with special educational needs. At the same time, we should pay attention to the legislative context concerning children in special situations, like the ones in foster care or in adoption.

6. Conclusions

All legislative instruments that we have consulted establish the rights and responsibilities of parents concerning the care, protection and education of children. Some of the responsibilities of the parents were not directly presented but resulted from the content of the articles. Some of the documents or parts of them are no longer valid or actual but were analysed in order to better understand the evolution of the legal framework concerning the duties of parents and school representatives in children's development and education.

Authors note:

Diana-Crina Marin is currently a teacher at Liceul Teoretic "Pavel Dan" Câmpia Turzii ("Pavel Dan" Theoretical High School of Câmpia Turzii) and Doctoral Student at Babeș-Bolyai University. Her research areas are aimed at discovering innovative modalities to consolidate the school-family partnership, considering that the school and family should be real partners in children's education. She is also interested in finding the most efficient teaching practices that could be successfully used in the educational process.

Mușata Bocoș is University Professor and Ph.D. Coordinator at the Faculty of Psychology and Sciences of Education (Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania). She has obtained a Ph.D. in Educational Sciences in 1997 at Babeș-Bolyai University. Her research interests are reflected in a series of studies and articles published in important national and international journals. Her teaching activity covers several domains such as the theory and methodology of curriculum, general didactics, and educational research.

References

Fantuzzo, J., Gadsden, V., Li, F., Sproul, F., McDermott, P., Hightower, D., & Minney, A. (2013). Multiple dimensions of family engagement in early childhood education: Evidence for a short form of the Family Involvement Questionnaire. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 28*, 734-742.

Fantuzzo, J., McWayne, C., Perry, M. A., & Childs, S. (2004). Multiple Dimensions of Family Involvement and Their Relations to Behavioral and Learning Competencies for Urban, Low-Income Children. *School Psychology Review, 33*, 467-480.

Jeffries, K. (2012). Increasing parental involvement in early childhood education. (Doctoral Thesis). Retrieved from http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd/4340. University of South Florida.

Fisher, Y. (2009). Defining parental involvement: The Israeli case. *US-China Education Review, 6,* 33-45.

Răduț-Taciu, R., Bocoș, M.-D., Chiș, O. (coord.). (2015). *Tratat de management educațional pentru învățământul primar și preșcolar.* Pitești: Editura Paralela 45.

Stăiculescu, C. (2011). *Școala și comunitatea locală. Parteneriat pentru educație.* București: Editura ASE.

Rădulescu, S. (2011). Evoluția legislației în domeniul protecției și asistenței sociale a copilului în România. *Revista Română de Sociologie, 3-4*, 257-280.

Recommendation 1501 (2001). Retrieved from http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-DocDetails-EN.asp?FileID=16877&lang=EN.

Management and leadership – a needs analysis and a training programme for leading, guiding and assessing staff in Romanian schools

Ioan Ioja, Mușata Bocoş

Management and leadership – a needs analysis and a training programme for leading, guiding and assessing staff in Romanian schools

Ioan Ioja [a*], **Mușata Bocoș** [b]

[a] *Doctoral School "Educational, Reflection, Development", Babeş-Bolyai University, 7 Sindicatelor Street, 400029, Cluj-Napoca, Romania*
[b] *Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Babeş-Bolyai University, 7 Sindicatelor Street, 400015, Cluj-Napoca, Romania*

Corresponding author: ioan.ioja@gmail.com

| **Abstract** | The new concept of the flexible, creative schools aims at diminishing the distances, the discrepancies as well as the invisible membranes which separate not only people but also schools; of course, the target is not uniforming but improving the quality of the educational act as well as of the school performance in a more and more competitive free market economy. |

Keywords:
management, leadership, the need for training in leadership competence, guiding and assessment

By starting from these aims, in 2018 we initiated a study on the training needs analysis which was the basis for the proposition of a new programme to develop leadership, management and evaluation competences, on taking into consideration the possibility and the need of a training which approaches holistically and synergetically the two dimensions of management and leadership. Considering the answers given by the teachers, we saw they gave partially correct answers to the questions regarding time management, project management, the difference between manager and leader and the functions of management.

The results of the study support the need for designing a training programme for school directors aimin at developing their competences necessary to assure a high quality management act, the increase of the degree of management performance, the improvement of educational service quality, administering of the resources, developing leadership abilities, communication and teamwork.

Zusammenfasung

Schlüsselworte:
Management; Führung/Leadership; die Notwendigkeit einer Ausbildung; Entwicklung von Führungs, Beratung- und Kontrollfähigkeiten/ kompetenzen

In dem neuen Konzept der flexiblen und kreativen Schule möchtet man die Entfernungen, Diskrepanzen und unsichtbaren Membranen verringern, die nicht nur die Menschen, sondern auch die Schulen voneinander trennen; natürlich ist das Ziel nicht die Einheitlichkeit, sondern die Steigerung der Qualität von Bildungsakt und Schulleistung im Kontext einer freien und zunehmend wettbewerbsorientierten Marktwirtschaft.

Auf der Grundlage dieser Ziele haben wir im Jahr 2018 eine Studie zur Analyse des Trainingsbedarfs gestartet, was den Vorschlag eines Programms zur Entwicklung von Führungs-, Orientierungs- und Kontrollfähigkeiten begründete und die die Möglichkeit und den Bedarf an Schulungen berücksichtigt, die sich ganzheitlich und synergistisch an die beiden Dimensionen annähert: Management und Führung/Leadership. Aus den von den Lehrern gegebenen Antworten wurde festgestellt, dass sie teilweise richtigen Antworten auf die Fragen gaben, die die Bereiche des Zeitmanagements, des Projektmanagements, der Differenzierung zwischen Manager und Leiter und Management-Funktionen abdecken.

Die Ergebnisse der Studie unterstützen den Bedarf an Schulungen und implizit die Notwendigkeit, ein Schulungsprogramm für Schulleiter zu konzipieren, das darauf abzielt, die Fähigkeiten zu entwickeln, die für die Sicherstellung eines qualifizierten Führungsakts erforderlich sind, die Leistungsfähigkeit der Führungskräfte zu steigern, die Qualität der Bildungsdienstleistungen zu erhöhen, die jeweiligen Ressourcen anzuziehen und zu verwalten und die Führungs-, Kommunikations- und Teamfähigkeit zu entwickeln.

1. Management and leadership – two correlative concepts

Educational Practice all over the world suggests that today leadership has surpassed management as a main descriptor when refering to leading and improving institutions in public service, being associated with change, ingenuity, motivation, inspiration and activity efficiency. From this perspective, school management should assume two simultaneous roles, apparently dichotomical: not only to automatically do what is in the position description, that is director of a public school, but also to be a leader for the human resource in that school in its totality, diversity and particularities.

The Manager-leader represents a desire of the contemporary society all over Europe, as today's world needs active social actors to participate in organisational development as well as in theoretical design and also to

initiate and support the positive transformational force of the human resource which they not only monitor and coordinate but first of all motivate and value by offering trust, inspiring courage and the power to assume the multiple social roles responsibly. However, schools in Romania and all over the world, although considered to be flexible, perfectible systems, open to change are, in fact, controlled as regards their organisation and position by the legislation of the social and political context at a given moment. Along with the tendency of decentralization in the formal educational system, we can see the diminishing of the degree of involvement of Central political actors in planning and delivering educational services, as the distribution of authority slightly moves from top to the bottom, to the schools which belong to the national educational system.

Under these circumstances, the mission and the responsibility of delivering quality educational services is greatly assigned to school managers and their partners in the management teams, where efficient, top educational leadership and management become fundamental dimensions in order to reach the objectives and the targets set locally and regionally as well as the priorities assumed on a national level. The increase in the quality of the service delivered, keeping up with a free, competitive market, adapting to the dynamics of the rapid, profound changes on a national and European ground, make it absolutely necessary for a qualified workforce, permanently updated to the new, to diversity, to the new technologies, to the new methodological tendencies, able to face challenges, to cope with emotional stress, especially if they have management, assessment, guiding and counselling positions. Contemporary educational management requires re-configuring and re-adapting the organisational culture, by inserting all the educational paradigms promoted worldwide, such as: education for all, education from all life experience, permanent education, lifelong learning, sustainable development, etc. Without incorporating the dimension of leadership, educational management can no longer reach the results in terms of performance and success in a world in which educational standards have been much raised and the beneficiaries' expectations are also very high.

The European documents such as the strategy Europe 2020 of the European Commission focus on education, the school plays an essential role not only in training and developing the workforce but also in assuring its access and insertion all of the work market; this way it is obvious the fact that there are ever greater expectations from the contemporary school and educational managers have to assume responsibility aiming at human development in all its complexity. A new pattern of life, where Society is a huge living organism and all its elements are connected and interdependent, new values and holistic strategies appear, focusing on learning and preparing for survival, innovation, creativity, involvement, network communication, valuing diversity and integrating it, etc. Forming and developing life and professional competence are not possible without triggering factors, without challenging learning contexts, without people involved, engaged and motivated to look beyond the dimension of the immediate future and of a knowledgeable existential comfort.

The national documents such as the Law of the National Education (http://oldsite.edu.ro/index.php/articles/14847) and The Regulations for organising and functioning of schools (https://www.edu.ro/etichete/rofuip) address the same needs and tendencies presented above, the leader manager being today a key actor of the formal education system in Romania. Educational Practice at the bottom of the pyramid in urban and rural schools in Romania still highlights the fact that many times the school manager is not the school leader as well. This kind of situations explain the performance discrepancies among schools the discrepancies of approaching the problems contemporary School has to cope with the discrepancies of the learning and teaching strategies teachers apply in class, the differences of the way they communicate, relate with and integrate in the regional and local community, the way they use the existing teaching materials... In a nutshell, we could say that management without leadership just meet the opportunities while management and leadership me too the opportunities and use them.

2. Needs analysis regarding management and leadership in Bistriţa-Năsăud County

Participation and involvement in the activities people do on a daily basis, including those from their workplace, we present a vital dimension for the human being for they are personal and professional development, because this way they develop competences and acquire new ones, they communicate and relate with other people, and moreover, they give a meaning, a direction to their own life, engaging and connecting to the others (Law, 2002).

Participation/ involvement represents an indicator of the competence and the quality of the action achieved by a person at a given moment, an indicator of a person's ability

to look beyond oneself and the responsibility for their own self as a dimension of belonging; The personal goal is achieved by PARTICIPATING to the goal of the group, of the whole. Participation does not mean only ACTION but rather ENGAGEMENT, RESPONSIBILITY, INNER INVOLVEMENT (of the soul, mental and moral), elements which are not always visible from the outside and not very easy to measure, but which can influence actions in decisive way (Vlaşin, 2013).

The Human resource in an institution should and can be engaged in a creative act as co-authors, co-designers and co-participants in a collective effort for development, for sustainable yet flexible, open to change design. Quality professionalisation is favoured by interdisciplinary teamwork allowing the burst of ideas, their overflowing and the strengthening of individual communication competence in a diverse environment which becomes even stronger when the members of the teams change often.

Managing a school implies fulfilling creatively, flexibly and coherently a system of management traits: analysis, identification and documentation on the alternatives, choosing the alternatives (management option), planning, organising and guiding, monitoring, checking, assessing, feedback (Bocoş, (coord.), 2015).

By starting from these ends, in 2018 I initiated a study regarding training needs analysis in order to develop management, guiding and assessment competences. The training program designed regarding the possibility and the need overtraining approaching holistically and synergetically the two dimensions: management and leadership in such a way that most schools in Bistriţa-Năsăud county to have leader-managers in order to diminish the distances, the discrepancies and the invisible membranes which separate not only people but also

schools. Our target is not equalising them but the increase of the quality of the educational performance as well as the school performance in a more and more competitive free market economy. The directors, the administrative staff are vital mediators of change regarding the teachers before, while and after periods of intense work. It is important for the members of the management team to be aware of the part they can play in minimising or maximising the level of stress of teachers and staff and to offer them opportunities to develop there management abilities for them to function as well as possible during times of change.

In order to identify and document the need for training, which we initially supposed through the analysis of the main European and national law document we mentioned before, through the analysis of some general inspection or focused inspection reports done by Inspectoratul Şcolar Judeţean Bistriţa-Năsăud along the last two school years and also through talks with school inspectors monitoring educational management activity in the County, we made and applied two questionnaires as follows:

First, in order to identify and study the training needs in "Management and Leadership in education", we applied a questionnaire to directors / deputy directors / members of the Board of Administration/ members of the Commission for quality assurance and evaluation in schools of Bistriţa-Năsăud county. 278 teachers answered these questionnaires, 211 female teachers (75,9%) and 67 male teachers (24,1%), 148 of them working in rural schools (53,24%) and 130 in urban schools (46,76%). As to their age, 10 are under 30 (3,6 %), 69 are between 30 and 40 (24,82%), 119 between 40 and 50 (42,8%), while 80 are over 50 (28,78%). The teachers who answered the questionnaires belong to schools with different structures.
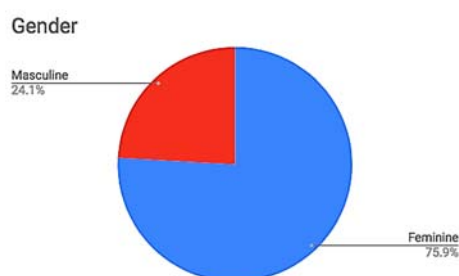

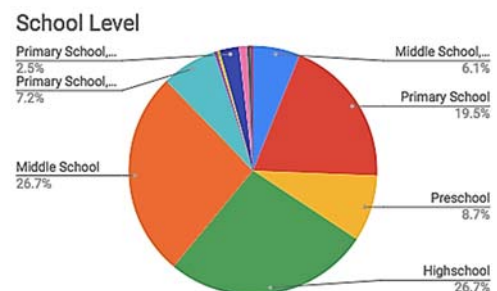Figure no. 1. *Biological gender*

Figure no. 2. *Education levels*

The questionnaire was made by considering the management roles of a director (Barry, 1991) namely:

Visionary: This type of management can be defined through creating and aggregating new versions inside the group. When solving a problem, visionary leaders have the ability to provide numerous solutions, but only some of them can be accepted by the others. Because they usually have visions different from the rest of the group, they can encounter problems of functioning inside the group, so they prefer to invent and create separately. Such persons will try to introduce their ideas inside the group only after the group has already engaged in certain actions.

Organiser: This type of management has the role to make order in the discussions taking place inside the group. The behaviour and characteristics of this type of management are: focus on details, time limits, time, efficiency and structure. Such people are usually preocupa to make things as clear as possible and to achieve the tasks without wasting time.

Relator: This type of management supposes preoccupation to maintain relationships with the exterior, to create and maintain a strong image of the team. This leader is usually focused on his or her own self, following his own interests and even sabotage the group to the extreme. He can be productive when he identifies with the needs of the group when his aims match the aims of the group.

Social: the social leader is that person who is mainly preoccupied with developing and maintaining the team from a psychological perspective. The general characteristics include identifying the needs and preoccupations of the different group members, ensuring that each group member speaks his or her opinion, matching with the level of energy and emotional state of the group, introducing humour and welfare in the group, and having the ability to mediate conflicts. The efficiency of this type of management can be seen when the group works hard, encouraged by the members of the team. This type of management requires constant attention and activity.

The training needs analysis for directors regarded 6 key fields of school management:

- Strategic management design
- Implementing a management strategy
- Designing an e-safety plan of action
- Knowing the employees needs and rights
- Identifying the institutional development opportunities through projects
- Writing and implementing projects.

The interpretation of data revealed that the level of appreciation good is predominant in both categories, urban schools and rural schools, the differences between the two categories being insignificant. Likewise, the appreciations WEAK or even UNSATISFACTORY are obviously predominant to the respondents working in rural schools for 6 dependent variables, except for the variable: Knowing the employees needs and rights, where the answers do not differ.

Figure no. 3. *The level of competence regarding strategic planning of the activity in a school institution*

Figure no. 4. *The level of competence in implementing a management strategy in a school institution*

It is interesting to notice that the level of competence regarding strategic design of the activity of a school institution and the implementation of such a strategy is appreciated by 70% of the respondents as good, very good or excellent.

However, when it comes to writing and implementing a project externally funded, things change as 70% think they do not have such competence developed.

How would you evaluate your level of skills in implementing the planned managerial activities of a school institution?
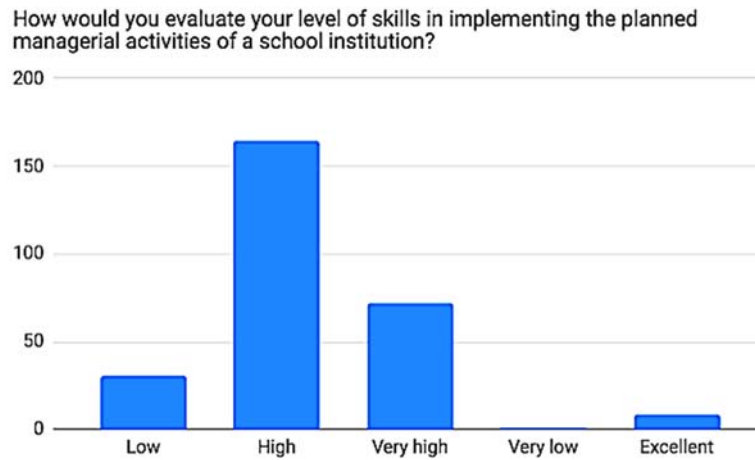
Figure no. 5. *The level of competence in identifying development opportunities through local, regional, national, European and international projects*

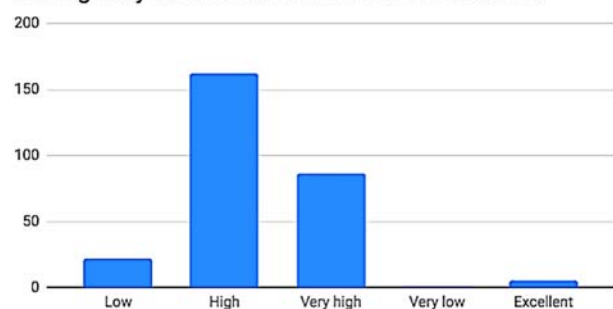How would you evaluate your level of compentce in writing an education project based on external funding?
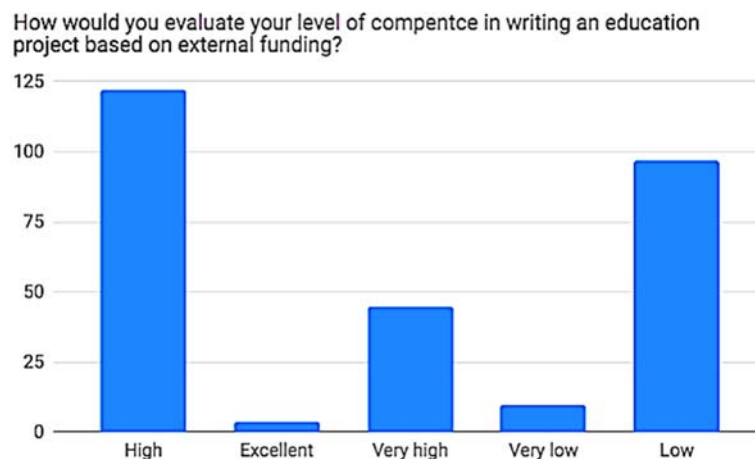
Figure no. 6. *The level of competence in writing an externally funded educational project*

The data presented support the fact that we need to consolidate/ develop the competences needed in the educational management and leadership process, including the teachers who occupy leading, guiding and assessment positions in school institutions, which would lead to an increase in the quality of the management act, to its adaptation to the dynamics, tendencies and expectations of a performant European educational management, to the increase of the prestige of the Romanian school on an international level.

The need for training in this direction seems to be more imperative in the case of the educational actors from rural school institutions, as the effort to diminish the discrepancy as to school performance between rural and urban school institutions is necessary to suppose the training of human resources, employees of the national educational system, regarding their professional and personal development, the increase of the level of satisfaction and quality of life in their workplace.

The second stage of identifying the training needs meant the creation of a second self assessment

questionnaire with 10 questions of medium difficulty in order to check the knowledge of educational leadership and management. This was applied to a number of 110 teachers who are directors or deputy directors in school institutions. By accepting the idea that "acquiring some competence supposes, as a decisive landmark, action, that is taking a set of steps: using adequate resources in different situations (educational, social, professional, life situations), checking the relevance of these resources, using them efficiently, approaching the situation, checking the validity of the result" (Bocoş, (coord.), 2015). The assessment questionnaire was intended to allow the identification of those types of competences, knowledge, abilities and attitudes which can be developed through training courses intended to support school directors activity. The 10 questions helped to point out the strengths of the management activity, the domains where possible improvements are necessary or desired, the priorities as to planning professional development activities of the staff and the quality standards of the school activity have been appreciated.

This time as well the greatest difficulties, that is partially correct answers, have been recorded at the questions regarding time management, project management, the differences between manager and leader, the functions of management.

3. Conclusions

The data collected by applying the two questionnaires and their statistical analysis support **the need for training**, the need to develop management, guiding and assessment competence **necessary** to assure quality management acts, the improvement of management performance, the improvement of Educational service quality, the alignment of school institutions in Romania to the European and International quality standards in order to acquire the mobility of Educational actors, to create international, European and national educational cooperation networks.

In conclusion by designing a training program for school directors we intend to develop they are combat of designing a strategy to develop the educational institutions, to implement and manage the strategic changes in the organisation, to manage the resources in order to develop leadership abilities, communication and teamwork.

Authors note:

Ioan Ioja is currently a teacher at Colegiul Tehnic Infoel Bistriţa, BN, Romania, and Doctoral Student at Babeş-Bolyai University, director of Teachers' Training Institution of Bistriţa-Năsăud county. His research areas are aimed at providing meaningful initial and lifelong training for teachers and at an efficient insertion of young graduates in schools. He is also interested in finding the teachers' learning needs in order to meet their expectations and offer them appropriate training programmes.

Muşata Bocoş is University Professor and Ph.D. Coordinator at the Faculty of Psychology and Sciences of Education (Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania). She has obtained a Ph.D. in Educational Sciences in 1997 at Babeş-Bolyai University. Her research interests are reflected in a series of studies and articles published in important national and international journals. Her teaching activity covers several domains such as the theory and methodology of curriculum, general didactics, and educational research.

References

Barry, D. (1991). *Managing the bossless team: Lessons in distributed leadership.* Organizational Dynamics, 20, 31-47.

Bocoş, M.-D. (coord.), Răduţ-Taciu, R., Stan, C., Chiş, O., Andronache, D. (2015). *Dicţionar praxiologic de pedagogie. Volumul I: A-D.* Piteşti: Paralela 45 Publishing House.

Law, M. (2002). *Participation in the Occupations of Everyday Life, The American Journal of Occupational Therapy.* Volume 56, Number 6.

Vlaşin, I. (2013). *Competenţa. Participarea de calitate la îndemâna oricui.* Alba Iulia: Editura Unirea.

*http://oldsite.edu.ro/index.php/articles/14847.

*https://www.edu.ro/etichete/rofuip.

Acquisition of reading and writing skills - comparative approach between the Montessori method and the traditional educational system

Rafila-Elisabeta Ilovan

Acquisition of reading and writing skills – comparative approach between the Montessori method and the traditional educational system

Rafila-Elisabeta Ilovan [a*]

[a]*Doctoral School "Education, Reflection, Development", Babeş-Bolyai University, 7 Sindicatelor Street, 400029, Cluj-Napoca, Romania*

Corresponding author: rafy_tupcil92@yahoo.com

Abstract

Keywords:
Reading and writing skills,
alternative education, The
Montessori method;

The microstudy presented is a psycho-pedagogical experiment, which consists in applying the Montessori-specific experimental factor to a group of pre-school children in the traditional system. The investigative approach is based on a comparative study, the results obtained being interpreted from both a quantitative and a qualitative point of view. In this paper we started from the premise that Montessori strategies foster the acquisition of reading and writing skills at pre-school age. The general objectives of the investigation are the introduction into the traditional experimental system of alternative methods of acquiring reading-writing skills specific to the Montessori system and the study of the Montessori system for the acquisition of reading and writing skills in methodical terms and from the point of view of the results obtained by applying these strategies.

Zusammenfasung

Schlüsselworte:
Lese- und
Schreibfähigkeiten,
alternative Ausbildung,
Die Montessori-Methode;

Die vorgelegte Mikrostudie ist ein psycho-pädagogisches Experiment, bei dem der Montessori-spezifische experimentelle Faktor auf eine Gruppe von Vorschulkindern im traditionellen System angewendet wurde. Der untersuchende Ansatz basiert auf vergleichenden Studien. In diesem Beitrag gingen wir von der Prämisse aus, dass Montessori-Strategien den Erwerb von Lese- und Schreibfähigkeiten im Vorschulalter fördern. Die allgemeinen Ziele der Untersuchung sind die Einführung alternativer Methoden für das Erlernen von Lese- und Schreibfähigkeiten für das Montessori-System in das traditionelle experimentelle System und das Studium des Montessori-Systems für den Erwerb von Lese- und Schreibfähigkeiten in methodischer Hinsicht der Ergebnisse, die durch die Anwendung dieser Strategien erzielt wurden.

1. Introduction

The school must be transformed into a place where the child should feel good and be eager to learn. School must be an institution capable of opening perspectives and stimulating creativity, a place where students can freely undertake the cultural and moral experiences necessary for their maturity process. In order to be successful, its construction must be based on the premise that any educational activity is based on the psycho-pedagogical knowledge of the subjects undergoing such intervention. The quality of the educational process depends entirely on the psychological abilities of those who do it.

2. Theoretical foundation

In the Pedagogical Dictionary (Schaub & Zenke, 2001), the term "alternative education" has the following definition: "the activity which takes place in school institutions, according to objectives, organization, content, forms of teaching and learning, tools, school life and parents activity, with total or partial deviation from the unitary characteristics of the school state and which offers another form of training and education."

In Pedagogical Lexicon, Mircea Ştefan attributes to the alternatives the following defining characteristics: forms to solve in different ways a certain pedagogical problem presenting educational advantages but also risks, different forms of the school organization officialized by the Law of Education, the multitude of currents, cooperative or contradictory, consulting alternative systems that are compatible with each other.

The education method proposed by Maria Montessori is based on respect for the freedom of the child in an organized environment rich in stimuli chosen according to her natural interests and desires (Montessori, 1922).

The Montessori method focuses on the use of multiple channels to receive information. Children learn to write before they learn to read, using all their senses: touching, seeing, hearing. Maria Montessori observed that there is no absolute simultaneity between the act of reading and writing, the pre-reading writing.

Maria Montessori set up a complex writing teaching mechanism in two steps Montessori, 1977. The first step - the child learns through games and practical exercises how to hold the writing tool without getting tired. Then, the child learns how to draw the form of each letter. Only in the second stage does the child learn to read the words.

3. Research methodology

The didactical experimental research performed was based on a methodology system consisting of: the psycho-pedagogical experiment, observation, research method of curricular documents and other school documents, pedagogical knowledge tests (Bocoş, 2007).

The general hypothesis:

Considering these innovative tendencies from the Romanian education system, we have formulated the following hypothesis: the early use of Montessori-specific strategies in the traditional system leads to earlier acquisition of reading and writing abilities, in shorter time, and reduces confusion between sounds, letters or sounds and letters within the words.

The study was organized in three stages: pre-experimental stage, experimental intervention stage and post-experimental stage.

In performing the pedagogical research, we formulated the following research variables:

Table no. 1. *Research variables*

1. Independent research variable:	2. Dependent research variable:
Montessori strategies for the acquisition of literacy skills - global perception, two-step learning	the number of letters and words learned, learning time, the mode of operating with the letters and words learned.

4. The results obtained and discussions/ the analysis of the results

Initial test:

Sample 1 - Recognizing and Reading the Suggested Letters to the Content.
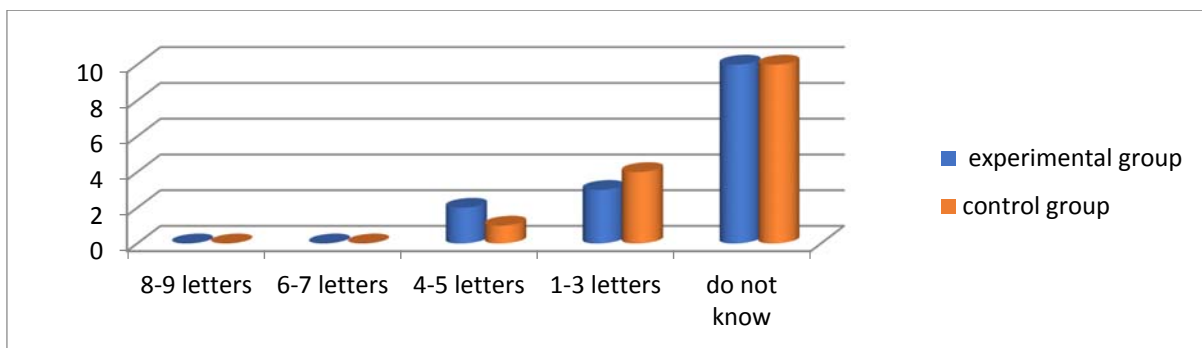
Figure no. 1. *Number of known letters*

A, M, and T are the known letters. We notice that two-thirds of children do not know letters.

Sample 2 - reading the words.
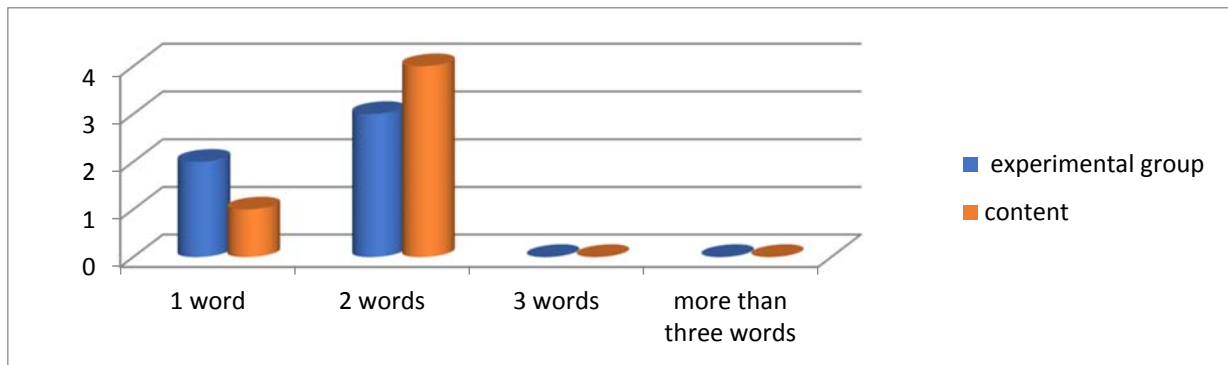
Figure no. 2. *The number of words read*

The words read are MAMA (mother) and TATA (father), words that children learn at home, from parents, brothers, or relatives.

Sample 3 - Modeling / Drawing a Known / Unknown Letter.

At this test, 80%. of children in each group manage to model or draw a letter.

Final Test:

Sample 1 - writing letters and words

Choose the right letters and write the word written on the token (RAC, PARA) on the mat
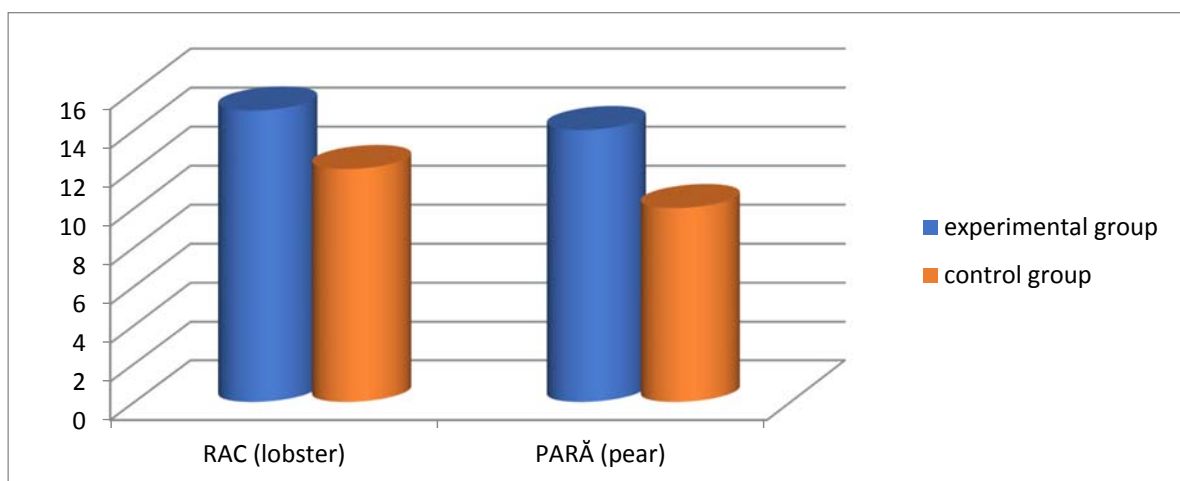
Figure no. 3. *Writing by pattern*

We note that in the experimental group all children write the monosyllabic word and 10 children can write the disyllabic one, while the group of children who manage to write correctly is smaller (14 for the monosyllabic word and 8 for the disyllabic word).

Sample 2 - reading letters and words
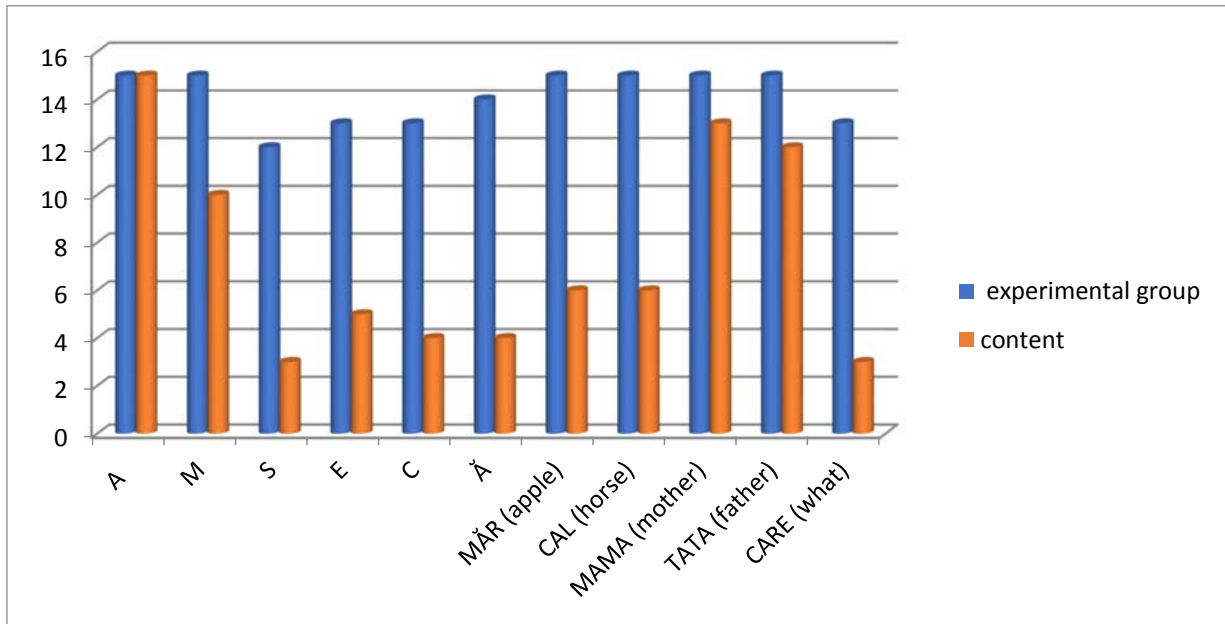
Figure no. 4. *Reading*

The results are better, this time at the experimental group. Also, children in the experimental group clearly distinguish letters A and Ă and read new words, composed of known letters. The progress has come as a result of the compositional exercises done after recognition and reproduction by modeling or drawing of the graphic sign (letter). Note that the distinction between L and R is made more easily and clearly in the experimental sample.

Sample 3 - Composition and word writing

Choose the right letters and write the word on the token (bed, hoe).
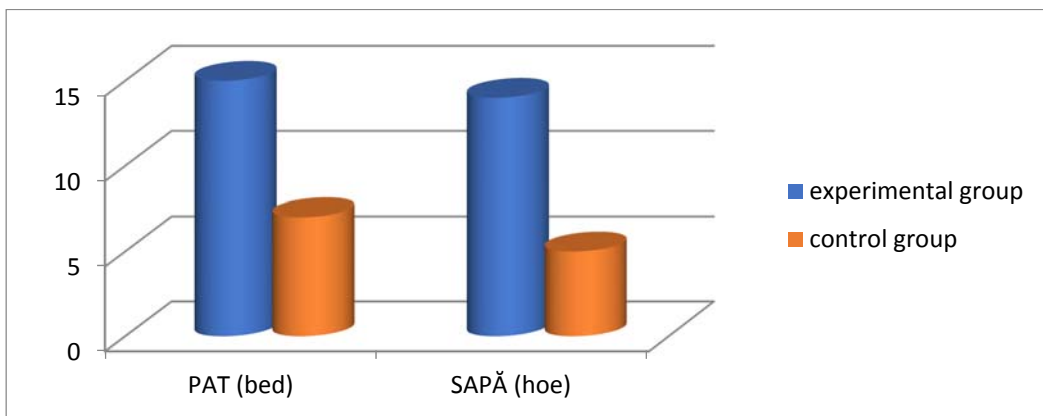
Figure no. 6. *Writing the illustrated words*

5. Conclusions

In the experimental group we observe 100% correct writing for the monosyllabic word and 14 of 15 children write correctly the disyllabic word, while only 8 and 5 children out of 15 manage to do it correctly.

Language development is closely related to the concept building process. The findings of the present research are based on practical examples from children's life experience, the way they develop their progressive language and gradually begin to grasp the mathematical

ideas contained in language expressions, by starting from concrete object activities.

The strategies proposed in the paper can be tailored to any desirable outcome of any type of activity and of any learning sequence, provided that in the design stages the strategies (methodological and didactic materials) are best suited to the combination of elements of content and entertainment, and tasks are formulated in a clear, attractive and motivating way.

After processing the statistical data, evidence reveal the progress registered in the experimental class. Therefore, the implementation of this practical-applicative research with improvement and developmental elements, in which the independent variable was the set of strategies and techniques specific to the Montessori system, proved effective. Thus, we can say that the independent variable has made a positive contribution to the improvement of the quality and efficiency of didactic approaches, confirming the research hypothesis.

Authors note:

Rafila-Elisabeta Ilovan is currently a teacher at Mihai Eminescu School Năsăud, Bistrița-Năsăud County, Romania and doctoral student at Babeș-Bolyai University. Her fields of research aim to provide students information and support. She is also interested in finding the children's learning needs and giving them all the necessary resources.

References

Bocoş, M. (2007). *Teoria şi practica cercetării pedagogice*. Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărţii de Ştiinţă.

Montessori, M. (1977). *Descoperirea copilului*, Bucureşti: Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică.

Montessori, M. (1922). *Metoda pedagogiei ştiinţifice aplicată la educaţia copiilor mici*. Bucureşti: Editura Cartea Românească.

Schaub, H., Zenke K.-G. (2001). *Dicţionar de pedagogie*. Iaşi: Editura Polirom.

Ştefan, M. (2007). *Lexicon de pedagogie*. Bucureşti: Editura Aramis.

Ways to improve the Romanian teachers' occupational prestige.
A systematic literature review

Diana-Crina Marin, Cecilia Macri

Ways to improve the Romanian teachers' occupational prestige.
A systematic literature review

Diana-Crina Marin [a*], Cecilia Macri [b]

[a] *Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Babeş-Bolyai University, 7 Sindicatelor Street, 400015, Cluj-Napoca, Romania*

[b] *Bucharest Center of Educational Resources, Romania*

*Corresponding author: *Diana.PANCU@ubbonline.ubbcluj*

Abstract	
Keywords: teachers' occupational prestige, self-esteem, motivation, professional satisfaction, school-family-community-partnership	Recent research has revealed that teachers' occupational prestige has become lower during the last years. The purpose of this study was to establish which are the strategies that could be applied in order to improve the teachers' prestige. At the same time, we were interested in establishing which are the main factors that contribute to the decreasing of the professional prestige of the teachers and to present the ameliorative solutions identified by us, taking into account the opinion of the researchers from Romania who have conducted researches on this topic. Some of the most important measures are related to reducing bureaucracy, stability, predictability and adequate funding of the educational system, improving teachers' working environment, and maintaining effective interpersonal relationships with students, parents, colleagues, school managers, and other educational agents. Love for teaching and the desire to contribute actively to the harmonious development of the current generation of children are some of the positive implications of this profession, which bring satisfaction to the teachers.

Zusammenfasung	
Schlüsselworte: Beschäftigungansehen der Lehrer, Selbstwertschätzung, Motivation, berufliche Zufriedenstellung, Partnerschaft Schule-Familie-Gemeinschaft	Die jüngsten Erforschungen haben gezeigt, dass das Beschäftigungsansehen der Lehrer in den letzten Jahren gesunken ist. Zweck dieser Studie war festzulegen, welche die Strategien sind, die dürfen angewandt werden, um das berufliche Ansehen der Lehrer zu verbessern. Zugleich haben wir uns vorgenommen, festzulegen, welche die Hauptfaktoren sind, die zur Minderung des Beschäftigungsansehens der Lehrer beigetragen haben, und die von uns identifizierten verbessernden Lösungen darzulegen, indem wir die Meinung der Forscher aus Rumänien berücksichtigen, die Erforschungen zu diesem Thema durchgeführt haben. Einige der wichtigsten Massnahmen stehen mit der Reduzierung der Bürokratie, der Verbesserung des Arbeitsumfeldes der Lehrer, der angemessenen Standfestigkeit, Vorhersehbarkeit und Finanzierung des Bildungssystems, sowie der Aufrechterhaltung einiger wirksamer zwischenpersönlicher Beziehungen mit den Studenten, Eltern, Kollegen, Schulmanagern und weiteren Bildungsagenten in Verbindung. Die Liebe für den Lehrerberuf und der Willen dazu, aktiv zur harmonischen Entwicklung der aktuellen Kindergeneration beizutragen, stellen einige der positiven Implikationen der Ausübung dieses Berufs dar, die die Lehrer zufriedenstellen.

1. Introduction

Mass-media usually presents various situations that indicate several problems of the current educational system, including the fact that the confidence of the members of the society has decreased during the last years. We consider that a high-quality occupational prestige of the teachers is associated with positive attitudes of the members of the society, trust, and valorization of the systematic efforts of the teachers in order to offer the best educational opportunities for each child.

2. Theoretical foundation

The high quality of the educational processes, a positive learning environment, the motivation for learning and the respect for others, including for parents and teachers, are some of the factors which influence the children's development in a positive manner. All the members of the society should respect the teachers' profession and the values promoted by the educational institutions. "The way teaching staff evaluate the social prestige of their profession fulfils normative and motivational functions and is, hence, reflected in how they actually perform their professional roles, serving both explicative and prospective purposes." (Frunzaru & Dumitriu, 2015, p. 629). According to Buzea & Scârneci

(2011, p. 17), "the issue of occupational prestige is subscribed to the individual axiological system". The study conducted by Andronache, Bocoș, Bocoș & Macri (2014, p. 632) revealed that "the behavioral manifestations of attitude towards the teaching profession may be directly influenced and dependent on context. Moreover, contextualized experiences become important, in the sense that not only the context itself may influence the manifestation of attitude but also subjective experiences of individuals, determined by relative context".

The results of the research carried out in Romania highlight the fact that the teachers' self-prestige had a negative evolution (Frunzaru & Dumitriu, 2015; Gheorghe, 2017; Marin & Bocoș, 2018). The research conducted by Frunzaru & Dumitriu (2015) revealed that some of the strategies that could be applied in order to improve the self-perceived occupational prestige of the teachers are: eliminating the bureaucracy, consolidating the school-family-community partnership, developing effective relationships with students, parents, colleagues and school managers, and adequate funding of educational institutions. The study conducted by Marin & Bocoș (2018, in press.) revealed that, in the view of the school principals, public policies should be adopted, in order to improve the prestige of the primary school teachers and of all other categories of educators. A public policy is a set of governmental decisions elaborated with the purpose of generating positive effects on a matter of great interest (Fink, 2016). Gheorghe (2017) show that the negative feedback received by the teachers from the members of the society could negatively influence their self-esteem and the quality of their didactic activity. "The teachers' perceptions of their own job are significantly influenced by the environmental factors, such as the teacher-student relationship, the collaboration between teachers or the systems of feedback and evaluation". Another important aspect revealed by the research conducted by Gheorghe (2017) is that there is a negative correlation between the volume of work and professional responsibilities of the teachers and the level of their self-esteem. "The more sense of freedom school gives teachers, the higher job satisfaction, and the lower burnout teachers will have." (Jiang, 2005, p.73).

The teachers from urban areas are more satisfied with their current professional status than teachers from rural areas (Gheorghe, 2017). The relationship established "with both school management and pupils' parents are important predictors for the self-perceived level of occupational prestige" (Frunzaru & Dumitriu, 2015, p. 639). Xiaofu and Qiwen (2007) considered that an effective management of the educational institutions is associated with a high self-esteem and satisfaction of the employers. "School climate has changed, it has become more tense, cold, and stressful. Relationships are mostly collegial and there are less friendships; these relationships are more reserved, more prudent, more suspicious and less opened, emphatic, trustful. It looks like their fear for losing their job and the many criteria which are difficult to accomplish negatively affect collegial relations and school atmosphere" (Mărgăriţoiu & Eftimie, 2013, p. 114). According to Anghelache (2014, p. 53) "motivation for the teaching career seems to increase with the subjects' ageing" and the persons aged between "18 and 28 are less interested in the teaching profession, because of the low income and the low social status of this job". According to Bentea & Anghelache (2012, p. 171) "teachers who think that the teaching profession is largely based on moral responsibility and social importance, work quality and efficiency, and has a motivating potential for them, have higher levels of job satisfaction too, and conversely".

3. Research methodology

We have conducted a systematic review of the literature in order to establish which are the factors and solutions proposed by the researchers from Romania in order to improve the prestige of the teachers. The inclusion criteria used in order to select relevant research articles and studies concerning this research topic are presented below. The publications must be written in Romanian or in English, during the last 10 years. We have used the following keywords: "Teachers' Prestige", "Job satisfaction" and "Romania". Peer review journal articles and conference proceedings were the types of publications used in order to realize this systematic review of the literature. We have consulted the following electronic databases: ProQuest Central and ScienceDirect. In the eligibility phase, 3 full-text articles were excluded, leaving a total of 9 eligible studies to be included in the qualitative synthesis (see Figure no. 1). All the articles that were not related to our research questions or were related to the aspects regarding the university level were excluded.

Our investigation was oriented towards the following questions:

• Which are the factors that contribute to the decreasing of the prestige of the pre-university teachers?

• Which are the institutional measures/ public policies that could be adopted in order to improve the pre-university teachers' occupational prestige?
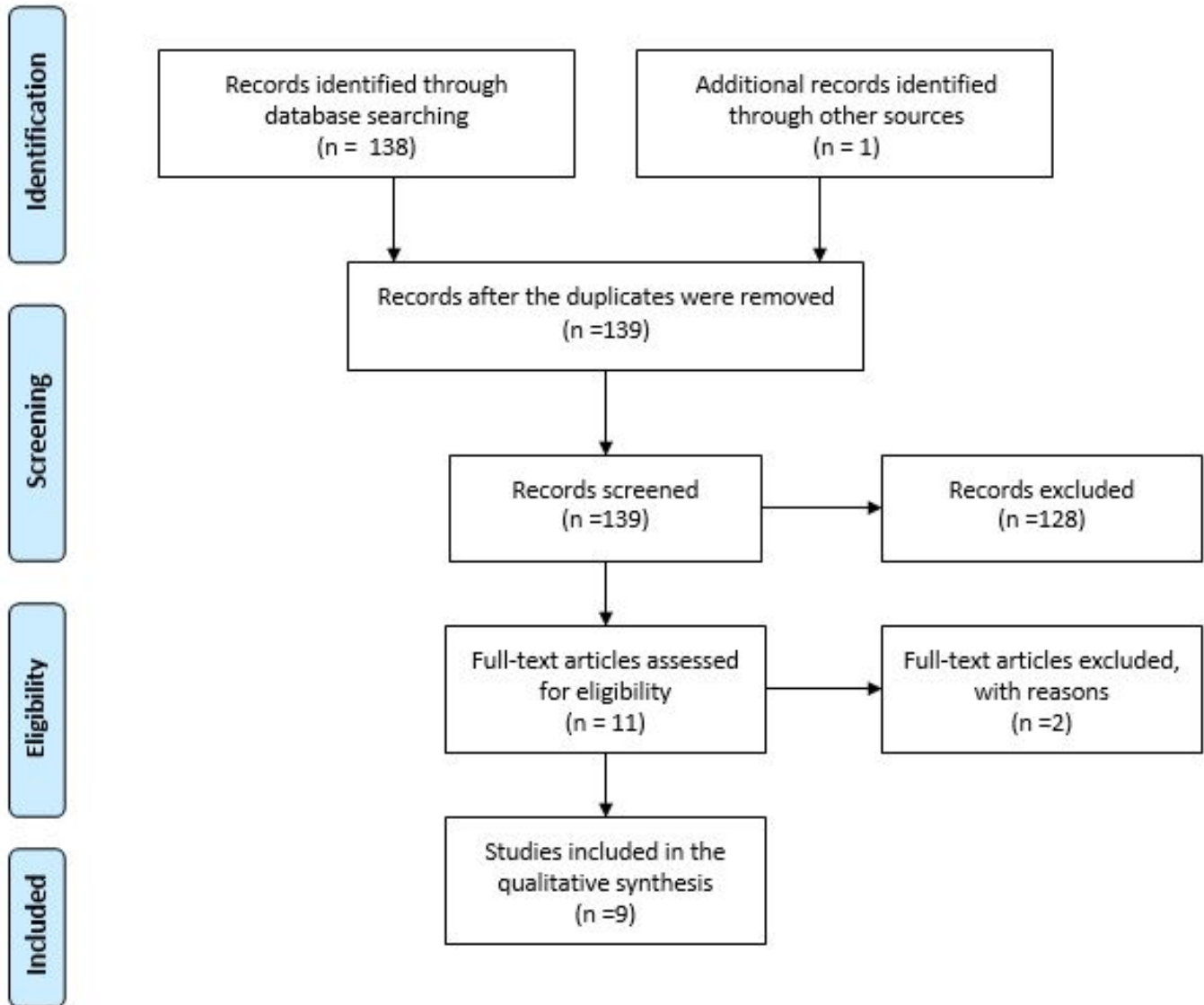
Figure no. 1. *PRISMA Flow Chart for the selection process of the articles concerning the teacher's level of occupational prestige and satisfaction (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, & Altman, 2009)*

4. Results

All the studies identified by us highlight that the teachers' prestige had a negative evolution during the last period of time. Table 1 includes the main factors and ameliorative solutions proposed by the researchers from Romania, interested in this topic (Mărgărițoiu & Eftimie, 2013; Popescu & Tudorache, 2014; Frunzaru & Dumitriu, 2015; Anghelache, 2014; Gheorghe, 2017; Alexandrache, 2015; Șerbănescu & Popescu, 2014; Bentea & Anghelache, 2012; Stan, 2015).

Table no. 1. Measures that could be adopted in order to improve the teachers' occupational prestige

Signs that indicate a low level of the teacher's prestige	Modalities to increase teachers' occupational prestige
- the occurrence of conflicts between parents and teachers; - a low level of confidence between parents and teachers; - the decision of some of the teachers to leave the educational system by choosing other domains of activity; - a high level of bureaucratic tasks; - teaching a high number of students simultaneously; - teachers' dissatisfaction with their own status; - the instability of the educational system and the educational reform, which is too often renewed; - the occurrence of stressful and complex situations which the teachers should face while practicing their profession; - teachers dissatisfaction regarding their incomes; - lack of attractivity of the teacher's profession.	- eliminating the bureaucracy; - adequate funding for the educational system and increasing the teachers' salaries; - adapting the curriculum to the current demands of the society; - improving teachers' authority, working condition and motivation for performing their daily attributions in good conditions; - coherence in the process of decision making and a high level of stability of the educational system; - creating an organizational culture based on trust, self-respect, appreciation, and cooperation; - consolidating the school-family-community partnership; - a high level of professional training of each teacher; - decreasing the number of pupils enrolled in classes in the school institutions of Romania; - valorizing the real potential of each student and creating effective teacher-student relationships; - adopting a democratic management type, based on transparency, cooperation and involvement of the teaching staff in the process of decision making.

It is important to outline that the measures and the strategies proposed during this study should be adopted at the level of the entire educational system and, at the same time, at the institutional level.

5. Discussions

Through this systematic literature review, we have decided to list some of the most efficient modalities to increase teachers' occupational prestige. Researchers from Romania suggested various solutions that could be applied in order to improve the teachers' prestige. The literature review conducted by us revealed that some of the most important measures are related to reducing bureaucracy, stability, predictability and adequate funding of the educational system, improving teachers'

working environment, and maintaining effective interpersonal relationships with students, parents, colleagues, school managers, and other educational agents. Some of the solutions proposed by the Romanian researchers are related to changes at the entire level of the educational system. Some of them are related to gaining the authority and independence in practicing the teaching profession. Changes at the institutional level are important at the same time. The managerial policies based on respect, valorization, transparency, and cooperation in the process of decision-making have a positive impact on the self-image of the teachers. A democratic managerial style has beneficial effects on the entire activity of the educational institutions, and the valorization of the efforts

made by all the educational partners ensure a positive climate and effective interpersonal relationships.

6. Conclusions

We consider that an increased level of prestige of the teachers contributes significantly to obtaining a high involvement of the family and of the community in the school life. At the same time, the attractiveness of this profession will be significantly increased if the educational prestige of the teachers perceived by educators and by all other members of the society is improved. In conclusion, the professional merits of the teachers should be outlined through various strategies, including mass-media. In this way, the students, the parents and all other members of the society will understand the high social importance of this occupation. In our opinion, the most important qualities of an efficient teacher who benefits of high prestige and social recognition are: responsibility, integrity, self-exigence, the desire for self-improvement, impartiality, respect for all the collaborators, a high level of self-esteem, and the most important fact, love for pupils and passion for their teaching activity.

Authors note:

Diana-Crina Marin is currently a teacher at Liceul Teoretic "Pavel Dan" Câmpia Turzii ("Pavel Dan" Theoretical High School of Câmpia Turzii) and Doctoral Student at Babeş-Bolyai University. Her research areas are aimed at discovering innovative modalities to consolidate the school-family partnership, considering that the school and family should be real partners in children's education. She is also interested in finding the most efficient teaching practices that could be successfully used in the educational process.

Cecilia Macri is logopedic teacher in Bucharest Center of Educational Resources. She has obtained a Ph.D. in Educational Sciences in 1997 at Babeş-Bolyai University. Her main study and research environment are consisted of the complex specificity of logopedic activity with preprimary and early primary students, including general teaching problems and the therapies for speech disorders.

References

Alexandrache, C. (2015). Occupational Stress as a Factor of (non) Orientation Teaching Profession. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences ,180*, 1038-1043.

Anghelache, V. (2014). Motivation for the Teaching Career. Preliminary Study, *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 128,* 49-53.

Andronache, D., Bocoş, M., Bocoş, V. & Macri, C. (2014). Attitude Towards Teaching Profession. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences. 142*, 628-632.

Bentea, C.-C., & Anghelache, V. (2012). Teachers' Perceptions and Attitudes Towards Professional Activity. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 51,* 167-171.

Buzea, F., & Scârneci, C. (2011). Occupational Prestige in Romania – An Exploratory Study. *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Braşov, 4(*53), 9-18.

Fink, J.W. (2016). Law, politics, and the creation of public policy: How the two can come together and create better public policy (Order No. 10167656). Available from ProQuest Central. (1845052639). Retrieved from https://search-proquest-com.am.e-nformation.ro/docview/1845052639?accountid=134368.

Frunzaru, V., & Dumitriu, D. (2015). Self-perceived Occupational Prestige among Romanian Teaching staff: Organisational Explicative Factors. *Management Dynamics in the Knowledge Economy, 3*(4), 629-643.

Gheorghe, O. (2017). Profesia de cadru didactic: statut social, responsabilități, satisfacții. Retrieved from https://iteach.ro/experientedidactice/profesia-de-cadru-didactic-statut-social.

Jiang, Y. (2005). The influencing and effective model of early childhood teachers job satisfaction in China, *US-China Education Review, 2*(11), 65-74.

Marin, D.-C., & Bocoş, M. (2018, in press). School Principals' Opinion on the Strategies of Strengthening School-Family Partnership. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Mărgăriţoiu, A., Eftimie, S. (2013). Pre-university Teachers' Professional Satisfaction, *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 78,* 110-114.

Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J., & Altman, D. G. (2009). Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses: The PRISMA statement. PLoS Medicine, 6(7). https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1000097.

Popescu, C., &; Tudorache, A.-M. (2014). Motivational Specificities of Teachers in the Pre-university Education in Romania, *Land Forces Academy Review, 19*(3), 267-274.

Stan, M.-M. (2015) Study on the motivational variables and professional values in the Romanian academic environment, *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 180*, 1661-1666.

Şerbănescu, L. & Popescu, T. (2014). Motivation for the teaching career, *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 127*, 691-695.

Xiaofu, P., & Qiwen, Q. (2007). An analysis of the relation between secondary school organizational climate and teacher job satisfaction, *Chinese Education and Society, 40*(5), 65-77.

Adapting and validating Ryff`s psychological well-being scale on Romanian student population

Anca Luştrea, Loredana Al Ghazi, Mihai Predescu

Adapting and validating Ryff`s psychological well-being scale on Romanian student population

Anca Luştrea [a*], Loredana Al Ghazi [b*], Mihai Predescu [c*]

[a,b,c] Educational Sciences Department, University Clinic for Therapies and Psycho-pedagogic Counselling, West University of Timişoara, Pârvan 4, Timişoara, Romania

*Corresponding author: anca.lustrea@e-uvt.ro, loredana.al@e-uvt.ro, mihai.predescu@e-uvt.ro

Abstract	
Keywords: Ryff`s Psychological Well-being Scale, well-being, college students, scale validation	This study aims to present the adaptation and the initial investigation of the psychometric proprieties of Ryff`s Psychological Well-being Scale on Romanian student population. The non-reversed, 44-item scale was already validated on Romanian population (Kállay, Rus, 2014) but there is a growing need for a more complex instrument for research and assessing the well-being of college students. Dr. Ryff recommends the use of the long form of PWBS as it was proved it does a good job of covering the content of the six well-being constructs. We consider that the long form of Ryff`s scale (84 items) is a more valid measure of well-being, capable to offer a better diagnosis by its six scales: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal grows, personal relations with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance. The initial assessment of the psychometric proprieties was conducted on 90 college students enrolled in Educational Sciences specializations. A reliability alpha Cronbach analysis was conducted, per scales and per item. The items that afected the reliability per scale was reformulated. Also, a reliability split half analisys and a corelation with other well-being scales was conducted. We determine that the long form of Ryff scales presents very good reliability coefficients, similar or even better than some scales reported coefficients. In the next step we will conduct a factor analysis on a larger student population to further validate the scale. The scale is a reliable instrument for future research and counseling.

Zusammenfasung	
Schlüsselworte: Ryff`s psychologische Wohlbefindungsskala, Wohlbefinden, College Studenten, Skalenvalidierung	Dieses Studium hat als Ziel die Anpassung und die initielle Ermittlung der psychometrischen Eigenschaften der psychologischen Wohlbefindungsskala von Ryff an der rumänischen Studentengruppen. Die nicht reversiblen 44-Item Skala war bereits bestätigt für die rumänische Bevölkerung (Kallay & Rus, 2014), jedoch gibt es eine wachsende Notwendigkeit für ein komplexeres Instrument für die Erforschung und die Bewertung des Wohlbefindens der Studenten. Dr. Ryff schlägt den Gebrauch der längeren Form von PSW vor, da es bewiesen hat, dass es erfolgreich bei der Abdeckung des Inhalts des sechs Wohlbefindungskonstruktes ist. Wir konsiderieren, dass die längere Form der Ryff-Skala (84 items) als eine validere Messart des Wohlbefindens gilt, da diese im Stande ist eine bessere Diagnose, anhand der sechs Skalas, stellen zu können. Diese wären: Autonomie, Beherrschung der Umwelt, Persönlichkeitsentwicklung, individuelle Beziehungen mit anderen, Lebensziel, Selbstakzeptanz. Die initielle Einschätzung der psychometrischen Eigenschaften wurde an 90 Studenten, die in erziehungswissenschaftlichen Spezialisierungen eingeschrieben waren, durchgeführt. Eine Zuverlässigkeitsanalyse Alpha Cronbach wurde mit Hilfe von Skalas und Items realisiert. Die Items, welche die Zuverlässigkeit beeinflussten, wurden daraufhin reformuliert. Zudem teilte die Zuverlässigkeit die Hälfte der Analyse und Wechselbeziehungen mit anderen Wohlbefindungsskalas in dieser Durchführung. Wir determinieren dadurch, dass die längere Form der Ryff-Skala einen hohen Zuverlässigkeitskoeffizienten, beziehungsweise einen ähnlichen oder sogar besseren Koeffizienten als andere bekannte Skalas darstellt. Im Folgenden werden wir eine Faktoranalyse an einer größen Studentengruppe duchführen, um weiterhin die Skala zu validieren. Die Skala ist ein zuverlässiges Instrument für die zukünftige Forschung und Beratung.

1. Introduction

The increasing interest in college students` well-being has heightened the need for developing and adapting instruments that measure accurately this construct. The study of students` well-being has become an important aspect of developing qualitative academic programs that foster not only an academic competence but also a social and personal one. More and more researchers (Dvorakova et al., 2017; Shapiro, Brown, Astin, 2008) view the mission of college education not only to train professionals but also to address the students as "whole persons", which includes, besides the professional knowledge, the socio-emotional dimension and the personal development. Other studies (Sparkman, Maulding & Roberts, 2012; Beauvais et al., 2013; Seider, Clark, & Soutter, 2015) emphasize the need to consider

the non-cognitive factors, such as well-being, in achieving academic success.

In recent years, researchers have become increasingly interested in the concept of well-being in the academic setting. The importance of studying this construct in the academic environment is linked to mental health issues encountered (Mulder, Cashin, 2015; Whiteside et al., 2017) but also with achievement (Turner, Scott-Young, Holdsworth, 2017) and preventing drop-out (Faas, Benson, Kaestle, Savla, 2017). All these arguments support the need to develop some university-based interventions to improve and foster well-being in the academic community along with some counseling programs aiming to enhance resilience.

2. The concept of well-being

Well-being is a central concept in positive psychology, over the last decades a lot of researchers focus their efforts to conceptualize and transfer it into practice. Two main directions have emerged in operationalization of the well-being construct: hedonic or eudaimonic (Chandler, Robinson, 2014). The hedonic approach views well-being as a state of subjective pleasure and satisfaction and its` been referenced as subjective well-being (SWB) (Bauer, Mcadams, 2010). The eudaimonic perspective views well-being as optimal functioning and positive life experiences (Ryan, Deci, 2001). The eudaimonic approach was theorized by Carol Ryff and Burton Singer (Ryff, Singer, 1998) and stands at the base of Ryff`s Pychological Well-being Scale. This approach stands at the base of the Psychological Well-being (PWB) and refers to the development of personal abilities, acting in accordance with high personal values, the attainment of personal potential or the experience of purpose and meaning in life (Mcmahan, Estes, 2011). Ryff (1998) advanced six dimensions of PWB: purpose in life, personal growth, self-acceptance, environmental mastery, autonomy and positive relations. These dimensions have been operationalized in the six scales of the Ryff`s PWBS. The purpose in life refers to having a meaning in life, a vocation, a meaningful direction (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Personal grows is viewed as a need of personal development and a desire of achieving ones` potential (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Self-acceptance means to have a positive attitude towards own self, to accept what we are with all the positive and negative aspects (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Environmental mastery invokes the perception of competence in environmental management, managing daily activities, and select fitting environments for

personal needs (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Positive relations indicates the capacity of developing and sustain satisfying relationships and to demonstrate empathy towards others (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Autonomy means to be independent, be self-determine and capable of making personal choices (Ryff & Singer, 2008).

3. Ryff's psychological well-being scale

In 1989 Ryff (1989) presented a new developed scale for assessing PWB, the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-being (PWBS), that operationalized the eudaimonic approach of well-being adopted by the author. She subsumed the well-being construct in six dimensions, presented above, operationalized in the six subscales of the instrument. Ryff`s PWBS was developed in a concept/ validity manner, with theoretically defining the six subscales, and items generated for each one (Ryff, 1989). The items were pretested and selected 20 valid items per scale. The validity and reliability of the scale was assessed, obtaining valid coefficients. Also the concurrent validity was assessed in relation with six scales which evaluate psychological dimensions related to well-being. The 3-items per scale (Ryff, Lee, Keyes, 1995) and 9-items per scale were further developed. Currently there are three forms in use: The long form - 14 items per scale, the mid-length form - 9 items per scale and the short form - 3 items per scale. Dr. Ryff recommends the use of the long form of PWBS as it was proved it does a good job of covering the content of the six well-being constructs.

Over 350 research articles using Ryff`s PWBS were published in more than 150 scientific journals (Ryff, 2014). Confirmations of the scale validity were presented in studies that used exploratory factor analyses (EFA) and confirmatory factor analyses (CFA). Some studies using EFA revealed that there are more than six factors extracted but others replicated the same factorial structure as the original study (Kállay, Rus, 2014). The studies using CFA determined contradictory findings (Kállay, Rus, 2014).

4. Romanian researches using Ryff's PWBS

Since 2010 Romanian researchers integrated the Ryff`s PWBS in their studies. Only one study (Kállay, Rus, 2014) aimed the Validation of one of the forms of Ryff`s scales, namely the mid-length 44 items scale. The study was conducted on 664 people aged 19 to 65, the maximum likelihood estimation method was used. The results indicated that the correlated six-factor model

presented a relatively good fit to the data and are similar to those provided by other studies that did not empirically provide a total support for the six- factor model of PWB (Kállay, Rus, 2014).

Other study (Negovan, 2010) used Ryff`s PWBS as a scale for measuring concurrent validity with an instrument, that the author developed, for assessment of PWB in students.

Most of the Romanian studies were conducted since 2015 and were using the instrument as a measure of well-being in correlation with other personality traits (Drăgan, 2014; Colomeischi, 2015; Buca, Calin, Mincu, 2016; Petrescu, Bogluţ, Teodor, 2016). Some studies used the instrument in studying therapeutic approaches (Chiriac, 2015; Vasile, 2016).

A few researches were conducted on college students (Chraif, Dumitru, 2015; Chraif, Miulescu, 2015; Petrescu et al., 2016), studying PWB in relation to sport practicing, gender differencing or quality of life. No study used the long-form of Ryff`s PWBS, all these studies used the mid-length form.

We consider that there is a great need of a reliable instrument for assessing students` well-being, adapted and validated on Romanian population. There is a current preoccupation at national level to prevent academic drop-out and one of the most efficient measures is to offer counseling services in universities. Ryff`s PWBS long form can be used in such services to assess and monitor the students well-being and resilience.

By this study we aim to assess the initial psychometric characteristics of long form of Ryff`s PWBS in order to better adapt the scale on Romanian population and to prepare it for the next step, the factor analysis.

5. Research methodology

Our *aim* is to adapt and validate the Ryff`s Scales of Psychological Well-Being long-form, (84 items) on Romanian students' population.

The research objectives are:

- To translate and adapt the Ryff`s PWBS long form on Romanian student population.

- To assess the psychometric characteristics of the scale.

- To validate it for research and counselling use.

Participants

Data were collected from a convenience sample made up of 90 college students enrolled in Educational Sciences studies in West University of Timisoara, bachelor (95.6%) and master (4.4%) degree. The bachelor students are enrolled in three specializations: Special Education (66.7%), Pedagogy (6.7%) and Primary and Preschool Education (22.2%). The age of participants ranged from 18 to 43 years (*M*=21.43, *SD*=4.31). Participants were 1 (1.1%) men and 89 women (98.9%). The participants were enrolled in first year of studies (62 - 68.9%), second year (16 - 17.8%) and 12 (13.3%) in the third. In terms of residence, 22 participants (24.4%) live in rural areas and 68 (75.6%) in urban environment. As living status, 56 (62.2%) live in rent, 22 (24.4%) live in campus, 7 (7.8%) with parents and 5 (5.6%) own a personal apartment. 58 (64.4%) students have a monthly budget lower than 1000 RON (225 EUR), 29 students (32.2%) have a monthly budget between 1000-2000 RON (225-450 EUR), and 3 (3.3%) bigger that 2000 RON (450 EUR).

Instruments

All participants completed on-line 3 instruments: Ryff`s PWBS long-form (84 items), Warwick- Edinburgh Mental Well-Being (WEMWBS) Scale (14 items) and Counseling Center Assessment of Psychological Symptoms CCAPS 34 (34 items). Before completing the questionnaires, the participants were informed about the aim and research objectives, the research team and the confidentiality conditions. At the beginning of the questionnaire the participants answered a socio-demographic questionnaire relating to individual characteristics: age, gender, specialization, academic year, residence, living status and monthly budget.

The main instrument which we aim to adapt and validate, is the Ryff`s PWBS, long-form (84 items). The scale is a theoretically grounded instrument that specifically focuses on measuring multiple facets of psychological well-being. There are 6 subscales (14 items per scale): autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Items from separate scales are mixed and participants respond on a 6-point item Likert scale from 1- strongly disagree to 6- strongly agree. The scale manual provided descriptions on meanings for high and low scores on each subscale. The high scores are

associated with good well-being on each of the six well-being facets.

For assessing concurrent validity, we administrated other two instruments related to well-being: WEMWBS and CAPPS 34.

WEMWBS is an instrument design to measure subjective well-being on adults over 16 years old. Mental well-being was defined by developers in relation to psychological functioning, life-satisfaction and ability to maintain mutually benefiting relationships (https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/med/research/platform/wemwbs/). The scale consists from 14 items, rated on a 5-point item Likert Scalev, where 1 represents none of the time and 5 all of the time. The WEMWBS is freely for use and can be downloaded from the developers` site.

CCAPS-34 is a 34-item instrument with seven subscales related to psychological symptoms or distress in college students and also includes the Distress Index. The seven subscales are: Depression, Generalized Anxiety, Social Anxiety, Academic Distress, Eating Concerns, Hostility, and Alcohol Use. The answers are rated on a 5-point Likert scale, where 0 represents not at all like me and 4 – extremely like me.

Procedure

The acceptance of using, adapting and validating the long form scale, for research and use, was obtained from the author. The Romanian translation was provided by the author, being made by Jenő-László Vargha and Corina Benea. All participants voluntarily participate in the research. All the students enrolled in Educational Sciences studies in West University of Timisoara received an e-mail presenting the study and the invitation to participate. In the beginning, after presenting the study and the research team, they were informed of the confidentiality and deontological conditions and briefed that by completing the questionnaire they give their consent to participate. From the total of 556 students, 90 choose to complete the questionnaire.

Statistical analysis was undertaken using SPPS v19 software (IBMSPSS, Chicago, IL). To test the psychometric proprieties of Riff's PWBS long-form, a reliability analysis per subscale and per item, split half and correlation with other well-being scales were conducted.

6. Results

First preliminary results (Table 1) were assessed: minimum, maximum, mean and standard deviation.

Table no. 1. *Descriptive statistics for Riff's scale and subscales*

Subscales	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ryff's score	2.93	5.55	4.59	.62
Autonomy	3.00	5.50	4.24	.86
Environmental mastery	1.86	5.71	4.41	.82
Personal growth	3.43	5.93	4.98	.60
Positive relations	2.64	6.00	4.69	.71
Purpose in life	2.38	5.85	4.56	.65
Self-acceptance	2.79	5.71	4.61	.74
Valid N (listwise)				

We can observe that similar means per subscales with the entire scale were obtained, showing a good consistency. Also, the standard deviations revealed a relatively homogenous distribution of the results.

Afterwards, a reliability analysis for the entire scale (Table no. 2) was conducted.

Table no. 2. *Reliability analysis for the Riff's PWBS long-form*

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.96	84

.96 Cronbach`s Alpha indicates a very good reliability of the scale.

We can observe that Cronbach`s Alpha for all six subscales are very good, indicating a reliable validity for all the subscales. In the case of two subscales (autonomy and Environmental mastery) we obtained better coefficients than that reported by the developers. All the

The next step was to calculate the reliability coefficient per subscale (Table no. 3).

Table no. 3. *Reliability analysis per subscales*

Subscales	Cronbach's Alpha	Developers` Reported Cronbach's Alpha
Autonomy	.87	.83
Environmental mastery	.91	.86
Personal Growth	.84	.85
Positive relations scale	.86	.88
Purpose in live scale	.83	.88
Self acceptance scale	.87	.91

subscales present reliability coefficients similar with those reported by the developers.

Next, we conducted a reliability analysis per item (Table no. 4) in order to determine which items must be reformulated to obtain a better adaptation and reliability

Table no. 4. *Reliability analysis per items*

Subscale	Cronbach's if Item Deleted	English item	Current translated item	New proposed form
Autonomy	.89	My decisions are not usually influenced by what everyone else is doing.	De obicei deciziile mele nu sunt influenţate de ceea ce fac toţi ceilalţi.	De obicei nu iau decizile în funcţie de ceea ce face majoritatea celor din jurul meu.
Personal Growth	.87	There is truth to the saying you can't teach an old dog new tricks.	Este adevărat ce se spune că nu poţi învăţa un câine bătrân figuri noi.	Este adevărat că la bătrâneţe poţi învăţa mai greu lucruri noi.
Purpose in live scale	.87	I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future.	Trăiesc clipa şi nu mă gândesc la viitor.	Trăiesc în present şi nu mă gândesc prea mult la viitor.
Self acceptance scale	.89	I made some mistakes in the past, but I feel that all in all everything has worked	Am făcut câteva greşeli în trecut dar simt că în cele din urmă totul a fost spre bine.	Am făcut câteva greşeli în trecut dar cred că ele m-au ajutat să evoluez spre bine.

We conducted the reliability analysis per item only to the four subscales where we obtained Cronbach`s Alpha coefficients lower than those reported by the developers.

We identified the items that mostly affected the subscale Cronbach`s Alpha and reformulated them in Romanian.

Also, a reliability split analysis was conducted (Table no. 5). With a mean score of 2.07, the generalized anxiety symptoms of our sample are similar with those reported for general population

Table no. 5. *Split-half reliability analysis*

Reliability Statistics			
Cronbach's Alpha	Part 1	Value	.93
		N of Items	47[a]
	Part 2	Value	.92
		N of Items	47[b]
		Total N of Items	94
Correlation Between Forms			.89
Spearman-Brown Coefficient	Equal Length		.94
	Unequal Length		.94
Guttman Split-Half Coefficient			.94

The results indicate a very good split-half reliability (Spearman-Brown Coefficient .94 and Guttman Split-Half Coefficient .94) and also a good correlation between forms (.89). The findings substantiate a very good split-half reliability for the adapted form.

Finally, we calculated the correlations of Riff's PWBS long-form with 2 scales (Table 6) relevant for the well/being construct: WEMWBS and CCAPS-34.

Table no. 6: *Correlations with other scales*

		CCAPS-34	WEMWBS
Autonomy	Pearson Correlation	-.43[*]	.54[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00
Environmental mastery	Pearson Correlation	-.81[**]	.80[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00
Personal growth	Pearson Correlation	-.58[**]	.60[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00

Positive relations	Pearson Correlation	-.57**	.66**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00
Purpose in life	Pearson Correlation	-.72**	.67**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00
Self acceptance	Pearson Correlation	-.78**	.73**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00

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

All the correlations obtained are significant at 0.01 level. All the six Riff's PWBS subscales have positively correlated with the general score of WEMWBS. All the six Ryff`s PWBS subscales have negatively correlated with the general score of CCAPS-34 – the higher the well-being is, the lower the symptoms of mental distress.

7. Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to adapt and measure the psychometric proprieties of Riff's PWBS, long-form. The motivation for this intercession is to further validate the scale for research and use it on the Romanian student population. The higher education institutions strive to offer more than professional development for their students, and to include more and more the personal dimension of development: fostering resilience and well-being. The high drop-out rates at academic level have determined the development and implementation of counseling programs and services that aim to assist student beyond learning, to their personal development. These services need valid instruments to measure the well-being, resilience and mental health and to monitor students` progress in counseling. Also such an instrument facilitates the cross-cultural comparison of students` well-being.

We obtained from the test developers the agreement to use the test for research and counseling purposes. The Romanian translation of the scales was realised by Jenő-László Vargha and Corina Benea and was provided by the authors. But because they were not involved with creating the translations, they cannot vouch for their quality. We test via gforms questionnaire 90 students from the Educational Sciences Department.

The results indicate a very good reliability score per test and per each subscale, for two of the subscale alpha Cronbach was even better than the developers` reported one. For the subscales where we obtain a lower alpha Cronbach, we conducted a reliability analysis per items, reformulating the items with the lowest alpha Cronbach, to raise the reliability per subscale.

Also, the split-half reliability was measured, obtaining very good coefficients.

The concurrent validity was assessed by correlating Ryff`s PWBS long form subscales with other two tests related to well-being: WEMWBS and CAPPS 34. The obtained coefficients indicate a very good positive correlation with WEMWBS (well-being) and a negative correlation with symptoms of mental distress, assessed by CAPPS 34.

In the end, we can conclude that the initial validation coefficients are encouraging for good scale validity and we can take the next research step, increasing the number of participants and conducting the factorial analysis.

Authors note:

Anca Luştrea is Associate Professor, a principal supervisor psychologist in Special Education since 2013, she has a rich experience in the theory and practice of special and inclusive education, mainly in special didactics. Key areas of interests include Special Didactics, Educational Inclusion, Case management in Special Education and Psychology of deaf children.

Loredana Al Ghazi is Assistant Professor, she has a Ph.D. in Psychology and is a principal supervisor psychologist in Special Education. Assistant Professor Loredana Al Ghazi is the director of the University Clinic for Therapies and Psycho-pedagogic Counseling of the West University of Timişoara. Her key areas of interest include Developmental psychology, Counseling and Positive psychology.

Mihai Predescu is Associate Professor, he has Ph.D. in Psychology and is a principal psychologist in Special Education. Associate Professor Mihai Predescu is the director of the Center for Educational Support and Integration (CAIP) of the West University of Timişoara. His key areas of interest include disabilities studies, intellectual disabilities and research methodology.

References

Bauer, J.J., & Mcadams, D.P. (2010). Eudaimonic Growth: Narrative Growth Goals Predict Increases in Ego Development and Subjective Well-Being 3 Years Later. *Developmental Psychology*, *46*(4), 761-772. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0019654.

Beauvais, A.M., et al. (2013). Factors related to academic success among nursing students: A descriptive correlational research study. *Nurse Education Today*. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2013.12.005.

Buca, A., Călin, M., Mincu, L. (2016). The relationship between HEXACO model of personality and employee well-being. *Romanian Journal of Experimental Applied Psychology, 7*(1), 26-37. doi:10.15303/rjeap.2016.v7i1.a4.

Chandler, R.C., & Robinson, O C. (2014). Wellbeing in retirement villages: Eudaimonic challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Aging Studies 31*, 10-19. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaging.2014.08.001.

Chiriac, G.R. (2015). Optimizing the level of well-being in personal development groups in integrative therapy. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *187*, 708-712. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.03.132.

Chraif, M., Dumitru, D. (2015). Gender differences on Wellbeing and Quality of life at young students at psychology. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *180*, 1579-1583. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.02.310.

Chraif, M., Miulescu, M. (2015). Personality Traits and Level of Well-Being Predictors for the Public Presentations at Young Student at Psychology. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *203*, 380-385. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.08.312.

Colomeischi, A.A. (2015). Wellbeing: Emotional Factors and Expectancy for Success. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *190*, 48-53. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.04.915.

Drăgan, D. (2014). Exploration of the relationship between well-being and burden in family caregivers: A community-based research project. *Undergraduate Journal of Service Learning and Community-Based Research, 3*. Retrieved from http://www.bk.psu.edu/Academics/36621.htm.

Dvorakova, K., Kishida, M., Li, J., Elavsky, S., Broderick, P.C., Agrusti, M.R., Greenberg, M.T. (2017). Promoting Healthy Transition to College through Mindfulness Training with 1st year College Students: Pilot Randomized Controlled Trial. *Journal of American College Health*, *65*(4), 259-267. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodres.2010.03.019

Faas, C., Benson, M.J., Kaestle, C.E., Savla, J. (2017). Socioeconomic success and mental health profiles of young adults who drop out of college. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2017.1406598.

Kállay, É., Rus, C. (2014). Psychometric properties of the 44-item version of Ryff's psychological well-being scale. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, *30*(1), 15-21. https://doi.org/10.1027/1015-5759/a000163.

Mcmahan, E.A., Estes, D. (2011). Hedonic versus Eudaimonic Conceptions of Well- Being: Evidence of Differential Associations with Self-Reported Well-Being. *Social Indicators Research*, *103*(1), 1-34. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-010-9698-0.

Mulder, A.M., Cashin, A. (2015). Health and wellbeing in students with very high psychological distress from a regional Australian university. *Advances in Mental Health*, *13*(1),72-83. https://doi.org/10.1080/18374905.2015.1035618

Negovan, V. (2010). Dimensions of students' psychosocial well-being and their measurement: Validation of a students' Psychosocial Well Being Inventory. *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, *2*, 85-104. Retrieved from www.ejop.org.

Petrescu, M., Bogluţ, A., Teodor, M. (2016). A correlative study between the level of well-being, self- esteem, life satisfaction, openness and sport practicing at students at psychology. *Romanian journal of experimental applied psychology RJEAP*, *7*(1), 23-25. Retrieved from http://www.rjeap.ro/files/vol7si1p2015/PSIWORLD_2015_PROCEEDINGS_RJEAP_ART_a86.pdf.

Ryan, R.M., Deci, E.L. (2001). On happiness and human potentials: A Review of Research on Hedonic and

Eudaimonic Well-Being. *Annu. Rev. Psychol, 52*, 141-66. Retrieved from http://wisebrain.org/papers/HappinessLR.pdf.

Ryff, C.D. (1989). In the eye of the beholder: Views of psychological well-being among middle-aged and older adults. *Psychology and Aging*, *4*(2), 195-210. https://doi.org/10.1037/0882-7974.4.2.195.

Ryff, C.D. (2014). Psychological Well-Being Revisited: Advances in the Science and Practice of Eudaimonia. *Psychother Psychosom*, *83*, 10-28. https://doi.org/10.1159/000353263.

Ryff, C.D., Lee, C., Keyes, M. (1995). The Structure of Psychological Well-Being Revisited. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *69*(4), 719-727. Retrieved from http://midus.wisc.edu/findings/pdfs/830.pdf.

Ryff, C.D., Singer, B. (1998). The countours of Positive Human Health. *Psychological Inquiry*, *9*(1), 1-28.

Ryff, C.D., Singer, B.H. (2008). Know thyself and become what you are: A eudaimonic approach to psychological well-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *9*, 13-39. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-006-9019-0.

Seider, S.C., Clark, S., Soutter, M. (2015). A Critically Conscious Approach to Fostering the Success of College Students from Underrepresented Groups. *Journal of College and Character*, *16*(4), 253-262. https://doi.org/10.1080/2194587X.2015.1091362.

Shapiro, S.L., Brown, K.W., Astin, J.A. (2008). Toward the Integration of Meditation into Higher Education: A Review of Research Prepared for the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society. Retrieved from http://www.contemplativemind.org/files/MedandHigherEd.pdf.

Sparkman, L.A., Maulding, W.S., Roberts, J.G. (2012). Non-cognitive predictors of student success in college. *Coll. Stud. J. 46* (3), 642-652.

Stevens, M.J., Constantinescu, P.-M., Butucescu, A. (2011). Aspirations and wellbeing in Romanian and US undergraduates. *International Journal of Psychology*, *46*(6), 436-445. https://doi.org/10.1080/00207594.2011.565344.

Turner, M., Scott-Young, C.M., Holdsworth, S. (2017). Promoting wellbeing at university: the role of resilience for students of the built environment. *Construction Management and Economics, 35*(11-12), 707-718. https://doi.org/10.1080/01446193.2017.1353698.

Vasile, T. (2016). Improving the well-being level by participating in a personal development training using therapeutic techniques. *Romanian Journal of Experimental Applied Psychology, 7(*3), 56-66. doi:10.15303/rjeap.2016.v7i3.a5.

Whiteside, M., Bould, E., Tsey, K., Venville, A., Cadet-James, Y., Morris, M.E. (2017). Promoting Twenty-first-century Student Competencies: A Wellbeing Approach. *Australian Social Work*, *70*(3), 324-336. https://doi.org/10.1080/0312407X.2016.1263351. https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/med/research/platform/wemwbs

.

Parents' view on the integration of the students with special needs in the mainstream education

Nicoleta Lupu

Parents' view on the integration of the students with special needs in the mainstream education

Nicoleta Lupu [a*]

[a] Special School, 125, 13 Decembrie Street, 500164, Braşov, Romania

Corresponding author: gheorghenicoleta22@yahoo.com

Abstract	
Keywords: *integration, attitude, special educational needs*	The present article is a qualitative research, aiming to answer the following question: "What is the parents' view regarding the integration of the students with special needs into mainstream schools?" In order to answer this question, the group interview method was employed. The focus group was attended by ten respondents, parents of the typical students of an urban school at the lower secondary school level. The results showed a positive attitude towards people with disabilities in general, but the degree of tolerance and acceptance of the parents decreases when it comes to integrating students with special educational needs with their own children. The data processed through content analysis is a starting point for future research into the community attitudes towards the inclusion of the students with special needs.

Zusammenfasung	
Schlüsselworte: Integration, Haltung, spezielle pädagogische Bedürfnisse	Der gegenwärtige Artikel ist eine qualitative Forschung, vorhabend, auf die folgende Frage zu antworten: "Was betrachtet die Ansicht von Eltern die Integration der Studenten mit speziellen Bedürfnissen in Hauptströmungsschulen?", um auf diese Frage zu antworten, wurde die Gruppeninterview-Methode beschäftigt(eingesetzt). Die Fokus-Gruppe wurde von zehn Beklagten, Eltern der typischen Studenten einer städtischen Schule am niedrigeren Niveau der höheren Schule aufgewartet. Die Resultate zeigten eine positive Haltung Leuten mit Körperbeschädigungen im allgemeinen, aber dem Grad der Toleranz und Annahme der Eltern-Abnahmen, wenn es zu Integrierung von Studenten mit speziellen pädagogischen Bedürfnissen mit ihren eigenen Kindern kommt. Die Gegebenheiten(Daten) gingen durch Inhaltsanalyse in einer Prozession ist ein Ausgangspunkt für zukünftige Forschung in die Gemeinschaft-Haltungen zur Einbeziehung der Studenten mit speziellen Bedürfnissen.

1. Introduction

Enăchescu (1973) considers that the status of the people with disabilities stems from the attitude of society towards disabilities and disabled people.The attitude of the family, the entourage of a deficient child contribute to the formation of a positive or negative self-image. The members of a family having a child with special educational needs can react differently. Năstase (2007) describes the types of reactions, starting from fight, resignation, acceptance to depression, fear, self-blame, denial, anger. And the attitudes of teachers towards the students with special educational needs may range from an attitude of rejection, resistance, fear, indifference to involvement and acceptance. The attitude of the teacher influences those of the disabled student's colleagues and their parents. Lupu (2017) investigated the attitude of a small group of teachers towards the integration of the students with special educational needs in mass education

through the group interview method (10 teachers involved in mainstream education, in Braşov county, urban environment, lower secondary school and secondary school level).The results showed a positive attitude. Participating teachers do not believe that disabled students spoil the image of the school, this category of students having the right to education, health and vocational training. Furthermore, participating teachers believe that the students with moderate and severe disabilities can make progress in mainstream school, the presence of a student with special needs in class not being considered extra work for the teacher. Regarding the ranking of disabilities, the teachers find that students with hearing impairment are the hardest to integrate into mainstream education, followed by the severe mental disability and visual impairment. Easier to integrate are the students with physical disabilities and the students with mild mental disabilities.

Regarding the attitude of parents, Palmer et all (1998) apud Palmer et all (2001) shows that parents' for or against

attitudes depend on their subjective assessment and the context. Pivik, McComas, Laflamme (2002) concluded that the parents of the students believe that the integration of the students with severe disabilities is a difficult process with a negative impact on the other students. Moore (2002) measured the attitude towards integrating of 196 parents of children without disabilities and of 47 parents of children with disabilities. It was also investigated whether parents' attitude differs according to the child's disability. The results showed that parents of both categories of children generally have a positive attitude, the success of integration being dependent on the support and resources of the integrating school. Although there were no significant differences depending on the disability of the child, parents are aware that the integration of the children with severe disabilities will be more difficult. Brandon (2006) shows that the parents of the children with severe disabilities show reluctance and rejection when it is attempted to integrate their children into mainstream education, considering those mainstream classes a place where the teacher is overstrained, overwhelmed and without the necessary experience, where the students are intolerant and without self-control and where the curriculum is inflexible. Yssel et all (2007) shows that parents' perception of inclusion is similar, regardless of the background. Participants in this study were the parents of children with disabilities in two provinces in South Africa and the parents of children with disabilities in two districts in America. The parents participated voluntarily and expressed their view on integration through a focus group. The themes of the focus group were: parental rights, social issues, the acceptance of children with disabilities. The results showed that the political, ethnic, cultural differences between the two continents do not influence parents' expectations, their experiences, frustrations, needs, appreciations. The study highlights the need to train the teachers to work with the parents of children with disabilities. Bochenek (2008) investigates parents' attitudes regarding the integration of children with disabilities into the mainstream education and what they think of the services that an inclusive school offers to these children. The attitude of 271 parents of children with disabilities and parents of children without disabilities from a primary school in Michigan was measured. There were no significant differences between the two groups of parents as regards their attitude towards inclusion. Parents show diverse feelings from worry, reserve to encouraging the integration programs. Hilbert (2009) compares the attitude towards inclusion between the parents of pre-school children with disabilities and the parents of preschool children without disabilities. It has

been shown that parents whose children have no disabilities are supportive and permissive in terms of educating their child beside a disabled one. Instead, the parents of the students with special educational needs are reserved regarding the integration into a normal class, anticipating more risks. Their attitude is influenced by the ethnicity and the seriousness of the child's disability.

In Romania, Horga (2009) in a project entitled "The situation of the children with special educational needs included in the mainstream education", developed by the Institute of Educational Sciences, investigated the opinion of the students with and without special needs on this topic, their parents, teachers, school administrators and inspectors through individual interviews, group interviews and a questionnaire. Opinions were asked about the readiness of the educational system to integrate students with special educational needs (human resources, materials), school environment issues (activities for students with special educational needs, group integration, evaluation, collaboration with the family), family environment issues (family perception of school, parent involvement, collaboration with teachers), aspects regarding the wider social environment. The conclusions highlighted the fact that the integration of the students with special educational needs into the mainstream school did not lead to the development of an inclusive school culture. In addition, teachers do not have enough training, they claim difficulties regarding curriculum adaptation, a useless effort considering that The National Evaluation contest does not provide special subjects but only specific organizational conditions. There is criticism of the insufficient number of support teachers, the diagnosis of the student with special needs and monitoring the case. The parents are pleased with the curricular adaptation because the children have the opportunity to solve school tasks. The teachers recall three categories of parents of the students with special educational needs: parents who are actively involved, parents who do not accept the child's listing as having special needs, and parents who have an indifferent attitude. Although the inclusive education policy is not very popular, and there are still schools that do not receive students with special educational needs, the majority of teachers and parents have highlighted the beneficial effects of integration, including the need for socialization. In a sociological study in Chisinau, Malcoci et all (2015) measures the attitude towards inclusion in children with special educational needs and their parents, typical children and their parents, teachers, school managers, and coordinators of centers for inclusive education through

individual and group interviews. The parents of the typical children consider that any child regardless of health problems can attend school, but the children with physical disabilities are more likely to be accepted in mainstream schools than those with intellectual disabilities and behavioral disorders, arguing that they have inappropriate behaviour that disturbs and the constant need to be supervised. The parents of the students with special educational support the inclusion in mainstream schools, noting that children are thus not isolated, communicating with their fellow students. Instead, the vulnerable families prefer boarding schools.

In a study "The inclusion of the children with disabilities in the education system" in Moldova, 285 boys and 325 girls were interviewed, typical students in lower secondary school and secondary school classes, more than 400 teachers in the primary, lower secondary and secondary school, and over 1300 parents of students with and without special needs. The respondents were asked how the family with a child with special needs should act regarding their education. The vast majority of parents believe that these children should be cared for in the family, others have opted for their placement in special institutions, and only 17% want them to be enrolled in a mainstream school. For parents, the most rejected group in terms of integration into a mainstream school is the group of mentally disabled students, followed by visual impairment and hearing impairment. To the question "Would you accept children with special needs in the same class with your child?", 38.5% of the parents answered certainly not, and 34.3% probably not, with the most rejected being the children with mental disabilities. With regard to the disadvantages of integration, 60.4% of parents were not able to invoke any disadvantage for the healthy children. The rest have argued that conflicts would arise, that the typical students would be distracted from school classes, and the students with special needs would be offended, discriminated against, and would not cope with the school curriculum. Among the advantages mentioned was socialization, a better subsequent integration into society, the sense of equality, the typical students will become better and more caring.

In a comparative study on knowledge, attitudes and practices in the area of educational inclusion, Cheianu (2011) has come to the following conclusions: parents perceive the student with special needs as a mentally retarded student with hearing or vision difficulties, a child with physical deficiencies attending either a normal school or a special school. Most students, parents, and teachers feel

compassion for the students with special needs. Others are against inclusion. 109 teachers, 285 pupils and 285 parents from the Central Region of the Republic of Moldova were interviewed.

The synthesis of the studies presented above allows the following conclusions:

Parents consider that any child, regardless of the health problems has the right to education, but accepting a child with special needs in mainstream schools depends on the type and severity of the deficiency, being more tolerant towards the students with physical disabilities than towards the students with mental deficiencies.

Parents justify that students with special needs through their inappropriate behavior will upset the other students and draw the teacher's attention to them, to the detriment of the other children; in addition, children with special needs will be discriminated against and offended and will not cope with the program and the school curriculum.

Among the advantages of mainstream school integration are: students with special needs socialize, developing the sense of equality, preparing for integration into society, developing the empathy of the typical students

By comparing the attitudes of the parents of the typical students with the attitude of the parents of the students with special needs, it has been shown that the parents of the typical students are more supportive and permissive than the parents of disabled students, who consider the integration of the child with special needs into a normal class as being risky, the success being dependent on the preparation of the inclusive school.

The attitude towards inclusion has been measured through individual and group interviews, questionnaires and Likert Scales.

There is a large number of studies and projects on the inclusion of students with special educational needs in the Republic of Moldova. This area still needs special attention in Romania.

2. Objectives

The objective of the study is to investigate the attitude of a small group of parents towards the integration into the mainstream education of students with the special educational needs, as knowing this attitude allows the development of programs aiming at changing attitude and implicitly of favouring integration.

3. Materials and methods

This study is a qualitative research. The method used for data collection is the group interview method. The interview discusses integrating the students with special educational needs into mainstream education and contains 19 questions (opening questions, key questions, final questions). The group interview took place in an integrative school, in Braşov County, with the approval of the headmaster. The Interview Guide is presented in Appendix 1.

Data interpretation is done by analyzing the frequency and prevalence of the answers. The answers provided by parents during the interview were classified and coded on a scale of 1 to 5 in order to be statistically processed, where 1 implies total disagreement, 2-partial disagreement, 3-neutral, 4-partial agreement, 5-total agreement.

The participants in the interview are 10 parents of typical students in mainstream education, urban environment, lower secondary level. The participants are aged between 29 and 60 (Figure no. 1), 5 are women, 5 are men, 5 have higher education, 3 high school and 2 secondary education (Figure no. 2). The respondents are not parents of children with special needs, the children of 5 of them are colleagues with the students with disabilities.
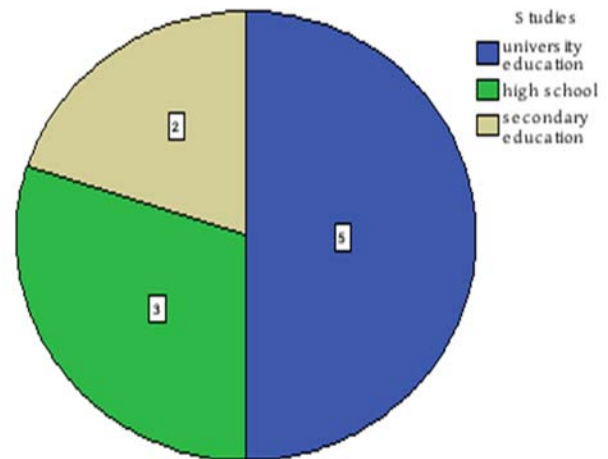

Figure no. 1. *The distribution of participants by age*

Figure no. 2. *The distribution of participants according to their studies*

4. Results

The parents' answers to the questions in the interview will be presented in the form of graphs.

The questions start from general to particular and investigate the parents' attitudes towards the people with disabilities in general and the attitudes towards the students with special educational needs and their integration with their own children.

Regarding the questions on the integration of people with disabilities in general (Are the people with special needs entitled to health and recovery services?/ Do the people with special needs have the right to education?/ Do the people with special needs have the right to professional training for employment?), all parents have expressed their full agreement with the rights of this category to health, education and professional training.

In the statement "The place of the students with special educational needs is in special education institutions", 6 parents expressed their total and partial disagreement, considering that the place of students with special educational needs is with the other children in the mainstream school, 3 parents agree that students with special educational need to be educated in special schools and one parent remained neutral (Figure no. 3).

Figure no. 3. *Frequency of the answers to the statement "The place of the students with special educational needs is in special education"*

In the statement "The place of the students with special educational needs is in special education institutions", 6 parents expressed their total and partial disagreement, considering that the place of students with special educational needs is with the other children in the mainstream school, 3 parents agree that students with special educational need to be educated in special schools and one parent remained neutral (Figure no. 3).
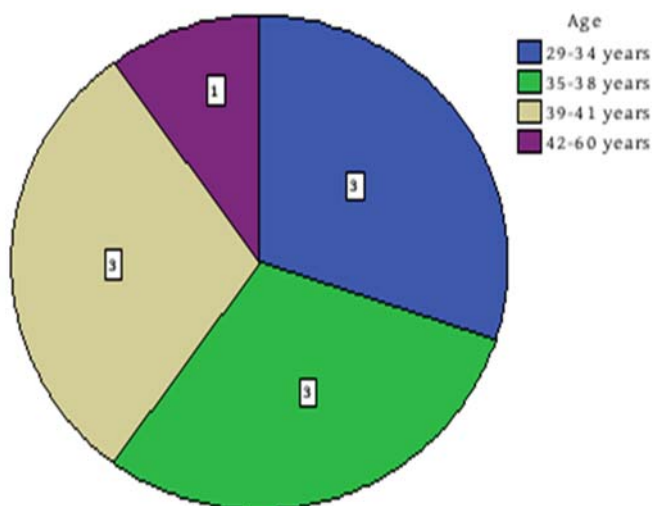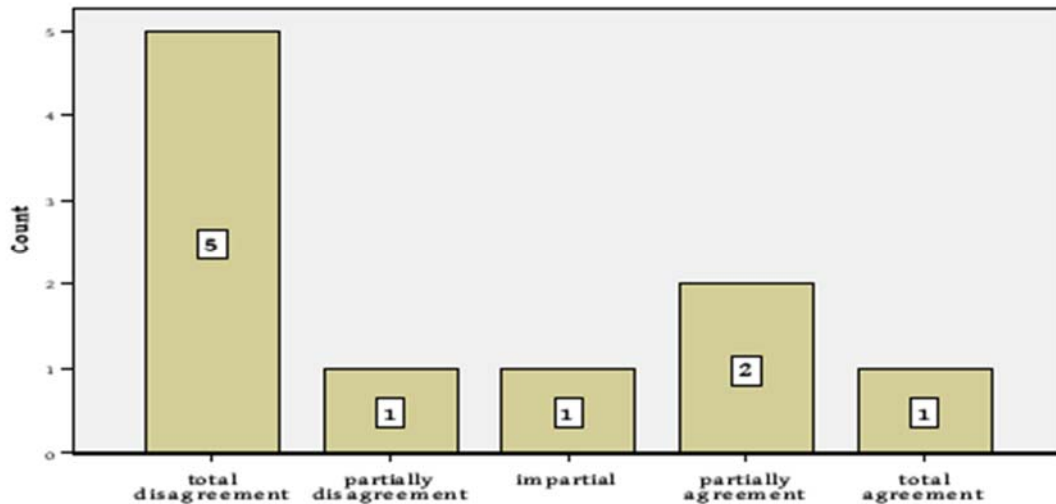
As far as the image of the school is concerned, the parents' opinions are equally divided, 4 parents consider that the students with special educational needs do not spoil the image of the school, while 4 of them think that the image of the school is affected (Figure no. 4).
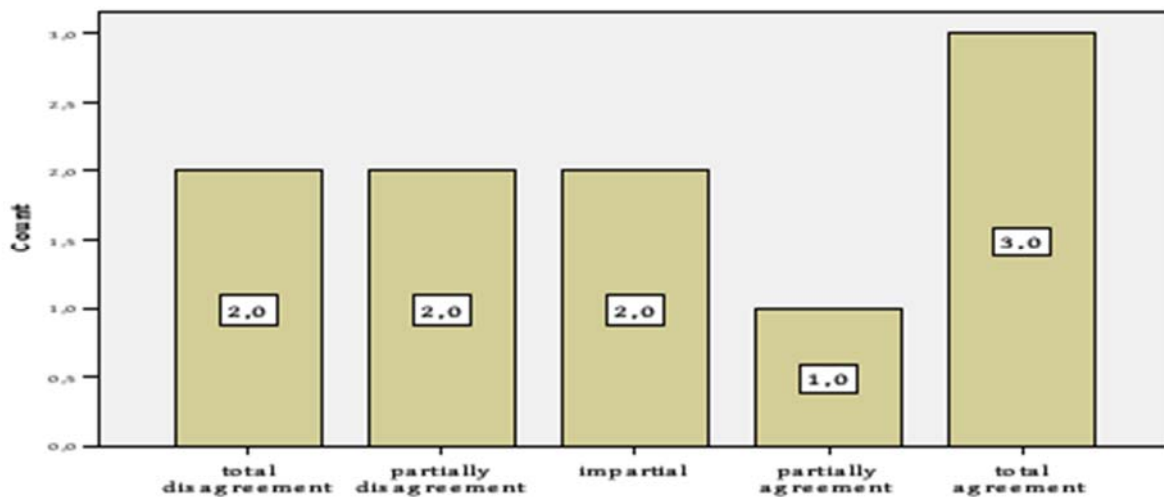
Figure no. 4. *Frequency of the answers to the statement "The school image is not affected by the presence of the students with special educational needs"*

With regard to the statement "School should not be equipped for the needs of the students with special educational needs because it is not a special school", 6 parents totally and partially agree that a school cannot have the facilities of a special school because it does not address this category (Figure no. 5).
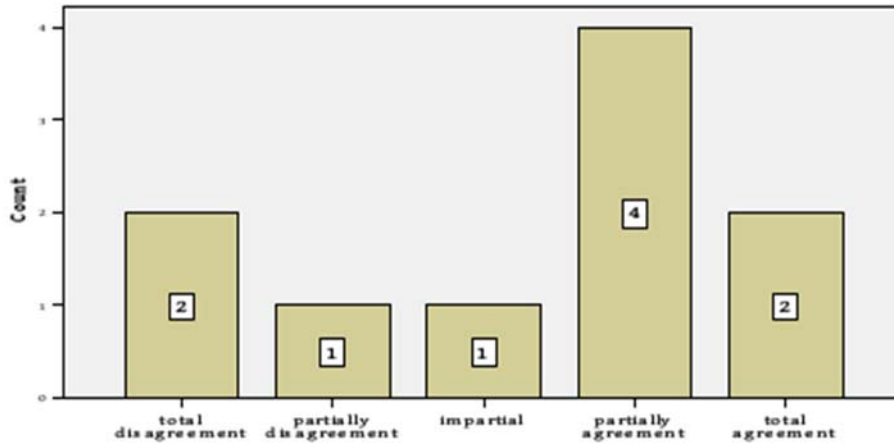
Figure no. 5. *Frequency of the answers to the statement "School should not be equipped for the needs of the students with special educational needs because it is not a special school"*

The answers to the question "Should school choose the students with special educational needs depending on the severity of their disability?" have highlighted the fact that parents agree to integrate students with special educational needs into mainstream schools but depending on the severity of the disability. Thus, 9 of the respondents stated that only mildly disabled students should be integrated into the mainstream school (Figure no. 6), 7 of them considering that the students with severe disabilities should only be partially integrated, for social development (Figure no. 7).

Figure no. 6. *Frequency of answers to the statement "Only students with mild disabilities should be integrated into the mainstream school"*

Figure no. 7. *Frequency of the answers to the statement "Seriously disabled students should be partially integrated into mainstream schools"*

The answers to the question "Does the presence of the students with special educational needs hinder the classroom activity of other students?" have shown that 6 parents consider that a student with special educational needs can have a negative impact on the typical students (Figure no. 8), attracting the teacher's attention constantly to the detriment of their own children.

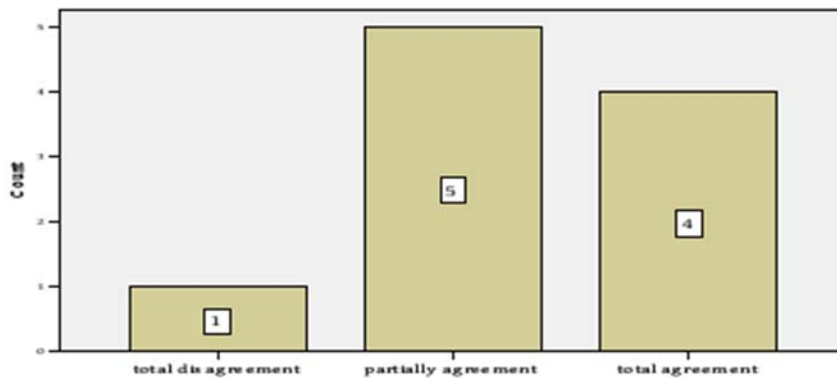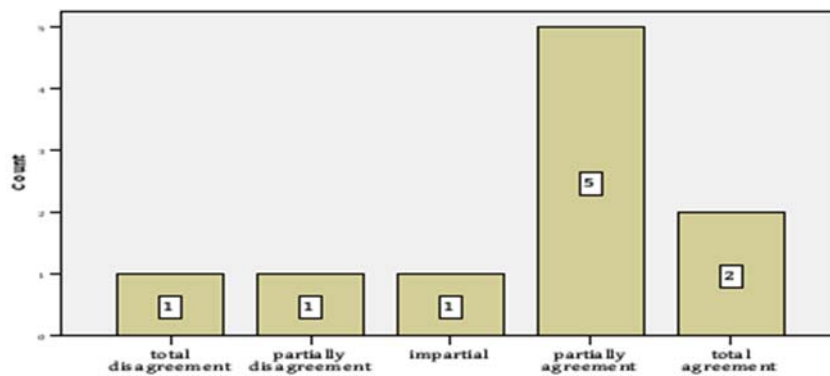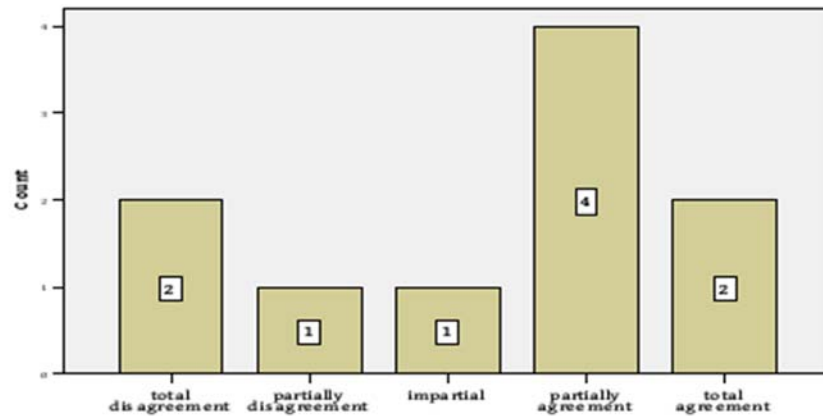Figure no. 8. *Frequency of answers to the statement "The student with special educational needs has a negative impact on the other students in a class"*

As a result of the questions regarding the integration of the students according to the type of disability, the following ranking can be seen. At the top of the pyramid, there is the type of disability that is difficult to integrate, and at the base of the pyramid there is the type of slight disability easy to integrate in the mainstream school (Figure no. 9). It can be noticed that the students with physical disabilities and language deficiencies are more easily accepted into mainstream schools compared to the students with severe mental disabilities and students with sensory impairments, the parents being of the opinion that teachers are not prepared to work with such students.
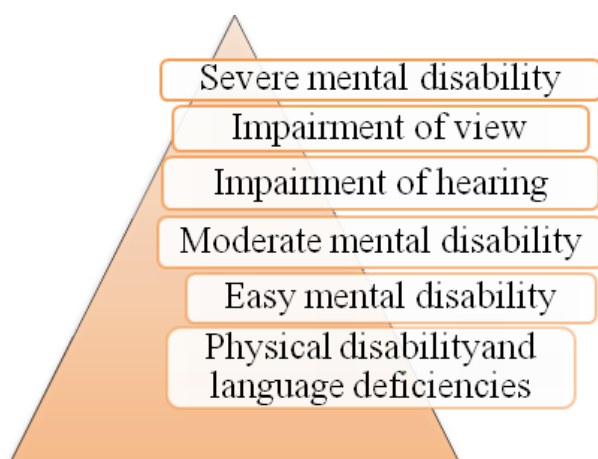
Figure no. 9. *Ranking of disabilities*

Conclusions and discussions

The purpose of this study was to investigate the attitude of a small group of parents towards the integration of students with special educational needs in mass education through the group interview method.

Most parents agreed that people with special educational needs have the right to education, considering that the place of the students with special educational needs is with the other children. Although they do not agree with the compulsory integration into the special education, the gravity of the disability influences the attitude. The parents interviewed said that the students with severe disabilities should be only partially integrated into mainstream schools. In addition, most parents are more tolerant of light disabilities, agreeing that students with mild disabilities can make progress in a class with typical students. Parents also exhibit a high degree of tolerance towards the students with physical disabilities, mild mental disabilities and language disorders, with the most reluctant categories being severe mental disabilities and sensory impairments. As for the presence of the students with special educational needs in the classroom, the parents consider that the students with special educational needs monopolize the teacher's attention, to the detriment of the other students, having a negative impact on their own children.

The results obtained are supported by other studies in the literature that have shown that parents support the inclusion of the students with special educational needs, but their attitude is influenced by the severity, the type of disability of the students and the degree of proximity to their own children. Based on these results, it is desirable to develop a tool to allow parents to investigate parents' attitudes in a larger number, in a shorter time and respecting the principle of anonymity.

The results of the study can be used at institutional level in the activity of school psychologists in mainstream education in combating discrimination and in forming an inclusive policy through the development of programs aimed at changing the attitudes of the members of the community.

Authors note:

Lupu Nicoleta is Ph.D. student, University of Bucharest, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences Teacher Support, Special School, Brasov, Romania. Topic of interest: Special Psychopedagogy

References

Boechenek, H.L. (2008). Approving or Disapproving: Parent Perception of Inclusion of the Elementary Level. *Dissertation,* Walden University, accessed online ProQuest Central.

Brandon, Dorothy P. (2006). Botswana's family and consumer sciences teachers' attitude towards the inclusion of students with physical disabilities. *Journal of Family and Consumer Science Education*, 24(1), pp. 37-49.

Cheianu-Andrei, D. (2011). *Comparative study on the knowledge, attitudes and practices in the field of educational inclusion of the children with special educational needs at family, school, community level.* Chişinau: Sociopolis Center of Investigation and Consulting.

Enăchescu, C. (1973). *Elements of projective psychology.* Bucharest: Scientific Publishing House.

Hilbert, D.D. (2009). Perceptions of parents of preschool children with and without disabilities regarding inclusion. *Dissertation*, Norman, Oklahoma, accessed on June 14, 2016, ProQuest Central.

Horga, I. (2009). Education of children with special educational needs in mainstream education, personalization endeavour in the Romanian school. *Pedagogical Magazine*, 7-9, pp. 143-156.

Lupu, N. (2017). Teachers' opinions towards the integration of students with special needs in mass education. *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Brasov,* Series VII: Social Sciences, Law, Vol. 10 (59) No. 1, pp. 29-37.

Malcoci, L., Chistruga-Sinchevici, I. (2015). *Including the students with special educational needs in community schools.* Sociological study. Chişinău: NGO Alliance, Global Campaign for Education, Swedish Organization for Individual Relief.

Moore, J. (2002). Parental Perceptions of Inclusion. *Dissertation*, Mount Saint Vicent University, online accessed June 14, 2016, ProQuest Central.

Năstase, L., Cocoradă, E. (2007). *Fundamentals of Special Psychopedagogy. Introduction in speech therapy.* Sibiu: Psychomedia.

Palmer, D.S., Fuller, K., Arora, T., Nelson, M. (2001). Taking Sides: Parent Views on Inclusion for Their Children with Severe Disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 67 (4), pp. 467-484.

Pivik, J., McComas, J., Laflamme, M. (2002). Barriers and Facilitators to Inclusive Education, *Exceptional Children*, 69 (1), pp. 97-107.

Yssel, N., Engelbrecht, P., Oswald, M., Eloff, I., Swart, E. (2007). Views of Inclusion. A Comparative Study of Parents Perception in South Africa and the United States. *Remedial and Special Education*, 26 (6), p. 356.

*** Inclusion of the children with disabilities in the educational system. Sociological study conducted within the project "Promotion of inclusive education at local level through changing the attitudes towards children with disabilities" implemented by IDIS Viitorul in partnership with UNICEF Moldova, accessed online on 03/01/2018 *https://www.unicef.org/moldova/Incluziunea_copiilor_cu_dizabiltati.docx*.

<div align="right">**APPENDIX A**</div>

<div align="center">**Interview Guide**</div>

Type of interview: focus group
Theme: The integration of the students with special educational needs into mainstream education
Place: Braşov
Date of interview: 25.01.2018
Interview time: 17:00
Interview duration: 30-40 min.
Number of interviewees: 10
Socio-demographic data of respondents: gender / age / background

I am ... and I am making a focus group on "The integration of students with special educational needs into mainstream education". Do you agree to answer some of my questions about this topic? Anything related to the theme can be said. There are no restrictions. All experiences are just as valuable for the purpose of the research. There are no better or more interesting experiences. No one judges the other. It is important for everyone to feel free to speak in his/her own way. When someone wants to intervene, they can do it when they feel the need, without asking for permission, but after making sure that the one who was talking before finished what s/he has to say. In order not to lose your idea, you can make a discreet sign to the moderator. We assure you of the confidentiality of the answers. The data will only be used for research purposes. I estimate the interview will take place over 30-40 minutes and I thank you in advance for your participation. Are you ready? Can we start? Does anyone have a question before we start?

Opening questions:
1. Tell me who you are and what you do?
In order to avoid any doubts, I would like to clarify what a student with special educational needs means and what is involved in the process of his/her integration into mainstream education. The students with Special Educational Needs (CES) are students with sensory impairments (hearing, vision impairment), physical-motor disabilities, mental disabilities (mild / moderate / severe) students with language disorders, students with behavioral disorders, multiple associated disabilities, students with autism, ADHD, other developmental disorders. School integration involves including the students with special educational needs in the mainstream school and the participation, depending on the potential, alongside other children in learning activities.
2. Are you the parents of students with special needs?
3. Are your children colleagues with students with special needs?
Key Questions
4. Are the people with special educational needs entitled to health and recovery services?
5. Do the people with special needs have the right to education?
6. Are the people with special needs entitled to professional training for employment?
So far, we have talked about your general opinion about the rights of the people with disabilities. Next, we will talk about the integration of the students with disabilities in the mainstream school.
7. What do you think about the statement "The place of the students with special educational needs is in the special education system"?
8. Do you think that the image of school is affected by the presence of the students with special educational needs?
9. What do you think of the statement "School should choose the students with special educational needs depending on the severity of their disability"?
10. What do you think about the statement: "School should not be equipped for the needs of the students with disabilities because it is not a special school"?
11. The presence of the students with special educational needs hinders the classroom activity of other students. What do you think about this statement?
Before I move on, I would like to tell you that I am pleased with the way the discussion progresses. We have learned a lot of interesting things that will help us to better understand the attitude towards integration. Please let me know if you want to make a change in the way we work. Now I would like to talk about the types of disabilities and to what extent you consider that the students with certain disabilities can integrate into mainstream education.
12. What do you think about integrating students with hearing impairment?

13. What do you think of integrating visually impaired students?

14. What do you think about integrating the students with physical disabilities?

15. What do you think about integrating the students with mild mental disabilities?

16. What do you think about integrating the students with moderate mental disabilities?

17. What do you think about integrating the students with severe mental disabilities?

18. How do you feel about integrating the students with language deficiencies?

I would like to summarize to make sure I have retained the essentials. Some of you people have said ... others have said ...., and others.... Have I forgotten anything?

Final questions

19. What is the general opinion about what we have discussed today?

The contribution of an intervention program for improving quality of life of older adults

Rona Bar-Netzer, Bocoş Muşata

The contribution of an intervention program for improving quality of life of older adults

Rona Bar-Netzer [a*], Muşata Bocoş [b]

[a] *Doctoral School "Educational, Reflection, Development", Babeş-Bolyai University, 7 Sindicatelor Street, 400029, Cluj-Napoca, Romania*
[b] *Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Babeş-Bolyai University, 7 Sindicatelor Street, 400015, Cluj-Napoca, Romania*

Corresponding author: ronab743@gmail.com

Abstract

Keywords:
FORCE program,
Quality of life, , older
adults, psycho-
education

This paper discusses the contribution of a new intervention program for older adults (FORCE), developed by the author (Schwartzman Bar-Netzer, 2016). The FORCE Program represents an innovative approach to health promotion with older adults integrating psycho-education and exercising core muscles, for improving everyday quality of life (QOL).
The research conceptual framework is based on The Whole Person Wellness Model (Kang & Russ, 2009) and the Trans-Theoretical Model -Stages of Change (Prochaska, et. al., 2008).
95 women and 11 men aged 60-90 participated in the program for 12 months. Two experimental groups- one of core muscle workout (CM: n = 28) and one with home equipment (CMI: n = 59), and a control group (CoG: n = 19) participated in the research.
The research tool was the SF-36 Health Survey Quality of Life Questionnaire (Bentor & Epshtein, 2001) before and after the intervention program. Eight parameters of QOL were examined: Physical functioning, Limited physical health, Limited emotional health, Energy, Emotional wellbeing, Social functioning, General health, Pain.
The results show significant improvement, following the program, on 7 of the 8 parameters related to QOL in the 2 experimental groups compared to the control group. These findings were further supported in the research when participants reported undergoing significant improvement in their quality of life and their capabilities in everyday activities.
The research conclusions hold the potential for developing new methods to substantially improve the quality of life and wellbeing of this growing population on whom there is limited empirical research.

Zusammenfasung

Schlüsselworte:
FORCE- Programm,
Lebensqualität,
ältere Menschen,
Psychoedukation

In diesem Bericht wird der Beitrag eines neuen Interventionsprogramms für ältere Menschen (FORCE) erörtert, das vom Autor Schwartzmann Bar-Netzer (2016) entwickelt wurde. Das FORCE-Programm stellt einen innovativen Ansatz zur Gesundheitsförderung dar, bei dem ältere Menschen die Psychoedukation integrieren und die Rumpfmuskulatur trainieren, um die tägliche Lebensqualität (QOL) zu verbessern. Der konzeptionelle Rahmen für die Forschung basiert auf dem Whole Person Wellness-Modell (Kang und Russ, 2009) und den transtheoretischen Modellstadien des Wandels (Prochaska, et al., 2008). 95 Frauen und 11 Männer im Alter von 60-90 Jahren haben 12 Monate lang an dem Programm teilgenommen. Zwei experimentelle Gruppen - eine der Kernmuskeltrainingseinheiten (CM: n = 28) und eine mit Heimausrüstung (CMI: n = 59) sowie eine Kontrollgruppe (CoG: n = 19) nahmen an der Forschung teil. Das Forschungsinstrument war der Fragebogen zur Lebensqualität des SF-36 (Bentor und Epshtein, 2001) vor und nach dem Interventionsprogramm. Acht Parameter der Lebensqualität wurden untersucht: Körperliche Funktionsfähigkeit, begrenzte körperliche Gesundheit, eingeschränkte emotionale Gesundheit, Energie, emotionales Wohlbefinden, soziales Funktionieren, allgemeine Gesundheit und Schmerz. Die Ergebnisse zeigen eine signifikante Verbesserung nach dem Programm bei 7 der 8 Parameter in Bezug auf die Lebensqualität in den 2 Versuchsgruppen im Vergleich zur Kontrollgruppe. Diese Ergebnisse wurden in der Studie weiter untermauert, als die Teilnehmer in eingehenden Interviews über signifikante Verbesserungen ihrer Lebensqualität und Alltagstauglichkeit berichteten. Die Forschungsergebnisse beinhalten das Potenzial für die Entwicklung neuer Methoden zur erheblichen Verbesserung der Lebensqualität und des Wohlbefindens dieser wachsenden Bevölkerung, für die es nur begrenzt empirische Forschung gibt.

1. Introduction

Studies prove that during the third and fourth age quality of life suffers significant decline due both to evolutionary causes and development of modernization. There is a rising need, along with increased life expectancy, for intervention programs that assist this population in improving its quality of life from educational, physical, emotional and social aspects. The gap in knowledge is that there is a lack of studies focused on this age group and not enough intervention programs developed in Israel and elsewhere. The current study developed a designated intervention

program (FORCE) for the third and fourth ages, which aims to improve the quality of life and sense of efficacy of these age groups. The FORCE program is a group activity relating to psycho-educational aspects and physical activity that strengthens core muscles, emphasizing emotional and social aspects of quality of life (QOL) in addition to physical aspects.

This article relates to the first and second parts of the research that deal with development of the program and assessing its contribution to the participants' quality of life compared to the control group that took part in a conventional physical training program for the elderly.

2. Theoretical foundations

The research conceptual framework of the FORCE workout intervention program was based on two theoretical models of behavioral and educational modification: The Whole Person Wellness Model (Kang & Russ, 2009) and The Trans-Theoretical Model (TTM) -Stages of Change (Prochaska, et. al., 2008).

A. The Whole Person Wellness Model (Kang & Russ, 2009)

This model describes behavioral change that contains a holistic approach with six dimensions of wellness. In the FORCE workout program, the idea was to attain five of the wellness aspects: social (group interaction), intellectual (verbally explaining), spiritual (mind and body), emotional (group coping) and physical (core muscle workout). Each of these aspects adds to an individual's wellness, operating in unison to generate behavioral changes.

B. The Trans-Theoretical Model (TTM) -Stages of Change (Prochaska, et. al., 2008). This model conceptualizes the intentional behavioral change process using a bio-psycho-social model. It relies on 6 stages of change: pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action and maintenance. There is a strong connection between stage construct and time.

2.1. The FORCE new Intervention Program

The FORCE program was designed by the researcher, to educate for better overall QOL for the elderly people aged 60 or more. With 20 years' teaching experience in this field and while training seniors using a unique method, the author noticed physical and mental changes in their perception of training and in feedback received from the participants. The FORCE program provides twice-weekly

activities for older adults in an appropriate studio in groups of 8 to twenty elderly persons in 11 settlements in Israel. The methods in the FORCE program promote flexibility of the body and the brain and facilitate sensory motor skills and cognitive and physical control. The classes are a combination of psycho-education based on methodological explanations and practical workout (Kok & Reynolds, 2017). Developing interpersonal communication, which enhances social connections, had been found in the literature (Charles & Carstense, 2010) to be a significant factor for quality of life at this age. The program helps the participants develop self-motivation: success and improvement in daily quality of life leads to the desire to attend the FORCE program regularly.

The different interventional tools are based on encouraging participants to increase daily activities knowing they are working their core muscles, destabilizing the support base and diminishing intra-spinal load in sitting, lying or leaning.

Problem Statement-Gap in knowledge

The role of the teaching staff is to help the elderly overcome barriers and intelligently integrate physical activity into their daily life (Dunsky, et al., 2015). Studies that investigated the influence of physical activity on mental function found both aerobic activity and resistance training to be effective (Dunsky et al., 2013). A reverse connection was found between physical activity and loneliness (Netz et al., 2012b) and decreased mortality among physically active people (Dunsky, et al., 2015). These studies prove the importance of developing a special program for promoting QOL in this age. Most studies that deal with older adults examine the influence of dynamic programs that include aerobic activities and classes, jogging and cycling on quality of life. Since the number of studies on Core Muscles programs for the elderly, combining educational, social and physical dimensions is relatively small, the current study examines the effect of FORCE program on improving QOL among older adults.

3. Methodology

The aims of the Study

- To develop an intervention program (FORCE) based on psycho-education and strengthening core muscle training for improving quality of life of third and fourth age elderly people.

- To examine the contribution of the FORCE intervention program to quality of life of older adults.

3.1. Research Population

106 participants aged 60-90, took part in the study voluntarily. They were recruited from among 11 communities in a Regional Council, groups that undergo relatively regular training and were divided into three random groups: Two experimental groups: one of core muscle workout (CM: n = 28) and one of core muscle workout with home equipment (CMI: n = 59), and a control group who do not participate in the FORCE program (CoG: n = 19). This is a multicultural population that includes orthodox, holocaust survivors and secular people coming from a variety of socio-economic statuses that influence their wellbeing and lifestyle.

3.2 Research tool

During their first assessment session, participants completed a demographic questionnaire - the Instrumental Activities Daily Living (IADL) questionnaire (Lawton, 1969; Dunsky, et al, 2017). Quality of life (QOL) was examined using the SF-36 Health Survey Quality of Life Questionnaire (Bentor & Epshtein, 2001), that were given to the participants at the beginning and end of the study (after 12 months). Eight parameters of QOL were examined: Physical functioning, Limited physical health, Limited emotional health, Energy, Emotional wellbeing, Social functioning, General health, Pain.

4. Results

Table 1 provides a comparison between the experimental and control groups, relating to eight parameters of QOL in the questionnaires.

Table no. 1. *Comparing the three study groups (CoG, CM&CMI) in eight parameters of QOL (means± S.D)*
*Time main effect (p<0.05); ^ Group main effect p≤0.05; # Interaction p<0.05

Groups	CMI (N=59)				CM (N=28)				CoG (N=9)			
Time	PRE		POST		PRE		POST		PRE		POST	
Measure	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Physical functioning*	60.24	32.37	70.75	27.46	68.52	27.64	81.48	18.84	66.66	28.05	65.43	27.04
Limited Physical health	56.73	41.56	61.54	31.11	47.22	38.41	61.81	31.01	69.44	39.09	60.41	36.04
Limited Emotional Health^	71.79	41.83	82.05	32.97	44.44	44.10	74.07	36.43	81.48	33.79	81.48	33.79
Energy*;#	50.88	25.52	64.42	18.99	22.11	12.25	62.36	14.95	52.77	12.52	52.77	12.02
Emotional wellbeing*;^;#	59.16	26.90	74.46	14.00	17.82	11.01	50.99	16.92	62.22	9.82	51.44	13.40
Social Functioning*	74.03	29.98	85.10	18.71	66.67	29.32	80.56	18.87	87.50	12.50	83.33	12.50
General health*	61.60	24.85	72.79	16.34	53.47	31.73	70.65	17.31	69.72	21.87	65.50	20.66
Pain*;#	52.98	30.70	69.71	21.10	41.39	30.57	72.50	19.53	50.27	14.05	45.00	14.89

Two-way ANOVA with repeated measurements (group X time) was carried out. As can be seen, the three groups were compared before and after the intervention.

Significant improvement was found on 6 parameters during the study: Physical functioning; Limited Emotional functioning; Energy; Emotional wellbeing; Social functioning; General health. In the Limited Physical health parameter there was an improvement but not significant.

As for the pain parameter - the experimental groups suffered greater pain than the control group. There was interaction (p=0.02) group*time.

Figure no. 1 presents the results of the Pain parameter of the three study groups.

Figure no. 1. *The results of the Pain parameters of the three study groups (CMI, CM and CoG)*
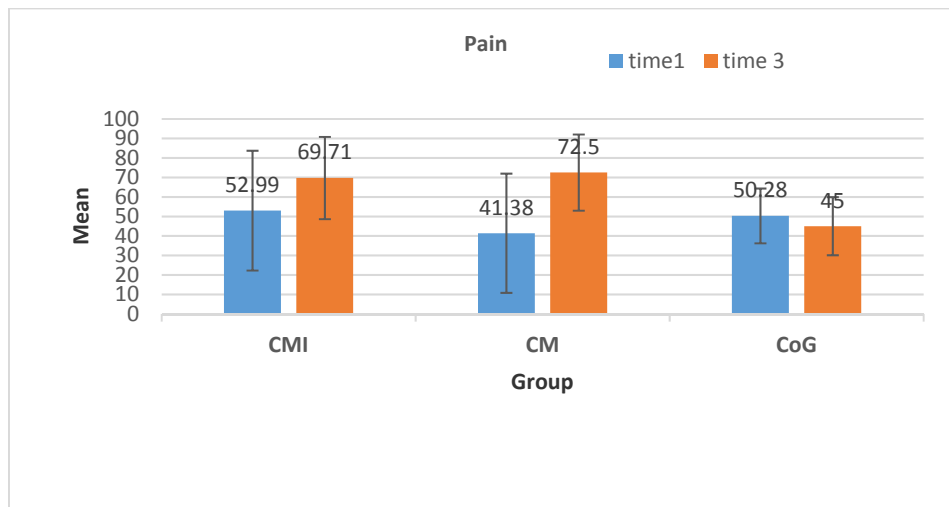
Another important finding shown in table no. 1 is that the experimental group that used home instruments (CMI) attained higher improvement in their quality of life compared to the experimental group (CM) that took part only in the FORCE program in bi-weekly training.

5. Discussion

Research findings show significant improvements of quality of life among third and fourth age persons who participated in the FORCE program. This section discusses the above findings in view of theories and previous research on this subject.

5.1. Energy parameter of QOL (vitality)

There is a biological-developmental component that influences decrease in motion, the gradual decline in physical activities with age (Dunsky, et al., 2015). This leads to decline in the motivation to move, not only that ability to move. Additionally, a reverse connection was found between physical activity and loneliness (Netz et al., 2012b) and less mortality among the physically active (Stessmen et al., 2009). Developing interpersonal communication in exercise circles helps develop social connections. Participants have the ability to change personal habits due to physical and emotional changes that occur with age and the ability to use these tools to deal with aging (Dunsky, et al., 2015). The research findings confirm that the FORCE program which combines psycho-education aspects with guided physical training leads to improvement in the Energy parameter

among the experimental groups compared to the control group.

5.2. Emotional Wellbeing

Mental health and emotional wellbeing are as important in older age as at any other time of life.

The elderly has the ability to adapt to changes and have a positive outlook to the changes involved in ageing (Khan & Tahir, 2014). The study findings show improvement in emotional wellbeing and quality of life in the two experimental groups, following participating in the FORCE program, compared to lack of advancement in the control group. The study findings support the literature maintaining that engagement in physical activity is very important to the elderly and effects their subjective wellbeing and depressive symptoms (Pudrovska & Anishkin, 2013).

5.3. Pain parameter (bodily pain)

The research findings related to the Pain parameter showed the control group had lower pain level than the experimental groups, in the end of the program. During the classes, the experimental groups were given verbal explanations on anatomy, physiology, forms of training, so they were able to comprehend the way exercises were selected and applied. Acquaintance with their body and attention to minor changes that occur in it was both an advantage and a disadvantage. The disadvantage is in knowing how to focus their pain, as well as use solutions

to suppress and remove pain. Among both experimental groups, in particular the CMI group, one may see excess comprehension, explaining the results of understanding pain interpretation, and that may explain why the experimental groups' results are higher. Furthermore, these groups began to move correctly and therefore the arthro-kinematic movements (deep muscle movements) are stronger raising capability but also increasing pain (McGill et al., 2014). Another possible explanation is that due to the interaction between the researcher and participants, they tended to expose their pain more than the control group. This research on the FORCE program, is one of the first research studies to test the efficacy of multiple compared to single behavior change interventions in older adults. The research findings provide important information not only on outcomes, but also on the process of behavioral change in older adults.6. Conclusions and contribution to knowledge

On the theoretical level, the FORCE program represents an innovative approach to health promotion with older adults. The program relies on a community-based recruitment and partnership model, utilizing a public health approach to an entire population.

This research on the FORCE Program may extend and enhance our knowledge of quality of life promotion of this age.

On the practical level, this research holds the potential for developing new methods to substantially improve the health and wellbeing of this growing population, gain new and important insights into how older adults change their health-related behavior.

The study Limits:

The study sample is relatively small. However, this is derived mainly from the research population of third age from 11 communities who took part in a 12-month study. This is not easy considering their age.

Future research directions

A continued study is recommended to accompany the participants in their second year of the program in order to determine if the improvement found in this research continue to influence their quality of life. Further research in different social-economic surroundings is recommended, as well as a larger number of male and female participants, in order to comprehend the influence of the program on quality of life. The study findings and conclusions have universal implications since one may develop similar programs for the third and fourth age on a global level. This may significantly improve their quality of life, consciously and subconsciously influencing their cognitive, social and emotional wellbeing.

Authors note:

Rona Bar-Netzer is a coordinator and instructor of the the 3rd age adults. She is Involved in an education project concerning the welfare of the elderly in Israel. She is a PhD student at UBB in Romania. Her research areas are aimed to develop and explore an intervention program (FORCE) that contributes to the quality of life and sense of efficacy of third and fourth age to improve everyday activity. She is teaching at Campus Ciim in T-A University.

Muşata Bocoş is a University Professor and Ph.D. Coordinator at the Faculty of Psychology and Sciences of Education (Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania). She has obtained a Ph.D. in Educational Sciences in 1997 at Babeş-Bolyai University. Her research interests are reflected in a series of studies and articles published in important national and international journals. Her teaching activity covers several domains such as the theory and methodology of curriculum, general didactics, and educational research.

References

Bentor, N. & Epshtein, S. (2001). SF-36: A tool for measuring and evaluating quality of life related to health. Gerontology. *Journal of Aging Issues*, 28(3-4), 187-216 (In Hebrew).

Charles, S., & Carstensen, L. L. (2010). Social and Emotional Aging. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 61: 383-409. Doi: 10.1146/annurev.psych.093008.100448.

Dunsky, A., Zeev, A., & Netz, Y. (2017). Balance Performance Is Task Specific in Older Adults. *Hindawi BioMed Research International*. Article ID 6987017, 7 pages. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1155/2017/6987017.

Dunsky, A., Netz, Y. & Argov, E. (2015). Physical Activity to Maintain Function in the Ascension Stage. In a D. Prilutzky, & M. Cohen (Ed*), Practical Gerontology A Professional Overview of Working with Older Adults*,

2(25) (pp: 417-444). Joint Israel Eshel Jerusalem (In Hebrew).

Dunsky, A., Zach, S., Zeev, A., Goldsmith, R., Shimony, T., Goldbourt, U. & Netz, Y. (2013). Level of physical activity and anthropometric characteristics in old age — results from a national health survey (Submitted for publication to IMAG). *European Review of Aging and Physical Activity*, 11(2), 149-157.

Khan, A.R. & Tahir, I. (2014). Influence of Social Factors to the Quality of Life of the Elderly in Malaysia. *Open Medicine Journal*, 1, 29-35.

Kang, M., & Russ, R. (2009). Activities that promote wellness for older adults in rural communities. *Journal of Extension*, 47, 1-5.

Kok, R.M., & Reynolds, C.F. (2017). Management of Depression in Older Adults. JAMA, 317(20), 2114-2122. Doi:10.1001/jama.2017.5706.

Lawton, M.P & Brody, E.M. (1969). Assessment of older people: self-maintaining and instrumental activities of daily living. *The Gerontologist*, 9(3), 179-186.

McGill, S.M., Cannon, J., & Andersen, J.T. (2014). Analysis of pushing exercises: muscle activity and spine load while contrasting techniques on stable surfaces with a labile suspension strap training system. J Strength Cond Res, 28(1), 105-116. Doi:10.1519/JSC.013e3182a99459.

Netz, Y., Goldsmith, R., Shimony, T., Arnon, M. & Zeev, A. (2012b). Loneliness is associated with an increased risk of sedentary life in older Israelis. *Aging & Mental Health*. Doi:10.1080/13607863.2012.715140.

Prochaska, J.O., Butterworth, S., Redding, C.A., Burden, V., Perrin, N., Lea, Michael, Flaherty, Robb M., and Prochaska, J.M. (2008). Initial efficacy of MI, TTM tailoring, and HRI's in multiple behaviors for employee health promotion. *Preventive Medicine*, 46, 226-231.

Pudrovska, T., & Anishkin, A. (2013). Early-life socioeconomic status and physical activity in later life: evidence from structural equation models. *Journal of Aging and Health*. 25(3), 383-404.

(Schwartzman) Bar-Netzer, R. (2016). Active Ageing and Effective Learning for Enhanced Quality of Life. *The European Proceedings of Social & Behavioural Sciences* EpSBS, Volume XVIII, Pages 544-551. The European Proceedings of Social & Behavioural Science EpSBS. Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

Developing visual art competence in young students (7-9 years old). A comparative study involving students from Romania, Poland, Turkey and the Republic of Moldavia, participants in the eTwinning Programme

Gabriela Ileana Crișan, Ion Albulescu

Developing visual art competence in young students (7-9 years old). A comparative study involving students from Romania, Poland, Turkey and the Republic of Moldavia, participants in the eTwinning Programme

Gabriela Ileana Crişan [a*], Ion Albulescu [b]

[a] *Doctoral School "Educational, Reflection, Development", Babeş-Bolyai University, 7 Sindicatelor Street, 400029, Cluj-Napoca, Romania*
[b] *Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Babeş-Bolyai University, 7 Sindicatelor Street, 400015, Cluj-Napoca, Romania*

Corresponding author: *crisangabriela@gmail.com*

Abstract	The aim of our study is to highlight the potential of using the blended-learning, flipped classroom, learning strategies in developing the students' competences in the subject of Visual Arts and Practical Abilities within the framework of European school partnerships. The practical and process-oriented research will investigate and describe the gains of flipped classroom strategy in improving the artistic-plastic performances of young students aged 7-9 years, participants in the eTwinning Programme. By means of comparative analyses, we will bring out the effects of applying this strategy to students from Romania, Poland, Turkey and the Republic of Moldavia with regard to forming and developing their visual art competences. We framed these specific competences present in the 4 European countries'curriculum into the plastic theme category, with the subcategories of observing the artistic movement, selected technique, type of chosen tools and materials, lines diversity and expressivity, diversity and complexity of shapes, chromatic harmony, colour surface, ornamentation of composition.

Keywords:
flipped classroom,
visual arts, eTwinning

Zusammenfasung	In diesem Studium möchten wir auf das Potenzial der neun Bildungsstrategie, sowie Blended-Learning, flipped classroom hinweisen und wie es auf die Kompetenzbildung der Schüler im Schulfach visuelle Kunst und praktische Fähigkeiten, im Kontext der europäischen Schulpartnerschaft, wirkt. Die praktische Forschung rescherschiert und beschreibt die Wertigkeit der Flipped-Classrooom Strategie, um die künstlerischen Leistugen der Schüler im Alter zwischen 7-9, die Teilnehmer der eTwinning sind, zu verbessern. Wir werden durch eine vergleichende Analyse darauf hinweisen, wie effektiv diese Strategie in Rumänien, in der Republik Moldau, Polen und in der Türkei ist, was die Bildung und die Entwicklung der küntslerischen Kompetenzen betrifft. Wir haben diese spezifischen Kompetenzen von den Schullehrplänen dieser 4 europäischen Ländern in der Kategorie Kunst zusammengesetzt, aber wir haben auch in Acht die künstlerische Richtung, die Technik, die Instrumenten und die ausgewählten Materialen, die Vielfalt und Expresivität der Linien, die Vielfalt und Komplexität der Formen, die kromatische Harmonie, die Farbenoberfläche, Dekoration der Komposition genommen.

Schlüsselworte:
FORCE- Programm,
Lebensqualität,
ältere Menschen,
Psychoedukation

1. Introduction

As a result of the informational boom generated by the development of technology, schools must permanently adapt and revise their educational offer. Therefore, questions like: What does the student need to know at the time of graduation? What competences should the model employee hold to perfectly fit in the work place ? How could the young generation achieve success in all walks of life?

Due to these continuous transformations, school needs strategies which enables it to balance the society trends and the children's education in view of their integration in society. Flipped classroom can be addressed not only

to diminish the gaps generated by class absenteeism caused by different reasons, but also to reduce the differences related to students' reaction speed during the lessons. Since art plays an important part in establishing the balance between man and society (Vygotsky, 1973), we therefore consider the choice of international eTwinning cooperation projects as appropriate and as a framework in which flipped classroom learning strategy may be used with the purpose of forming the students' visual art competences.

In the present work, we aim at analyzing the visual art competences of 7-9 years old students from Romania, the Republic of Moldavia, Poland and Turkey participants in the ARTmania eTwinnig projects with a view to identify

the way in which the application of flipped classroom learning strategy contributes to the development of such competences. We have opted for this approach for several reasons:

1) Flipped classroom strategy is gaining more and more popularity in learning activities, with positive results in Europe and worldwide;

2) eTwinning cooperation projects contribute to the rapid spreading of ideas and experiences among countries inside and outside Europe.

The research objectives:

a) The comparative analysis of the curriculum of visual art subjects in Romania, the Republic of Moldavia, Poland and Turkey with respect to create some flipped classroom –tailored tutorials

b) The analysis of developing specific visual art-oriented competences in the students belonging to the four European countries, participants in the ARTmania eTwinning projects.

2. Theoretical background

According to school curricula, **specific competences** are defined as acquisitions that are meant to be reached at the end of a school year for each subject. However**,** specific competences are differently defined in the curricula of each participant country in the ARTmania eTwinning projects.

In Romania, specific competences derive from general competences and developed by means of Learning Activities (the learning activities occur only as suggestions in the curriculum, the teacher being free to organize learning experiences by selecting the relevant activities). Due to the fact that Visual Arts And Practical Abilities is already an integrated subject, created by the juxtaposition of Arts and Technology, in this study we took into account the specific competences for the visual art field. We used the curriculum for VISUAL ARTS AND PRACTICAL ABILITIES as a landmark which

represents Annex 2 to the Order of the National Education Ministry no. 3418/ 19.03.2013 (for grades I and II), respectively no. 5003/ 02.12.2014 (for grades III).

In Moldavia, specific competences are set out in the curriculum as acquisitions gained at the end of the educational stage, with sub-competences corresponding to the acquisitions gained at the end of the school year. The curriculum for Visual Art Education is comprised in the School Curriculum for grades I-IV approved of in the National Council for the Curriculum meeting on 30.04.2010 by Order of Ministry of Education no. 331 of 12.05.2010.

In Poland, acquisitions gained at the end of the school year are defined in terms of abilities, knowledge and competences.The curriculum mentioned by our partners and consulted in the eTwinning projects is Gra w Kolory, Program Nauczania Edukacji Wczesnoszkolnej issued in the year 2009 by Juka Publishing House in Warsaw under the signature of Ewa Stolarczyk.

In Turkey, the learning areas are detailed for each school year in terms of knowledge, abilities and competences. Examples of learning abilities are offered to encourage the acquisition of competences according to the curriculum for Aesthetic Education, İLKOKUL've Ortaokul Görsel Sanatlar Dersi Öğretim Programı, in force since the year 2013.

In the table below, we carried out comparative analyses of the curricula for Visual Arts/Plastic Education in Romania, the Republic of Moldavia, Poland and Turkey. The motivation for such a comparison is given, on the one hand, by developing an educational programme based on using art movements in order to meet the needs of developing visual art competences in primary school children (7-9 years old). On the other hand, schools from these countries have started ARTmania eTwinning projects, and their integration into the curriculum requires the setting of common goals and objectives based on similar contents and competences.

Table no. 1. *Comparative analysis of competences specific to Visual Arts and Practical Abilities/ Visual Art Education within primary education in Romania, Republic of Moldavia, Turkey and Poland*

Items of common competences	Romania	The Republic of Moldavia	Poland	Turkey
	1. Noticing the difference between the	To create works on the same topic in materials	Expresses own experience in a variety	Identifying the differences between the subject of an

Competences in communication and visual art appreciation	practical information sent through visual language and artistic message;	of classical art as well as modern materials;	of artistic techniques on a flat plane and in space;	art work;
	2. Identification of meaning in the line, the dot, the colour and the shape of a work of art;	To notice the peculiarities of lines, dots, colours, shapes used in the nature and in a diversity of artistic contexts;	Recognizes the selected art work belonging to European and Polish cultural patrimony;	Noticing the formal properties of a work of art: colour, line, shape;
Competences in using visual art means	3.Exploration of some characteristics/ properties of materials in different contexts;	To obtain dots, lines, stains, shapes, colours using a diversity of materials and artistic means;	Describes their characteristics, using basic terminology for this creative field of activity;	Analysis of examples of figurative art: principles, materials, techniques, colours, lines, message, balance, value.
	4. Expressing personal ideas and feelings by means of the line, dot, colour and shape;	To render certain state of nature by use of colours and non - colours;	Achieves artistic compositions based on own experiences, literary or musical;	Analysis of examples of figurative art: principles, materials, techniques, colours, lines, message, balance, value.
	5. The transformation of a material through simple/varied techniques;	To combine colours in order to obtain artistic expressivity;	Creates colour combinations.	Noticing the formal properties of a work of art: colour, line, shape;

We have compiled the specific competences in the curricula of the four participant countries in the ARTmania eTwinning projects regarding the plastic theme into common competence categories, as follows:

a. Competences in communication and visual art appreciation

b. Competences in using visual art means.

The plastic theme criterion taken into account in the present study is one of the components of the research tool (criterion evaluation grid) and comprises eight sub-criterion referring to observing the artistic movement, the chosen technique, type of selected instruments and materials, expressivity and diversity of lines, diversity and complexity of shapes, chromatic harmony, colour surface, ornamentation of composition. Each sub-criterion is closely connected to one or more specific competences.

The composition of each sub-criterion is presented below:

Sub-criterion 1. The compliance with the artistic movement comprises both the consideration of the peculiarities of the artistic movement of Impressionism, Cubism and abstract Expressionism. Therefore, we monitored the presence in the students' impressionist art

works of the following aspects: light-shadow alternance, the use of „coloured commas", the use of cool colors for rendering distance and of warm colours for closeness, the use of bright colours, the delimitation of the land and air plan, the avoidance of using black shades and earth tones. What we observed in the art works achieved in cubist manner were: the use of geometric shapes, of brownish colours, the shapes alignment in unexpected ways, the clear and natural setting of the starting point in shapes. In the expressionist-like works of art, we assessed the representation of feelings through different artistic gestures, fast, spontaneous painting, freedom in choosing the colours, the techniques and tools.

Sub-criterion 2. The selected techniques refers to the artistic techniques provisioned by the curriculum for grades I-III for the subject Visual Arts and Practical Abilities: shading, scaling , repetition, brushing, collage, printing, dabbing, sprinkling.

Sub-criterion 3. The type of chosen tools and materials refers to the recommendations in the curriculum for grades I-III for Visual Arts and Practical Abilities with regard to the use of: water colours, gouaches, tempera, sponges, paint brushes (of different sizes), the finger, stamp, paper/ linen, graphite/ coloured pencils, wax crayons etc.

Sub-criterion 4.The diversity and expressivity of lines is considering the existence of vertical, horizontal, slant, broken(folded), curved types of lines in the student's art works.

Sub-criterion 5. The diversity and complexity of shapes refers to the occurrence of figurative types: vegetal, animal, human, objectual, cosmic as well as of simple, complex or combined types.

Sub-criterion 6. The chromatic harmony applies to the presence of contrasts: warm-cool, dark-bright, dominant colour, mixing colours.

Sub-criterion 7. Texture (colour surface) takes into account the presence of different texture types in the students' artworks: flat, smooth, lumpy, tabular or fibrilar.

Sub-criterion 8. The ornamentation of composition implies the composition of the artistic space through different ornamental elements such as: graphic overlapping of line, dots, colours.

Each sub-criterion is detailed by performance descriptors translated into grades of Very Good (FB), Good (B), Sufficient (S) and Insufficient (I) in accordance with the grading system in the Romanian primary education, yet, the grid can be easily adapted to other evaluation systems as well.

3. Flipped classroom

Flipped classroom learning strategy is becoming more and more popular in international educational practices. There are a series of studies which confirm the role of this strategy in increasing students' performances in different subjects. Most of them spotlight the increase of students' performances in Maths (Lai & Hwang, 2016), Informatics (Zhong, Song & Jiao, 2013), History (Aidinopoulou & Sampson, 2017), Foreign Languages (Shaffer, 2015). The teachers' opinions regarding the use of flipped chart classroom in primary education vary from optimism to skepticism. In the survey regarding "The contribution of flipped classroom and eTwinning projects to altering teachers' perception on organizing learning experiences in the field of Aesthetic Education" conducted in Romania in 2018 on a sample of 110 experienced teachers in carrying out international cooperation projects, we concluded that the main objections to implementing the

flipped classroom in young students arose from the lack of time for preparing the video materials and the necessity to educate the parents in view of understanding the peculiarities of this learning strategy. Flipped classroom comprises an online component (the tutorial) and a face-to-face component, respectively the acquired knowledge application session, with a permanent feedback from the teacher. In ARTmania eTwinning projects, the partners created and shared the tutorials and organized work sessions in which the students worked individually and in groups.

A series of stages were complied with in the process of developing tutorials which included the consultation of curricula for grades I, II and III for the subject Visual Arts and Practical Abilities in partnership with Alin Bîlcu, Arts teacher in selecting the competences and the contents to be taken into account in the video tutorials, in conjunction with the selected competences and contents for painting styles specific to some internationally established artistic movements, in selecting the potential cross-disciplinary artistic movements, adjusting the specific of artistic movements to age peculiarities, the planning of the teaching scenario to be applied to the video material, adjusting the length of tutorials to the peculiarities of brain's abilities to focus on a task, recording the video material, its uploading on the Web (Youtube) and its sharing within the project space (Twinspace), the tutorial subtitling for the foreign partners, obtaining feedback from partners (with the redoing of the material in case of negative feedback).

4. Method

The research started from the idea of organizing some relevant learning experiences for primary students in the field of visual arts within the context of ARTmania eTwinning projects.

The selected partners in the projects subject to our research are experienced teachers, mostly novice in the eTwinning. The experimental sample comprised a number of 328 students aged 7-9 years old from Romania, the Republic of Moldavia, Poland and Turkey participant in the ARTmania eTwinning projects conducted within the years 2016-2018. The formative experiment comprised the students' watching the tutorials at home of the impressionist, cubist and abstract expressionist artistic

styles performed by us, followed by their classroom practice sessions.

The following materials were made available to the 328 students in both the pre-testing , respectively the post-testing and re-testing stages: white sheets of paper, water colours, paint brushes, glass of water, sponges, coloured pencils, wax pencils, graphite. The task was announced: to make a drawing of their choice on "Nature Landscapes" or "Portrait", using their favourite available materials. The two themes represent frequent and favourite topics for young-aged students. The students chose their own working techniques among the previously studied ones. They were told that their works would not be graded and that there would be no wrong drawings. The students were advised to let go of their imagination. All the drawings were individually made during school time, with no support from the teacher. The duration time for the activity was 1 hour, no other directions being given.

The drawings of the students in the experimental sample group were posted on the project's eTwinning space. The drawings were being labeled, mentioning the students' initials and ages.

The students' art works were being analyzed by means of the criterial evaluation grid developed by us. Grades for each sub-criterion were being set up according to the performance descriptors defined in the grid.

The analysis of the results obtained in the pre-testing/ re-testing stages by the experimental sample group.

The analysis of the values achieved by the experimental sample group in the pre-testing stage on the Plastic Theme criterion illustrates a significant increase in the mean of Very Well (FB) grade (Mre-test=170,63 from Mpre-test=48,00), as well as a decrease in the means of the other grades: Good (B) (Mre-test=82,75 from Mpre-test=103,25), Sufficient (S) (Mre-test=72,13from Mpre-test=142,75) and Insufficient (I) (Mre-test=2,50 from Mpre-test=34,00).

Table no. 2. *Collected data in the Plastic Theme criterion experimental group, pre-testing/re-testing stages*

Plastic Theme		N	Mean	Standard deviation	Standard error mean
Very Good	Pre-test experimental group	8	48,00	34,773	12,294
	Re-test experimental group	8	170,63	26,992	9,543
Good	Pre-test experimental group	8	103,25	21,796	7,706
	Re-test experimental group	8	82,75	24,070	8,510
Sufficient	Pre-test experimental group	8	142,75	28,524	10,085
	Re-test experimental group	8	72,13	6,221	2,199
Insufficient	Pre-test experimental group	8	34,00	18,346	6,486
	Re-test experimental group	8	2,50	1,927	,681

The hypotheses for the T test were being launched:

The Ho null hypothesis: the mean of differences between the values obtained in the experimental sample group in the pre-testing and re-testing stages is 0.

The H1 research hypothesis: the mean of differences between the values obtained in the experimental sample group in the pre-testing and re-testing stages is other than 0.

By assessing the results obtained in the T test, we can notice values of p<0,05 which supports the H1 hypothesis, which says there are significant differences between the values of the acquired means by the experimental sample group in the pre-testing and re-testing stages. An exception is the Good (B) grade (p=0,09).

Table no. 3. *Collected data as a result of applying the t test to the Plastic Theme criterion*

	Levene Test		t-Test	
	F (equality of variances)	Unidirectional level of significance	t	Bi-dimensional level of significance
Very Good	,048	,830	-7,879	,000
Good	,091	,757	1,786	,096
Sufficient	7,062	,019	6,942	,000
Insufficient	18,339	,001	4,830	,000

As a result of the students' re-testing in the experimental sample group, we brought forward the following observations in comparison with the pre-testing stage:

1. The number of Very Good (FB) grades significantly increases, in direct relationship with a decrease in the amount of Insufficient grades;There is a decrease in the number of Sufficient and Good grades;

2. The mean of the values of Good grades does not record significant differences in the two criteria compared to the pre-testing stage.

Table no. 4. *Final results in the pre-testing/post-testing/re-testing stages, experimental group.*

Final results	Very Good	Good	Sufficient	Insufficient
Pre-testing experimental group	621	1424	1856	363
Post-testing experimental group	1347	1425	1192	300
Re-testing experimental group	2284	1044	915	21

By analyzing the acquired data, we notice a gradual increase in the the students' Very Good grades in the experimental group throughout the stages, from pre-testing to re-testing. The lowest amount of Very Good grades was recorded in the pre-testing stage (621), with a doubling (1347) at the end of the formative experiment so as to increase to 2284 in the re-testing stage.A similar surprising evolution is obvious in the evolution of Insufficient grades. If their number had a slight fall in the post-testing stage, there is a significant decrease in the re-testing stage, to 21. An identical process is to be noticed in the case of Sufficient grades, their amount being

reduced to a half in the re-testing stage (915). However, there is a slower drop in the number of Good grades (from 1424 to 1044), they being featured in the Very Good grades.

Conclusions

In the carrying out of the present research, we started from the finding that contemporary education requires new strategies to attract students' interest towards study. Subjects like Mathematics, Romanian Language and |Literature, English become the target of the parents' and teachers' interest straight from the first school year/grade at the expense of children's emotional development, of educating the aesthetic taste that Arts has. On the other hand, the lack of awareness in the potential of this field in the global development of the children is mainly due to the inability of the Romanian educational system to set up interdisciplinary connections by means of coherent curricula and proper material equipment. Through its general competences, Visual Art education aims at the students' ability to use specific materials and tools, as well as the ability for art reception, of being aware of its aesthetic values. Classical and modern artistic movements constitute paradigms which offer the child the access to these values, also contributing to a paradigmatic thinking. Flipped classroom represents a way of facilitating the achievement of specific competences in the field of visual arts.

The existence of some competence categories and common content elements has been also highlighted, a fact which allowed us to structure our educational programme and its integration into an eTwinning cooperation project. This approach was facilitated by the flexibility of the topics in the school curricula which offer greater freedom to both teachers and students. The students are suggested a wide range of approachable subjects ranging from means and techniques in drawing/painting, from artistic language to elements of arts history, of artistic culture. All these create the premises for developing the student's creativity and for taking into account their abilities. We consider the performing of interdisciplinary connection between visual art education and other subjects such as TIC to be of great importance in view of achieving the students' global development.

Authors note:

Gabriela Ileana Crisan is Ph.D. student at Doctoral School "Education, Reflection, Development", Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences from Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

Ion Albulescu is University habilitated Professor and Ph.D. Coordinator at the Faculty of Psychology and Sciences of Education (Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania) Department of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences. His research interest is reflected in a series of studies, articles and books published by prestigious international and national editors. The Professor Albulescu teaching and research area covers several educational domains such as Educational Alternatives, Comparative Education, Pedagogical Theories and History of Educational Thinking etc.

References

Aidinopoulou, V., Sampson, D.G. (2017). An Action Research Study from Implementing the Flipped Classroom Model in Primary School History Teaching and Learning. In *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 20(1), 237-247. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/jeductechsoci.20.1.237.

Hong X., Song S. & Jiao L. (2013). Instructional Design Based on the Idea of the Flipped Classroom in ICT Environment, Retrieved from http://en.cnki.com.cn/Article_en/CJFDTOTAL-JFJJ201301012.htm.

Lai, C.L., Hwang, G.J. (2016). A self-regulated flipped classroom approach to improving students' learning performance in a mathematics course. In *Journal Computers & Education*, Volume 100, Pages 126-140, ISSN 0360-1315, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2016.05.006.

Shaffer, S. (2015). One High School English Teacher: On His Way to a Flipped Classroom. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 59(5), 563–573. doi:10.1002/jaal.473.

Stolarczyk, E. (2009). Gra w Kolory, *Program Nauczania Edukacji Wczesnoszkolnej*, Wydawnictwo JUKA-91, Warszawa.

T.C. MİLLÎ Eğitim Bakanlığı Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı (2013). *İLKOKUL've Ortaokul Görsel Sanatlar Dersi Öğretim Programı*, Ankara.

Vygotski, L.S. (1972). *Opere psihologice alese*. Bucureşti: Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică.

Literacy abilities in students – an essential element in the formation of the *learning to learn* competence

Nicoleta Meseșan

Literacy abilities in students – an essential element in the formation of the *learning to learn* competence

Nicoleta Meseşan [a*]

ᵃ Doctoral School "Educational, Reflection, Development", Babeş-Bolyai University, 7 Sindicatelor Street, 400029, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Corresponding author: *nicoletamese@yahoo.com*

Abstract

Keywords:
literacy abilities,
learning to learn,
lifelong learning

The dynamics of current society urges and obliges to an easy and quick adaptation at the same time. The Parliament and the European Comission have recommended that until the end of mandatory schooling, all students from all of the member states of the EU should form eight essential key-competences for a lifelong learning. *Learning to learn* is one of the eight key-competences and it implies the formation in students of some learning abilities during mandatory schooling so that they might be able, in the future, to be connected constantly to the novelties of the professional and social field in which they activate. In the formation and development of the aforementioned competence, literacy abilities are a key-element. Reading, comprehension and the transposition of the received information from a literary or a scientific text into a new context constitute essential stages in the formation of the *learning to learn* competence.
Taking into consideration the importance of the formation of the literacy abilities in the schooling, profesional and social evolution of the students, the current study wishes to present the results of a micro-research that was done on the level of the formation of these abilities at the end of the mandatory schooling stage in the Romanian educational system. The study was done on four classes of students, from the 10th grade, from two different highschools, with a pedagogical vocational orientation, the teacher-educator specialization.
In the formation of the *learning to learn* competence, directed learning and individual study contribute to a large extent and the literacy abilities are the foothold in the realization of an efficient learning.

Zusammenfasung

Schlüsselworte:
Literalität; Lernen
lernen; lebenslanges
Lernen

Der gegenwärtige Artikel ist eine qualitative Forschung, vorhabend, auf die folgende Frage zu antworten: "Was betrachtet die Ansicht von Eltern die Integration der Studenten mit speziellen Bedürfnissen in Hauptströmungsschulen?", um auf diese Frage zu antworten, wurde die Gruppeninterview-Methode beschäftigt(eingesetzt). Die Fokus-Gruppe wurde von zehn Beklagten, Eltern der typischen Studenten einer städtischen Schule am niedrigeren Niveau der höheren Schule aufgewartet. Die Resultate zeigten eine positive Haltung Leuten mit Körperbeschädigungen im allgemeinen, aber dem Grad der Toleranz und Annahme der Eltern-Abnahmen, wenn es zu Integrierung von Studenten mit speziellen pädagogischen Bedürfnissen mit ihren eigenen Kindern kommt. Die Gegebenheiten(Daten) gingen durch Inhaltsanalyse in einer Prozession ist ein Ausgangspunkt für zukünftige Forschung in die Gemeinschaft-Haltungen zur Einbeziehung der Studenten mit speziellen Bedürfnissen.

1. Introduction

In a society with quick and diverse changes in all fields of activity, adaptation and the ozitive answer to the current professional and social challenges can only be obtained by forming some abilities and competences during schooling, which should constitute the operational support for continuous learning and adaptation. In the 21st century education, the emphasis must be moved from *how much the student knows* – the quantity of accumulated knowledge – to *what the student knows how to do,* so on abilities and competences, on the ability to put the knowledge into practice. "The emphasis is put on offering the children indispensable tools of knowledge for the intellectual formation and methods of independent work that are necessary to the completion of the training that was received in school" (Albulescu, 2008, p.18).

The European Council and Commission have recommended that during mandatory schooling, the students should acquire eight key-competences to represent the basis of future social and professional activity, for a lifelong learning. These competences are: communication in a maternal language, communication in a foreign language, a mathematical, scientific and technological competence, digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competences, having an initiating and entrepreneurial spirit, cultural sensibilization and expression (Recommendation of the European Parliament and Council - *2006/962/CE*

regarding the key-competences for a lifelong learning (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/). The key-competences "represent a transferrable and multifunctional package of competences that must be developed until the end of mandatory schooling" (Bocoş, (coord.), 2016, p. 223) for the adaptation of the person in a flexible way to a world that is constantly changing.

The competence of *learning to learn* is important because there is no particular discipline that contributes to the formation of this competence in students, and since it's transversal, like all key-competences, it must be attained using applied strategies on all disciplines of study during mandatory schooling.

The preoccupation of the teachers for improving learning in schools as a process, but also as a product is constant. Specific action is continuously unfolded for the development of the curriculum and strategies destined for students in order to increase school performance so that the future graduates may become competitive on the labor market and the integration in society may take place quickly and actively. The formation of the learning abilities is essential, and literacy has an important place in the learning activity.

2. Theoretical foundation

Between the necessary competences that should be developed in students during mandatory schooling, at the recommendation of the European Parliament and Council, we can also find the *learning to learn* field of competence. Even though none of the eight key-competences isn't considered to be more important that the others, since all have an essential role in forming youngsters for a social and professional insertion, *learning to learn* can be considered an integrative competence. This competence includes the awareness of one's own learning process and needs, the identification of the available opportunities and the ability to overcome the obstacles for a succesfull learning. *Learning to learn* is a complex competence that can be used both from the point of view of the student, as well as the point of view of the teacher. Regarding the student, he forms his learning strategies during the formal education, a period of time in which he assimilates basic knowledge that is specific to various disciplines, he manifests different attitudes towards learning, he learns certain behaviors that are specific to school or society. During this time, the

student also has the opportunity to be evaluated and to evaluate himself. This will help him to become aware of his development needs, the fields that are well contoured or that require greater attention and where he's on track to achieve his goals. These aspects are also motivational factors that support the need to learn. Initially, the student follows the steps that are presented by the teacher, adding personal data based on self-knowledge, on the understanding of one's own mechanism of assimilating knowledge.

From *the teacher's point of view*, an essential constrution to the formation of an effective style of learning can be noticed. Effective learning can be described in the following manner: in a short time, with balanced resources, to obtain maximum performance. The teacher must explain to the students what are the necessary steps that they can and must take in order to achieve their goals, the manner in which they can establish realistic objectives and, also, how they can be persistent in achieving their goals and valuing cognitive aquisitions in new life and/or learning situations.

Firstly, the learning abilities include the capability of the student to operate with written text. We call this ability *literacy*. Literacy is defined by the OECD (The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Develoment) as "the aptitude of understanding and using written information in daily life, at home, in the working environment, so that the person may be able to achieve certain personal goals and to develop his knowledge and abilities" (OECD, 2000). In the British Encyclopedia, literacy is defined as the ability to communicate using signs or written, printed or electronic symbols that are reprezentative for the language (https://www.britannica.com/search?query=literacy).

The formation of these abilities isn't just necessary, but also compulsory in a society where writing offers and important means of communication and also a resource for knowledge. Why are literacy abilities necessary in a society dominated by technology? Writing is the essential way of transmitting and receiving messages. The formation in students of the ability to select information from a text and apply it in new situations represent a basic ability in a society of knowledge. Reading has many levels: basic reading, inspectional reading, analytical reading (Adler & Van Doren, 2014) and each level makes the reader more advanced.

In the same paper there are presented methods of studying different types of text: literary, scientifical, philosophical texts etc., each having difficulties, but also particular methods of approach.

Taking into consideration the complexity of the *learning to learn* competence, the development of literacy abilities in students during mandatory schooling is stringently necessary. Literacy can be described in components that are correlated in a system according to functionality: a) desciphering and using information from the written text, b) integrating the information in the structure of the previous knowledge and c) tansposing the information in practical-applicative situations, in problem solving or in finding some innovative solutions to current or special cases from the school, profesional or social activity.

The formation of literacy abilities is an issue which concerns specialists from all current educational systems, because in this way functional illiteracy will be eliminated. Currently, illiteracy affects the school population in different proportions in each of the member states of the EU. In Romania, functional illiteracy reaches alarming peaks, especially in the field of receiving the written message. In the case of the PISA tests, the results show that "35% of Romanian students are on the 2nd level. Under level 2, meaning on the lvel 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). The 2nd level is the basic level which must be reached at the end of the mandatory studies so that a 15 year old youngster may be able to continue his studies efficiently or to be integrated on the labor market.

Therefore, the necessity of forming the literacy abilities is emphasized both from the point of view of preventing functional illiteracy, as well as the formation of the *learning to learn* key-competence for a lifelong learning.

3. Research methodology

Taking into consideration the presented issues, it was considered useful and important to follow the level of the literacy abilities in students that are at the end of mandatory schooling, on the 10th grade. The research tool that was used was the survey. Through this survey, there were analyzed aspects related to the study techniques of literary and scientific texts, the difficulties encountered by the students when studying scientific texts, as well as the difficulties in learning in school, but also the level of acknowledgement in students of the need to form studying techniques of the scientific texts. In the construction of the survey, the term *learning techniques* was used, and not that of *literacy*, in order to ensure the familiariation and familiarity of the students with the terminology that was used.

The survey was applied on a group of students that was selected out of 10th grade students, two different vocational high schools, pedagogical profile, the specialty teacher-educator, from Sibiu and Cluj-Napoca. In this way, the working group constituted of 115 subjects from four grades, each two from every school unit.

The survey that was applied is considered a useful tool for analyzing the issue of literacy abilities for literary and scientific texts, the necessity of forming studying techniques of the text, as well as the difficulties encountered by students when studying scientific texts.

4. Results

Here are the results of the survey that was conducted. In this way, on the questions regarding the familiarization of the students with the study of literary and scientific texts, a good familiarization of the students with study techniques both for literary texts, as well as scientific texts can be noticed: 80% (93 of respondents) master study techniques for literary texts and over 60% (67 of the students) know study techniques for for scientific texts. Out of the students that were questioned, over 8% (9students) are not familiar with study techniques for literary texts and 14,78% (17 students) for scientific texts. 9,56% (11 students) don't know if they are familiar with study techniques for literary texts and 18,26% (21 students) for scientific texts. The results appear in the graphic below:
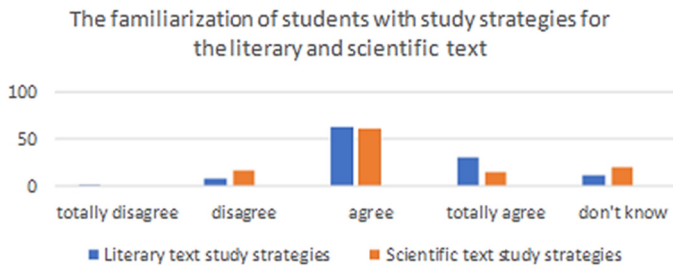
Figure no. 1. *A comparative representation of the degree of familiarization of students with study techniques for literary and scientific texts*

To the question *I prefer the classical methods of teaching (based on the explanation of new notions) instead of the methods that emphasize the discovery of the notions by studying the text*, the option of students for the teaching methods was the following: approximately 70% – over 80 students – prefer the classical methods of teaching, based on the explanations of the teacher, and over 20% (25 students) prefer the study of the text for the discovery of new information. 7,82% (9 students) have opted for the option *I don't know.*
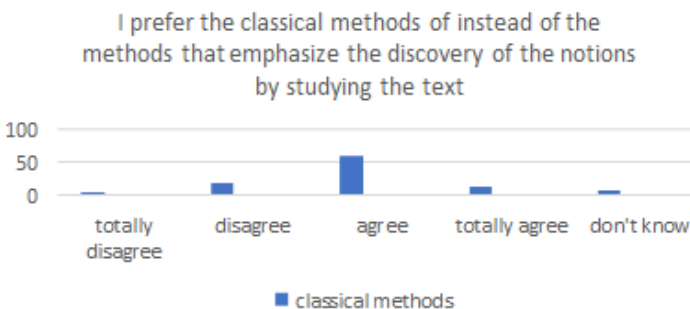

Figure no 2. *The option of students for the methods based on explanation or the methods based on studying the text*

Among the difficulties encountered by students in studying the texts, a very large number of choices was for the difficult specialty terms – 59,13%, specialty terms in great number – 37,39% (43 students), long texts and a complex language are equally difficult for approximately 27% (31 students). 6,95% (8 students) don't encounter difficulties.

When learning a new lesson, the difficulties that are encountered by students are: the patience to go through the text integrally 45,21% (52 students); the identification of the key notions, as well as the communication to the

others of the learned notions are considered to be difficult for the same number of students 21,73% (25 students); the formulation of the main ideas and the association of the new notions with other learned notions represent difficulties for over 12% of the students (12, respectively 14 students). 20% of the questioned students don't encounter difficulties in learning (23 students).

To the questions *I consider it is important to know techniques in order to study a scientific text,* the answers were formulated in the following manner: complete agreement – 33,91% (39 students), agreement – 52,17% (60 students), disagreement – 2,60% (3 students), complete disagreement 0,86% (1 student) and don't know – 10,43% (12 students).
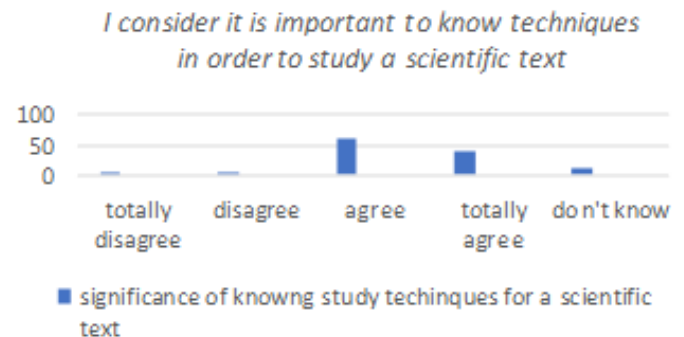

Figure no 3. *The opinion of the students about the significance of knowing the study techniques for a scientific text*

Conclusively, the importance of knowing the study techniques for a scientific text is pointed out by over 85% of the respondents (99 students), approximately 3% of the students (4 students) don't consider these study techniques necessary and 10,43% (12 students) don't know whether knowing the study techniques for a scientific text is important to them.

5. Discussions

By analyzing the results that were obtained after the survey was applied on the 10th grade students regarding the study techniques of the texts, so the literacy abilities, we can notice a good mastery of the study techniques of both the literary and the scientific texts. The study techniques of the literary texts are mastered by a larger percent of the respondents (over 80%), while the literacy abilities for scientific texts are familiar to approximately 60% of the students. Even if the percentage is great, the differences between the obtained results may be the result

of the manner in which the teaching activity is unfolded: in Romanian classes and/or foreign languages, strategies based on text analysis are predominant, while in science classes (Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Maths etc.), the teaching-learning activity is organized predominantly through strategies based on explaining the notions by a teacher or presenting these strategies in the final form, and the use of text study is rarely encountered. This result can easily be correlated with the preference of the students for strategies based on the teacher's explanations, an option that is expressed by the students to the third question, in the detriment of the literation strategies that are particular to the scientific text. This preference can be determined by many causes: a lack of exercise in the analysis of a scientific text can make this activity extremely complex and discouraging, the certainty that they found out the correct information, without the risk of understanding the text wrongfully, the convenience expressed by the desire of not putting the effort into learning; obtaining scientific information presented in a concise manner, it simplifies the effort put by the student in learning. But these aspects are not beneficial in forming one's own style of learning, so the formation of literacy abilities for a scientific text is extremely important.

Questions 4 and 5, respectively, show the numerous difficulties encountered by the students in studying scientific texts and in learning a new lesson. So, even if the students claim that they are familiarized with study techniques for the texts, many of the enumerated difficulties indicate that literation abilities are insufficiently formed. One cause of the difficulties encountered by the students might be the large quantity of information that is transmitted in a teaching activity and, due to an overcharged school curriculum, the time for fixating new knowledge is extremely limited. Therefore, the new notions are not connected with the notions that are already assimilated, the moment of applicability or transposition in practical situations of the studied notions is lost. In this way, important stages of literation's are lost. The difficulties that were encountered by the students both in studying of a scientific text, but also in studying new notions can lead to a lack of motivation for studying, and the lack of motivation can have as a consequence a lack of formation of learning strategies to be applied in one's own learning.

The students who don't know whether these techniques are important or not are not to be neglected, but also the ones who claim that these are not important. Even if they comprise a very small percentage, these students didn't manage to become aware of the role of deschipering a written text in one's own learning, as well as the application of literacy in daily life, so it requires an increased attention from the teachers.

It should be noticed that the majority of students consider knowledge and the application of particular study techniques for the scientific text to be very important. This results in the importance that they offer to studying the texts and this aspect contributes to the formation of the literacy abilities, respectively of the abilities for individual study.

6. Conclusions

At the end of the research, some conclusions have appeared:

- The presented research points out the fact that students know and appreciate the particular elements of literation abilities.

- The *learning to learn* competence is based on the skill of the youngster to possess literation abilities in order to form abilities for individual study that can be applied in the personal and professional development. So, at the end of mandatory schooling, it can be stated that these youngsters have literacy abilities, thus envisaging a delightful situation, that of overcoming functional illiteracy.

- The students that were involved in the presented study, by becoming aware of the fact that they hold study abilities for the texts are ready with the necessary skills to form the *learning to learn* competence.

- Recognizing the difficulties in learning represents an important stage in forming of the *learning to learn* competence because it is an awareness of a problem that can be fixed. This aspect denotes the preoccupation of the students for forming effective study techniques.

- It would be interesting to correlate the answers of the students with the obtained results to the PISA tests, considering they are a generation of students who took the exam in 2015. In this way, the differences in evaluation and self-appreciation/self-evaluation can be analyzed, but also the evolution along the three years.

- Also, the research can be extended to the teachers who teach these classes in order to have a double perspective on the appreciation of the level of literation that was achieved.

- The value of the research resides in showing the literacy abilities formed in 10th grade students, as well as the difficulties encountered by them in learning.

- As limits are concerned, it can be noticed that the dimension of the group of respondents doesn't enable the generalization of the result of the research over the entire school population, on a national level.

Literation abilities are an essential element in developing strategies for individual study that are necessary in the formation of the *learning to learn* competence.

Authors note:

Nicoleta Meseșan is Ph.D. student, Doctoral School "Education, Reflection, Development", Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences.

References

Adler, M.J., Van Doren, Ch. (2016). *Cum se citește o carte. Ghidul clasic pentru o lectură inteligentă*. Pitești: Editura Paralela 45.

Bocoș, M.-D. (coord.), Răduț-Taciu, R., Stan, C., Chiș, O., Andronache, D. (2015). *Dicționar praxiologic de pedagogie. Volumul I: A-D.* Pitești: Paralela 45 Publishing House.

*** Recomandarea Parlamentului și a Consiliului European 18.12.2006 privind competențele-cheie pentru învățarea pe tot parcursul vieții. In *Official Journal of the European Union*, 30.12.2006 (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/?uri=celex:32006H0962).

*** *Rezultatele elevilor români la testarea OECD-PISA 2015* (https://www.edu.ro/rezultatele-elevilor-romani-la-testarea-oecd-pisa-2015).

https://www.oecd.org/.../8%20-%20How%20PISA.

https://www.britannica.com/search?query=literacy.

Appendix:

Survey regarding the formation of the literation strategies in students:

Dear students,
Please answer the questions below by selecting the answers that best describe your learning ability:

1. I am familiar with the study strategies of a literary text:

Complete disagreement	Disagreement	Agreement	Complete agreement	I don't know
1	2	3	4	5

2. I am familiar with the study strategies for a scientific text:

Complete disagreement	Disagreement	Agreement	Complete agreement	I don't know
1	2	3	4	5

3. I prefer the classical methods of teaching (based on explaining the new notions) instead of the methods that emphasize the discovery of the notions by studying the text:

Complete disagreement	Disagreement	Agreement	Complete agreement	I don't know
1	2	3	4	5

4. When I read a scientific text, I encounter the following obstacles/ difficulties:
   a) Numerous specialty terms;
   b) Difficult specialty terms;
   c) Long texts;
   d) Complex phrasing;
   e) I don't encounter difficulties.
5. When learning a new lesson, it is very difficult:
   a) To formulate the main ideas;
   b) To select the key concepts;
   c) To associate new notions with other learned notions;
   d) To communicate the new concepts to the other ones;
   e) To have the patience to go through the recommended material;
   f) I don't encounter difficulties.

6. I consider it is very important to know study techniques in order to study a scientific text.

Complete disagreement	Disagreement	Agreement	Complete agreement	I don't know
1	2	3	4	5

Grade _____
Age _____

Developing Courses in English for Specific Purposes
by Helen Basturkmen

Reviewed by Bianca Bretan

Developing Courses in English for Specific Purposes
by **Helen Basturkmen**
Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 157 pp.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is now well established as a distinctive and important part of English Language Teaching. It refers to the teaching and learning of English with the particular goal of the learners to use the language acquired in a specific domain. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987:19) ESP is an approach to language learning which is based on learner's needs. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998:4-5) define ESP in terms of absolute and variable characteristics. In their opinion the absolute characteristics should apply to all ESP courses as they mention general facts: ESP is designed to meet specific needs of the learner; it makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the disciplines it serves; it is centered on the language, skills, discourse and genres appropriate to these activities. The variable characteristics are often, but not always, present.

Helen Basturkmen is an Associate Professor at the University of Auckland, New Zeeland, in the Department of Applied Language Studies and Linguistics. Prior to this she worked as a lecturer and a teacher educator in the UK, Turkey and the Middle East. Among her fields of interest and research are: discourse analysis, language education, and investigating postgraduate EAL student's difficulties in structuring and writing theses.

First published in 2010 *Developing Courses in English for Specific Purposes* is one of her most recent publications. The target audience is revealed on the book's back cover as students of TESOL and prospective and practicing teachers of ESP.

The aim of the book is, as stated by the author (p. X), to make the topic of ESP course development as accessible as possible to a wide audience and to show how ideas about course development in the literature can be related to practice.

The book is divided in two major sections, Part I (Main considerations in ESP course development) and Part II (Case studies in ESP course development). Each chapter in Part I is organized in the same way: an introduction followed by the presentation of theoretical framework, a summary and some discussion questions that invite the reader to reflection and offer guidelines for further reading.

In the Introduction the author prefaces the book with different writers' definitions of ESP including statements from prominent authors in the field such as David Nunan, Dudley-Evans and St John, Holm, Bernard and Zemach. It also includes a description of different areas in ESP and a discussion on the demands and effectiveness of teaching specialized languages.

Part I (with chapters 2, 3 and 4) familiarizes the reader with three important areas of ESP course design: needs analysis, investigation of specialist knowledge and curriculum planning.

Needs analysis is a crucial instrument in course development as it pinpoints the language and skills that the learners will use in their target professional or vocational workplace relating it to the present state of knowledge of the learners, their perceptions of their needs and the practical possibilities and constraints of the teaching context (p. 19). Chapter 2 provides the reader with essential information about needs analysis, its importance, the way it can be used not only in course

design but also on course assessment, types of techniques that could be employed in data collection (interviews, questionnaires, and observations).

Chapter 3 deals with descriptions of specialist discourse as the backbone of ESP course design. Though investigation of specialist discourse is time consuming it represents a crucial step for any specialized language teaching attempt. Basturkmen suggests and describes three approaches to provide the necessary information: ethnography, genre analysis and corpus analysis.

Ethnography is a form of qualitative research that has been described as study of phenomena in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln: 2000, p.3). Genre analysis is a research tool that aims to identify patterns underlying specific genres and how particular social groups (called discourse communities) use them in order to accomplish their aims. Corpus analysis is a collection of authentic written texts or spoken texts available electronically that can be accessed with computer software for teaching purposes.

In chapter four the author outlines four areas of curriculum development: focusing the course, determining the course content, developing the materials and evaluating courses and materials. In the first section, wide-and narrow-angled courses are presented as two ends of a continuum. The first is described as a course designed for a more general group of learners and the latter as a course for a very specific group of learners (e.g. Business English vs. English for Financial Auditors at Co). In the second section, a distinction is drawn between real and carrier content; the first denotes pedagogical aims such as the features of the language to be mastered while the latter denotes the means of delivering the real content such as the use of texts or activities (Dudley-Evans and St John: 1998; Belcher: 2006). The third section mentions the place and importance of using authentic texts and tasks that are written for purposes other than teaching and learning. In the final section is discussed the place of course revision based on teachers' and learners' evaluation of its effectiveness.

The second part of the book includes 4 chapters, each presenting a case study of a different ESP course. Each case study chapter follows the same organization: they first describe the context in which the course emerged and then go to focus on the decisions taken by the course developers with regard to the three areas of ESP course design namely, needs analysis, investigating specialist discourse and shaping the curriculum.

Chapter 5 relates to English for the police in a private language school. The chapter describes how the course was set in order to address officers' individual needs and the tools used in measuring its efficiency.

Chapter 6 offers an insight of a course constructed around the needs of an oversea-trained doctors' group that had difficulties in conducting medical consultations. After careful examination of the needs some criteria were listed including establishing rapport, understanding the patients' perspectives and offering options. The techniques used for gathering information and detecting key features of the discourse were: observations of the role-plays, observation of authentic medical consultations and filmed materials.

Chapter 7 examines the development of a course in the area of English for Visual Art Studies. The reason for developing the course was the obvious difficulty that those students had to enter the bachelor's degree program. The result of needs analysis revealed the lack of connection between teaching academic writing and disciplinary content. Consequently, students' prior textual experiences and subject knowledge and exploring genres to foster students' understanding of socio-historic practices and beliefs were two major principles which were incorporated into the design of the course.

Chapter 8 describes the context of English for Thesis Writing course development. Its purpose was derived from a problem noticed by the postgraduate center of a university related to formulating the literature chapter (or literature review, usually the longest chapter in a thesis). In an effort to understand needs, the teacher drew on a number of sources due to the diversity of members. In the development of the workshop, discussions with the colleagues and student, research literature and designers' own experiences helped to improve the course sessions.

Chapter 9 concludes the book with an invitation to reflection on the three main elements that shape an ESP course: needs analysis, investigating specialist knowledge and determining the curriculum. The chapter considers

what can be learned from the four case studies in the three key areas and identifies trends in the field.

The author's purpose is to enable teachers and prospective teachers to design and build up an efficient ESP course by providing relevant knowledge on this domain and by developing practical skills. In her endeavor Helen Basturkmen uses a step-to-step approach in guiding the reader through the necessary theoretical background up to practice provided by a number of relevant case studies. It can be concluded that the author's initial aim is achieved, and her book *Developing Courses in English for Specific Purposes* is a valuable volume for any teacher or course designer who wishes to work in the ESP field.

Reviewed by
Lecturer Ph.D. Bianca Bretan
bianca.bretan@ubbcluj.ro

Dicționar praxiologic de pedagogie
by Mușata Dacia Bocoș (coord.), Ramona Răduț-Taciu, Cornelia Stan

Reviewed by Margareta M. Thomson

Dicționar praxiologic de pedagogie
by **Mușata Dacia Bocoș (coord.), Ramona Răduț-Taciu, Cornelia Stan**
Paralela 45 Publishing House, Pitești (volumes I-III),
Cartea Românească Educaţional Publishing House, Piteşti (volume IV).

From the desire to meet the needs of educators, teachers, researchers, as well as policy makers in Romania, the "Praxiological Pedagogical Dictionary" saw the light of printing, under the specialized coordination of Professor Muşata-Dacia Bocoş, in several volumes. So far, this work is comprised of four volumes, as follows: volume I (authors: Muşata-Dacia Bocoş, Ramona Răduţ-Taciu, Cornelia Stan, Olga Chiş, Daniel-Cosmin Andronache) containing pedagogical terms and pedagogical phrases starting with letters A, B, C, D (2016); volume II (authors: Muşata-Dacia Bocoş, Ramona Răduţ-Taciu, Cornelia Stan) – regarding letters E, F, G, H (2016); volume III (authors: Muşata-Dacia Bocoş, Ramona Răduţ-Taciu, Cornelia Stan) – regarding letters I, Î, J, K, L (2017); volume IV (authors: Muşata-Dacia Bocoş, Ramona Răduţ-Taciu, Cornelia Stan) – regarding letters M, N, O (2018).

For example, in Volume II of the Dictionary we find the detailed, explicative analysis of creativity education as follows: "System of socio-educational approaches directed in the directions of: discovering, engaging, cultivating and developing the creative potential of one (or more) person(s); approaching the creative personality from the perspective of its formation; promoting ways to stimulate the transition to creative creativity, its stimulation and development; the systematic development of creative abilities and creative spirit. Stimulating creativity in school involves creating a favorable, interactive, exciting, and dynamic environment. In order to educate creativity in school, it is

advisable to create active curricular environments that capitalize on the creative potential and ideas of each educator, which allow the free expression of educators, the free exchange of information and opinions, their personal effort, the manifestation of the desire to have original, inventive, creative contributions, in a democratic, positive, flexible atmosphere." (Bocoş, M.-D., (coord.), 2016, p. 20)

The specific educational connotations of the term 'pedagogical idea' can be studied in Volume III of the Dictionary, as follows: "**Pedagogical idea - 1.** Summarized representation, overall, global, elementary view on an educational aspect, product of the thinking activity in the field of Education Sciences. More pedagogical ideas articulated in a coherent system that provides a certain vision and understanding of educational events, processes and phenomena form a pedagogical conception. See also **pedagogical conception**. The fundamental pedagogical ideas and theses that underlie general conceptual approaches provide the substance of a pedagogical doctrine. See also **pedagogical doctrine**. **2. Anchor/ pivot/ force/ key pedagogical idea** - Basic, essential, reference point for certain areas of content, which is used in pedagogical approaches, essays, presentations, expositions/ debates, pedagogical researches, studies and articles, etc. The whole pedagogical discourse is organized around the anchor/ pivot/ force/ key ideas, around the necessary explanations and the relationships established between them. See also **pedagogical/ educational speech,**

explanation. **3. Preconceived pedagogical idea** - Admitted pedagogical idea, adopted without careful prior research, often of empirical character, which can lead to the formation of an empirical view. See also **empirical pedagogical conception**. In general, in pedagogical knowledge and in scientific knowledge it is recommended to adopt an impersonal and objective attitude, the non-involvement in judgments and judgments of preconceived ideas, own prejudices, as well as manifestation of respect for scientific data, for the scientific substantiation of the new, for scientific rigor. See also **empirical knowledge, pedagogical knowledge**." (Bocoş, M.-D., coord., 2017, p. 16)

The text of each volume in the dictionary presents the operational definitions of the most relevant pedagogical terms and syntaxes in Educational Sciences, applicable to pre-university education. The concepts and principles presented are grounded in multiple scientific perspectives, such as pedagogical, psychological, sociological, philosophical, ergonomic, legislative, economic, ethical, and axiological, as well as didactic and managerial.

All terms and all pedagogical concepts are complemented by suggestive quotes from the international literature and the Romanian pedagogical literature. Noteworthy, as a separate feature of this work, the existence of explicit (inter)relations (references to other pedagogical terms related to the term under consideration) and the implicit (inter)relations (explanatory information) are provided.

At the end of each group of words or phrases starting with a certain letter, a bibliographic list is presented, and at the end of each volume there is a set of general applications with formative valences, which can be done individually or in groups, based on reader's choices.

Reviewed by
Associate Professor Ph.D. Margareta M. Thomson
mmpop@ncsu.edu

Pedagogia adulților. Definiții, elemente de reflecție și exerciții aplicative
by Ramona Răduț-Taciu, Cornelia Stan, Mușata Dacia Bocoș

Reviewed by Claudia Crișan

Pedagogia adulților. Definiții, elemente de reflecție și exerciții aplicative

by **Ramona Răduț-Taciu, Cornelia Stan, Mușata Dacia Bocoș**

Cartea Românească Educațional Press, Pitești, 2017. 159 pp.

Designed as a learning support and instructional resources for education students, particularly, students in the adult education programs, the present paper explores the various issues associated with applied pedagogy and classroom practices. Additionally, the authors propose as well, at the end, a glossary of specialized terms. The manuscript contains three chapters, as follows: Chapter 1. Adult pedagogy - applied pedagogical discipline; Chapter 2. Definitions of terms and phrases circumscribed to adult pedagogy and Chapter 3. Reflective elements and applied exercises.

The concepts and ideas presented help promote adult education as an object of study for the applied pedagogical disciplines, with an epistemological identity defined in the system of Educational Sciences, namely the Pedagogy of adults. The challenges of a knowledge-based society have also made progress in the pedagogy of adults, and they also support specialized terminology clarifications, such as: andragogy, popular education, lifelong learning, illiterate education, unemployed education, recurrent education, iterative education and so on.

Chapter 2 brings together the definition of a large number of pedagogical terms and syntaxes related to adult pedagogy, 129 being quoted from the volumes of the Praxiological Dictionary of Pedagogy (volumes I, II and III, published in 2015, 2016 and 2017) and another 60 new pedagogical terms and syntaxes, which are to be inserted and quoted in the following volumes, on the letters of the same Dictionary.

The text of the current manuscript ends with a set of applications, questions, activities, corresponding to each subtitle, 220 in number, in fact general applications with formative valences, which can be done individually or in groups, at the readers' choice. At this level, there is a great diversity, depending on the content, of the following situations: single answer questions, multiple choice questions, interrogations that call for argumentative answers, essays on various topics, composition comparative analyzes, critical analysis of some Romanian and/ or international literature, conceptual maps to highlight (inter)relations and (inter)determinations between pedagogical terms or syntaxes.

In conclusion, this manuscript aims to support reflexive and actional approaches related to issues from adult pedagogy, and opens new avenues for future research in this field, which are not sufficiently investigated in the Romanian literature.

Reviewed by
Lecturer Ph.D. Claudia Crişan
claudia.crisan@ubbcluj.ro