



МАКЕДОНСКИ  
ЦЕНТАР ЗА  
ГРАЃАНСКО  
ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ



# First International Conference

**“Practicum of Future Pedagogues,  
Teachers and Kindergarten Teachers  
in Multicultural Environments –  
Experiences and Challenges”**

27–29 November 2014  
Skopje

Faculty of Philosophy  
Ss. Cyril and Methodius University

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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

It is our pleasure to present the electronic edition of the proceedings of the First International Conference on **“Practicum of Future Pedagogues, Teachers and Kindergarten Teachers in Multicultural Environments - Experiences and Challenges”** held at the Faculty of Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Ss Cyril and Methodius in Skopje, from 27 to 29 November 2014. The Conference was organized by the OSCE Mission to Skopje in cooperation with the Macedonian Civic Education Centre (MCEC) and the five teacher training institutions in the country, i.e., the faculties of Philosophy and Pedagogy of the University of Ss Cyril and Methodius in Skopje, the Faculty of Philosophy of the State University of Tetovo, the Faculty of Educational Sciences of the University of Goce Delčev in Štip and the Faculty of Education of the University of St. Kliment Ohridski in Bitola.

The conference was opened by the Minister of Education and Science, Mr Abdilqim Ademi, the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje, Prof. D-r Goran Ajdinski and the head of the Human Dimension Department of the OSCE Mission to Skopje, Ms Ioana Cosma. The keynote speeches were delivered by Prof. D-r Lena Damovska from the Faculty of Philosophy of the Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, who described the concept and experiences of student’s practicum in the

country, by Mr Frank Crawford, education transformation expert from Scotland, who presented the Scottish and European inclusive practices in teacher training and Prof. Mark R. Ginsberg, Dean of the College of Education and Human Development at the George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, who highlighted the pathways for teacher training that lead to positive impact in multicultural environments.

This Conference is a result of six years of intense cooperation between the OSCE Mission to Skopje and the five teacher training faculties in the area of pre-service teacher training and practicum placements of future pedagogues and teachers and it is a unique example of excellent cooperation between the OSCE and the five teacher training faculties. The event was dedicated to advancing the theory and practice of preparing future education professionals for work in multicultural environments and it promoted collaborative exchange between academia and practitioners involved in the practical training of future teachers. This, first-of-its-kind conference organized in the country, gathered nearly 100 university professors, teachers, pedagogues, students and education experts, guests from Albania, Bulgaria and Serbia. Abstracts and papers for the conference were also submitted by education experts from Croatia, Estonia, Greece, Kazakhstan, Kosovo and Russia. That many of the participants

travelled long distances shows just how important the work of education professionals is, and how strong is their commitment to the well-being and prosperity of future generations.

We would like to thank all authors who contributed with their papers and to extend special gratitude to the members of the Scientific Board and the reviewers for their dedication and insightful comments.

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KEYNOTE SPEAKER

**Frank Crawford**

**October 2014**

**Practicum of Future Pedagogues, Teachers and Kindergarten Teachers in Multicultural Environments - Experiences and Challenges**

*Practicum: A school or college course, especially one in a specialised field of study that is designed to give students supervised practical application of previously studied theory.*

*([www.practicum.ac.uk](http://www.practicum.ac.uk) <http://www.practicum.ac.uk> - the website used to allocate student teachers to schools and local authorities in Scotland used by all teacher education university departments).*

**Introduction**

This paper outlines the complex nature of issues surrounding initial and continuing education for teachers relating to multi-cultural education in Scotland with references to practices in Europe and Australia. The paper looks at the mixed picture across European countries in identifying those young people who need support because of their cultural background, and in applying a 'practicum' to teacher education. The paper describes the practicum approaches in Scotland, particularly with respect to initial teacher

education. A main theme of this paper is that multi-cultural education is becoming regarded as an aspect of broad inclusive educational practices. The thesis in this respect is that if systems adopt the concept of the inclusive teacher, classroom and school, then issues relating to demographic diversity, social cohesion, equality of opportunity and equity as an outcome can be better addressed across the full range of government and school policies and practice.

**1. Legislation**

The UK is regarded as having one of the most advanced and rigorous set of laws that apply to issues of inclusion and equalities. Scotland opts into such legislation as a country in the UK and also has its own supplementary laws.

The Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000 bases its expectations upon an inclusive philosophy of education.

In Scotland there is a 'code of practice' supporting the learning of all young people and two Education Additional Support for Learning Acts (2004 & 2009).

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 places burdens on education providers 'to have regard, as far as practicable, to the child's religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background'.

Across the UK (including Scotland), legislation protects a range of characteristics against discrimination. It is unlawful to discriminate against anyone on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

## **2. Scottish approach to initial teacher education and the induction of new teachers as an exemplar of a Practicum approach**

The approach that has been adopted in Scotland for 'initial teacher education' offers a sound model as a 'practicum'. The eight universities that offer initial teacher education degrees and post-graduate qualifications work with education authorities (teachers' employers) and with individual schools (96% managed by education authorities) to put a practicum approach into place.

Subsequently, newly qualified teachers are guaranteed a position in one school for a year on a reduced weekly workload, and are

mentored by an experienced teacher who works in partnership with the local authority and the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) to decide on a final award of qualified teacher status. This approach is highly regarded internationally. The GTCS regularly reviews university courses for initial teacher education using published criteria. Programmes have to prepare teachers to meet the range and diversity of the needs of all young people and to have knowledge of inclusion and equalities legislation.

The most recent report concerning the nature of teacher education in Scotland is both wide-ranging and holistic. A key issue in the report is that the paradigm of teacher education needs to shift further away from being an 'informed', 'self-reflective' or 'enquiring' practitioner to the actively 'transformative' professional. Such a paradigm shift puts the responsibility for teacher education onto the shoulders of every single teacher. The consequence of that is for the teaching profession to operate within a supportive framework of regular review based on comprehensive standards that would include criteria related to issues of equalities, inclusion and diversity. ([www.scotland.gov.uk/resource/doc/337626/0110852.pdf](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/resource/doc/337626/0110852.pdf) and [hwww.gtcs.org.uk/professional-update/professional-update-and-fitness-to-teach.aspx](http://hwww.gtcs.org.uk/professional-update/professional-update-and-fitness-to-teach.aspx))

The model for continuing teacher education involves regular self-evaluation and review based on teachers as enquiring practitioners. This model closely aligns to a 'practicum'

approach ([www.gtcs.org.uk/web/FILES/about-gtcs/guidelines-for-ite-programmes-in-scotland.pdf](http://www.gtcs.org.uk/web/FILES/about-gtcs/guidelines-for-ite-programmes-in-scotland.pdf))

### 3. Relationship to teacher standards

In Scotland (and in Australia), teachers' professional standards contain criteria that address multi-cultural education under wider terms such as diversity and inclusion. These standards are used to guide teachers' self-reflection and personal and professional development.

In the Scottish Standards for Career-Long Professional Learning and those for Leadership and Management, there are clear criteria that relate to social justice, including: embracing values of equality and justice; committing to the principles of democracy through inclusive policies and practices in relation to race, ethnicity, religion and belief; valuing social and cultural diversity; and respecting the rights of all learners as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. ([www.gtcs.org.uk/standards/standards.aspx](http://www.gtcs.org.uk/standards/standards.aspx))

In Australia, proficient teachers are expected to design and implement teaching strategies that are responsive to the needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds. Principals are expected to: embrace inclusion; recognise the multicultural nature of Australian people; and use the rich and diverse linguistic and cultural resources in the school community.

also. ([www.aitsl.edu.au/australian-professional-standards-for-teachers/standards/list](http://www.aitsl.edu.au/australian-professional-standards-for-teachers/standards/list))

### 4. Inclusion and diversity as concepts beyond additional support for learning

A range of reports, documents and support materials are available in Scotland to support professional learning in multi-cultural education, diversity, equality, additional support needs and inclusion.

In 2002, a seminal document in Scotland described the concept of an inclusive approach to education as: creating an ethos of achievement for all; valuing a broad range of talents and abilities; countering conscious and unconscious discrimination; and actively promoting the diversity of individuals and groups within society. ([http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/cui\\_tcm4-712831.pdf](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/cui_tcm4-712831.pdf))

Some materials to support professional learning are online, for example *achieving success for all learners: An introduction to Inclusion* can be found on the Journey to Excellence website ([www.journeytoexcellence.org.uk](http://www.journeytoexcellence.org.uk)). Other resources for professional learning have been produced in Scotland in relation to good practice in diversity and inclusion. ([www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/Promoting\\_DE080313\\_tcm4-747988.pdf](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/Promoting_DE080313_tcm4-747988.pdf))

A major policy thrust in Scotland relates to 'Getting it right for every child' which is a

holistic, multi-agency and local and national government multi-departmental approach to meeting the individual needs of all learners. ([www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/YoungPeople/gettingitright/background](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/YoungPeople/gettingitright/background) )

A number of recommendations in relation to new immigrants in Scotland have been published. These recommendations include: providing challenging learning experiences; enabling young people to use their first language as a tool for learning; monitoring progress and achievement of individuals; establishing effective partnerships with parents; and providing well-targeted education and training for staff. ([www.educationscotland.gov.uk/publications/c/publication\\_tcm4581042.asp](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/publications/c/publication_tcm4581042.asp) )

Scotland has produced self-evaluation support materials linked to issues such as anti-racism. One particular resource suggests that schools can take a number of steps to improve provision, including: monitoring achievement by ethnic group; providing teacher education on tackling discrimination; ensuring that bilingual young people have equal access to the curriculum; encouraging role models to share their knowledge, skills and expertise; valuing diversity; and challenging stereotypes. ([www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/hgiospre\\_tcm4-712669.pdf](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/hgiospre_tcm4-712669.pdf) )

A report from the Centre for Human Ecology in Scotland relating to multi-cultural education notes that: ‘Self-respect, including respect for Scottish cultures, goes hand in hand with

learning respect for others’. Their report recommends that: teacher training should include in-depth knowledge of multi-cultural issues; and that politicians in Scotland should train in participative inquiry methods. ([www.alastairmcintosh.com/articles/2000-The-Real-Scot-Report.pdf](http://www.alastairmcintosh.com/articles/2000-The-Real-Scot-Report.pdf) )

Inclusion is an issue for all schools. Communities where minority groups are small also have challenges and these cannot be ignored. In a publication on Race Relations in Scotland, it was noted that in many parts of rural Scotland, the minority population is less than one percent. Individual minorities may be literally invisible. Yet these small and isolated groups are particularly vulnerable. ([www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/publications/pdfs/AchievingRaceEqualityInScotland-2010.pdf](http://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/publications/pdfs/AchievingRaceEqualityInScotland-2010.pdf) )

Particular communities face particular challenges in Scotland, for example Gypsy, Traveller or Roma communities. Schools are advised in a national report to take steps in: identifying a senior member of staff to take forward curriculum flexibility; recording, monitoring and dealing with incidents of bullying and racism; monitoring the attendance and achievement of young people from Gypsy and Traveller people; developing more effective communications with parents; working across agencies and government departments to improve access to education; and providing a contact point for national support services. ([www.step.education.ed.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/STEPInclusive\\_Education\\_web](http://www.step.education.ed.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/STEPInclusive_Education_web) )



[2011.pdf?phpMyAdmin=25644c053cf9e75454ed0055ea424327](http://2011.pdf?phpMyAdmin=25644c053cf9e75454ed0055ea424327) )

The travelling communities are also supported by self-evaluation resources, which are available to schools online.

([www.step.education.ed.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/hgiosmnog\\_tcm4-712667.pdf](http://www.step.education.ed.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/hgiosmnog_tcm4-712667.pdf) )

### **5. European developments in inclusive practice in education: the inclusive teacher, classroom, and school**

While there are Europe-wide sets of guiding principles relating to multi-cultural education, practice varies widely. The varying practice relates to a wide range of issues including the identification, classification and recording of cultural and religious background, ethnic origin and linguistic preference. Advice on how schools should deal with such diversity also varies widely.

Education can be inclusive and can promote the principles of social cohesion and equality. However, it is important that it avoids propagating stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination. Quantifying the level of diversity among young people in EU countries is made more complicated by the range of criteria used in categorising cultural background. Some countries use linguistic criteria, others whether learners are immigrants and still others use ethnic background.

The challenge is to develop educational policies that are culturally sensitive and inclusive in

societies that have an increasingly diverse student population. Such policies have to take into account cultural/religious diversity and cope with sources of conflict.

Denmark and the UK are the only countries that have officially created schools with a Muslim orientation. In general terms, faith schools obtain better educational results for minority children than mainstream schools.

Although EU member states have appropriate legislation, implementation remains incomplete. Wider anti-discrimination approaches tackling cultural, religious and ethnic prejudice have been acknowledged only by the UK and to some extent by France.

As with many of the aforementioned reports from Scotland, recommendations in EU research projects dealing with multi-cultural challenges include: providing teacher education on intercultural/ multicultural pedagogy; offering teachers incentives to teach in schools with large minority groups; appointing bilingual/bicultural teachers and cultural mediators; avoiding schools becoming “all-immigrant”; grounding multicultural education on wider citizenship education; and emphasising social responsibility, community involvement and political literacy in the curriculum. ([http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/policy-briefs-emilie\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/policy-briefs-emilie_en.pdf) )

### **6. Diversity education and multi-cultural education in teacher education**

In the UK and across Europe, it is difficult to find specific pre-service or in-service provision of teacher education programmes aimed specifically at multi-cultural education. Some specific courses exist in Scotland that target teachers who work with multi-lingual young people.

This paper suggest that policies in Macedonia should be developed that encompass the most up-to-date thinking in relation to cultural diversity and how best to include such issues in the education of all newly qualified teachers and the continuing education of all experienced teachers. This would be a necessary addition to any practicum approach aimed at ‘specialist’ teachers in the area of multi-cultural education. Policies should also aim at how best to establish a vision in every school that helps develop the concepts of inclusive learning and teaching (including the curriculum), inclusive classrooms, inclusive schools, and inclusive communities.

**CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS**

**THEMATIC STRAND**

**STUDENTS' PRACTICUM –THEORETICAL ASPECTS**

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***THE NEW VISION OF PRE-UNIVERSITY  
EDUCATION CURRICULUM PROMOTES  
COOPERATION BETWEEN THE  
INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT  
EDUCATION AND UNIVERSITY FOR THE  
IMPROVEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY  
CURRICULUM FOR NEW PRESCHOOL  
TEACHERS***

**Abstract**

*For more than one year, the Institute of Development Education, IDE, has been working hard on the curriculum reform of the pre-university education. On the first stage we have changed basic education, from kindergarten to the 9<sup>th</sup> class. For the first time, kindergarten will be part of obligatory education. On the second stage, we will change the curriculum of preschool education and secondary education to realize the full cycle of new curriculum reformation of the pre-university education.*

*The new vision of curriculum reform is based on the competencies approaches and on the learning areas (fields). The reform moves the focus of pupil's learning from the subject content toward the creation of learning situations in the classroom, from which the pupils construct the meaning of things, gain their knowledge and show what are able to do (being competent). So the children are able to learn by doing and to learn new knowledge from the actual knowledge, helped from the teachers and other adults.*

*Until now, the IDE has prepared the curriculum framework, core curriculums and subject syllabi.*

*The reformation of pre-university education is related closely with the reformation of University syllabi and new curriculum*

*philosophy on the new teacher generation preparation.*

*This is a great work and a strong challenge for the Education University, because they are responsible to form the new teacher-students with the requests of the curriculum based on the competencies. For this reason, the Institute of Development Education will work closely with the pedagogues staff of the University, in the partners status in this important process.*

**Keywords:** *competencies approaches curriculum, curriculum reform, kindergarten teachers, teacher's university preparation, challenges.*

### **The curriculum framework**

The curriculum framework describes the main orientation and guidelines for the educational goals, the content, the methods of learning and the pupils' achievements. Also, it describes these important issues:

- the overall goals of the pre-university education;
- seven key competencies;
- the general principles of the development and the implementation of the new curriculum;
- the learning areas and the subjects, according to the levels and the rates of the curriculum;
- instructional time for each field, subject and class;
- pupils' assessment etc.

The new vision of the reform changes are reflected on the goals of the pre-university education, because this level of education creates the conditions and opportunities for the pupils to develop and build their knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.

The curriculum reform is based on the key competencies<sup>1</sup> for lifelong learning that realize the education goals. These competencies are:

- Communication and expression competence;
- Thinking competence;
- Learning to learn competence;
- Life, entrepreneurship and the environment competence;
- Personal competence;
- Civic competence;
- Digital competence.

Each competence attempt to create, pupils that communicate on the effective way, pupils that think on the creative way, pupils that learn to learn, pupils that contribute on the community effectively, pupils that live on the healthy life, pupils that feel responsible for the best of the all; pupils that use technology to promote innovation.

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<sup>1</sup>Curriculum framework, page 13.

### The levels of pre-university education and curriculum rates

The Albanian curriculum framework has four informal levels and six curriculum rates<sup>2</sup>

ISCED Levels	The pre-university education structure	Curriculum rates
ISCED 4	Education after Upper secondary education, non-university	
ISCED 3	Upper secondary education Class XII	Rate 6. Consolidation of achievements and specialization
	Upper secondary education Classes X-XI	Rate 5. Basic development and vocational
ISCED 2	Low secondary education Classes VIII- IX	Rate 4. Reinforcement of achievements and career guidance
	Low secondary education Classes VI- VII	Rate 3. Further development of the bases and orientation
ISCED 1	Primary education Classes III - V	Rate 2. Reinforcement of foundations and development
	Primary education Classes I - II	Rate 1. Appropriation of the bases for recognition
ISCED 0	Preparatory class	
	Preschool education	Preparatory rate Childhood education

The curriculum is based on the learning areas<sup>3</sup>. According to the levels and the rates of the curriculum these learning areas are:

Learning areas	ISCE D 0	ISCED 1		ISCED 2		ISCED 3
	Rate 1. Preparatory class	Class. I & II	Rate 2. Class. III - V	Rate 3. Class. VI-VII	Rate 4. Class. VIII- IX	Rate 5. Class. X-XII
Language and Communication	26.3 %	39.6%	34.1%	28.6%	25.8%	21.5 %
Mathematics	21.1 %	19.8%	16.3%	14.3%	12.9%	10.9%
Natural science	10.5 %	4.9%	6.8%	10.7%	19.3%	17.4%
Society and environment	10.5 %	4.9%	6.8%	14.3%	16.1%	17.4%
Physical education, health and sports	10.5 %	14.8%	12.2%	10.7%	9.7%	3.3%
Arts	15.8 %	11.1%	10.2%	8.9%	6.5%	3.3%
Technology and TIC	5.3%	0%	5.4%	5.4%	3.2%	5.5%

<sup>2</sup> Curriculum framework, page 31

<sup>3</sup> Curriculum framework, page 43

**Preschool education and preparatory year**

The pre-university education reform attends to integrate the 5-6 years old children on the obligatory education system and for this reason, the preparatory class is included on the first curriculum rate.

Until now, in Albania, preschool education is not obligatory. During the next 3-4 years, we will realize that the children 5-6 years old must go at least one year to preschool before they enter the first class.

The learning areas on the preschool education are the same with the other part of the education system.

The teaching in the preschool is based on the integration between subjects.

Each learning area has its competences. It is very important that the teachers understand this competencies and the learning results, because they need to plan and to develop teaching according to their requests.

<b>Learning areas</b>	<b>Areas competencies</b>
Language and Communication	Listening of different texts. Speaking to communicate and to learn. Reading of the literary and non-literary texts Writing for personal and functional purposes The correct use of the language
Mathematics	Solution of the problem situations Reasoning and mathematical proof Mathematical thinking and communication Conceptual relationships Mathematical Modeling
Natural Science	Identify problems and their solution Using the tools, facilities and scientific procedures Communication in the language and terminology of science
Society and Environment	Civic and social
Physic education, Health and Sports	Show motile in accordance with various situations motor sports Interacts with others in different situations motor sports Adopt an active lifestyle and healthy
Arts	Artistic creation. Performing / artistic interpretation Assessment of artworks
Technology and TIC	Cognitive skills Practical Skills Communication Skills

So, as it's seen, the new curriculum is very ambitious and challenging, because keeping on mind the key competencies, thinking about the learning areas competencies, planning learning situations, integrating the subject to fulfil learning outcomes, using appropriate tools to evaluate the process and to assess the pupils is not easy.

The Ministry of Education and Sport and the Institute of Education Development have developed a new scheme to train the teacher with the new curriculum philosophy.

This academic year, 2014-2015, 26 schools from 13 Educational Regional Directory are engaged on the piloting process of the new curriculum. The pilot year includes the teachers and the pupils of the preparatory classes, first and sixth grade and we are working hard to help teachers with didactic materials and information.

### **Conclusions**

To have a best practices and good teachers to implement the new curriculum, it is needed that the education. Faculty cooperate with the Institute of Education Development.

It is very important that the Faculties of preschool teacher revise their syllabus and prepare a new teacher generation. Some of those faculties don't have "Curriculum development" subject and this would be a problem for the teachers after they finish the University. The preparation of the teachers' generation would have to purposes:

*The first one* is related with the understanding of the new vision of curriculum reform.

*The second* purpose is related with general teacher standards.

As soon as Teachers Faculties plan to revise their syllabus, as more chance has the curriculum implementation to be successful and the children profit from the learning environment.

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**OVERCOMING STEREOTYPES AND  
PREJUDICES THROUGH IMAGERY AND  
FORUM-THEATER**

**Abstract**

*The twenty-first century is not much different from the thirteenth century. The two will be remembered as a time of religious strife, cultural and culturological misunderstandings and the general feeling of discomfort and fear of the Other. The school as a homo chronotope, in the transitional and post-transitional period experienced "traumatic points" dividing students between Us and Them. The other is in a static and fixed in position to defend the concept of identity, if he feels threatened or challenged by the other's identity under rigid cultural, ethnic and religious prejudices and stereotypes. Prejudices and stereotypes cloud the fact that the ethnical perspective is geared towards real life with the Others, that man becomes I in touch with You.*

*Then, the school becomes a topos of collisions and, instead of dialogism of entities, the idea that the subordinated will need to prove their authenticity with academic spokespersonship begins to take root. The practical instruction on the subject Macedonian Language and Literature, showed that these imagological paradigms of the correlation between alterities as "acute pain points", are very well resolved through the so-called Forum Theatre (theatre of the oppressed). The scene is set with a real problem where the imperative is to prove that all types of conflicts, mostly ethnic, are neither a way of*

*life nor a way of resolving problems. After performing the stage play, a conversation commences between the audience and the participants in the play in an attempt to find a solution to the enigmatic problem. One should come to the conclusion that every person is like all other people, and not like no other person and that identity is humanity.*

**Keywords:** *identity, otherness, forum, theatre, ethics and responsibility.*

### **Imagology**

“...We, the world’s saddest Vilayet, the most unfortunate people in the world, have been losing our faces and cannot accept an alien one, torn and unaccepted, strange to everyone – even to those that we are related to, and to those who do not accept us as kin. We live at the furthest limits of the worlds, at the boundaries of the nations, at the reach of everyone’s punch and always to be blamed by someone. Waves of history break upon us as upon a reef. We are bored by our strength, we turned misfortune into our virtue: we become smart due to our boldness.” – Mesha Selimovich

This is the way Mesha Selimovich speaks of the Balkan people, especially of those of them which we once used to call inhabitants of a heterogenic topos SFR Yugoslavia, subjects of different nations, beliefs, confessions, which at that time seemed to be a projection of a futuristic vision that the world will not dismantle, but globalize; a policy aiming

towards integration, not disintegration. The Balkans seen through the eyes of travellers, was through time seen as an exotic place where antinomies, dichotomies and ambiguities collide in such a way that, speaking culturologically, epistemically, geopolitically and comparatively, they generate an image of a unique world where to winds blow towards the same fireplace: God’s and Devil’s, the one from the cross and the crescent, the West and the Orient, the rich North and the poor South, a place for hedonists and ascetics, believers and non-believers.

This “former place” called Utopia has been referred to by analysts, particularly in the past twenty years, as a place of bloody clashes between the universal binary oppositions: Good (I) – Evil (THEY); Life (MINE) and Death (THEIRS); Builders (WE) – Destroyers (THEY). These clashes occurred in the place that perceived itself as the Cradle of European civilization, whereas centuries back, and even today, Europe considers it the margin that constantly causes problems and generates collisions of high intensity.

I belong to the idiorhythmic generation from the 70s of the previous century that grew up free of the thought that one day it will witness Kafka’s prophesies, that such a time will come when the processes will be conducted in mouldy and dark rooms, no one’s, yet everyone’s. My generation experienced the substitution of human measures by measures of censorship of the free thought, where the distorted values of the big West became the

imperatives of the transition procédé (method) that made us realize that the World really rests on a struggle of unequal opposites, where the power of authority imposes hegemonic criteria of value at all possible levels of man's initiating walk through life. We have become loners in our homeland, we set boundaries in our own home and build not only spiritual enclaves, but also ethnic, religious and political ones. Thus, people have found themselves facing many choices of where to belong; this led to a crisis, causing them to multiply. The problem of self-identification and the existence of the Other arose. On the one hand, the Balkans experienced a geopolitical deconstruction; on the other hand, the postmodern discourse imposed globalization of the modern society and unification, which was to overcome the regional differences. As a logical consequence of the decrepit and disoriented Balkans, the nationalistic and ethnic identities come to life, let us not say became vampires, spinning around its axis, as they do not have any other support.

This meant that, from the diachronic and synchronic viewpoint, the Balkans created auto-stereotypes (self-images) resulting from the auto-perception. These images are often realistic and coloured up to the point of prank, but at the same time painfully truthful because the stereotypes were rather negative occurrences that got in the way of a man and a woman, on the way from one city to another, standing as Scyllae and Charybdae among the rooms of a six-room apartment, which suddenly became too tight for ones and too roomy for

others. The auto-stereotypes highlighted the differences between Me and You. 'Me' did not find its image in its reflection in 'You', the identity narcissistically closed in itself, causing the appearance of Cain and Abel's discourse of postmodern times. Stereotypes pointed out the differences, not as an opportunity of a cosmopolitan perspective, but as prejudices being the cause for even bigger curses on this Balkan homo-chronotopos.

Heterostereotypes of the contemporary discourse describe the peoples of the Balkans as the ones from the Third World; the name 'Balkans' being already avoided to be uttered – a substitute appears as a 'Pilates' solution – Southwest Europe. But that designation did not make the Balkan people EU citizens, it did not relieve them of the etiquette – barbarians, provincials, marginal people, immigrants, thieves, idle people. The negative stereotypes also built Schengen, which though had fallen a decade before, the world regarded as unknown, the trivial hamlet for the residents of that Europe. If ever the Balkans had been the immanent positive stereotypes 'hospitable, kind, generous, pranksters, hedonists, heroes', in the past twenty years they have been transformed into their opposites. After all, when was the Balkans not a bone of contention? If foreign policies and aspirations did not destroy the Balkans, then it kept destroying itself by gnawing itself, because there have always been more witches than princes-aristocrats by spirit, more imaginary magic mirrors than Snow Whites, more magic shoes than Cindarellas; therefore, one could not tell who the Prince

was, and was the wolf, who the hunter was and who the prey was, which path was the right one for Hansel and Gretel, and which was the false one, neither was it known who was hidden under the mask (the Capulets and the Montagues). The Balkans are an enigmatic Time-Space. The carnival under masks is a common décor, the misery of the courtesans hides behind the glitter of the scene, they remain the only honest ones amidst the tumult of the trashed God's Commands. Don Quixote is a madman, and Hamlet is as well. The world suddenly becomes odd to the man from the Balkans, and he becomes alien to the world. They do not recognize each other, although they see one another. The world, incarnated in the old courtesan Europe, creates new-old surmises of cosmopolitanism, which it had once killed in the Balkans, under the excuse that totalitarianism was in fact dehumanization of identities. In postmodern times, that Europe creates stereotypes of the abundance of varieties in the identities. It especially refers to the multi-ethnic societies on the Balkans. We wonder who, in this case, was the 'discoverer of America'? Columbus or the Americans? Who dares tell the people on the Balkans how to live in a global village? Did not the Balkans explode as a tinderbox just because of the positive stereotypes of centuries-long life in multicultural and multiethnic discourse and did it not tattoo the tragedy on its skin, so that it doesn't stay unrecorded? The people of the Balkans have been empirically convinced that the 'identification' of the identity should start from the individual (ME) who needs to know

that he is just like all the others (identity of humanity); the individual may be like some other people (cultural and social identity) and that he is an identity for himself, and is not alike any other person (self-identification).

Stereotypes are simplified pictures of ourselves (auto-stereotypes) and others (hetero-stereotypes) based on generalized conclusions devoid of any empirical experience of those who create them. The logical consequence of these are prejudices directed towards the other, decomposing his integrity and placing him on the pillar of shame, because they are always given in a negative paradigm. These imagery perceptions of Us and the Other become emphasized at times of great political, ideological and religious conflicts. They possess a great propaganda procédé and affect the creation of public opinion, especially when supported by the mass media. The pejorative disqualification of the Other often gets the dimensions of a national perception of the enemy. In terms of geopolitical, historical, culturological and epistemical view, Macedonia is a place where bridges between the East and West are erected and is therefore exposed to traumatic shocks that are primal and reflect the juxtaposed alternatives: paganism to Christianity, Christianity to Islam, western rationalism to eastern exoticism, cruel cold-bloodedness to passionate full-bloodedness, relativism to fatalism. The time of the great transition in Macedonia, due to the impact of the heterostereotypes, which further on influenced the auto-perception, triggered a re-

evaluation of its own history and the history of the Other.

Therefore, once Schengen had fallen, we have suddenly become trash; we were horrified by ourselves because we became asylum seekers in the large home called Europe and were rejected back from the borders of the promised world as potentially inappropriate Europeans. We saw ourselves as the world had seen us: dirty, unworthy of the great family, dishonest to the ancestors who saw “the world as a field for cultural competition among the nations” (Goce Delchev). So inferior became we that we forgot the culture and thought only of the gastro-stomach syndrome occurring always when there is no bread for the hungry. Of course, help came from Europe on a giant scale. Europe taught us that we should embrace the differences of the entities in order to live in the European style; that joining the alterities is a paradigm of the postmodern world; that we should destereotype the stereotypes and to revive the old love for the Other as if it had not been our own milieu of life for centuries. After all, it is good to hear the truth of unity being the only prospect to the world and to Macedonia, directly from the lips of the Great Powers (Authorities) because thus truth sounds more truthfully.

From the above, we can summarize that the twenty-first century is not very different from the thirteenth century. Both of them will ever be remembered as a time of religious strife, cultural and culturological misunderstandings

and general feeling of unease and fear of the Other.

In the transitional and post-transitional period in Macedonia, the school as a homo-chronotopos has experienced the "traumatic points" of separating the students to Us and Them. The Other is found in a static and fixed position to defend the identity concept, if he felt he was endangered or challenged by Other identity by rigid culturological, ethnic and religious prejudices and stereotypes. Prejudices and stereotypes obscure the fact that the ethical perspective is targeted towards real life with the Other, that the human being becomes Me in touch with You. Then, the school becomes a topos of collisions, so instead of the dialogism of the entities, an idea that the “subordinates” will prove the autochthony through “academic magniloquence”. The school is that spiritual space for promoting human values, where students may homogenize and unify as a transparent vanguard and to confirm their role and importance in creating the new order of Europe, founded on cosmopolitanism, tolerance, dialogism and interaction.

We would say that schools are more important than houses, more important than temples. There, the speculative thinking translated into a creative paradigm will annul the stringent catalogue of the conformist stereotype perception of the alterities; it will annul the action of non-ethic that most frequently is being achieved through autocracy of the major entity. It believes that the right to priority in each segment of school life belongs to it

automatically. Self-conscious factors, the teachers mostly, are free of moral entropy and their mortgage and incentive for creating a common path through the development of the creative spirit will contribute not to bring the entities in opposition, but will bring them in a position to create a new symbolic and semiotic identity, which bears the message for a modern syncretic totality, free of any type of autocracy, automatism, nationalism, chauvinism, destruction. The teacher must be knowledgeable, brave and bold for initiative to start, not to cancel the opposites of the manifestations of Me and the Other.

Opposites are the ominous sign of life in the community of different identities, but at the same time are strong dialectic, they are merger of the intellect, ethics and aesthetics on emotional national and rational level. The teacher needs to direct his thoughts towards the development of the individuality of identities; but, also to show that it is a path to evolved self-awareness which also means that development and emancipation of the feeling of belonging to the identity is belonging to the totality of humanity and a reason for creative joy and artistic act in creating reality that fits the human being, not the tendencies of daily politics that are often initiated by the predominant stereotypes and the forces of entropy.

### **Forum Theatre**

In teaching Macedonian language and literature, the forum theatre is one of constructive opportunities for demonstrating that it is

possible to overcome all sorts of problems and conflicts that arise in the school life when it comes to the ethnic, social and other divisions caused by the rigid stereotypes to the Other, experienced as the oppressor or the oppressed. The forum theatre appears in the early seventies of the twentieth century, when August Boal lived in exile in Brazil. It is the most common type of Theatre of the oppressed. When making forum theatre, theatre stage should be set where the event is directly related to the real world or derived from it. This event should not be too abstract or absurd. The scene should not display a hopeless situation. For example, it would be illusory to perform on stage Camus' Merceau prior to the guillotine on him, because it is already a *fait accompli*. It is the imperative for the forum to point out that violence is not a way of life, nor the way of solving problems, although it is quotidian lifestyle of someone. The motto of Augustus Boal is "Peace, not passivity".

This method of work with students belonging to different ethnic identities, one of which treats itself as oppressed, offers aesthetic and ethical opportunity to analyse the past in the context of the present and to anticipate the future, not waiting for the intervention of *deus ex machina*. The theater of the oppressed teaches the students how to return the dialogue at an open table, to ignore the language of violence, it teaches them how to live in a multiethnic society without traumatized individuals and groups. Oppressed are those individuals or groups who are ethnically, religiously, politically, socially, economically, racially,

sexually unable to establish a dialogue with the Other party.

Dialogue, means free exchange of thoughts and views with the Other, participating in a society of equal individuals and groups and respecting the differences among the people. Forum theater promotes the view that dialogism is the only alternative amongst the individuals, groups, race, family, nation. It achieves this by setting the scene of a seemingly insoluble problem, which is produced by the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed. In that context, the efforts of the forum theater are to point out that the dialogue as the only form of humane solution to the conflict. After the scene is played, the audience is called to offer their own solutions to resolve the conflict. This type of theater actively involves both, the actors and the audience and contributes to consider the problem from multiple angles and perspectives. Thus, the youngsters prepare to take action in real life situations. It is a way of obtaining to social changes as well as changes of the current worldview of the entities that are in a conflict situation.

This theater is defined as a pedagogical drama workshop and a theater performance. It strives to highlight the role of the theater as an art in human service of social change. The point of the forum theater is that it activates the passive spectator transforming him/her into an actor who can offer a better solution to the conflict between the two parties. The spectator actively changes the dramatic situation, so that his speech is important to show that the theater is a

forum where the abilities for speech can be explored and where more solutions to some important imagery problem can be tried out.. The goal is to humanize the mankind through maturation of the statement that every human being is a theater; that everyone can perceive the situation and spot himself in the situation.

So, in this way a kind of subjective theater is created in which a man is an actor and spectator simultaneously. Thereby, the forum theater is seen as an aesthetic movement fighting for peace, not for passivity; it becomes a paradigm for nonviolent and democratic solutions to all types of conflicts, even ethnic, and therefore, it is practiced in the education, culture, art, politics, the public health. The theatre of the oppressed is practiced as a medium for a knowleoging Me as well as and the Other, it provides an opportunity to change that situations generating an accident through dialogue and thus, eventually, to reach the righteous solution that is ethically sound and will endure the judgment of general democratic public. The rights of the man as a part of the world and of a group as well as independent entity will develop and defende only in this way.

Our immediate experience in overcoming stereotypes and prejudices through imagery ideas of the Other through forum theatre is that we have created thematic fields for proving and self-proving as an acting paradigm that changes the world of "pitfalls of life" which can easily catch us if we do not see "farther from the hill". Thus we have jeopardized the mediocrity of the

template approach to solving eventual ethnic conflicts in the school and beyond, and have formed a creative laboratory where the chaos becomes cosmos. We have shown that the harmonization of the identities is possible when life is preferentially understood as an aesthetic act wherein its modernized syncretic form will be recreated; when the ideas for overcoming the differences are a powerful tool for social changes, so necessary for the current historical and political moment, in the Balkans. Therefore, this type of theatre has been declared by the UN as one of the ways to promote social changes and a way to get to the implementation of all human rights, by which the Balkans and all other "crisis topoi" worldwide would return to the foundations of democracy.

### **Conclusion**

The students perusing the imagery aspects of the Otherness through the forum theatre come to the solution that there is a treasure of interpretative opportunities in detecting an

abundantly, subconscious world, free of frustrations of stigmatizing the "taboo" topics that the Other is a potential evil. The theatre develops their thoughts to overcome the taboo topics about Them; it faces the students with the stalking dangers and prepares the students to recognize them; it offers the individual to confront with itself, and thus, confronting the problems on a planetary level; because no one is alone, but is a part of the wholeness of the world. The universal culturological code is placed, without emphasis, in the context of imagery researches which are so necessary today.

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**SCIENTIFIC AND NON-SCIENTIFIC  
RESEARCHES IN FUNCTION OF  
IMPROVEMENT OF STUDENT  
PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE IN  
MENTORING SCHOOLS**

**Abstract**

*The paper is focused on development of climate for using the educational research results in improvement of mentoring schools, the process of mentoring student teachers in mentoring schools and building the capacities of mentoring school for facing the challenges of the didactical changes.*

*The paper consists of three parts. The first part, Theoretical aspects of using researches in teaching, is dedicated to conceptualization of the researches in classroom living. The second part of the paper, Mentoring schools as a part of teacher training curricula, is focused on explanation of the role of the mentoring schools in their personal development and the development of practical competences of the student teacher. Possible improvements of student pedagogical practice is the third part of the paper in which are elaborated the results of some educational researches in Republic of Macedonia which can be used for improvement of the teaching process in mentoring schools and roles of the faculties of Education in supporting of that process. At the end of the paper are given some conclusions and recommendations as direction for improvement of the mentoring process in mentoring schools in the Republic of Macedonia.*

**Keywords:** *educational research, didactical changes, mentoring schools development, pedagogical practice.*

## Introduction

The process of mentoring students is primarily defined as a process of exchanging the values for the classroom improvement and development. The traditional perception on the mentoring of students in R Macedonia was defined as a process of giving services for a specified amount of money. That was the reason which gave me the idea to explore the mentoring process in mentoring schools, the relations between teacher training faculties and mentoring schools and the possibilities for development of the mentoring process based on mutual trust, development and cohesion. The focus of our interest was the development of institutions in terms of: where the pupils and students learn, the strength of the mentors in classroom acting and institutional and interpersonal partnership.

## Theoretical aspects of using researches in teaching

There are a lot of positive attitudes on the idea for practicing teaching and researching as a parallel processes in contemporary educational settings. As is stated by Hitchcock and Hughes, "There is also an important sense in which teacher research, viewed as critical, reflexive and professionally oriented activity, might be regarded as a crucial ingredient in the teacher's professional role."<sup>4</sup> Having developed competences for researching, the teacher should be engaged in exploring: "existing problems

which we can already recognize; emergent problems which we discover in our initial investigations and potential problems which we anticipate might develop if we took a particular course of action"<sup>5</sup>.

There are a lot of different views about the influence, engaging researcher, values and the possibilities for replace the scientific with non-scientific researches.

The scientific research method usually used in some educational research, according Cohen L., Manion L. & Morrison K., is a "... set of procedures which show not only how findings have been arrived at, but are sufficiently clear for fellow-scientists to repeat them, i.e. to check them out with the same or other materials and thereby test the results."<sup>6</sup>

The other type of research, which we have named non-scientific research, doesn't have such a possibilities, but is strongly focused on understanding the concrete practice, changing of that practice and improvement of the research practice. That means that, the teacher has the unique right to select, develop, design, use, implement, measure and evaluate some of the professional part of their living. Well-educated teachers should operate with the simple and every day research methodology, which will lead to holistic decisions, eclectic planning and mixed approaches to the practice.

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<sup>4</sup> Hitchcock G. & Hughes D. (1999). *Research and the teacher, A qualitative introduction to School-Based research* (second edition), London: Routledge, p. 7

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<sup>5</sup> Pollard A. at all. (2003). *Reflective teaching- Effective Evidence-informed professional practice*, London, New York: Continuum, p43

<sup>6</sup> Cohen L., Manion L. & Morrison K. (2007). *Research Methods in Education*, (Sixth edition), London and New York: Routledge, p.15, 16

Table 1: Practicing Science vs. Teaching Science<sup>7</sup>

<i>Scientific Research Approach</i>	<i>Inquiry-Based Teaching Approach</i>
Raise fundamental question of interest that is addressable via scientific investigation.	Engage student interest; guide the development of questions [i.e. establish basis for inquiry) in a specific area of content.
Research what is already known	Discuss with students what they already “know” or think they know [prior knowledge assessment] to help address the question(s).
Make a prediction or hypothesis in answer to the question of interest	Ask students to make a prediction or hypothesis in answer to the question of interest
Plan and implement an experiment to test the prediction.	Plan and implement an experiment to test the prediction [hands-on activity]
Reflect on the results of the experiment and how they affect what was known before. Be alert for how the new data does or does not readily fit into the existing structure of scientific understanding.	Reflect with students on the results of their hands-on activity/investigation and use their predictions to assist them with gaining new/deeper understanding of content. Be alert for any shifts from “prior knowledge” as students integrate their new experiences.
Communicate new knowledge via talks and papers. Science community judges the validity and value of the results. New questions are raised.	Communicate new knowledge via presentations, papers, demonstrations, exams [assessment methods]. Teachers judge students’ learning and guide them to apply it to new circumstances.

Table 1 (above) presents the characteristic of the *Scientific Research Approach and Inquiry-Based Teaching Approach*, which only stress the differences between some of the aspect of practicing of scientific and non-scientific researches in education.

<sup>7</sup> Morrow A. C., (2000). *What Are the Similarities between Scientific Research and Science Education Reform?* Space Science Institute, Boulder, Colorado Retrieved September 15, 2014 from: [http://casa.colorado.edu/~dduncan/teachingseminar/Research\\_Ed\\_Similarities\\_Cheryl\\_M.pdf](http://casa.colorado.edu/~dduncan/teachingseminar/Research_Ed_Similarities_Cheryl_M.pdf)

### **Mentoring schools as a part of teacher training curricula**

When we say that mentoring schools are a part of teacher training curricula, we think that it is a process of practical maturation of the teacher knowledge in their initial teacher training and life-long learning of teachers.

The process of initial teacher training can be seen as "...a base for professional realization of the teaching profession"<sup>8</sup> and our perception of that process as "...a starting and unique condition for practical involvement in a teaching profession" and as "... first certificated education for achieving the licence for working in specific educational sub-system"<sup>9</sup>. Talking about initial teacher preparation, we want to emphasize the "...development of the teachers sense for understanding the teaching environment, accumulation the knowledge for critical recognition, learning for asking and answering, development of the cooperative relations with the colleagues, producing positive atmosphere and their self-respect."<sup>10</sup>

The process of life-long learning of teachers is a process which follows the initial training and has the goals for deeper and wider improvement and innovation of the knowledge, attitudes and acting of teachers. As is stated by Elliott J. 1999, "without real teachers, given real

resources to empower students, lifelong learning will remain a slogan, a catchphrase, a substitute for real action"<sup>11</sup>. This can be achieved through formal, non-formal, informal learning and life-wide learning. (A *Memorandum of Lifelong learning by the European Commission*)<sup>12</sup>

All of these initial and lifelong learning activities of teachers can be realized through some classical and alternative forms of learning.

The classical form of realization of the initial teacher training is the mentorship. Created on a different, but similar ways, the mentorship can be realized through the following forms: School placement, School based work, Pedagogical practice or Teaching practice.

The alternative forms of realization of the mentorship in initial teacher training are: "coaching and counselling, peer assisted leadership, consultancy, private study, critical friendship, quality circles, critical incident analysis, self-development, distance learning, shadowing, job rotation and simulation."<sup>13</sup>

The reason for existence of that process is the uniqueness of what the student teachers can learn through, and the interesting ways of

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<sup>8</sup> Камберски К. (2000). *Предучилишното и основното образование во Република Македонија*, Скопје: Филозофски факултет- Институт за педагогија, стр. 115

<sup>9</sup> Илиев Д. (2001). *Иницијално образование на наставниците од основното образование*, Битола: Факултет за учители и воспитувачи, стр. 22-23

<sup>10</sup> Илиев Д. (2006). *Акциони истражувања во образованието*, Битола: Педагошки факултет

<sup>11</sup> Tight M. (2002). *Key concepts in Adult Education and Training*, London and New York: Routledge Falmer, p. 41

<sup>12</sup> In: Ivanova I. (2002). *Thinking About Learning in Universities*, In Ed. *Leading schools for learning*, Ljubljana: National leadership school, p. 51-52

<sup>13</sup> Peček P., Černigoj M. & Vaupot R. S. (2002). *Non-formal Staff Development in Primary Schools*, In Ed. *Leading schools for learning*, Ljubljana: National leadership school, p. 170-171

learning of something new which arises from it.<sup>14</sup>

The primary role of the mentorship is making conditions for realization of the pedagogical practice of the students, and the secondary role is the development of the partner institutions. Through the mentorship, according to Collison, "...are confirmed the real potentials of the school based initial teacher training"<sup>15</sup>. In this process can be "...verificate the starting base of the mentees in every area of their professional competences at the beginning of the practice"<sup>16</sup>, which can lead to the specific, individualized and appropriate design and realization of pedagogical practice.

### **Possible improvements of student pedagogical practice**

When we discuss the possibilities of improvement of the mentoring school which is the conditions for increasing the quality and quantity of the mentoring process and the student teachers achievement, we think about the action which should be taken according to the results of the scientific and non-scientific researches.

Based on our experience and analyse of some doctoral thesis, we suggest implementation of the following projects:

- *"The needs of our children,*
- *From me you can learn...,*
- *The student has learned from me...,*
- *I teach as a mentor, I learn as a student,*
- *The mentor as a team member,"<sup>17</sup>*
- *I learned from the student, and*
- *The mistakes I made with the students*

The objective of the project *The needs of our children* can be identification of the needs of the pupils in a mentoring school, their mutual analyses from the mentors and making decisions for the best practice and action which can be taken for improvement of the teaching and learning processes. (This has an influence on the mentoring process of the student teachers)

*From me you can learn...* is a project in which every mentor can promote their best positive and negative knowledge, attitudes and educational behaviour from the exchange with the colleagues- teacher mentors. On this meetings the teacher will explain and show to the rest of the teachers in their school: what is so specific in their teaching which can be useful and used in the classrooms of other teachers, what are the best possible decisions made on

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<sup>14</sup> Cameron-Jones M. (1991). *Training Teachers: A Practical Guide*, The Scottish Council for Research in Education, p. 5-7

<sup>15</sup> Collison J. (1998). Mentoring: Realising the True Potential of School-based ITE, in (Ed). *Primary Teacher Education: High Status? High Standards?*, Falmer Press. p. 173

<sup>16</sup> Cooper H. & Batterson C. (1998). Mentoring: Possible Developments and Constraints in (Ed). *Primary Teacher Education: High Status? High Standards?*, Falmer Press, p. 167

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<sup>17</sup> The projects are realized in the frame of the doctoral thesis of Dean Iliev with the topic: "*The role of action researches in improvement od mentoring school*"

specific problem in the classroom, how can be dealt with the specific categories of pupils, what and why some of the decisions were accepted or rejected by the children etc.

In the project, *The student has learned from me...*, the point is the exchanging of the identified positive influence of the mentor on the student teacher. This can happen on some non-formal meetings of the mentors, but also the perceptions can be written on the paper on white board on the wall, visible for the rest of the mentors. This can influence also for improvement of the mentors, but the pupils and student teacher, too.

*I teach as a mentor, I learn, as a student* is a project with the objective oriented on the attitudes of the teacher mentors to understand, accept and to behaviour at the same time as a mentor and learner. Practically, periodically can be organized meetings in the teacher office in which the teacher will stress and explain their new knowledge and experience from the reflexive teaching. On that way the mutual reaction of the teacher can be discussed, analysed by the other teachers and can influence on the acceptance of that knowledge and teacher reaction on a specific practice.

With the project *The mentor as a team member* the strength of the team of mentors can be reached and the faith that the mentor is more productive as a team member. This project can overcome the passive and naïve perception of some mentors that the personal decisions can be the single and unique way for improvement of the mentoring process.

*I learned from the student* is also the project in which the reflexive characteristics of teacher mentors can be developed and improved. The teacher mentor on a formal meeting and non-formal discussions exchanges the new knowledge, which was acquired in the process of mentoring students. In a period of practicing of this activity the teacher mentor develops their openness, but also strengthens the capacities of students for promoting their unique ways of learning and acting.

*The mistakes I made with the students* can be viewed as a concept, which is a positive reflection on the mistakes and failures made by the mentor teacher during the collaboration with the student. This is an experience, which should be taken by the other mentors in specific situations, but also stress the role of student as a person who has influence in changing the current school and classroom settings.

All of this project or activities are based on reflexive behaviour of teacher mentors and students, and shows that there is a space enough for changing and improving the mentoring process according to the results, knowledge and experience of the teachers, but also and external researchers of the teaching and learning process.

Non-scientific researches on the other hand can have a specific impact on specific context, situation, conditions, people and places. Because of that, the results from the participatory action researches, collaborative action researches, classroom action researches, teacher reflections, and so on, based on the

teacher individual engagement, can have positive impact on improvement of every aspect of teaching and learning in a very direct and immediate way.

### Resume

In this theoretically based paper we wanted to disseminate the results of our perception and the reflection of mentoring processes in the Republic of Macedonia based on doctoral thesis results. According to this it was stress and elaborated that there are a lot of scientific researches in this area which unfortunately are not taken into consideration in creating the sustainable mentoring process in our country. The same and much poorer is the situation with the reflexive experience in teaching and learning of mentor teachers. Their knowledge and experience about situational learning and teaching, contextual learning and teaching and the possibilities for improvement of the mentoring process are treated as irrelevant, not so contemporary and oriented on self-promotion. There is a space, there are the decisions and there are a strength of participant scientists and teachers to find and developed the best specific ways for mentoring student teachers and mentoring process. We should only find the real potential, balanced the scientific and non-scientific but useful and create system for mentoring student teacher which will live for the best of all participants of the mentoring process, including pupils.

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### **Abstract**

*“When one of us does well, we’ll all do well. When one of us fails, we all fail” Ladson-Billings, (1994:62)*

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**MULTICULTURAL ISSUES IN THE  
TEACHING ENVIRONMENT  
ACCEPTING THE OTHER**

*The concern of teachers in multicultural environments at all levels of teaching, starting from kindergarten through university studies, should not only focus on the teaching of the specific subject, but should also focus on knowing the learners, where they come from, and what they represent. The world is made of different people, with different cultural backgrounds, and these specific differences are what make everyone unique in their own way. People speak different languages, have different religions, have different coloured skin, they have different traditions and music- and think about it: we travel the whole world to meet these different people and eat their traditional food, and yet, fail to accept our next-door neighbour or our student at school! When doing this, we automatically “cut off” the others pride and self-confidence, and block any relationship whatsoever. We lack communication and we lack comprehension; we lack in accepting variety, and as a result lack in accepting the multicultural society.*

*This paper aims at presenting some issues of multicultural Macedonia, in terms of everyday occurrences while teaching at a state university that was intended only for Albanians, for it was built by them and financed by them; a state university that has today become the home of*

*education for all nationalities, not only from the region but also for foreigners. The main focus will be on the relationship between teachers and learners in multicultural classes, their attitudes towards the learners LI, and their readiness to help all, without making a difference. I truly hope that this article helps in maintaining a better future for all.*

**Keywords:** *multicultural, education, variety, attitudes, relationship etc.*

### **Introduction**

“There will never be a single solution that will be a perfect fit for our diverse society. Don’t wish for a unilateral answer to our educational dilemmas. Instead, we should work toward partnerships of families, communities and educators who will enjoy the process of problem-solving.” (Elaine Griffin, 1995, United States teacher of the year.)

The issue of multiculturalism is quite interesting. It is both narrow and wide. This depends on how one tends to see it. It is wide, if we fail at accepting variety and becomes confusing, and is narrow if and when we see the other similar to us and our cultural background.

My personal experience regarding this issue is probably a rare one for those who have never sat down to think about the differences that we individually represent or have never themselves lived in communities with different kinds of nationalities. I was fortunate enough to live and go to school in a country that promotes human values and democracy world-wide and have

since then, always kept diversity as something cherished and valued. My experience relates to my childhood in the USA, specifically, life in the city of Chicago. Being raised in a neighbourhood of diverse cultures, colours and tradition and having attended local public school, I was lucky enough to be part of the worlds’ mixture and variety of people. I recall my first best friend, Sital, who was a Hindu, my second best friend Zena, who was from Serbia, Jennifer and Xavier, from Mexico, Allen from Detroit, Kimberly and Jovita from Michigan, Zein and Rosita from Pakistan, Yang from Vietnam, need I continue? This multicultural group is only a small number of names that recall my childhood. They made it special. Having celebrated every holiday together and having tried our traditional foods, we not only shared our present values, but built together our future- a future of multi-cultural diversity. I was too young then to think about these issues, but now realize that if our parents at home or our teachers at school promoted hatred and injustice, we would have surely become grown-up monsters today. I say this with certainty, because I know that children are the most innocent and are victims of fundamentalism, ethnic contradictions and hatred. We become what others made of us and resemble what we were taught. Nothing more or less. My paper is focused on different issues of teaching in multicultural environments, but emphasizes accepting the other as a moral value, a must. I refer to my past, which may be irrelevant to some, because I am proud of it and because only experienced ones have true facts and

arguments. If a whole nation of diversity represents a world force, then why not have the same on the Balkans? Why not promote acceptance and why not know the other?

### **Multiculturalism- what is it?**

It is not easy to actually define what multiculturalism is and whether or not it is important for us to accept it. I believe that it is inevitable, however and that we must gain insights of it. This notion is not present only in the states, it is not present only in some parts of the world, but is present world-wide. Multi-culture is not only on the streets or in neighbourhoods, it is in schools, restaurants, parks. It is present in work places and in every institution. I have previously mentioned and compared life in the states with life on the Balkans, and have truly forgotten to mention that the case is only a bit similar, but is not the same. It is similar in diversity but differs in the sense that North America is a newly found continent, whose first inhabitants were England colonizers, whereas the Balkan has always been known to have existed with a variety of different ethnicities, either as former Yugoslavian republic, or as Macedonia. Whilst Americans are a nation almost half of immigrants and foreigners, Macedonia is an ethnic variety of “domestic peoples.” The term multiculturalism is defined as: “a cultural diversity of communities within a given society and the policies that promote this diversity” (Wikipedia) or as “the preservation of different cultures or cultural identities within a unified society, as a state or nation”.

I highlight the following terms: promote, preservation and unified society because they are linked to one another. When we promote diversity and preserve it, we gain a unified society, a society in which we live in together and a future that we share. Therefore, the importance of maintaining multiculturalism is inevitable. In institutions where such diversity exists, it depends on us as individuals to make the difference. We must learn to surpass cultural variety; we must respect ourselves and respect the others. Banks and Banks (1995) define multicultural education as: “a field of study and an emerging discipline whose major aim is to create equal educational opportunities for students from diverse racial, ethnic, social-class, and cultural groups. One of its important goals is to help all students to acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function effectively in a pluralistic democratic society and to interact, negotiate, and communicate with peoples from diverse groups in order to create a civic and moral community that works for the common good.” (1995, pg.11)

As an English teaching assistant at State university of Tetova, I have full right to use only English as a language with which I communicate with students. When my students do not fully understand, however, I translate into their L1. Since I master Macedonian language also and have ethnic Macedonian students, I normally refer to them in their L1. No one can force me into doing so. I do it because I treat them as equals. I would have normally spoken in Turkish if I had knowledge

of it, but try to be understood through gestures, for I lack it. This is only one example of acceptance. When we accept the other, we firstly respect their language. As a linguist, methodologist and teaching assistant, this is step one for “effective communication” between societies.

### **Multi-ethnic/culture classroom instruction**

I mentioned previously that multiculturalism is found in all institutions, where we work, teach, study etc. our everyday encounter is with a variety of people. We have coffee with a variety of colleagues and discuss different topics with them. The same happens in the class. We lecture to different individuals and try to get the message across; we teach different groups and try to be effective and precise in what we do.

Some issues regarding teaching cultural responsive instruction according to Au (2006) are:

- it should reside firmly within a plural vision of society i.e. teachers begin with a high regard for the competence of students of diverse backgrounds and their families and recognize the likely differences between literacy demands in school and in the community. As Gay (2000) states: “it acknowledges the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups, both as legacies that affect students’ dispositions, attitudes and approaches to learning and as worthy content to be taught in the formal curriculum”. (2000, pg. 29)

- it aims at school success for students of diverse backgrounds, acknowledging that a disproportionate number of these students typically experience failure in school;
- it seeks to build bridges between students’ experiences at home and at school;
- it supports students in building, or at least maintaining, their competence in the home culture and language;
- it fosters social justice through an emphasis on equality of educational outcomes and the celebration of diversity i.e. it seeks to move away from a mentality of educational winners and losers toward a future in which students from all groups achieve at high levels and diversity is celebrated and not merely tolerated. (2006, pgs. 114-115).

The previous issues are however somewhat different from what we actually encounter in Macedonia, because the population is smaller and we have more similarities than differences in both culture and tradition. We have similar food, music, occasions; we know each and every religious holiday because we have neighbours and colleagues that all represent these minor differences. Macedonia has two majority ethnicities, Macedonian (64.2%) and Albanian (25.2%), followed by Turkish (3.9%), Roma<sup>18</sup> (2.7%) etc. Because we have lived together for centuries, we have in some way inherited tradition and culture. The most relevant issue has remained to be neglecting the spoken languages in the region. I am not going

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<sup>18</sup> Macedonia Demographics Profile, 2014

to be bias regarding the issue, but am going to be very sincere in the approach because I am an English teacher and am interested in languages, both foreign and second languages. My course, English language teaching (ELT) methodology requires specific terminology acquisition, and FL and SL are specifically dealt with. Whenever I lecture and discuss these terms I have to make students aware of the fact that English is a foreign language and that either Albanian or Macedonian is a second language because they are institutionalized.(Macedonian is in all institutions, documentation etc. and Albanian is partly institutionalized). After some time, I actually became aware of the fact that my students were happier and much more satisfied to learn a foreign language than to learn a second language, which is spoken in their hometown, in their school, neighbourhood, on public transportation etc. They would communicate in English with one another! How can we further discuss other issues of multiculturalism when we deny our own multicultural society? And why deny learning and speaking our “home languages?”

### **Denying home languages**

I want to further focus on this issue because I want to be understood by my readers. My overall assumption is that we culturally neglect learning, speaking and understanding languages that are very important to know. Every single encounter of ours requires understanding of the second language- Albanians should be able to perfectly communicate in Macedonian and vice versa. And this is not because I say so. It is

merely a must. It has nothing to do with authority, nor is it linked to politics or the government. As a nation sharing the same territory, we should ourselves know this and accept this for a fact. I mentioned previously that accepting the other means respecting their language and honestly, we lack this. It is a personal matter that individuals like to link to history and the past, and referring to the past takes away our future. I work with different nationalities and we have never had clashes. We respect each other, greet each other and drink coffee. We discuss different topics. While communicating, however, I am the one who switches from L1 to L2. For some unknown reason, others do not. Again as a linguist, I can conclude that some may have low self-confidence when speaking another language or may lack previous knowledge, but my inner self has also concluded that it is more “denied” than “unknown”. I myself am not always sure of my Macedonian language proficiency, nor of my Turkish, but notice that they are delighted whenever I refer to them in their mother-tongue, and that they have always understood what I have wanted to say i.e. we find ways to be understood, when and if we want to be understood.

### **Promoting equality where we teach- SUT**

The matter of feeling equal and being treated equally with the others is one of the most important and most relevant issues of teaching/learning. As a teaching assistant at SUT for eight years now, I can proudly declare that this high institution has maintained to

promote equality between nationalities. I wanted to however, ask my students specifically regarding the issue of language denial and what they thought and believed. The overall assumption was that as Albanians living in Macedonia, we actually learned the L2, whilst Macedonians took it as an irrelevant issue and did not learn it. The study survey was conducted with third and fourth year students of the English department. The number of participants was 60, of both genders and nationalities. The purpose was to define students' awareness level regarding home languages, whether they denied them and their denial was done on purpose and whether or not they had ever thought of the issue. Results were gathered using a questionnaire and also by conducting a student-teacher round-table discussion in the form of groups and individually. (see Appendix 1).

### **Discussion of answers**

Before I became aware of what I intended to do, I read many different books and articles regarding the issue of multiculturalism in education, including "Study on multiculturalism and inter-ethnic relations in education" (UNICEF, 2009). I wanted to see perceptions beginning at elementary level of education, because the same learners would attend secondary and then normally would become my students at university i.e. the same cultural background and ethnic relation. Even though some changes have occurred during the last years, I was surprised to see some answers. Regarding question nr. 1, most students (57/60)

answered with yes, meaning that friendship among different ethnicities did exist, regarding question nr. 2, students replied that they had good experiences with their colleagues (47/60), and made no distinction between each other, only one student (1/60) had experienced the case of being treated unequally by a teacher, and that had occurred at secondary education (Q3). Most students (39/60) actually spoke one or even two foreign languages (English, Italian, Croatian, German were stated) while regarding second languages, neglecting and preferring second languages, the results were a bit complicated. The overall general assumption was that Albanians did learn Macedonian, because as they saw it, it was mandatory when living in Macedonia. They accepted the fact that knowing it not only added a language to their L1, but it indeed helped them to better communicate with their Macedonian friends/colleagues (25/60), others referred to the issue as "historical-based" and denied speaking it even during their encounters. They felt that their own L1 was treated as inferior and suggested that Macedonians also learn Albanian (10/60), others did not deny the L2 but simply did not feel comfortable due to lack of self-confidence and having L1 interference (even FL interference was a case with Croatian/Macedonian) (15/60), and only (10/60) actually wanted to use the L2. The tension that arouse was that for the Albanians, the Macedonian language was a must, whilst for Macedonians it was not the case with the Albanian language. This was the idea and belief that the students had, and to some extent, it

seemed true. None of the students had however been insulted by other ethnicities and they all responded that their personal experience was good. The two last questions were those that “cut- off” all the hope and desire that I had regarding equality or a better future. My students did not believe in equality, they thought that the other ethnicity was over-estimated and that was reality for them. They wished for, but did not wait for changes to occur. All of them wanted a brighter future, and answers such as “I hope for a future where people respect each other’s language, ethnicity, race etc.” and “I hope that we will have the same rights, priorities etc. the matter not being whether we are Macedonian, Albanian or any other nationality.” were provided, followed by “This will never happen” and “There is no future in Macedonia.” The round table-discussion helped to solve some dilemmas and provided space for students to better understand one another. Students of diverse ethnicities found out what the other thought of speaking an L2, and the overall conclusion was that they had not thought that such a matter could be insulting for the other, that lack of self-confidence when using an L2 was present and this was especially the case with Macedonian students who had never learned Albanian in schools. They did not have anything against learning Albanian, but had been denied the opportunity. Some prejudice that they had about their colleagues seemed to change and students seemed relieved to discuss such issues together.

## **Conclusions**

The main aim of this paper was to present and discuss the topic of language denial and to conclude whether or not it is actually present in institutions and among our everyday encounters. As an English teacher methodologist, my main goal is to “produce” future English teachers and have normally nothing against my students speaking in English with one another; it is the contrary- I have achieved my goal. I am however intrigued by the manner that they choose to communicate with one another in a foreign language rather than a second language. The attempt to make my students aware of the fact that they could actually communicate better with each other using their mother tongues proved to be successful to some extent. I found that many of them had personal negative feelings, some had trouble because of limited proficiency and some had in fact never thought of the issue. The overall experience was actually very interesting, because some taboos were eliminated. Having open discussions of cultural differences and similarities is however very important. They help in surpassing clashes and help in understanding viewpoints. Again, this is only step one towards multi-cultural acceptance.

## **Limitations of the study and further recommendations**

Issues of multi-culture are amongst the most relevant in the era of globalization. They are a must in education and in everyday situations. The basis of accepting the other in this paper was referred to as communication and language

denial. The purpose was eliminating negative overall feelings regarding homeland languages. I am aware of the fact that limitations such as: the number of participants, instruments used and overall time that was available are present and that results could have varied in different circumstances. Also, dishonest answers and unreliable information could also be part of the overall results. However, some general ideas and feelings of students were dealt with, and many issues were discussed. One could feel that a certain tension was dissolved and that the classroom atmosphere became more welcoming. I highly recommend further steps be taken in bringing cultures and people together. These steps are easily managed by teachers in all institutions if strong will is present. We are the past, present and future and changes lie within us.

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### Appendix 1

Please answer the following as honestly as possible. Thank you in advance.

- Do you have friends belonging to other ethnicities?
- What is your overall experience with your colleagues?
- Have you ever been treated unequally by your teachers?
- Do you speak foreign languages?
- Do you speak a second language? Why or why not?
- Why do you neglect speaking Macedonian/Albanian?
- Why do you prefer speaking Macedonian/ Albanian?
- Have you ever been insulted by other peoples living in Macedonia?
- What are your future expectations?
- Do you believe in equality between ethnicities in Macedonia? Why or why not?

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**Abstract**

*The level of analysis of a literary work in the lower grades depends on the physical, mental, and intellectual abilities of students. It must be neither too studious and highly scientific, nor too simplified. It is better for a literary text to remain as an aesthetic creation in a student's mind at their level of experience, rather than be trivialized with bad and incorrect analytical procedures. Analytical requirements in grade I and II are much lower than in III, IV and V grade where they can be extensive and studious.*

**CONTENT  
(INTERPRETATION) OF A TEXT IN  
CLASS TEACHING**

**ANALYSIS** *The greatest portion of time should be devoted to the analysis phase because students' understanding of a literary work depends on it. This is often overused, so the entire lesson turns into a lesson in education, which suppresses the artistic spirit of the work. By means of analysis we reveal the artistic values of a text - and this should be the ultimate goal, and we should afterwards realize the objectives related to the educational part of class.*

*We conditionally distinguish four types of analysis/interpretation of an artistic text from the theoretical-methodological aspect:*

- *Content Analysis*
- *Conceptual Analysis*
- *Ethical Analysis*
- *Psychological Analysis*

*Some methodologists define analysis as absorption in the content and the notional character of the text. Despite the different views*

*and opinions, for analysis as a phase it is common to analyse the content and the reproduction of facts and occurrences, and to reveal the underlying concept of the writer, i.e. of the idea or the message of the literary text.*

**Keywords:** *analysis, text, practical work, lesson realization.*

### **Content analysis**

In teaching methods literature analysis as a stage and as a whole is divided into three sub-stages by some researchers: logical, ethical and aesthetic analysis. Others notice two structural elements: content structure and conceptual structure of the artistic text.

Content structure includes:

1. **Thematic structure** (a snapshot of life that is recognizable in space and time);
2. **Motives** (smaller thematic sections of material and spiritual nature or of spiritual nature that make the shown life event seem more concrete and more credible);
3. **Poetic images** (meaningful interaction of several motifs with which sensory, cognitive and emotional representations of the phenomenon and its place in the context of the presented are achieved);
4. **Various emotions** (writer's emotional reaction to certain emotional phenomena);
5. **Characters** (their physical traits, personality traits and psychological states and relationships in specific life circumstances);

6. **Conflict of heroes** (dramatic conflicts and reasons for their occurrence, detection of the problem and its resolution).

There are methodologists who define analysis as dwelling into the content and the ideological context of the text. Despite the different views and opinions, the common feature of analysis as a stage is the analysis of the text content, reproduction of facts and occurrences, and to reveal the writer's underlying concept, i.e. the idea or the message of the literary text.

The word content means a set of events, situations, phenomena, feelings, facts, and details shaped by the power of the writer's talent into a single artistic whole. Simply, the content is what a literary work is really about. Theorists of literature operate with the notion of content that covers everything from construction / material to its final cognitive and linguistic shaping of thought.

In methodological terms, content analysis means understanding the text as a complete artistic structure. It means understanding the words, expressions, sentences, understanding their relationships within smaller sections or motifs. During analysis, the student sees the logical order of the author's presentation, discovers the plot and causal connections. The questions must be clear and unambiguous, logically derived from the text. The best are those questions that transform the immediate content into issues that inspire students to perceive, deduce and generalize. Questions should be encouraging and revealing.

The basic rule is: the teacher should not analyse the text while the students are passively listening. The dynamics and the quality of the lesson depend on the diversity of questions and on how they are asked (intonation, rhythm, etc.). Ever since the first grade students need to be educated about how to keep a conversation, how to communicate. It is wrong and harmful if the teacher asks questions, and the student responds in the course of the whole lesson. The teacher should continuously and gradually encourage students to equally ask and respond to questions.

Questions can be:

- **Concrete** (*Where did he go? Whom did he meet? What did he do?*),
- **Questions with which a student can independently make conclusions** (How did he do it? Could he have done something better? How would you have solved that situation?),
- **Questions for discovering causal connections** (*Why did he act in such a manner? How do we conclude that it is good? What didn't he understand?*),
- **Stimulating-revealing questions** (pay attention, perceive, elaborate, validate, compare, explain, think, etc.),
- **Questions about establishing a relationship with the text** (the text in the Find in the text! Compare in the text! Read what the writer says! How did the writer express it?),
- **Questions to express their own views** (How do you think you would have solved that problem? Put yourself in the role of that character! How would you finish the short story/story?).

The question is *what questions to ask students?* The answer is both simple and complex: teachers should always ask questions that lead to profound and essential considerations that will encourage the development of critical thinking skills on a higher level.

The questions to which students need to answer only by stating a fact (example: Who is the main character in the text?) are not stimulating, creative and they do not encourage critical thinking. This does not mean that this type of questions should never be asked, but it indicates that their number needs to be reduced in teaching. In contrast, questions that require students to make a critical review (reflection), to discuss, imagine, create, etc., teach them that their thinking is on a more complex level and that in that way they can contribute to the community in terms of greater understanding and belief (example: *Which character did you like best and why?*).

There is an opinion that all forms of analysis (content, conceptual, ethical and psychological) should be processed simultaneously in a synchronized manner with their interweaving. This is acceptable and applicable to the first grade, but analysis as a methodical stage is much more extensive and effective if it is differentiated into specific structural elements.

These structural elements or sub-stages should not be taken as a strict educational rule, because an artistic text is experienced and interpreted as a whole.

Understanding of the text content is an essential prerequisite for understanding its overall value. In addition, retelling should not be equated with content analysis. In fact, content analysis always precedes the retelling. The approaches to teaching methods for processing the content structure of an artistic text are different. In the lower grades (I to V grade) four methodological approaches are mainly dominant:

- Content analysis of a text as a whole,
- Content analysis of a text by its logical wholes/parts,
- Content analysis of a text according to a previously given plan,
- Content analysis of a text by a series of pictures or slides.

#### ***Content analysis of a text as a whole***

The reproduction of a text is made by the method of conversation. This is done gradually, chronologically, line by line, taking into account the logical development of the action or the expressing of poetic images if it is a song. During the analysis it is important to distinguish between the essential and the irrelevant and not to let students to emphasize the unimportant as if it were the essential.

In prose (short story, tale) the analysis goes from part to part and in poetry from stanza to stanza. Depending on the nature of the text, the

sequence of content reproduction can also take place in a synchronized manner.

#### ***Content analysis of a text by its logical wholes/parts***

The logical whole is a part of an artistically homogeneous text. Discovering logical sections students are trained to think logically, to learn how to break down the whole into smaller structural segments. Methodological procedure for the analysis of a text by logical parts can take place as follows:

1. Expressive reading
2. Student's reading of a particular logical whole (one student reads the logical whole aloud, and other students, previously directed towards certain tasks, monitor the reading),
3. Interpretation of new words and phrases from the whole that is read,
4. Content reproduction of the read logical whole,
5. Formulating subheadings for the analysed logical wholes.

In the course of analysing each logical whole, it is necessary to write every subtitle for each logical whole on the board in correct order, thus composing the plan of the text. For certain logical groups the teacher can prepare illustrations to demonstrate them during the conversation, and, according to the given subheadings, the students can determine the logical units in the text by themselves.

***Content analysis of a text according to a previously given plan***

Long texts are usually processed according to a plan given in advance. The teacher divides the text into certain logical, thematic and motive units and familiarizes the students with the plan during the previous lesson so that they could prepare for the lesson in time. The plan motivates students for an independent and responsible approach to work.

***Content analysis of a text by a series of pictures and slides***

Photos and slides must be made by a professional person - artist. They can form logical groups. During the analysis care should be taken that these teaching tools do not dampen the interest in the artistic text and turn the students' attention away from the basic tasks of the analysis. So all kinds of illustrations should be applied cautiously, and priority should always be given to the word.

***Conclusion***

The exhaustiveness of the analysis depends on the age of students. In class the analysis is

partial, i.e. adjusted to the students' overall abilities and this should not be exaggerated. The task of the analysis is to awaken the students' aesthetic sense, to sharpen their powers of observation of a literary work, the critical spirit and to form their literary taste. These requirements/tasks are accomplished in the process of teaching with students' full and thorough engagement. Literary analysis raises and propels students' emotional, imaginative, intellectual and creative potential. The emotional component prevails at the beginning, but later it is enriched with reflective elements.

During the analysis, the questions must be encouraging, to induce students to think, associate and link literary facts. The worst is when the teacher suggests his/her own views and knowledge to students, load them with his/her teaching style, retells the contents of the text or reveals the idea / message, the nature of the characters etc. The analysis is successful if the questions are well-designed and stimulating, if a dynamic conversation is conducted, and if clearly defined knowledge and attitudes are exposed.

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***PREPARING TEACHERS FOR  
MULTILINGUAL SCHOOLS, ESTONIAN  
EXPERIENCE***

### **Abstract**

The Republic of Estonia is a small Nordic state with one official language – Estonian language, regardless of the fact that 30% of the population speaks Russian as their first language. One fifth of general education is delivered in Russian, both pre-school education and basic education are available and publicly financed also in Russian. At secondary education level the language of instruction is Estonian for at least 60% of studies in all public schools. It's mandatory for children to start learning Estonian, the official language at the age of four. Russian language does not have a special status in Estonia.

Estonia educates pre-school and primary school (first six grades) teachers for Russian language schools and these curricula give knowledge and prepare the students to implement content and language integrated learning (CLIL). This type of training has converged in Narva College of the University of Tartu, which is situated in the most Russian-speaking area of Estonia. The students are mostly Russian speaking and their educators are competent in both Estonian and Russian. The languages of studies are Estonian and Russian but also English. Content and language integrated learning, plus active teaching methods aim at preparing bilingual students who would speak Estonian at B2 level (by the end of Bachelor studies) or C1 level (by the end of Masters studies).

Also Tartu University and Tallinn University prepare teachers of Estonian as a foreign language. Narva College prepares also subject teachers for basic schools, but only in limited capacity. The education of subject teachers for minority language schools needs further attention.

The presentation looks at the Estonian model for preparation of teachers for multilingual schools in the context of European Union countries' similar teacher education. I will bring out the most interesting practices from Europe.

The focus of the presentation is on showing the results of the 15 years of work in Narva College and includes references to research and feedback from students, employers and alumni.

## **Introduction**

Like the rest of Europe, the educational system in Estonia is multilingual and multicultural. Traditionally we in Estonia consider Estonian Russian-language education while discussing multi (two) language and -cultural school. Nevertheless, English, German, French and Finnish are among the languages of instructions in Estonia. Bilingualism has become a common phenomenon also in the Estonian school. Each fourth Russian-speaking student in Estonia is studying in an Estonian school or attends a language immersion programme. Nevertheless, the fact goes that according to the school managers and teachers the educational system in Estonia fails to place value in

multiculturalism (Loogma, Ruus, Talts, Poom-Valickis 2009).

Quality is one of the measures characterising the success of education in any country. Attention should be paid to the fact that against the rather good results of the Estonian basic education the learning outcomes of Russian-speaking schools<sup>19</sup> remain remarkably weaker, although Pisa test results reveal the noticeable trend towards better results (Henno 2014; Tire, Puksand, Henno, Lepman 2010). Also the data of the Ministry of Education and Research demonstrate lower state examination results for the students of Russian -speaking upper secondary level schools compared to their peers in Estonian schools.

Quality is the measure for education, and similarly it is the teacher who is the key figure in school (and also in a multilingual school) both as the person shaping coherence in the society and a securing of the quality of studies. The preparation of the teachers for the Estonian schools with Russian as language of instruction was last high in the agenda of serious discussions in late 1990s when an amendment was introduced into the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act establishing that not later than by 2007 the transition to partial Estonian-language tuition shall begin in the

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<sup>19</sup> There is one national language in Estonia and this is Estonian, but 28% of the population speaks Russian as their first language and 80% of the these pupils attend Russian-speaking schools. In Estonia basic education is provided also in Russian while teaching Estonian starts at the age of four. In the upper secondary school level 60% of the studies takes place in Estonian. In vocational education the transfer to partial instruction in the Estonian language was launched in autumn 2014.



upper secondary school level. Then the educators of teachers focused on two aspects: the teachers well versed in the principles of multicultural education are needed, teach subjects of *Estica* at school, and also teachers working in the Russian language are required (Vassiltšenko, Asser, Trasberg 1998; See also Asser, Pedastsaar, Trasberg, Vassiltšenko 2002). During the following years Russian-language study groups were closed in the universities and the preparation of Russian-speaking subject teachers came to an end.

Since the restoration of independence in Estonia (since 1991) a large number of teachers of Estonian as the secondary language have been prepared. The teachers of Estonian as the secondary language have become the key figures for the implementation of the bilingual education: nine teachers out of ten have received support from each teacher teaching in the Estonian language. These results have been revealed in the study of teachers of upper secondary level schools (Masso, Kello 2010). The teachers of Russian as a mother tongue are prepared both in Tallinn and Tartu universities. The experience of the Narva College of University of Tartu that has focused on the preparation of the teachers for the bilingual schools has been described in detail below.

In 2014, the students finished the upper secondary school level who have acquired 60% of the volume of mandatory studies in Estonian. The data of the state examinations of the Republic of Estonia Ministry of Education show that despite the studies conducted in

Estonian the knowledge of Estonian as a second language has not improved remarkably and the universities estimate that it does not reach the B2 level that is required for university studies in Estonian. Once again, the focus of the discussion is on the need for teachers, primarily for teachers teaching their subject in Estonian and are thereupon successful in their work. The educational spheres are also discussing whether the preparation of the teachers of the Estonian language as a second language and in lifelong learning should be changed and how it must be done (See Klaas-Lang, Praakli 2014).

At the same time different target groups, teachers included, agree that studies in Estonian and also partly Estonian(bilingual studies) must begin as early as possible, already in kindergarten (Eesti ühiskonna intrgratsiooni monitooring 2011; Kello, Masso, Jakobson 2011 et. al.). Potential developments in the field of educational policies will outline the need for kindergarten and basic school teachers aside teachers for upper secondary school level. On the other hand, in case Russian-language basic schools and upper secondary schools partly continue to operate, the new generation of Russian-speaking teachers is also required. Essentially, we need bilingual teachers for the Russian-speaking schools.

As the proportion of young teachers is relatively low, we certainly need an efficient system providing in-service training. Provision of high-quality in-service training proves complicated without a respective further education system.

The aim of this article is to map the expectations regarding the education of teachers for bilingual schools for primary, basic schools and upper secondary schools in Estonia on the basis of existing source documents and research materials. References are made to potential developments and specific measures. We will focus especially on the process of preparation of CLIL teachers which is becoming one of the key issues in Estonian teacher education. Multilingualism poses a challenge also for the schools of the native population.

### **References to preparation of teachers for the bilingual schools in national documents and expectations regarding training**

In Estonia bilingual studies mean in particular integrated subject and language studies referring to simultaneous learning of language and content. The focus of methodology in Europe is on the learner-focused approach, development of novel learning strategies and application of information and communication technology in the learning process (Perez-Vidal 2009). The triumph of integrated content and language learning has been especially significant after the translation of the work of Peeter Mehisto and David Marsh in 2008 (Mehisto, Marsh 2008), numerous training and seminars provided have also played their role. The principles of CLIL have found their way into the national curricula that have been reformed in recent years for pre-school child care institutions, basic schools and upper secondary schools.

The principles of CLIL have been consistently implemented since late 1990s in Estonia, when first early and then also late language immersion was implemented following the example set by Canada and Finland. The goal of the language immersion is the integration of the Estonian society and awareness of Russian and Estonian languages and cultures. Studies that have been continued over years show that the language immersion students acquire three languages (Estonian, Russian and English) and also all subject knowledge required by the national curriculum and the students having participated in the programme have critical reasoning skills and they are active and open in their communication. In schools where the programme has been implemented in selected classes, the change of school culture is spread all over the school as the same teachers teach mostly both in the language immersion programme and in the common programme. The latest research on the first language immersion students having finished basic schools confirm these facts (Keelekümbluse teadusuuringud 2001-2009, Sau-Ek, Loogma, Vainu 2010).

The preparation of subject and language teachers requires several competencies that are established in the framework documents (cf. Betraux, Coonan, Frigols-Martin, Mehisto 2009). The proficiency in the Estonian language (target language), that is one of the key aspects for the preparation of subject and language teachers, has been established in the Language Act. The act also states that the teachers teaching Estonian and in the Estonian language must have command of the Estonian language

at the proficiency Level C 1 (the latest wording of the Language Act, 2007). The professional standard for teachers underlines the knowledge relevant for multicultural learning environment. The teachers are also expected to take into account the needs of students with different language proficiency levels and cultural backgrounds during the learning process. It is added that the teacher must be prepared in regard of Estonian, European and world history and culture and be the holder of national identity and the architect of the spirit of the society (V professional standard for teachers).

The expectations of the language immersion teachers are revealed in the study of the learning outcomes of the basic school (Sau-Ek, Loogma, Vainu 2010). The teachers would like to have training addressing specific concerns (experienced teachers) and likewise longer training courses (less experienced teachers), it was also pointed out that the majority of training events are focused on the primary school teachers while the subject-based (targeted to the intermediate level of basic schools) training remains a bottleneck. The conclusion of the researchers reflects the need for a larger number of teachers and improvement of the teachers' professional skills.

Taking into account the level of language proficiency of the teachers, the need for training in Estonian as the second language will not disappear in contemporary Estonia (See Kello, Masso, Jakobson 2011). Personal initiative, such as personal language consultations, is a

key to success. At the same time the number of Estonian teachers engaged in the Russian-speaking schools feeling the need for training in the Russian language, especially for communicating freely with parents, is increasing (Sau-Ek, Loogma, Vainu 2010).

Alternative teacher-focused self-development activities requiring active involvement of the teacher: counselling, work in support groups, teacher networks, are constantly gaining in popularity (See Ugur, Raudvassar 2011 regarding support groups). Regional counselling centres were established in 2008; their primary aim is to ensure methodological support to teachers and development through individual and group counselling. The aim of the network for subject and language teachers is exchange of best experiences and creating their own website and communication channel. It is important to engage the teachers of the Russian-language schools, but also the teachers teaching in English, German or French.

#### **Engaging national minorities into the teacher education and subject and language integrated tuition (based on the example of Narva College of Tartu University)**

Narva College of Tartu University, founded in 1999 on the border between Estonia and Russia, prepares teachers for pre-school childcare institutions and basic schoolteachers for stages II and I who are prepared for work in a bilingual school. The college is located in a town which is presumably the town with the highest percentage of Russian-speaking population (97%).

There is good tradition in the European Union for preparing teachers for the pupils of this age group of historical ethnic minorities and/or numerous minorities living in close proximity, often in border areas (See the experience in Spain, Great Britain, Slovakia ja Slovenia - Jager, van der Meer 2007; the experience in Spain, Great Britain, Austria, Slovenia and Finland - Raik 2014). Narva college has also developed a curriculum for preparing teachers for humanities and social sciences in multilingual school. All Bachelor and master studies curricula are designed so that the students can also acquire a second or additional specialty in bilingual programme (Tartu Ülikooli Narva Kolledži õppekavad 2014/2015).

The majority of the students attending teacher training in Narva College have finished a Russian-speaking school and they need training in the official language themselves. The principles of content and language integrated studies are applied in the learning process; almost 70 % of the instruction is conducted in Estonian. The would-be teacher is going to use the same methodological approach at his or her workplace. It goes without saying that English is also taught and in the future the importance of English as the language of instruction will increase. This trilingual model is called for by the principles of multilingualism advocated by the European Union: the students use the official language, the mother tongue of the students, that is also the language of the neighbouring nation, and also English. Similar approach is most noticeable in Catalonia (cf.

Commission Communication on Multilingualism 2008; Trilingual Primary Education in Europe 2011). Such an educational model focusing on three languages meets the expectations of the Russian-speaking Estonian youth, which is confirmed by research (See Masso, Kello, Jakobson 2011 regarding preferences of English-language studies). In the studies attention is paid to the knowledge and skills regarding teaching of cultural differences, intercultural communication, multicultural education and teaching in other languages. Needless to say, the curriculum also includes Estonian and Russian cultural history (Tartu Ülikooli Narva Kolledži õppekavad 2014/2015).

The volume of training in the Estonian language can reach up to 30 credit points in the college, depending on the level of command of the language of the student. The aim is to achieve the level of the official language required for professional experience, that being proficiency in Estonian on C 1 level for Master's level students. The students' proficiency in the official language is determined at the national language exam. Attempts are made to use various study work practices for teaching Estonian; as expected, training in the language environment is most appreciated. In addition, language and literature clubs are organised and intensive language courses provided, Estonian -language media is engaged in the study process. There is still room for development, confirmed by the fact that poor command of Estonian may prove an obstacle for graduating from the college, particularly in the Open University, where

students are somewhat older and their language level acquired in the upper secondary school can be meagre. Still, the majority of the college graduates rated positively the strict requirements with regard to official language after graduation, confirming that command of Estonian allows them to find work. The majority of the students having graduated from the teacher education in the last years hold jobs pertaining to their profession. Studies of employer feedback confirm that curricula meet employers' expectations and the students successful in their studies fare better in their future jobs (Rootamm-Valter 2014).

In case of Estonian-language studies in the college various models are applied: a subject may be taught completely in Estonian, a subject is partly taught in Estonian, two instructors work with the same group, one in Estonian and the other in Russian. The planning for the tuition in Estonian is based on the language skills of the students. Inter alia, the subjects and activities taught in Estonian are the ones that are usually taught in Estonian in the particular study stages (such as physical activities in the kindergarten and physical training in stages of study I and II, study of nature and human studies and didactics in levels of study I and II).

In case of studies in Estonian students receive support in Russian, they can communicate with the instructor in the mother tongue of the student. In general, the students perform their independent and graded tasks in the target languages, but with the aim of improved learning outcomes specific agreements between

the student and the instructor are allowed. The powerful development of the e-support is paramount as the assistance for studies in Estonian. Acquisition of Estonian and motivation for learning gets support from the practical training and work arranged in the Estonian language environment and guided fact-finding trips (such as completion of a particular subject in the language environment, integrated with joint activities with students of teacher education of other colleges, practical training in country study in Lahemaa National Park). In the end of studies, a graduation thesis is defended or a final exam is passed. In the specialties that require level B 2 for graduation, the graduation thesis can be in Russian. Master's degree is awarded for a graduation thesis in Estonian or English depending on the specialty. Students are expected to have language level C 1.

Besides Estonian, English is also granted an important role. The command of English is not directly checked on the proficiency exams (unlike Estonian) with the exception of the future teachers of English. The Masters level students must pass the international CAE (Certificate of Advanced English) exam permitting them to teach English as L2 or L3 language also outside Estonia. Nevertheless, the instruction of the English language provided for the students of teacher training has an explicit aim: the professional standard of an Estonian teacher requires level B2 command of Estonian (Õpetaja V kutsestandard). In order to motivate the students to learn English, Erasmus exchange programme is highly valued. Students are

regularly directed to use literature in English in their daily studies.

For providing basic knowledge in CLIL a subject is designed which aim is to establish conditions for teacher training students for acquisition of knowledge and shaping of positive attitude for creating learning process valuing the subject/content, language and learning skills and guiding this process (Aja, Golubeva, Kebbinau 2010). The following requirements have been set as learning outcomes: the student is able to list forms of subject and language integrated study, describe one study work practice widely spread in Estonia, using the CLIL terminology, is aware of the options of the study environment for using the principles of CLIL, is able to plan for the learning process emphasizing subject/content, language and learning skills and can give reasons for the usefulness of CLIL approach.

The college provides an option to acquire the specialty of the language immersion teacher (Tartu Ülikooli Narva Kolledži õppekavad 2014/2015). The learning outcomes of the module are worded as follows: the student knows the theoretical basis and application options of multicultural education, knows the basics of language acquisition and instruction in the target language, has subject-based knowledge for subject teaching in stages of study I and II, has knowledge in language immersion methodology and is able to prepare study materials for the language immersion classes. The student must complete the

following subjects: bilingual subject syllabus, mastering language, active learning techniques: teaching talking, language immersion, nature and social theory, active learning in natural sciences, mathematics and teaching methods, integrated methodology of manual training and art study, basics for preparation of study materials. All students must undergo practical training in language immersion.

### **Further developments in promoting teacher education for bilingual schools**

In Estonia, no school or class is monolingual today. The whole background of the educational system is diverse regarding languages and cultures, besides Russian-speaking children and adolescents new immigrants study in the Estonian educational system. 20% of the Russian-speaking children attend Estonian-language schools. All teachers need knowledge in cultural differences, intercultural communication and multicultural education and skills for coping in various situations.

It is important to underline the importance of consistent methodological approach for implementation of the content and language integrated studies. Besides subject and language-oriented and cognitive skills the cultural aspects must be kept in mind, particularly in Estonia, which is a country characterised by different cultural and historical ideas and where the society is aiming to move from peaceful co-existence towards increased mutual communication. Knowledge in working in the multicultural environment definitely

forms a part of the basic competencies of the teacher of the 21st century.

The curricula of the Estonian teacher training are becoming more flexible and are oriented towards acquisition of several specialities. Taking into account the spread of multilingual teaching in general education - and not only in Russian-speaking schools -, the need arises to establish a content and language integrated learning module, facilitating entry into work in multilingual environment. In Narva College the respective re-training of teachers was started in autumn 2014 (Lõimitud aine- ja keeleõpe 2014). It is imperative that this module is available to other teachers beside language teachers. Based on the results of Estonian educational research, this module must, inter alia, ensure competence in adaption and compilation of study materials, as well as motivating students (Cf. Metslang, Kibar, Kitsnik 2013).

It is important to engage both Estonian-speaking and Russian-speaking young people in the teacher training. A good teacher has good command of the language of his or her students as well as the target language. Universities have to provide for learning of professional target language, as the preparation of the subject teachers is mainly conducted in the official language. Today young Russian-speaking students prefer to work in the Estonian-speaking schools, as their knowledge in Russian professional language is not sufficient. We have to take advantage of the situation where we have our scientists of the older generation who

still have perfect command of the Russian language. A term spent in the country of the target language, be it Russia, Great Britain or Germany, must become an inseparable part of teacher training.

It is important to establish a system of guided practical training for all students in language immersion classes and in educational institutions practicing multilingual studies. Taking up work in Russian -speaking schools can be motivated through teaching practice. It is also a possibility to shape the students' attitude, particularly if teaching practice and school-based learning are taken up as early as possible. The knowledge and skills of young teachers can be supported during the next stage, i.e. while they pass their vocational year.

During the next stages of development we must not forget the most important aspect: the teaching of Estonian and the level of it. With the decline in the volume of Russian-language studies in the Estonian bilingual school, the role of the teacher of the Russian language as a bearer of culture and the component of *Russica* becomes more important in school. These are the new challenges faced by the teachers of Russian as mother tongue. While considering teacher training system as a whole we must bear in mind that bilingual school needs also Russian-speaking teachers, especially in the basic school, and particularly in mathematics and natural sciences. Retaining Russian language instruction in these subjects would satisfy the expectations of the Estonian educational sphere.

Bilingual school needs cooperation well above average levels, as while implementing CLIL the subject teachers must also engage in teaching language for specific purposes. Cooperation will succeed only in case the head of the school is willing to take the role of the leader. We are supported by teacher retraining and in-service training, counselling and various cooperation models. Particular attention should be paid to the last two areas. In regard to in-service training cooperation with the leading teacher training centres in Northwest Russia cannot be underestimated. Openness is one of the attributes of a good bilingual school.

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***BASIS OF MULTICULTURAL  
EDUCATION: IMPORTANT STRATEGIES  
FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN SCHOOLS***

**Abstract**

*Multicultural education influences all stages of effective instruction. The multicultural curricula allow children to learn about themselves and the others. In this way, they analyse the beliefs, attitudes, values and behaviour typical for specific cultures. The members of these cultures need to have an increased self-confidence, and, at the same time, they need to value and understand the others. In this paper we made a theoretical analysis of the possibilities for development of the professional competencies of the future teachers for dealing with the challenges of the cultural pluralism of the students. Hence, we will look into the matter related to the instructions referring to multicultural education for the future teachers, in more detail. Primarily, they can help raise the academic achievements of the students of the minorities and help overcome the negative stereotypes, regardless if they are ethnic, religious, gender based, etc. We will also analyse the multicultural curricula and the conditions they need to meet in order to be effective in terms of quality education.*

*Based on the relevant theoretical findings, we will present the following basic dimensions of effective multicultural education, which should serve as guidelines for the future teachers in the multicultural schools: 1. Content integration; 2. Developing knowledge; 3. Equity pedagogy; 4. School culture consolidation, and 5. Prejudice reduction. We will try to prove that these*

*aspects are in the spirit of multiculturalism in education.*

**Keywords:** *cultural pluralism, teaching instructions, stereotypes, competencies.*

## **Background**

The multicultural education affects all phases of the effective classes (Ramsey, 1987). Through the multicultural curricula the children learn about themselves and the others. In this way they analyse the beliefs, attitudes, values and behaviours which are characteristic for certain cultures (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Gutmann, 2004). The members of these cultures need to have greater self-confidence and simultaneously develop evaluation and understanding of the other cultures (Tiedt & Tiedt, 1990; Kryzanowski, & Stewin, 1985). The instructions for multicultural understanding can assist in raising the academic expectations of the pupils from the minorities and to contribute for decreasing the negative stereotypes. It is assumed that in order for the multicultural programs to be efficient, it is necessary for them to incorporate the social, historic and political contexts (Nieto, 1997).

Hence, it is logical to expect that they will meet the following conditions:

- To teach the children to recognize, accept and appreciate the cultural differences; and
- To “imprint” in the pupils, during their education, the sense of responsibility and commitment for the work in the direction of

the democratic ideals, justice, equality, and democracy (Manning & Baruth, 1996,p.3).

Taking into consideration the significant role played by culture in the process of education, one must ask the question: Is the cultural belonging of the pupils, who attend classes in elementary education, reflected in their academic achievements? The academic achievements of the pupils are closely connected to the cultural belonging. Explicitly and implicitly, they are symbolic to the democracy of the society, culture and the current trends, as well as the engagement of the teachers and the persons responsible of the education. In addition, they reflect the attitudes of the parents, and the culture in general, towards the education (Stevenson, 1990; Marin, 1994; Vasta et al., 2007; Shweder, 1991; Lerner, 1991; Turner, 1987; and Zinberg, 1976).

In the teaching practice, when the teacher calls to the cultural values appropriate for the pupils, i.e. their cultural identity, the participation in the classes increases evidently and the degree of the achievements increases as well (Tharp, according to Slavin, 2006). These achievements are an essential indicator of the intellectual education and competence, as well as the most important prerequisite for the individual and educational prosperity of the person. This characteristic brings the academic achievements of the pupils to one vital issue for the politics, and the educational and scientific-research activity. The assessment of the success of the students in the study program usually focuses

on the academic achievements, but in many educational institutions, their achievements and attitudes are also assessed (Banks, 1995). In other words, the assessment of the academic achievements includes all the means which are used in the schools, to formally measure the performances of the pupils.

As for the analysis of the professional literature, the works of the authors: Banks (1991; 1993); Bride (2005); Elliot et al.,(2000); Steve (2002), Tajfel (1982); Bauman(1999); Brewer & Miller(1984); Myers ( 1995; 1999); Feldman (1997); Eriksen, (1993), are considered to be a good starting point. With papers like these and similar to them, one can identify some characteristics typical of certain cultures, learning strategies and materials adequate to each of them.

### **The skills for multicultural communication**

Providing equal physical teaching conditions: school buildings, classrooms, halls, yards, and sports fields, is not enough to develop a multicultural awareness and behaviour of the pupils. Although they learn in the same buildings, it is not a guarantee that quality information has been provided for both cultures. To better illustrate, if the texts, i.e. textbooks and other teaching resources do not provide contents with equal quality, equally objective notions of the differences in the existing cultures of the pupils, then the goals of the multicultural living will be that much more distant.

Referring to a great number of researches about school cultural diversity, we will try to provide basic notions about its very nature. The expected findings will make a more current topic of the need to train the future teachers in the skills for multicultural communication, as well as the unbiased evaluation of the educational achievements of the pupils from different cultures. If we strive for a culturally inclusive education, it is necessary for the teachers to learn of the traditions, beliefs and experiences of the pupils from different cultures, in greater detail. The knowledge of the cultural specifics of the pupils and their reflection on the studying will contribute for the reduction of the wrong perceptions and expectations of behaviour, i.e. the success in learning.

### **Psychological premises of the multicultural education**

Multiculturalism in the education includes a wide range of theory and practice. This analysis will emphasize also the psychological premises of the multicultural education in the educational institutions, and based on this, the training of the students - future teachers will improve, with abilities and skills for handling the challenges during the implementation of the multicultural education in the school environment. Undoubtedly, the cultural differences of the pupils cause variations in their academic achievements. By accepting these influences and by adapting to them in the classes, the academic achievements in various educational

and cultural spheres in the frames of the school and beyond will improve significantly.

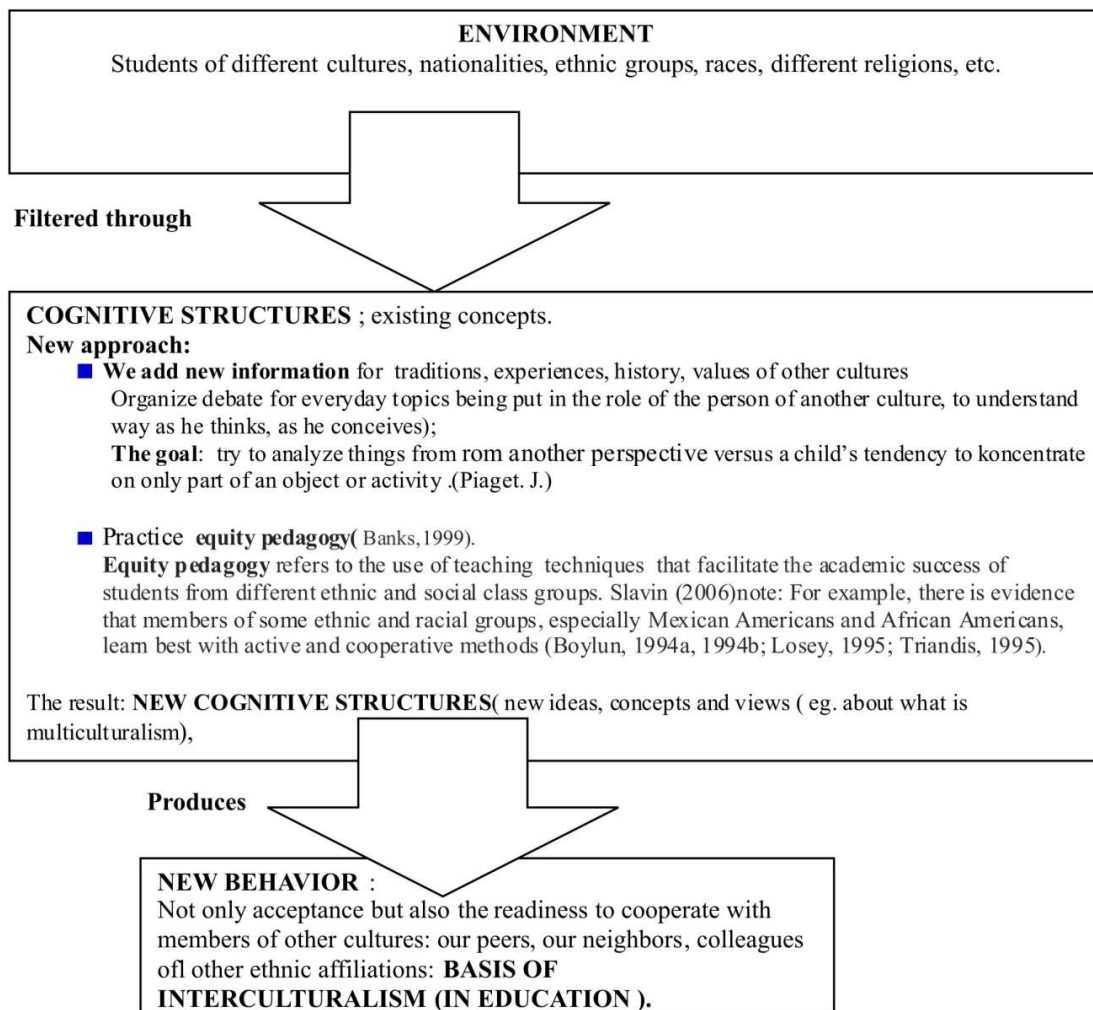
Usually people interpret the surrounding occurrences and people through the prism of their own values (Myers, 2003) and the points of view of their ego. Everyone has personal expectations, values, convictions, concepts and many other subjective traits which determine whether the surrounding occurrences and people them will be valued as good or bad. Cognitive psychology elaborates this tendency, in whose frames the theory of the famous epistemologist Piaget (1971) suggests good strategies for getting to know oneself objectively and then to get to know the others. Namely, Piaget stresses the need for decentred thinking in the act of interpretation of the others, during which we are trained to see their perspective of things. If we succeed in this, we will know more about the others, their needs, attitudes, traditions and cultures, and thus, we will be able to better accept them and collaborate with them.

The decentred thinking will enable us to overcome the existing limitations in the interpretations of the behaviour of other people (fig.1). Most of all, this refers to overcoming the prejudices and stereotypes of ethnic, national, religious and other character. The result of this act will be a more open and tolerant relation with those with a culture different from ours. This thinking may be

nurtured in the frames of a democratic society i.e. the school, where equal education for everyone is a top priority. These are most of all strategies which promote cooperation among the students, shared responsibility and goals, during which the cultural parallelisms among them will be minimized with the goal to overcome the stressing of the differences among the students.

Figure 1: The transformation from multicultural to intercultural education

**FROM MULTICULTURALISM TO INTERCULTURALISM**



**The basic dimensions of the multicultural education**

The psychologists there give great significance to the way the schools accommodate to the differences of the pupils in terms of their abilities, race, ethnicity, regional origin, family

condition, gender and sexual orientation, in order for everyone to have the same learning opportunities. The most famous theoretic frame for facing these challenges in the American educational system is the concept of developmental contextualism, by Richard Lerner. It is complemented by the so-called

cultural constructivism, which is currently used as a platform on the territory of the USA for a great number of empirical researches.

The cultural origin of the child is determined by its ethnic identity, social and economic status, the religion, mother tongue, gender and experiences in certain groups and sub-groups. Taking such a set of factors as a starting point, we can identify the basic dimensions (we consider them as challenges) of the multicultural education, for which Banks (1993) gives an opinion, as follows: 1. Integration of the contents; 2. Building the knowledge; 3. Equity pedagogy; 4. Consolidating the school culture, and 5. Reduction of the prejudice. I am deeply convinced that these dimensions are the embodiment of the spirit of the multicultural in the educational practice.

The most important dimension is Equity pedagogy that promotes education for everyone in the same way regardless of the cultural differences. Through equity pedagogy, the importance of the development of positive interactions among the students from different ethnic groups in the function of creating tolerant and democratic attitudes towards the others is stressed. As we have mentioned previously, an important precondition to get to know those who do not belong to our culture is the readiness to take their point of view of things. Apart from this, it is not sufficient to think cognitively about the other cultures we live with, but first of all we need to get close to them emotionally. This will be achieved if the students try to perceive the things and traditions

of the other cultures from their point of view as well, and not only from one's own. Only in this way, we may contribute for the creation of a stable social school climate (not only here), where we will have ethnic, language and religious diversity, in which the cultural barriers will be removed.

### **Conclusion**

The building of knowledge from the aspect of multiculturalism means that the ways to get certain cognitions do not have to be the same. In this process the children will be introduced to different notions about the world, which are the result of the history and the shared experience of a group of people, which creates different concepts and philosophies in its members.

An important condition for achieving the aspirations for a modern multicultural climate in schools is the materialization of equal pedagogy (Banks), which highlights values such as collaboration, equality, non-selectiveness, calling onto positive examples from history of how different cultures collaborated and faced reality in different times etc.

The detailed information for the essence of multiculturalism in the education will be to the benefit of the professional training and will be more efficient in facing the manners of implementation in the school practice. In other words, this will be a rich source and a model for realization in circumstances characteristic for the Republic of Macedonia, where the classes in a great number of schools consist of pupils of



various nationalities. Based on the combination of the research knowledge and the professional experience, we believe we will be much more effectively engaged in the practice.

The opportunities to disseminate the findings and experiences from the research are numerous:

- Training the students in direct classes with competencies for an inter-cultural dialogue; Introducing the students from the second cycle of studies in pedagogical psychology regarding the indicators of a democratic culture of the school institution;
- Giving instructions for facilitating the professional work of the teachers and the professional services of the school during the treatment of cases of deteriorated and conflict relations of an inter-ethnic nature, and
- By organizing training for the teachers in the function of consolidating the modern school culture which accepts the differences of the students of any type and through the realization of training for the social skills of communication and developing strategies for rational resolving of ethnic conflicts, which in our society are often a potential source of uncontrolled behaviour in the young people, with negative consequences for the society.

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***IMPROVING THE MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE CLASSROOM***

**Abstract**

*The most significant segment of life in a multicultural and multi-religious society is an advanced form of instruction in the classroom. In fact, the classroom is a micro level reflection of society as it is the place in which the understanding and acceptance of cultural and religion differences and the mutual respect among the members of different communities are the very foundations for building models of behaviour. With this realization on mind, the accent of the paper is placed upon the realization of a successful communication between the teacher and the students and the creation of a favourable socio-emotional atmosphere in the classroom, both based on respect, appreciation, understanding, and cooperation as important prerequisites for promoting multiculturalism in one of the earliest settings of multicultural community – the classroom. The attention in the paper is drawn upon the capability of the teacher to be empathetic with the students, and his/her skills to make students enjoy the atmosphere, to satisfy their need for distinguishing themselves, to enable them have the same opportunities for their accomplishments, to satisfy their need for acceptance and recognition within the classroom, to provide each with a place and position within the classroom, to enable them develop self-confidence, etc. In line with that, our paper provides various techniques with specific activities which largely improve the atmosphere in class towards acceptance of*

*differences via equal and unbiased interactive communication between the students and the teacher, as well as between the students themselves.*

**Keywords:** *multicultural, environment, successful communication, teacher.*

## **Introduction**

A very important task set before the teacher in a multicultural classroom is to establish good communication with the students (see Int'l Journal of Arts & Sciences, 2011: 437). It is the quality of classroom communication development that the quality of the relationship teacher-students and students-students, and the social and emotional atmosphere in the classroom will greatly depend upon. Good relationships between members of the class community are the basis for a pleasant atmosphere as it provides students with the ability to satisfy their needs for distinguishing themselves, for success, acceptance and recognition in the group, their need for self-confidence development and performance appraisal, and above all it provides the opportunity for improvement of the multicultural and multi-religion differences between the students from different ethical, religious and social class environment. In that sense, the objective of this paper is to present the appropriate methods and techniques that stimulate and improve the socio-emotional atmosphere in the classroom, the interaction teacher-student and the collaborative

atmosphere as the building foundations of multicultural cooperation, tolerance, respect and mutual acceptance in the Republic of Macedonia. The analysis and practical examples for implementation of the techniques and strategies we offer have proceeded from the years of our work experiences at the Faculty of Education in Bitola, i.e. from the professional and practical training of future teachers in subject teaching, and from the experiences we had when working on various projects and other forms of professional development.

## **Assumptions for successful communication in the class**

One of the many tasks set before teachers is establishing good communication with students, the quality of which largely influences not only the further course of the relationship between the teacher and the student and among students themselves, but the social and emotional atmosphere in the classroom as well, and in the school in general. Communication with the students is a very complex domain because the school itself is an open social institution in which the teacher does not only communicate knowledge, but he/she also coaches, educates, encourages students, and above all he/she has to cope with social problems and relationships among students, the solution and improvement of which highly depend on the teacher's communication development skills.

Therefore, it is necessary to fulfil certain assumptions, which will lead to a desirable and successful communication among all of the members of the classroom community.

Furthermore, bearing in mind that we refer to the development of students of the first and of the beginning of the second cycle of elementary education, whose reactions – as a result of the nature of their development, are still largely dependent on the teacher's behaviour and instructions as he/she is the key person in the creation of the desirable interactive-communicational and socio-emotional ambience with his/her skills for solutions relying upon didactics and teaching methods when teaching.

In that sense, the first assumption for establishing and maintaining successful communication in the classroom is teacher's empathetic approach (Int'l Journal of Arts & Sciences, 2011: 438 – 439) towards the students, as well as towards the situations that he/she teaches about. Actually, it is necessary that the empathy is a feature of the teacher's character and personality, and that he/she develops it with his students since they are at the age when they are apt to self-identification. Thus an empathetic teacher will be a suitable model for their self-identification. But why is it important that the teacher is empathetic and that he/she cherishes an empathetic approach when teaching? The truth is that the teacher who is empathetic has a greater opportunity to discover the hidden motives of a student's behaviour and thus have a better understanding of the student and his/her behaviour. The teacher's skill to exercise empathy is particularly called for in the student – teacher communication; in order to bring his/her communication into accordance with students' abilities and capacity for

understanding, it is necessary that he/she communicates with them empathetically. On the other hand, an empathetic teacher spurs empathy with students by encouraging them continually to talk about their feelings, to reveal their wishes, motives, and what is especially important, an empathetic teacher listens to the students and provides them with pleasant and safe surrounding and atmosphere for work in class. The insights of researches in this area led to conclusion that in schools in which students are engaged in activities, which develop and promote empathy, the overall success is much better. Techniques with concrete activities through which the empathetic teacher will help students to better understand their own feelings, and thus to be able better to understand the feelings of others, are varied.

1. A very suitable technique to develop empathy in students is "role playing". (see Bratanić, 1993: 103) Role-playing in multicultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious environment enables students to become more sensitive to the feelings of others, to improve their understanding of the relationship between the individuals and their group, to develop group cohesion etc. The empathy development via role-playing can be achieved by means of assigning the students with an authentic or fictional problem context. For example, role-playing can serve in real or fictional situations that treat honour, self-acceptance, refusal, acceptance of the differences, friendship, responsibility, cooperation, equality, obligations, duty, respect, etc.

Among the activities by which the empathetic abilities of students are developed via role playing, the following ones can be mentioned:

- The teacher hands out the cards to the members of the group. On each card there is a textual scenario of a cultural or confessional situation with all the necessary information given, (for example, marking an occasion with customs, tradition, celebration, folk-dances, etc.). The student plays the role specified in the scenario and then the emotional elements associated with the authentic situations in practice are discussed;
- The use of the technique again: this technique allows students to make corrections to certain mistakes they made the first time they were role-playing. For illustration, a wedding celebration of various ethnical and confessional communities can be analysed, and the respective customs can be acted as well as other segments of tradition such as folk dances and folk music performance or any other aspect of traditional celebration. Then, the emotions prevailing in the celebration are analysed, the family atmosphere is described, the presence of relatives and friends as well. Then, the aspects of celebration characteristic for the other community scenarios are discussed which could be preceded with an analysis of a textual wedding ceremony discourse. When the word again is uttered students are to act again but different roles this time in accordance with the respective wedding celebration. It is in this way that sensitivity is developed for the different but authentic approach that various religious and ethnic communities have when marking an occasion and celebrating with the family;
- The teacher can give a description of a character and ask the students to play the role of the character as realistically as he/she can. The student should develop the imagination and identify himself/herself with the character, that is, respond from the character's perspective;
- The teacher can ask students to walk around the classroom without making up crowds or elbowing. The teacher names a feeling and a student's task is to make a halt and show to the class how he/she moves around when, for example, he/she is happy, both with gestures and facial expression. Then, the teacher names another feeling and the steps are repeated. The activity goes on. Finally, the teacher may ask the students to write a reflexive essay so that they can think about what makes them happy, sad, angry, etc. and then to share their views with the other students in class. In this way, students' feeling of togetherness will be greatly enhanced through their own realization of the unique but universal way of any human's reaction, regardless of the cultural, ethnical community or confessional group he/she belongs to.

Among the activities to develop and promote empathy, the following ones should also be mentioned:

- Teacher presents students with a particular emotional situation, which should arouse empathy with them; students may be asked to work in pairs and give a careful look to a picture, which portrays sad and depressed faces of children of different races and social backgrounds. Then the teacher asks the students to talk about the feelings they have when watching the picture. The activity ends with the students' assignment to write a reflexive essay;
- The teacher may ask the students to read a sad story in class. When they read the text he/she the students are expected to talk about their feelings; the activity ends by their writing a reflexive essay. In this way, as in the previous case, students are trained to develop their imagination about others' standpoints;
- Within the teaching contents of a particular subject, the teacher can select scenarios from the TV series, movies, and documentaries, etc., that is scenes that show, for instance, a conflict among different ethnic communities. Then, the teacher asks the students to discuss the specific scenes; he/she encourages them to discuss about their experiences and also to hear the experiences of others. In this way the teacher promotes acceptance and respect for the differences among the various ethnic communities, acceptance and respect for their feelings;
- The teacher may ask students to find information about the life and work of distinguished people of a high degree of empathy, such as Mother Teresa, for example. With her picture in front of them, which may be placed on the board, students discuss her life and work, emphasizing the aspects in which her empathy is particularly prominent. The activity ends with an assignment from the teacher for the students to write a reflexive essay;
- The teacher may ask students to develop skills for active listening as it helps them develop empathy. Active listening involves listening to others in order to understand what he/she is saying (agreeing with the attitude of the other is not relevant), to understand what he feels and to understand what the other wants to achieve. For this purpose, one of the students working in pair asks questions and the other one responds. The following questions are some of those, which can develop empathy: What is it that you really want? How do you feel? Do you need any help? The one who asks should express his/her willingness to help. Then, a brief report is given in front of the whole group. The teacher may ask the pairs of students to change their roles. Our experience shows that active listening does not have the



attention it deserves. Most often students do not listen actively and carefully, but while one student is speaking the others usually do not listen to him/her, but try to think of their own response;

- The teacher can write a topic on the board: How does empathy allow us to understand others? Then the teacher can ask them to read a corresponding text. He/She can give the students a blank sheet on which they are to draw pictures or maps presenting what empathy means for them. The information from the text helps students to develop relationships through empathy expressed for the content of each other's sketches. Students share their ideas with their partners and discuss similarities and differences in their ideas;
- The teacher may ask the pairs in the cooperative group to discuss the following questions: What makes you happy / sad, angry? How do you respond when you have these feelings? Can you tell me how your parents feel? How can you know? How can you show your friend that you are really listening? How does active listening look like? How do you respond when someone interrupts you? If you find out that your friend received an unsatisfactory grade in the written test in Mathematics what would you say to him/her? What would you do for your friend to feel better? etc. The teacher may ask students to write what an active listening looks like and how it sounds;

- Another technique for stimulating the development of empathy among students may be the so-called two-columned diary. Students work in pairs; each pair is handed out a sheet divided into two columns - the first one featuring a quote or a drawing that stimulates empathy with students, and the second one is empty for the students to fill out with expression depicting their feelings and attitudes. Then a discussion follows.

2. In order to achieve successful communication in class oral or written feedback such as praise, approval, written evaluations, is of a paramount importance. The feedback indicates the interest of the teacher and his/her objective approach towards students and motivates them for continuing their learning, and, to a great extent, it reflects on the relationships among the members of the classroom community. The feedback is necessary as a part of the oral explanation of the achievement of students in their activities performance; it is particularly an inevitable part of a written assessment of the achievements. The impact of the feedback is different on different students, and because of that the teacher has to know the individual characteristics of each student, the familial conditions, and their cultural and religious environment, on the basis of which the communication with the students should be individualized and controlled. Teacher's feedback should be given to each student in continuity.

In the contemporary teaching, the feedback provides an intensive interaction between the teacher and the student. Thus, effective teaching is one in which the teacher has full insight into the quality of the information received, in the effectiveness of its essence processed by the students, and in the possibility of a purposeful utilization of such information when acquiring new knowledge, i.e. the ability to successfully resolve different school and life problems. With the help of the reciprocal feedback, both the teacher and the student direct their action toward a common goal. In the teaching process the feedback should be given on a regular basis, it should be corrective, timely, specific and fully understandable both for the students and for the teacher, because it is via the feedback that the subjects in the communication are kept informed about the work, the correctness of the chosen route and about the correctness of the conduct towards oneself and towards the others.

3. The school climate has a favourable impact on the establishment of successful communication in the classroom. School climate is defined as a tendency to prevalence of certain behaviour. It is the result of the use of certain procedures in communicating with students: application of rewards and penalties, application of cooperation, etc. The climate in the classroom consists of four dimensions: the emotional atmosphere that involves warmth and support, mutual acceptance, empathy in students in class, etc.; social atmosphere that includes supporting and respecting the ideas and opinions, tolerance, equality, rights to

decision-making and initiative-taking, etc., teacher – student interaction upon which the nature of communication depends; and competitive atmosphere or an atmosphere of cooperation. (Andrilović, Čudina, 1985: 133)

The major features of the teacher upon which the climate in the class depends are the following:

- Personality of the teacher – the competency, vocational readiness, developed empathetic ability and knowledge of pedagogical and psychological issues should enable the teacher to choose the most appropriate methods of work, to promote collaborative work by affirming human relationships and respect for students' personality, as well as to provide their personality self-realization, etc. First of all, the personality of the teacher should be marked by the following features: reliability, openness and honesty, tolerance, inclination to justice, etc.;
- His/Her knowledge about which behaviour gives good educational outcomes and his/her skills and knowledge to achieve optimal educational outcomes;
- His/Her personal philosophy about the educational goals that he/she wants to achieve with his/her work.
- Emotional atmosphere. The creation of a positive psychological atmosphere in the classroom is one of the important conditions and criteria for successful

communication between the teacher and the student. It has already been confirmed that the good relations in the classroom depend on the abilities of the teacher to establish a good relationship with students and accept them emotionally, as well as to understand their needs and problems. The good emotional climate in the classroom and in the school depends on the nature of the relationships between the students as well. Acceptance of the students on the part of the teachers is important, but not sufficient for their adjustment in school. Students also need acceptance by their peers. Studies show that self-acceptance and acceptance by others are closely linked. The personal qualities of the teacher, his/her patterns of behaviour and values, and his temper, to a large extent determine the quality of the experience that students acquire in the classroom. (Ђорђевић, 2004: 81)

- Social atmosphere. The social atmosphere in the class is created by the general atmosphere that prevails in the school and depends on the way the whole organization works and on the way teachers communicate with each other. It should be borne in mind that the climate in the classroom and communication that takes place in the same are the most important factor in the socialization of the students in the school. It should be emphasized that the good atmosphere in the classroom is the result of conscious efforts on the part of the teacher and the students. Research

indicates that teacher behaviour reflects the behaviour of the members of the class. For example, the dominant behaviour of the teacher is discerned with the members of the class as well.

The established social relationships, teacher – student, lecturer – auditorium, teacher – group, teacher – teaching tools – student, indicate the nature of communication and interaction between the teacher and students in class. On the other hand, the successfulness of the communication will depend on the knowledge of these relationships. (Int’l Journal of Arts & Sciences, 2011: 446)

The successfulness of the communication, which is the basis of the relationships among all of the students in the educational process, greatly depends upon the above stated factors. These are the activities that schools ought to continually perform: promotion and betterment of the communication between all segments involved, promotion of the multicultural environment as one that is not a communicational barrier but a setting to bring differences of the world into harmony that is to be cherished.

### **Conclusion**

The understanding of cultural values in the global setting is a significant tool for communication development by which potential barriers between different cultures are overcome, an atmosphere of mutual confidence is established, and students are engaged in joint activities. Regardless of our perspective that we

do understand each other, communication is a complex process that requires to be frequently exercised in order to promote the multiculturalism. The promotion of multiculturalism entails active and empathetic listening, to oneself in someone else's shoes, to respect each other's differences and choices, to overcome prejudice. A multicultural classroom has to be grounded upon these differences and to use them as the foundation for progress and growth. Teachers who emphasize these differences in their classrooms are successful in multicultural setting development, which would promote the achievement of the educational goals of all of the students. A successful multicultural classroom requires that the teacher is open with his/her students and knows all of the aspects of their everyday life and activities, particularly the learning patterns of those coming from different cultures. In this sense, the above stated points suggest a conclusion that the promotion of a multicultural setting yields more harmony in the society and in the world, it enhances the perception of equal value of all human beings. On the other side, it is necessary for students to become familiar with the tradition, values, and norms of the various ethnic groups, and thus cultivate the respect for diversity, which would eventually lead to a higher tolerance among members of multiethnic, multicultural, and multi-religious community.

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***SCIENTIX – A POWERFUL TOOL FOR  
FUTURE TEACHERS AND PEDAGOGUES  
IN THE PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION  
OF SCIENCE AND EDUCATION FOR  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT***

**Abstract**

*This year the primary schools in Republic of Macedonia started implementing science as a new subject, which was done according to the adapted curriculum provided by Cambridge International Examination Centre. It is a new subject taught from first to third grade in primary school, where different themes from biology, chemistry and physics are incorporated in the curriculum. This curriculum, benchmarked to international standards, is intended to develop primary school pupils' science skills so that they will be well prepared for the next stage of their education. This new approach provides an excellent base for students' further education and permanent development through the process of following the best educational systems in the world. For future pedagogues and teachers who are studying at pedagogical universities in Republic Macedonia it represents new educational approach, a challenge where through inquiry and observation the pupils will obtain new knowledge in the learning process.*

*Because of it, the Scientix resources provided to the future pedagogues and teachers trace the way of finding inspiration for future classes, as well as many useful practices and digital pedagogical resources as well. Through Scientix the teachers can now be involved in European education projects via matching tools and can participate in the national and European workshops and professional development*

*courses, online training, webinars or communities of practice and many other educational opportunities that can help them enrich their future pedagogical skills according to the standards of education of sustainable development.*

**Keywords:** *scientix program, science, primary education, education for sustainable development*

### **What Scientix represents in the frame of EU?**

Year after year, hundreds of science education projects are funded by the European Commission but, apart from the persons directly involved in these projects (teachers, project managers, etc.), not many people hear about the results obtained, especially when the projects are over. The objective of the Scientix portal is to ensure that the knowledge and results of the projects reach a larger audience. In other words, Scientix was created to facilitate regular dissemination and sharing of know-how and best practices in science education across the European Union. The portal collects and disseminates teaching materials and research reports from European science education projects financed by the European Union. Launched in May 2010, the portal is targeted especially at teachers and schools, but also at other science educators, curriculum developers, policy-makers, researchers and EU stakeholders. It is a free-to-access and free-to-use portal, so that anyone interested in science

education in Europe can join the Scientix community. Most of the content on the portal is accessible for all users, without registration. However, after registration, users are able to access some additional content, such as their personal pages, and use additional services, such as the forum and the chat tool, and request translations of the existing teaching materials. All users are encouraged to give feedback on the portal through the feedback tool, and thus to take part in developing the portal further. The philosophy of the portal can be summarized in the following keywords: “search, find, engage”. This motto emphasizes the shift from a central portal where information is disseminated to end users (who act in this case as passive users) towards a more dynamic and user-centred platform. Scientix thus should not be seen as an information transmission mechanism, but rather as a knowledge building platform. Scientix is managed by European Schoolnet (EUN) on behalf of the European Commission. European Schoolnet is a key player at EU level in education, representing a network of 31 Ministries of Education in the EU Member States and beyond. EUN provides major European education portals for teaching, learning and collaboration and leads the way in bringing about change in schooling through the use of new technology.

### **How to find information on European science education projects**

The projects section of the Scientix portal presents European science, math and technology education projects, which are

financed either by the European Commission or by other public entities. It is possible to search for projects by topic, target group, programme start and end year, or by the participating countries. All the information about each project is divided into three pages. The first page of the project presentation provides a general description of the project's aims and goals, including information about the project's partners, target groups, topics, timeline, and so on. This information is particularly relevant for policy-makers, to help them make better decisions in the area of science education, or anyone who wants a quick view of what the project is about. In the project's research information section, researchers and policy-makers will find a wealth of reports, case studies and projects linked to their area of work, while project managers can find links to deliverables and reports from European projects in the area of mathematics and science education. On a third page, the project's teacher information provides background information about the educational methodology behind the project and links to the teaching materials and other learning resources developed in the project if they have been made available for Scientix. In this section teachers will find resources to stimulate their science classes, and may request translation of the teaching materials into any of the 23 languages of the European Union. Other advantages Scientix offers to teachers are that they can suggest new projects, pass on news and announce events through the feedback tool of the portal; they can be informed when workshops will take place

and take part in them; and they are encouraged to join the users community and share their experience with colleagues across Europe by using the forum and chat facilities.

### **How to find high-quality resources in science education?**

In the Scientix resource repository users can find and download various science education materials, such as teaching materials, lesson plans, reports, studies, guidelines and training courses. All the resources are available for free, thanks to the European projects that have developed them. Regarding the display of the resource repository, the title and the description of the resources are translated into all Scientix languages, whereas the resource or report stays in its original language. A unique service: on-demand translation of teaching materials. In the case of teaching materials, some of them are available for the translation on demand service. This means that if a Scientix user finds a teaching material that is not available in his/her preferred language, as soon as he/she is registered on the portal, he/she can request an additional translation of the teaching materials. The Scientix team will examine the request, and if approved, the additional translation will be added on the page of the resource. The criteria for requests to be approved are that: The user asking for translation must be registered on the Scientix website. The user asking for translation must be a teacher and/or the material will be used only for educational purposes. The same translation is requested by several different users.



### **How to stay informed about the latest news in science education in Europe?**

In the Scientix news section, you can find current national and international news on science education projects, events, competitions, etc. Projects included in Scientix have priority in having their news published on Scientix, but other news is also accepted. News can be searched by the topic, target group, language or country related to the item, and an RSS feed is available. A complementary option to stay up-to-date with the latest news is to subscribe to the Scientix newsletter, available in the six portal languages. The newsletter consists of a monthly update of the new content of Scientix and is also published on the portal, where users can also find an archive of the previous issues of the newsletter.

### **How to share information about best practices in science teaching**

The Scientix community is a platform for Scientix users to network, share experiences and ideas, and discuss the projects. The community provides two types of communication tools: the forum and the online chat. The forum has separate categories for different science subjects, projects and countries. New categories can be created upon request, e.g. for the Scientix projects. The forum is open to everyone; however, it is necessary to register on the Scientix portal in order to participate in the discussions.

### **How to benefit from free online training**

The Scientix Moodle platform offers the opportunity to follow various online training courses for teachers interested in improving their skills, to learn to use tools that can bring a new dimension to their science classes, deepening their knowledge on specific topics, or even to follow an introductory course on a totally new subject. The Scientix Moodle courses include learning how to create one's own Moodle course, how to make the best use of the Google form tool, and how to spice up math classes.

### **Science project of EU that can be find on Scientix platform**

As previously mentioned Scientix collects and distributes information about past and present science education projects carried out in Europe. Priority is given to projects funded by the European Commission, but other publicly funded projects are accepted as well. Projects accepted for Scientix must provide accurate information on the project goals, research and results, and preferably also links to the public reports and resources developed in the project. These are displayed on the Scientix portal, in both the Projects and Resources sections. Project authors are also invited to promote their events and news (e.g. new publications and calls for conference speakers) through the Scientix portal. Examples of currently active projects which are included in the Scientix portal can be found below. As most of them had just started at the time of this publication, their final results or achievements are not available

yet. However, these will be updated on the Scientix portal at a later stage.

a. **Sample of projects**

1. *Places*

Developing the concept of the European City of Scientific Culture, the PLACES project facilitates cooperation between science communication institutions and local authorities. The project focuses on developing and strengthening City Partnerships, bringing together 67 science centres, museums and festivals (each partnering with local authorities) and ten European regional networks. The partnerships provide a basis to foster interactions between science centres / museums, science festival / events and universities on one side and cities / local authorities on the other. PLACES puts emphasis on topics and issues with social relevance (e.g. environmental sustainability, ageing populations, healthcare, social security, drinking water, agriculture, biodiversity, transportation, clean energy, education policies, innovation for economic growth) which allow citizens to engage in dialogue with researchers and local authorities.

2. *Themes*

The project (2013-2016) introduces inquiry-based learning (IBS) into the science and mathematics classroom using magic tricks, myths and mysteries. TEMI is a teacher training project, working with teacher training institutions and teacher networks across Europe to implement innovative training programmes –

inquiry labs. The Enquiry labs are based around the core scientific concepts, but use local myths and mysteries to explain them. The labs are supported by scientists and communication experts to guide teachers through the transition to use inquiry in science teaching. The TEMI Central hub coordinates the activities of the local training centres and provides a platform to share best practice across all aspects of the project.

3. *Cyber Mentor*

CyberMentor is an e-mentoring programme for girls and young women ages 12–18 in Germany designed to foster their participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Each female student (mentee) is paired with a professional woman in STEM, i.e. a researcher, a professor, or an engineer, (mentor) who informs and advises her. CyberMentor offers an online platform, which provides communication possibilities and helpful suggestions for STEM activities and information on STEM courses of study and professions. Community members can introduce themselves through personal pages and interact regularly via e-mail, chat, or discussion forum for the period of one year with their mentoring partner and with all programme participants. Discussion topics range from specific scientific questions about the mentors' work to private matters. Each year, at least 800 girls and 800 women take part in the programme. Having so many other students and mentors as contact persons offers a great possibility for information exchange. In order to

encourage engagement within the platform, the CyberMentor management team regularly makes suggestions for STEM-related experiments, activities, and competitions that participants can work on together. CyberMentor edits a monthly journal, CyberNews, which offers reports on interesting STEM articles, quizzes, and interviews with professionals in the STEM-Field.

#### 4. *Inspiring Science Education*

Inspiring Science Education is a project aimed at providing resources and opportunities for teachers to make science more attractive to their students. The project includes:

- an online portal that provides an interactive inventory of e-learning tools and resources from research centres and other facilities;
- communities of practice as the place where the collaboration between teachers and students will take place.

The project will be implemented through pilot activities that will take place in 5.000 primary and secondary schools in 15 European countries. The schools will be selected to participate in piloting the project tools and resources through case studies developed in cooperation with the local teachers.

#### 5. *Science on Stage Europe*

Science on Stage is a European initiative designed to encourage teachers from across Europe to share good practice in science teaching. Innovative and inspirational science

teaching is seen as a key factor in attracting young people to deal with scientific issues, whether or not they finally choose a career in science. Hence, Science on Stage aims to stimulate the interest of young people through their school teachers, who can play a key role in reversing the trend of falling interest in science and current scientific research. Ultimately, the aim of Science on Stage is to enable teachers to deliver science in a more creative and engaging way.

#### 6. *eTwinning*

The eTwinning community for schools provides teachers across Europe with the opportunity and the tools for collaboration in math, science and technology education projects. eTwinning promotes collaboration between schools in Europe through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). The community provides support, tools and services to make it easy for schools to form short- or long-term partnerships in any subject area, and thus to improve and develop teachers' practices and education in Europe. Additionally, eTwinning provides Professional Development Workshops and Learning Events where teachers can learn more about eTwinning and develop their skills in using ICT in teaching.

#### 7. *Go-Lab*

Go-Lab (2012-2016) has created an infrastructure (the Go-Lab Portal) to provide access to online laboratories run by research centres and universities worldwide. These online labs can be used by universities, schools,

instructors, students and lifelong learners to extend regular learning activities with scientific experiments, giving students a real experience of research work. The Go-Lab Project offers a federation of remote laboratories, virtual experiments, and data-sets (together referred to as “online labs“), as well as facilities for teachers to embed these online labs in pedagogically structured learning spaces.

#### 8. *E-Bug*

e-Bug is a free educational resource repository that makes learning about micro-organisms, antibiotics and hygiene fun and easy. e-Bug helps to teach children about the different types of microbes, the activity of antibiotics against them, and the increasing problems of antibiotic resistance with unnecessary use, and thus to raise awareness of wise antibiotic use. The e-Bug project aims to

- Reduce the incidence of antibiotic resistance across Europe by educating future prescribers and users on prudent antibiotic use;

- Complement national antibiotic and hygiene educational campaigns;
- Exchange information and experience of good practice in the educational curriculum with European partner countries, and
- Translate and implement the e-Bug resources across Europe in close collaboration with local Ministries of Health and Education.

#### 9. *Profiles*

PROFILES promotes Inquiry-Based Science Education by raising teachers’ awareness of more effective ways of teaching, with the support of various science education actors. The project aims to work towards a better understanding of the changing purpose of teaching science in schools and the value of science education stakeholders’ networking. PROFILES is based on “teacher partnerships” aiming to implement existing inquiry-based science teaching materials. Long-term teacher training courses reflecting challenges relevant to the participants raise their skills in developing creative, scientific problem-solving and socio-scientific related learning environments, which enhance students’ intrinsic motivation to learn science and their individual competences such as decision-making abilities and abilities in scientific inquiry. The intended outcome of PROFILES is that science education becomes more meaningful for students and more strongly related to 21st century science and Inquiry-Based Science Education (IBSE), and thus fosters students’ scientific literacy.

#### 10. *Science: It’s a girl thing*

A pan-European awareness campaign to encourage girls to develop an interest in science and engage young women in scientific research careers. This reflected Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn’s commitment to promote gender equality and the gender dimension in research and innovation. With the slogan “Science: it’s a girl thing!” the first phase of the

campaign targeted girls aged 13 to 18, aiming to challenge stereotypes around science and show girls that science can be a great opportunity for their future.

### *11. Responsible Research and Innovation*

Responsible (RRI) implies that societal actors (researchers, citizens, policy makers, business, third sector organizations, etc.) work together during the whole research and innovation process to better align both the process and its outcomes with the values, needs and expectations of society. In practice, RRI is implemented as a package that includes multi-actor and public engagement in research and innovation, enabling easier access to scientific results, the take-up of gender and ethics in the research and innovation content and process, and formal and informal science education.

### **Conclusion**

The Scientix portal was launched in May 2010. Since then, it has proven to be a very successful portal, which attracts users to search for science education projects and studies, browse and download reports, resources and tools, and use the communication and translation services provided. The yearly survey of Scientix users showed that it has managed to reach the intended target groups: more than two-thirds of the users are teachers at schools or universities, followed by researchers, policy-makers and education managers such as head teachers, experts involved in curriculum development, etc. Most users are looking for project information, news and teaching materials, and

they are generally happy with the content and resources that they found – one in three of the survey respondents had used one or several resources from Scientix in their teaching.

Scientix is gradually growing as more and more projects join the community and share their resources and materials through the portal, which is also constantly updated and developed to display the current status and latest results of the projects, and to fulfil the needs and wishes of the users. Scientix is all the time looking for new educational initiatives to join its community to demonstrate new ideas and good practices for science education in Europe.

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### **Abstract**

*The paper provides ideas for possible solutions creating marketable, well-trained professionals who are competitive in a global economy. The question that arises is what skills and knowledge are important for an internationalization of career professionals? The article explores the perceived relevance of student learning outcomes covered in the curriculum for the labour market.*

**Keywords:** *comparative study, competitive professionals, employability skills, labour market, student learning outcomes assessment.*

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***GLOBAL EDUCATION AND  
EDUCATIONAL MARKETPLACE:  
TRAINING FUTURE PEDAGOGUES***

### **Introduction**

The winds of global education continue to blow, causing seeds of change throughout the world. Comparative education research is one of the seeds that can bring economic growth, social changes and shape higher academic education. As ideas and skills become more of a commodity in today's societies, the place of exchange of ideas and skills which education involves also becomes a marketplace.

Today it seems that no institution of higher education can afford to solely concern itself with the more noble side of this marketplace. In competing for students, staff, resources, and reputation each institution must also involve itself in the other side as well. Today's academic marketplace, being both a marketplace of ideas and skills as things to sell, is one in which students are acting as shoppers

and consumers, seeking more flexible programs, better teaching, and more user-friendly institutions.

Much of today's global academic marketplace is in fact a series of national marketplaces of ideas and skills in which each nation-state, via intellectual, scientific and technical work, defines itself and its character through the invention of traditions.

Such national marketplaces of ideas and skills do not, however, exist alone. They rather depend upon key factors for their development and maintenance. Most important among these factors are: (a) the investment and effective management of capital in universities; (b) the organization of a curriculum and educational strategies which reflect the invented traditions each nation-state wishes to call forth; and most importantly (c) the creation of a fine balance - between the more noble marketplace of skills and ideas and the marketplace of commodities - which works to create the prestige and confidence which the student-as-consumer demands.

While this national marketplace of ideas and skills is the most important factor in the greater global academic marketplace, it is also becoming an increasingly important part of different national marketplaces to create capital, its management, educational organization, as well prestige and confidence outside of the older national traditions and within emerging international traditions. While students may have in the past mainly been drawn to study in, and thereby take part in, different national

traditions around the world, they are now also drawn to traditions they consider to be no longer simply national in character. The search for flexible programs, better teaching, and a more user-friendly learning environment may actually signal a need for an academic marketplace which makes international concerns, connections and learning itself a top priority.

Emerging states in the global marketplace may, for many reasons, have more of a potential to fill than those established national marketplaces. While the older national traditions will continue to be the most important selling point for the educational marketplace overall, those traditions which are not able to create an international balance between the more noble marketplace of skills and ideas and the marketplace of commodities will increasingly give up more of their prestige and confidence to those who are able to create such a balance.

As the general purpose of education is to prepare students for the world in which they are living, there is a growing expectation that the curriculum must enlarge students understanding of international circumstances as well as of peoples, cultures and languages beyond the borders of one's own nation-state. Without exception, such missions are delegated to the faculty of the many academic disciplines existing within nation-state traditions found in each institution and within the traditions of other nation-states. For these organizations another, possibly more difficult balance



between the more noble marketplace of cultures and peoples and the marketplace of commodities must be achieved.

Today it is a well-discussed fact that universities across Europe are, at least in certain ways, seeking to become increasingly international in their missions, program planning, faculty development, research, service, continuing education, technical assistance, student selection, and opportunities for student learning on campus and abroad. In search of internationally-oriented intellectual frameworks, process models of programmatic development, and substantive concentrations appropriate to their particular institutions, they are investigating international connections within and among the disciplines.

Economic and social changes worldwide are reshaping the way institutions of higher education operate today. The ability of institutions of higher education to anticipate and embrace change and to develop strategies that support innovative educational activity is absolutely essential. Besides, the increasing scope and complexity of problems facing higher education institutions have placed ever more formidable demands upon educational leaders.

As in all nation-states, peace and security are intricately connected to economic prosperity and political stability, which has been growing in recent years, but could be disrupted at any time by internal and external forces. Without greater knowledge and understanding of the rights and responsibilities within a democratic society, any country cannot expect its citizenry

to embrace democratic norms. It is precisely those comparative and international perspectives in education just elaborated on that are crucial for conveying this knowledge.

Nowadays, educational leaders and scholars must try to successfully reform higher education in order to meet the requirements of both the nationally and internationally oriented and balanced marketplace. Unfortunately the present system of higher education does not prepare its students or its nation-state to play a competitive role on behalf of one another.

One of the tasks of institutions of higher education is to train competitive specialists in order to meet the often vague and dubious requirements of the world market. In trying to implement an international experience, educators very often worry about output, asking themselves how their students might be more competitive in the world market today. Instead of assessing memory alone, the use of different methods of assessing student achievement such as the assessment of portfolios, assessment via interviews, the writing of essays, and giving presentations is a much more effective means of preparing students for future careers and for developing their employability skills.

The changes that occurred in the beginning of the 90s due to the transition from the planning economy to the labour market and open society dictated the necessity for adapting the system of higher professional education to the new social, economic, and political conditions. Integration

into the world system of education proved to be an important stimulus for reforms within the system of higher education. Only the process of considerable reforming the structure of levels and qualifications existing in higher education system could effectively contribute to this process.

The question as to the applicability of international academic marketplace structures is indeed a complex and interesting one.

The university is a part of nation-state and other forms of culture which, while teaching the rule of law, civic values and sacrifice, must also embody and enact these things as well. If the university fails to balance the noble and commodity sides of the academic marketplace, then it not only fails the students but also the nation-state and international community whose values and needs it attempts to serve.

In short, while educational organization, involving issues such as assessing achievement, may be seen as a special issue for universities and related institutions, it is in fact a much greater issue involving the nation-state and world as a whole.

Nowadays, educational leaders and scholars in Russia must try to successfully reform higher education in order to meet the requirements of both the nationally and internationally oriented and balanced marketplace. Unfortunately the present system of higher education does not prepare its students or its nation-state to play a competitive role on behalf of one another. While there may be many reasons to be

discussed as to why this is so, the reason I will address in what follows is the dependence of Russian students non-Russian students studying in Russia on an old system of assessment; a system which is too much based upon the testing of memory alone. While this diagnosis may seem very concrete in relation to the more abstract nature of the problems mentioned above, after more careful examination it will become more clear that the relationship between the concrete and abstract in the area of education may be less different than many have previously supposed.

One of the tasks of institutions of higher education is to train competitive specialists in order to meet the often vague and dubious requirements of the world market. In trying to implement an American experience in Russia, educators very often worry about output, asking themselves how their students might be more competitive in the world market today. Instead of assessing memory alone, the use of different methods of assessing student achievement such as the assessment of portfolios, assessment via inter-views, the writing of essays, and giving presentations is a much more effective means of preparing students for future careers and for developing their employability skills.

The changes that occurred in the beginning of the 90s due to the transition from the planning economy to the labour market and open society dictated the necessity for adapting the system of higher professional education to the new social, economic and political conditions. Integration into the world system of education proved to be

an important stimulus for reforms within the system of higher education. Only the process of considerable reforming the structure of levels and qualifications existing in higher education system could effectively contribute to this process.

In regards to the balanced practice just mentioned, the objectives of educators must be dedicated to practically preparing competitive, flexible and competent specialists, who will be able to take these values into both sides of the marketplace and, in doing so, help themselves and their communities. In the current attempts to do so, however, there appear to be a number of contradictions in implementing educational strategies for achieving this practical goal. These contradictions include:

- contradictions between the orientation of the contents of the specialist's training and his or her knowledge or personal development;
- contradictions between the traditional approach to assessing the quality of professional training and the education market now forming;
- contradictions between the necessity of applying new effective diagnostic methodologies for evaluating the professional training in an institution of higher pedagogical education, on one hand, and the insufficiency of scientific and methodological tools for controlling the quality of this training, on the other;

- contradictions between the requirements which particular trade markets demand of the specialist and the readiness of the educators to training a competitive specialist;
- contradictions between the existing system of assessing the quality of specialist's training and the orientation and attitude of the specialist in regards to the adequate assessment of his professional skills.

These problems in the sphere of education are still regarded as unsolved, notwithstanding the fact that there have been particular achievements in the field of assessing the quality of professional training. For this and other reasons mentioned above, it is important to turn to the positive experience of foreign countries in building systems of evaluation and assessment of the quality of professional training. The system of higher education in Europe is based on training specialists in conditions of tough competition. The comparative research done on the quality of training specialists has so far proven to be effective in enriching the system of the contemporary higher education.

Two qualitative indexes of specialist training should be singled out here as integral to its effectiveness:

- the time needed by the University graduate to adapt to the work environment in accordance with his specialty;

- the number of related specializations that enable the graduate to get to work without substantial amount of time and strengths spent on adaptation and mastering these specializations.

In conclusion, let me also briefly address another issue of educational organization that is vital in ways discussed above. This issue involves the implementation of a credit transfer system.

The credit transfer system regulates the multifaceted activities of the University's educational program, curriculum, timetable, assessment of student achievement, obtaining degrees, fees for studying, and so on. Due to this system, students and faculty members can better evaluate the results of their activity in and between areas of study. Thus, it provides flexibility in education that corresponds to market economy relations. Introduction of the system of evaluation and assessment based on the credit transfer system, along with the other measure just described, will contribute to the development of the process of educational organization and its reform.

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***PRACTICAL TEACHING AT THE  
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES  
– SOMETIMES, TODAY, IN THE FUTURE***

*Changes and reforms that the last few years take place in all domain of the socially residence, spread over higher education institutions, especially institution for the education of the teaching staff. The last few years these institutions intense their work on the alignment of their programs in accordance with the Bologna Declaration and the famous credit transfer system. As one of the key notes that most often indicates to the initial teacher education is the remark that refers to students practical teaching - future teachers, it's duration, implementation, fund of hours etc.*

*In this article we describe the theoretical analysis for practical teaching, it's placement in the curricula and programs of the Faculty of Education in the Republic of Macedonia, with special emphasis on the Faculty of Educational Sciences for the period from 1994 to 2014 year. We have analysed the current situation with the application of practical teaching, manners of its implementation, the forms of its organization, as well as the objectives and tasks that need to be achieved through the implementation of practical teaching. We also presented our plans, visions for her implementation in the future.*

**Keywords:** *methodical practice, pedagogical practices, teachers, students, clinical teaching*

**Abstract**

**Introduction**

*„The experience is the best teacher–Usus est optimus magister“*

### **Cicero**

Social changes that have occurred over the last few decades as a result of intensive scientific, technological and technical development have implications on the segment of education as one of the most important segments of the social life. Changes in the field of education are manifested as various innovations implemented in the educational system, creating contemporary systems of education pointed toward higher quality of education, education related to new social and technological demands, or education in step with the contemporary way of life in the modern society. Changes in the systems of education refers to the understanding of the role of knowledge, position and importance of teaching process, contents and methods of work, as well as the education of the teaching staff as one of the key points to achieve quality education and educated youth. By itself, all these are a foundation in order to achieve quality in all segments of life as a base core for further social development. All these transformations in educational systems as a reflection of social changes are reality in many European countries, in the countries from the Balkans, also including the Republic of Macedonia.

One of the key remarks noted for traditional systems of education is pointed to the initial education of future teachers, particularly the segment of practical teaching, precisely the small time allocation of practical teaching,

number of classes, forms of its realization and evaluation etc. Practice is one very important segment from the aspect of future professional work. Practice identified as “specific manner of human living is a form that differ the human from any other creature and its defined as free creative activity during which the human create and defines itself and its own world, historical act leaded by the call from the future” (Pedagogic encyclopaedia, 1989:233) or the totality of acting (lectures and practices), interaction with children, interaction with teachers, parents and surrounding - society, culture and tradition (Barbareev, K., 2010:138).

Starting from Aristotle (384-322 B.Sc.) who makes a difference between three dimensions of human acting: theory, poises and practice (praxis), defining practice as ability for moral decision based on a responsibly formulated concrete aims of social acting, issues related to practice, or practical teaching are always actual problem and subject in many discussions<sup>20</sup>. The conclusions as a result of these discussions, debates, conferences etc., are summarized in numerous documents<sup>21</sup>, used in order to improve practical teaching of future teachers. They defined practice teaching as an important

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<sup>20</sup> The Lisbon European Council in March 2006 noted that “education and society are determining factors for development of long-term capacities of European Union at the area of concurrency and social cohesion and added that is necessary to strengthen the reforms that provide high – quality systems of education which are justified and quality” (Message from the commission of the board and European parliament, Improvement of quality of education of the teachers, 2007:2)

<sup>21</sup> Improving the quality of teacher education (2007), prepared by the European commission for education that emphasize the need in certain period of study, the student to acquire practical experience in the teaching process.

precondition for successful start during the process of employment, but also as a keystone for successful professional development of the teacher. These conclusions also point out on changes that should be made in the traditional model of practical teaching at the Faculties that educate teaching staff. Considering the recommendations from educational network of European Union, continuous, life – long learning is emphasized as especially important and related to this as a very important part is emphasize the role of practical teaching and the need of integration of different forms of practical teaching in the educational process (European commission, Practical training for teaching class in the initial education of teaching staff). Related to practical teaching, the recommendations are following: practical teaching to be represented from 15% to 50% of the total number of classes in the curriculum. Most of these classes should be used for practical training and activities which will be the main work during their professional work.

Designing the current curricula at teaching faculties, special attention is devoted to practical teaching. It is based on the paradigm that the action reflection that means that student – future teacher will making a critical analyses of its own work permanently, it will permanently over list its own knowledge and experiences, permanently will explore what can be done better in a future, based on its own findings, to make a critical estimation of personal practical activity respecting the roles for objectivity, systematically and validity. This paradigm is based on one thought of Leonardo

da Vinci that every practice must be built on a good theory. Only this type of foundation will allow the student – future teacher to be a reflective practitioner, explorer on self-practice, person with own, well know professional style.

### **Current situation with realization of practical teaching at teaching faculties in Republic of Macedonia**

The analysis of the current condition for representation and realization of practical teaching at teaching faculties in the Republic of Macedonia, precisely the study programs at Faculty of Philosophy, Institute of Pedagogy at the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje, Teaching faculty in Skopje at the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius, Faculty of Philosophy at the State University in Tetovo, Teaching faculty in Bitola, University “St. Kliment Ohridski” and Faculty for Educational sciences in Shtip, University “Goce Delcev”, points out on huge diversity in realization of practical teaching between the faculties, as well as a great differences in a sense of representation of practical teaching regarding the previously mentioned recommendations. This condition is confirmed with the results from the study conducted by Barbareev , K (2010), that point out on different representation of practical teaching at the Faculties that educate teaching staff in Republic of Macedonia, respectively TF Bitola 26% representation of practical teaching in the curriculum, TF Shtip – 30%,TF Skopje - 39% and Institute of Pedagogy 28%. These data suggest on significantly lower representation of

practical teaching in Republic of Macedonia, compared with several countries from the European Union: Croatia, Slovenia and Nederland in which curricula, practical teaching is represented with 50%.

The current situation with representation of practical teaching in the Republic of Macedonia, including the Faculty of Educational Sciences in Shtip as a starting point for implementation of recommendations of European commission for education that have a tendency for greater representation of initial teaching of future teachers is a subject of many detailed analyses<sup>22</sup> realized at the curricula at all previously mentioned teaching faculties in the Republic of Macedonia. These analyses refers to manners of organization and realization of practical teaching. Conclusions from these analyses are summarized and presented in "Guidelines for realization of student's practical teaching". Summarized, the current situation in Republic of Macedonia related to practical teaching is characterized with different models and forms of realization at the faculties that educate teaching staff. This difference regards to different time allocation of practical teaching by semesters, different conceptions of programs for its realization as well as different demands and obligations toward students. Differences are

also determined regarding to criteria for selection of educational institutions in which practical teaching is realized (primary schools, kindergartens and other educational institutions) and criteria for selection of mentors (pre – school teachers and primary school teachers).

Results from the analyses of the current situation also suggest on existence of certain difficulties and problems similar to all educational institutions. These difficulties are noted as lack of clearly defined manner of collaboration between the faculties from one side and schools, kindergarten and other educational institutions from other; inconvenient conditions for realization of practical teaching, lack of financial support of the subjects (institutions, mentors) included in the total process of realization of practical teaching.

These and similar problems regarding the communication, rights, obligations and responsibilities of all subjects involved in the process of realization of practical teaching, are partly a result of lack of law legislative. Currently, in Republic of Macedonia, practical teaching is regulated with only two low acts. Therefore, creation and use of previously mentioned Guidelines for realization of practical teaching is the first step forward to improve it. In the Guidelines, problems of practical teaching are not just identified, but also it gives a clear description of all phases of practical teaching, and probably even more important, it defines the rights, obligations, responsibilities and tasks of all participants in

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<sup>22</sup> The analyses was made by the experts from Teaching faculties in Republic of Macedonia, on an initiative of department of education in the mission of OSCE, represents from Ministry of education, which share their experiences and knowledge and work at the creation of Guidelines for realization of practical teaching of students from teaching faculties. In the period during October and November 2013, this Guideline was presented to the teachers in kindergarten and primary schools in several cities in Republic of Macedonia.



the process of realization of practical teaching. The Guidelines conducted a numerous instruments as additions to improve student's practical teaching, from which, some are already implemented in the teaching process. The implementation of all these instruments was made after the presentation of the content, the structure and the function of The Guidelines in front of the teachers, students and all other subjects involved in the process of practical teaching.

### **Conception of practical teaching at the Faculty of Educational sciences in Shtip**

The Faculty of Education Sciences in Shtip is a faculty that educates teaching staff for the pre – school, primary and secondary school system. It has a several approved programs of study from which currently active are the study programs for pre – school and primary school education and the studies for history with archaeology. All these programs are designed according to the Bologna declaration and credit transfer system. During their creation, a special attention is given at the proportion between the subjects, as well as the realization of practical teaching. When speaking about the practical teaching we mean at so called clinical teaching that students should have during their entire studies according latest legislatives (gazette, 2010:2-3), realization of practical teaching according the teaching subject pedagogic practice, methodic practice which is realized as a part from certain methodic subjects as well as the pedagogic probation – compulsory for all students in the final year of study. At the Faculty of

Educational sciences, the pedagogic probation is realized during 15 working days or three weeks.

### **Why practical teaching is important for students at the Faculty of Educational sciences?**

In the new and innovated curricula at the Faculty of Educational sciences in Shtip, the realization of practical teaching is specially emphasized. This is because of its importance and the role of practical teaching as a link between the theoretical knowledge acquired during the studies and practical work or the teaching profession as a future profession with all real problems and challenges that could be overcome only by practical implementation of acquired theoretical knowledge. Particularly, for the students – future teachers, practical teaching gave an opportunity to:

- Knowledge for the role and significance of the profession teacher;
- Knowledge for physical, social and academic dimensions and activities at institutions for education;
- Relations between the theory and practice.

These means an implementation of theoretical knowledge in real educational situations above direct and indirect participation in planning, organization and realization of educational work with children, but also a participation in organization and realization of all other teaching and free – time activities.

### **Development of personal and professional competences.**

This acquisition of practical teaching is closely related with the implementation of theoretic knowledge in practice work, or previously mention link between the theory and practice. Every involvement of the students in any phase of the education process, activates their theoretic knowledge, arouse development of abilities for their creative application, developing abilities for creative and critical thinking, creation of own attitude and professional style; development of abilities for planning, organization, estimation; abilities for management with resources, space and time; acquisition of socially acceptable manners of communication.

All these point out of the importance of practical teaching in the process of creation of the student to a successful future teacher. Consequently, **the aim of practical teaching** is to direct and to help to the students to become independent during their active participation in education process. The practical teaching is realized in several phases that involve different degree of inclusion of the students in the education process. Every following phase is a continuum from the previous one in a sense of continuous increase of intensity of student's involvement in educational process, followed by a continuous increase of the level of their activity, but also and incensement of their tasks and responsibilities. But yet, placing the practical teaching in the frames of certain curricula and clearly defined legislative, still

means nothing without definition of the concrete manners for its implementation, precisely its organization and realization.

### **Realization of practical teaching at Faculty for educational sciences**

Starting from the school year 1995/1996 up to now, practical teaching at the Teaching faculty in Shtip, which in 2012 was transformed in Faculty of Educational sciences, is realized in several different phases characterized with different degree of involvement of the students in practical realization of the teaching process. With aim to determine the trend of these changes, we made an analysis of curricula at the Faculty of Educational sciences. The analyses regards to the name of the subject, its representation by semesters, weekly number of classes, the status of the subject, its verification throw exams and final grade as well as the number of ECTS. Results from the analyses are presented in Table 1. In the period from the school year 1995/1996 until 2003/2004 practical teaching at the Teaching faculty in Shtip is realized in three phases: pedagogic practice, methodic practice and pedagogic probation. According the legislative changes from 2008 (Gazette No 108), in the school year 2008/2009 so called clinical practice is established as a prior phase of pedagogic practice.

**With and during the pedagogic practice** as a first form of practical teaching in the period from 1995 to 2003 allows an implementation of theoretic knowledge through educational practice. The aim of the pedagogic practice is

students to get acquainted with complete organization of schools and kindergartens, their functioning, collaboration and interaction with local community, Bureau of Education, Ministry of Education etc. During the pedagogic practice, students are acquainted with: System of management of school and kindergarten, the work of professional organs (teaching council, class council, and professional actives, council of parents, school council etc.)

- Legislative, regulations and propositions that regulate the basic activity of the school and kindergarten, as well as the documentation related to these work;
- Planning and programing of educational work in the school;
- Following the activity and the work of the teachers, periodically assisting in their work, participation in realization of certain project activities etc.
- Observation, analyses and active participation of students in different forms of work with gifted children and children with special educational needs;
- Presence and observation of classes realized by a teacher - mentor.

In the period from 1995/96 to 2008/09 pedagogic practice is realized in the 3,4,5,6, and 7 semester, with weekly number 0+2 and there is no final exam. Starting from the 2004/2005 year of study, it brings 1 ECTS. According the changes in legislative from 2008 and establishment of clinical practice, pedagogic

practice at TF in Shtip is shortened, and it is realized in three semesters (second, third and sixth) in study year 2008/2009, consequently in two semesters (fourth and sixth) in the period from 2009/10 until today. Changes realized as a decrease of number of representation by semesters is followed with increase of number of ECTS from one to two ECTS.

As an obligation defined under law, *clinical practice* is established in 2008 as one of the phases of practical teaching. It is intended for first year students, and consequently for the students of all years of study which according the legislative (Gazette No.120/2010; Gazette No 20/2013) should spend 45 days with at least one and maximum eight hours in educational institution. Starting from the 2012/2013, at the Faculty of Education sciences, clinical practice is realized during the first four semesters. The clinical practice is realized based on a prior agreement with educational institutions according which students during these practice students are leaded by a professor – mentor, eminent expert from the practice. During this practice, all students' activities are noted in student's diary which is a consistent part of students file. Designed and realized at this way, clinical practice allows students - future teachers to:

- Familiarize with school climate, culture and the real functioning of educational institutions by knowing the structure of the management (director, vice director), acquisition with the structure and the work

- of professional teams, the work of the parents council etc.
- Acquisition with material and technical facilities of the educational institutions, organization and maintaining the safety in the schools/kindergartens;
- Acquisition with annual program of work, the forms of pedagogic documentation, forms of co – operation between the school/kindergarten and the family;
- Vision for practical realization of teaching class (articulation, teaching methods, strategies etc.)
- Familiarization with forms of planning, organization and realization of additional teaching and extracurricular activities.

Table 1. Analysis of realization of practical teaching at the Faculty of Educational sciences in the period from 1995 to 2014.

Study program	Subject name	Semestar	Number of classes	Exam/no exam	E K T S
1995/1996 2003/2004	Pedagogic practice	3,4,5,6,7	0+2	no exam	no
	Methodic practice	5-8 semester Teaching methods (methodic) from certain teaching subjects are studied in <b>four semesters</b>	3+2, 2+2	Exam	no
	Pedagogic probation	8 semester	It is realized during three weeks in May	no exam	no
2004/2005 2007/2008	Pedagogic practice	3,4,5,6,7	0+2	no exam	1
	Methodic practice	5-8 Teaching methods (methodic) from certain teaching subjects are studied in <b>four semesters</b>	3+2, 2+2	Exam	3, 4
	Pedagogic probation	8 semester	It is realized during three weeks in May	no exam	1

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<b>2008/2009</b>	Clinical practice	1,2,	45 days	no exam	
	Pedagogic practice	2,4,6	0+2	no exam	1
	Methodic practice	4-8 Teaching methods (methodic) from certain teaching subjects are studied in <b>three semesters</b>	3+2, 2+2	exam	4-6
	Pedagogic probation	8 semester	It is realized during three weeks in May	no exam	1
<b>2009/2010</b>	Clinical practice	1,2,	45 days	no exam	
	Pedagogic practice	4,6	0+2	no exam	1
	Methodic practice	4-8 Teaching methods (methodic) from certain teaching subjects are studied in <b>three semesters</b>	3+2, 2+2	exam	4-6
	Pedagogic probation	8 semester	It is realized during three weeks in May	no exam	1
<b>2010/2011</b>	Clinical practice	1,2	45 days	no exam	/
	Pedagogic practice	4,6	0+1+1	no exam	2
	Methodic practice	4-8 Teaching methods (methodic) from certain teaching subjects are studied in <b>three semesters</b>	2+2+1* *contact class+class for exercises+ class for students activity, practical teaching	exam	4-6
	Pedagogic probation	8 semester	It is realized during three weeks in May	no exam	4
<b>2011/2012</b>	Clinical practice	1,2	45 days	no exam	/
	Pedagogic practice	4,6	0+1+1	no exam	2

	Methodic practice	4-8 Teaching methods (methodic) from certain teaching subjects are studied in <b>two semesters</b>	2+2+1* * contact class+class for exercises+ class for students activity, practical teaching	exam	6-8
	Pedagogic probation	8 semester	It is realized during three weeks in May	no exam	4
<b>2012/2013</b> <b>2014/2015</b>	Clinical practice	1,2,3,4	45 days	no exam	/
	Methodic practice	4-8 Teaching methods (methodic) from certain teaching subjects are studied in <b>two semesters</b>	3+2+2 2+2+1* * contact class+class for exercises+ class for students activity, practical teaching	exam	6-8
	Pedagogic probation	8 semester	It is realized during three weeks in May  0+0+4	no exam	0

**Methodical practice** as phase of practical teaching regards to practical activities that are realized as a composed part of certain teaching subjects. At the beginning of methodic practice led by a professor mentor, students obligatory attend so-called mentor classes realized by a teacher – mentor. The aim of these classes is through real teaching situations, students to notice the specifics in realization of the classes from certain school subject in a sense of applied methods, application of concrete forms of work, realization of prescribed aims and tasks, as well as to note the

specifics that regard to the organization of the total teaching class. Student's marks from these observations are noted in specially prepared instruments for critical notes of observed classes. The aim of these notification is to prepare and to teach students on critical thinking, critical interpretation of data for organizational component of teaching process. Methodical practice also anticipates an independent realization of teaching class and educational activity by every student as a part of different methodic as a separate subject. Realization of these classes means a higher

level of independent work of the students. During the methodic practice, students are permanently directed in a sense of giving directions and suggestions by the professor mentor and the teacher mentor.

Realization of independent activities of every students means previously preparation, or writing a document for daily preparation, which is analysed, controlled, corrected and approved by a professor – mentor in coordination with the suggestions from the teacher – mentor. Practical realization of the teaching class or the education activities in the kindergarten by the student, is observed by the professor – mentor and teacher-mentor as well. They follow and evaluate students work, give suggestions and opinions for future work of the student. The documents from students practical realizations are included in student`s file and are used as one of the criteria when creating the final grade of the final exam. These requirement for obligatory realization of teaching class as a condition for presence of the final exam regards both full – time and part- time students.

All noted students activities during the methodical practice are pointed toward development of abilities and competences for independent realization of educational work as a main job from that what means to be a teacher. During the methodical practice students learn independently how to create and write preparation for class, to use contemporary interactive methods and techniques for successful realization of educational process, they learn how to teach children to learn on

different manners, considering their needs, abilities, interests and motivation; how to evaluate children` knowledge using various techniques and instruments; how to create a positive socio – emotional atmosphere in the class developing abilities to solve different problem situations; critically to analyses personal classes with aim to take conclusions for improvement of its own future work.

At the Faculty of Educational sciences, until 2008/2009 methodic practice was realized during the fifth, sixth, seventh and eight semester as a Teaching methods (Methodic) of certain teaching subjects that were studied during 4 semesters with weekly number of classes 3+2 and 2+2. They are evaluated with final grade during the final exam. In the period of 2008/09 and 2009/2010, methodic practice by separate methodic is realized in three semesters in the period from fourth to eighth semester, its` evaluated with final exam and brings 4 or 6 ECTS. The trend of decrease of representation of methodic as a curriculum subject continues and according the curriculum from 2011 they are realized in 2 semesters with weekly number of classes 2+2+1.

The last, fourth phase of practical teaching is realization of *pedagogical probation* where students are already able to realize all education activities by their own. Pedagogical probation is realized in a period of 15 working days, or three weeks in the period April/May every calendar year, or during October for part – time students. All students` activities such as documents for daily preparation, lists for critical notes for

observed classes realized by colleagues – students, or teacher - mentor are noted in specially designed notebook for pedagogic probation. During the pedagogic probation students and all their activities are coordinated by a professor - mentor for pedagogic probation. But it also means an active participation to professors from every methodic.

**Instead conclusion**

*The experience is a crude teacher: first gives us opportunity and then teaches us how we should act*

**Bernard Rasel**

**Vision for future directions of practical teaching at Faculty of Educational sciences**

- From the aspect of realization of practical teaching, our vision is some of the classes to be realized in pedagogic laboratories specially designed according the specifics of every teaching subject;
- Strengthening the collaboration between faculties of education and schools and kindergartens. These could be realized as organization of different forms of permanent, live –long education for the teaching staff (organization and realization of seminars, training courses etc.)
- Organization of workshops for all subject included in the educational process (students, teacher – mentor, professor – mentor, parents etc.)
- Increasing the number of classes for observation realized by teacher – mentor, observed by the students;
- Organization of classes for observation realized as a cooperation between teacher – mentor and students.



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***ABOUT SOME CHALLENGES IN THE PRACTICUM OF FUTURE TEACHERS AND KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS IN MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENTS***

**Abstract**

*This paper provides some suggestions for improving the practice of future teachers and kindergarten teachers for working in a multicultural environment from two aspects. One of these is in the frame of learning contents, and the second in terms of teaching strategies as a form of learning. This idea is a product of two situations. The first is related to a well-known fact that there is a gap between theory and practice. It is not uncommon to hear teachers and researchers bemoan the perceived problems associated with the theory-practice gap. From a research perspective there is a view that the complex and messy world of teaching can-not adequately be theorized by the teachers who are busy working in that world whilst, from a teacher’s perspective, there is a view that theory is not necessarily helpful in responding to the need for ideas and activities that will “work in class tomorrow”. Teacher-researchers bring to bear their expert knowledge and understanding of practice in research as they attempt to better understand their practice and its impact on their students. The second situation refers to the existing curricula. Namely, the analysis of curricula for teachers and kindergarten teachers shows that they offer a solid theoretical knowledge as a base to develop practical skills. But, this is not enough from the perspective of the multicultural environment so the suggestions in this paper are challenges in the practicum of future teachers and kindergarten teachers.*

**Keywords:** *intercultural communication skills, cooperative learning.*

### **Instead of an introduction**

The existence of a gap between theory and practice is evident anywhere, anytime, in any attempt and in any period of educational reforms. All attempts even the deepest reforms have failed to overcome this gap, at least so far. This point to the complex educational sphere. We can consider teaching complexity from different angles, even when speaking from the angle of the teachers, for example a future teacher, teacher-novice, or experienced teacher. From here, the first step is made in the direction of teacher education. Namely, teacher education is currently facing a number of tensions as pressures have come from many quarters in the last decade, with perhaps the most intense focus being on the issue of teacher quality. This call for improvement in the quality of teachers is welcomed by many, but there are inherent dangers too. Smith (Smith-Cohran, M., 2004) writes: Over the past several years, a new consensus has emerged that teacher quality is one of the most, if not the most, significant factor in students' achievement and educational improvement. In a certain sense, of course, this is good news, which simply affirms what most educators have believed for years: teachers' work is important in students' achievement and in their life chances. In another sense, however, this conclusion is problematic, even dangerous. When teacher quality is unequivocally identified as the primary factor that accounts for

differences in student learning, some policy makers and citizens may infer that individual teachers alone are responsible for the successes and failures of the educational system despite the mitigation of social and cultural contexts, support provided for teachers' ongoing development, the historical failure of the system to serve particular groups, the disparate resources devoted to education across schools and school systems, and the match or mismatch of school and community expectations and values. Influenced by the new consensus about teacher quality, some constituencies may infer that "teachers teaching better" is the panacea for disparities in school achievement and thus conclude that everybody else is off the hook for addressing the structural inequalities and differential power relations that permeate our nation's schools.<sup>23</sup>

### **Our insights and experiences - analysis of the situation**

Intending to contribute to the improvement of the practice of pre-service teachers and preschool teachers for working in a multicultural environment, we started from two aspects. One is in the frame of teaching material, and the other in terms of learning strategies as forms of learning. This idea is a product of two situations. The first is related to the well-known fact that there is a gap between theory and practice, and the second situation applies to the existing curricula. Both situations

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<sup>23</sup>Smith-Cohran, M. (2004). *Walking the Road (Race, diversity and social justice in Teacher Education)*. New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, pp.3-10

are closely linked and any separation of these two for purpose of easier study and analysis leads to partial solutions. Therefore we will try to analyse them in their unity in the text that follows. The first aspect of our analysis aimed at improving the practicum for pre-service teachers and preschool teachers for working in a multicultural environment refers to the analysis of the curricula for teachers and preschool teachers.<sup>24</sup> The analysis of existing curricula for pre-service teachers and preschool teachers shows that they offer a solid theoretical basis for developing practical skills that are aimed at bridging the theory-practice gap. Namely, study programs feature contents such as religious systems, multicultural education, inclusive education, pedagogical communication within which intercultural communication is studied. But, this is not enough from the perspective of working in multicultural environments because they have a status of elective subjects, so a future teacher and preschool teacher may or may not decide to choose them. The results of the survey we have conducted at our Faculty are interesting.<sup>25</sup> The data show that a large percentage of students (88.7%) come from multicultural backgrounds, and they chose content from multicultural education and pedagogical communication in the highest percentage (90.32%). Despite their experience as members of a multicultural

community and theoretical knowledge of multicultural education and communication based on their pedagogical preparation for their future profession, 54.83% still want to engage in activities for practicing work in a multicultural environment; the reasons for this are said to be new experience and insights about working in a multicultural environment. But we should not neglect the number of students (46.77%) who do not want, i.e. do not know, or are not sure that they need project activities for developing skills for working in a multicultural environment. These data again point to the gap between theory and practice. Previous experiences of involving teachers and students-future teachers and preschool teachers in projects involving multicultural cooperation and intercultural communication talk about certain weaknesses in the practice of future teachers and preschool teachers, from the time perspective (duration is precisely determined and limited) and from the perspective of the scope of human resources (the number of participants is limited both from the ranks of faculty staff and from among students - future teachers and preschool teachers). So we have a situation of new generations of future teachers and preschool teachers, as well as the fact that we are all members of a multicultural community, a community where we live and work. For these reasons we talk about the gap between theory and practice.

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<sup>24</sup>Study programs available at <https://www.ugd.edu.mk/index.php/mk/fakulteti/pf/pf-prv-ciklus>

<sup>25</sup>The survey was conducted in September 2014 at the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Stip and Strumica, dispersed study, which involved 62 students of third and fourth year of the two departments, elementary school and preschool education.

**How to improve the practicum for future teachers and kindergarten teachers?!**

The answer to the question of how to improve the practicum for future teachers and kindergarten teachers for working in a multicultural environment is contained in the next section of this paper. Our considerations are given in the form of proposals that we believe will be a strong challenge in the intention to improve the practicum future teachers and kindergarten teachers. The strategy of improving passes through several steps: know your culture; the ability for cultural responsibility (training to develop the ability of cultural responsibility); get to know the culture of others; the ability for intercultural communication and working in a multicultural environment. We will give a short description of each of them. The first step has already been made (which is quite evident and can be seen from the analysis of the curricula content for future teachers/kindergarten teachers, as in national history, language, educational system - organization, practice, attending educational institutions). As for the second step, it is obvious that the existing curricula do not pay enough attention to it. Because culturally responsive instruction is a term that lends itself to different interpretations (Au, 2009; Osborne, 1996), let's explain how it may be defined in the context of future teachers and kindergarten teachers. In our view, the goal of culturally responsive instruction is to promote the academic success of future teachers and kindergarten teachers of diverse backgrounds, to close the gap that typically exists between the achievement levels of these future teachers and kindergarten teachers and their mainstream

peers. Studies indicate that an achievement gap exists even at the earliest levels of schooling and that this gap only widens over the years (Au, 2007). Culturally responsive instruction is central to a pluralist vision of society in recognizing that heritage cultures have a central place in a school's curriculum in all levels. In this way, culturally responsive instruction can help future teachers and kindergarten teachers simultaneously achieve academic success while taking pride in their heritage cultures. Culturally responsive instruction is based on the idea that future teachers and kindergarten teachers of diverse backgrounds bring assets a skilful teacher can build on. Culturally responsive instruction is proposed as a way of narrowing the gap, by building on the values, knowledge, and behaviours that future teachers and kindergarten teachers of diverse backgrounds bring from the home. Culturally responsive instruction is not intended to limit future teachers and kindergarten teachers to content and learning activities they find comfortable and familiar. Rather, it involves giving children opportunities to find success in school by learning through means that are responsive to their cultural backgrounds, while at the same time introducing them to the new curriculum content and patterns of interaction needed for success in mainstream academic contexts. We know, however, that many teachers work with future teachers and kindergarten teachers from a dozen or more different cultural backgrounds. What can we do to bring culturally responsive instruction to our classrooms and later, future teachers and

kindergarten teachers in their classrooms? Part of the answer is to plan lessons that foster a classroom environment where learners are provided with common experiences and knowledge, while simultaneously inviting future teachers and kindergarten teachers to make contributions from their various heritage cultures. In this way, a shared classroom culture can evolve to include and engage all future teachers and kindergarten teachers, as everyone in the class weaves a tapestry that represents expanding views of the world. With action, enthusiastic and explore, we can take advantage of this energy and curiosity to develop culturally responsive lessons that engage future teachers and kindergarten teachers in exploring the world together with their children in their classroom. This will encourage cultural responsibility and develop abilities for this skill. As for the third step - get to know the culture of others, as already mentioned, it also exists as a part of the curricula of future teachers/kindergarten teachers. The fourth step expresses applicability of the strategy we are speaking about. In this context, our proposals are related to the application of the method of play, especially dramatization and role-play. We will not speak about the method of play and its significance here, but there is an interesting excerpt from an interview with Vivian Gussin Paley<sup>26</sup> who, working with students-future

teachers/kindergarten teachers, asked the question that led to an analysis of how boys and girls looked at each other and themselves in the kindergarten year. Someone in the colloquium with a great deal of anxiety said, "But how can we do this today, how can we examine kindergarten children the way you did, if we don't see them playing the way you did?" That is a good question. Perhaps these student teachers will discover for themselves ways to bring more play into their classrooms, and how to connect the storytelling and acting to play. Anyhow, the most important pathways to this education were found in dramatic play. Being in a place where every kind of dramatic, verbal, social, literary, and cultural idea can be played out, where words themselves can be examined by a dozen learners at once...stories all around you, observing how problems are solved by so many different kinds of everyone coming from so many different places is essential. What a rich addition this is to our students-future teachers and kindergarten teachers in this technological age. Given that there's nothing we can do about the technology overwhelming us, I prefer not to spend my time thinking about it, but rather what are the cultural opportunities available if one takes advantage of the storytelling abilities of learners. As for picture books and stories, at the moment I suggest several that can be used not only in teaching in elementary school but also in kindergartens and in the practical training of future

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<sup>26</sup> Vivian Gussin Paley writes and teaches about the world of young children. She examines their stories and play, their logic and their thinking, searching for meaning in the social and moral landscapes of classroom life. A kindergarten teacher for 37 years, Mrs. Paley brings her storytelling/story acting and discussion techniques to children, teachers, and parents throughout the world. Her books include *The Kindness of Children* (Harvard

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University Press, 1999), *In Mrs. Tully's Room* (Harvard University Press, 2001), *A Child's Work* (University of Chicago Press, 2004), and *The Boy on the Beach* (University of Chicago Press, 2010).

teachers/kindergarten teachers, such as: How did/didn't Friday complete his obligations?; The Story of Otto, Otto, and Otto; The Magic Comet; Goalkeeper Risko; Friday's Band.<sup>27</sup> The second proposition is related to place-based education. Place-based education is a key to culturally responsive curriculum and entails strategies that can be used by teachers in diverse, multi-ethnic classroom settings. Developing a sense of place is a way to awaken learner's reflections of personal identity and connections to the environment, both natural and man-made. It gives learners the opportunity to investigate their potential and who they can be in the inclusive global world that surrounds them. They can begin to discover more about the importance of their culture and cultures through history with a respect for their own education and the future of their people. Also, revitalizing the culture creates new learning opportunities for families as well as their young children. They can share common experiences and access new knowledge linked to their ancestors and their history. They can redefine and reconnect with their sense of place on their land in their culture today. A basic cultural link is easily enhanced in content areas utilizing real artefacts or materials. In all cultural areas around the world, natural materials still link people with the land across time. The third proposition is related to working with literature. Literature from a heritage culture can also be a way of introducing an inquiry in a culturally responsive manner. With guidance from a

cultural archivist and educator, a teacher experimented with using a historic chant to highlight examples of natural sources of water in the children's environment, for example. The chant provided a culturally responsive introduction to a science unit on the water cycle from a native perspective. The children were excited to discover that they drank water from the same sources as their ancestors. They identified sources where water could be found in the world of their ancestors, soon realizing that their ancestors were keen observers of their environment and practiced natural scientists. Children then considered sources of water in the present environment. They experimented with the water cycle and used modern resources, such as videos and brochures from the local water supply board, to find out more about what they could do to maintain an ample supply of water, as well as good water quality, in their home. The proposal we offer, called working with literature, is in service of learning through projects where collaboration among learners is encouraged by research, encouraging activity, and being in the spirit of constructivism and holistic approach to learning. If these suggestions become practice in the curriculum of future teachers/kindergarten teachers, we think that they will find application in their professional work.

### **Instead of a conclusion**

In literature several approaches to the training of future teachers can be found, which mainly differ in critical dissonance and collaborative

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<sup>27</sup> Picture books are available on <http://www.sitesmeednakvi.org.mk/sub/3>

resonance. The first with the tendency to bolster utilitarian perspectives on teaching and ultimately to perpetuate existing practices, and the second with cooperative resonance and intensification of joint work for learning communities. However, the essential purpose of preparing future teachers is to think and work critically, which includes liberal education, and flexible strategies aimed at improving their practicum. Indeed, the preparation of future teachers and educators is a process of continuous learning and change, a process that brings together different ideas, thoughts and experiences, a process of collaboration and togetherness.

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***THE INFLUENCE OF PLANNING THE  
FORMATIVE EVALUATION IN THE  
SUCCESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF  
STUDENTS***

**Abstract**

*Since the process of teaching and learning is a dynamic one, it is necessary to have a continuous checking and assessing, and it is done very carefully from the teacher. The teacher has to put some targets in the beginning that he/she should fulfil. These targets are about what students should learn, these are the aims of the lessons. Only in this way we can contribute in the education for a regularity in the performance of duties, and will assure that the teacher has done successfully the process of evaluation of students. This way of acting influences in a qualitative way in students' engagement and activity. By this, teacher with plan, realize and assess its teaching job. In this way grading would be more real, and it would be based on the individuality of each student. This way of assessing would also prompt a positive sense to student's work, and help them to get a better success. So the aim of the research was to ascertain how the planning formative assessment affects on improving teacher's success and in students' achievements. Based on this purpose, and on the complexity of the problem posed above, we defined to use a questionnaire for teachers as a technique. Subsequently were posed 120 teachers from elementary schools.*

**Keywords:** *planning, formative assessment, success, achievements, student.*

## Introduction

One of the requirements of modern education that is also a case of debate with which we are faced every day in pedagogical practice and in the successful realization of the learning process is to control and evaluate the knowledge and the achievement of the students. Checking and assessing of knowledge have two functions: *educative* and *instructive*. In other words, when grading and assessing is done in a continuous and in the right way, it cannot accomplish its educative function, but even that instructive function. (Osmani, 2007, p.61) In this way they can contribute to the regularity of the teaching process.

Notifying and assessing are deep and delicate psychological processes. It is not enough to aim a good explanation, if we want to achieve the success wanted in teaching and learning process. We should use methods, instruments and the right educational principles, with the only purpose to stimulate students' work. But in the same time it is needed the responsibility and the seriousness of the teacher during the notification, checking and assessing. It is needed his/her objectivity, transparency and being fair during the grading of students' achievements, abilities, knowledge and their success. (Berisha, 1995, p.138)

During the evaluation we have to focus on students abilities, given work and the achieved success. In this way grading would be more realistic, and it would be based on the individuality of each student. This way of assessing would also prompt a positive sense to

student's work, and help them to get a better success.

Using the assessments for the improvement of quality of teaching depends primarily on teachers and their behaviour. Teachers should get acquainted with the assessment instruments, results of assessment and develop teaching methodologies that would lead to improvement of quality of teaching.

Precisely this was the reason that we wanted to investigate and prove. So the aim of the research was to ascertain how the teacher's planning of the formative assessment affects on improving teacher's success and the student's creativity and motivation, and also in the objective assessment of students' achievements.

## The importance of planning the formative evaluation in teaching and learning process

According McManus (2008)<sup>28</sup>: „Formative assessment is a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of intended instructional outcomes. Increasing numbers of educators regard formative assessment as a way not only to improve student learning, but also to increase student scores on significant achievement

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<sup>28</sup> McManus, S. (2008). *Attributes of Effective Formative Assessment - Paper prepared for the Formative Assessment for Teachers and Students (FAST) - State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS) of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)*. Washington, DS: The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), pg.3

<http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/accountability/educators/fastattributes04081.pdf>

examinations.“ *Formative assessing* is done through the process of teaching. Its purpose is to gather information and to give efficient information over teaching and learning, in order to make these processes more successful. (Osmani, 2010, p.50)

In many studies and research done before, it is proved that students' success is improved when the teachers have applied an effective strategy like formative grading. This means that assessing by planning it before, and making everything in a continuous and systematic way, is done to prevent the eventual failure of the students. This way of acting influences in a qualitative way in students' engagement and activity. This way the teacher will realize and assess its teaching with a plan. The teacher has to put some targets in the beginning that he/she should fulfil. These targets are about what students should learn, these are the aims of the lessons. (Вилотијевић, 1999, p.57) This way, we can get to the conclusion that information, checking and assessing has a very important function in progressing and in fruitful work of education. Assessing, as an important part of this system, should be present in each step of schoolwork.

Formative assessment includes diagnosis of prior knowledge; setting and following goals,

and evaluating the results. Planning takes place at the beginning of every new unit, when goals are set. The starting point is the question: *What do I already know? And What don't I know? Or What do I want to learn?* The first question helps the teacher to find out the strengths and prior knowledge of each student and the second question identifies the weakest areas. Teachers set goals jointly with the class. Goals are also adjusted and changed to meet the needs of individual students. (Peršolja & Burdenski, 2010, pg.45).

The process of monitoring and assessing the students' achievement should be conducted in a systematic and planned manner. Only in this way, can we contribute in the education for regularity in the performance of duties, and will assure that the teacher has done successfully and in an adequate way the process of evaluation of students. In the same time he/she has provided data about the development and the progress of his/her students. The evaluation done this way would affect positively in the students' engagement and activity. This way the teacher will realize and assess its teaching with a plan. But it is important to know, how much do they believe that this way of working is. Their opinion over this is shown in *table no.1* given below:

**Table no.1. The importance of planning the formative evaluation in teaching and learning process**

<i>How much importance do you give to the planning formative evaluation in teaching and learning process?</i>		<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>a)</b>	<b>Very much</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>b)</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>c)</b>	<b>Little</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>ç)</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Totally:</b>		<b>120</b>	<b>100 %</b>

From *table no.1* we can see the results that most of teachers' give priority and precedence to the checking and assessing by plan and in a continuous and systematic way. 75% of them think this way. Meanwhile, a small number of teachers that were asked, only 5%, declared that they give little importance to this way of checking and assessing, and the others approximately 20% give medium importance to it. None of the teachers that took part in this study accept that they do not practice in part and do not give importance to this type of evaluation.

From the obtained results, we have come to a conclusion that the teachers get motivated and encouraged during the realization of the

learning process, and also they will control and assess the students' knowledge and the achievements in a continuous and systematic way and with a plan are going to realize and assess its teaching job.

### **Conclusions**

Assessing, as an important part of the process of teaching, should be present in each step of schoolwork. Evaluation of the teaching activities, in the right time, can help us to get information about the results that students achieve and the teachers' work over time. This information, that we can get through the evaluation system, give us an overview about the quality of teaching and the results that students achieve. This can help us to obtain the

efficiency and well function of students' assessment. From this, we can conclude that assessing of knowledge and achievements is one of the most important problems that we face everyday in pedagogical practices.

Because the formative assessment process helps students achieve intended learning outcomes based on explicit learning progressions, teachers must first identify and then communicate the instructional goal to students. Teachers must provide the criteria by which learning will be assessed so that students will know whether they are successfully progressing toward the goal.

Sharing learning goals and criteria for success with students, supporting students as they monitor and take responsibility for their own learning, helping students to provide constructive feedback to each other, and involving students in decisions about how to move learning forward are illustrations of students and teachers working together in the teaching and learning process.<sup>29</sup> In that way of teaching and assessment, the teachers miss the creativity and engagement of students in the process of learning, which enable them taking responsibility for their own progress, work, learning and knowledge. Teachers should get

acquainted with the assessment instruments, results of assessment and develop teaching methodologies that would lead to improvement of quality of teaching.

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***THE IMPACT OF STUDENT'S PERSONAL  
PHILOSOPHY ON THE EFFECTIVE  
PRACTICE OF TEACHING IN  
MULTICULTURAL CLASSROOMS***

**Abstract**

*A central aim of this paper is to expand the range of educational perspectives regarding the formation of an individual belief system among the students, which will help them to grow and develop as unique individuals and professionals. The students build own attitudes and values in all their activities during the studying. It refers to the practice teaching also, especially if it is organized in multicultural classroom. The personal philosophy of each student should emphasize the encouragement of critical thinking, the openness of mind, the strengthening cultural consciousness, the preventing prejudice and discrimination and so on. It is wrong to regard some occupations as more important as such than others, but the teachers' profession requires more reconsidering and more introspectiveness than other professions. Exclusively is important, the future teachers to acquire knowledge about how to act, not only as a specialists in the educational field, but as citizens of a given society. The teacher should define certain mode of being that will serve as his moral goal, and this requires him to act upon himself, to monitor, test, improve and transform himself. In this point appears in sight the big picture of teacher's power and accountability.*

**Keywords:** *students, values, attitudes, practice teaching, multicultural perspectives*

## 1. Introduction

Pedagogy-education-praxis: this is the trilogy, which is cognizable in every educational system. The high expectations regarding teacher education are nothing new. Drawing upon Aristotelian conceptions of episteme and phronesis, that is the ability to act wisely based upon self-understanding, and praxis, with its focus on moral and ethical choice, the case is made for the boundaries between these to be so porous that they can be said to have dissolved (Groundwater-Smith, 2011). It is closely linked with the term "practice" which is used as more technical and instrumental concept compared to the term "praxis" which is regarded as the broader, more philosophical concept. In pedagogy the "theory" isn't categorically different from the "practice". According to some educational experts, pedagogy is not a theory "about" practice, it is a theory "in" practice (Lövlie, 1984).

A professional teacher today is required to demonstrate an increasingly large repertoire of personal as well as professional qualities. Teaching practice which is related to effective classroom learning has many aspects such as: well structured - lessons, student outcomes, supportive classroom climate, and individualized instruction. At the same time, teachers' professional knowledge and actual practices may differ not only among countries but also among teachers within a country. To gain an understanding of the prevalence of certain beliefs and attitudes related to the characteristics of the teaching practice

important is to emphasize the impact of teachers' (i.e. students') personal philosophy. Teacher beliefs, practices and attitudes are important for improving educational process. Because of that, the general component of teacher education has a personality-cultivating dimension.

## 2. The Macedonian Practice in Teacher Education: A Brief Overview

The future of each country depends on its teachers. Making improvements in teacher education is the most important task of each national educational policy. The first step in this direction is designing teacher education curricula. The second, how the curricula are implemented in teaching practice. Therefore, the main principle of the teacher training in many countries is that practice should start as early as possible and support student teachers' growth towards expertise. Simultaneously, research shows that too few teacher preparation programs offer the type of accurate, practical experience that prepares future teachers for the realities of today's educational challenges.

The goal of practice in teacher education is to maintain a balance between the theoretical and fundamental content of the curricula and the development of practical skills. The Macedonian educational system intends the practical training of future teachers. According to it, students should be introduced to the school placements during the first term in teacher education. Further on, teaching practice resembles a spiral process which continues throughout the studies moving towards the full



teaching qualification. The teaching practice is realized at training schools. Nonetheless, as in many South European and East European countries (Vašutová and Spilková, 2011), the Higher Education Act does not include the institution of the training school, the so-called faculty school. That is why close collaboration is based on the faculties' initiative and bilateral institutional agreement between the faculty and the school without the existence of a higher legislative anchorage. In these conditions, supervising teachers are not specially trained for their mentors' activity either, but they are willing to work with students.

The need for expert guidelines in conducting of practical training for future teachers and pedagogues were recognized by the faculties of education (in Skopje, Bitola and Stip) as well as by the faculties of philosophy (in Skopje and Tetovo). In this regard, the Department of Education at the OSCE Mission to Skopje took initiative to conduct research on the rules, regulations and practices of the faculties of education related to student practice in schools. The survey included experiences from several countries that have a long tradition in the educating of future teachers. It was one of the main tools through which nine experts engaged by the Department of Education at the OSCE Mission to Skopje developed the guidelines for the practical teaching of future teachers and pedagogues, with special attention on the multi-ethnic character of the Macedonian schools. The main purpose of the Guidelines was to make unification of the different institutional experiences regarding the practice in teacher

education. In order to guide the practical instruction for all stakeholders (students, university professors, elementary school teachers i.e. mentors et cetera) involved in this process, the document contributed to improving of the practice in teacher education on national level.

### **3. The Impact of Student's Personal Philosophy on the Effective Practice Teaching in Multicultural Classroom**

*If you work with children, you cannot not be a character educator.*

***Marvin Berkowitz***

Although the practicum has a long tradition in teacher education, the fluidity of social, cultural and political practices may not have been sufficiently addressed in practicum process. Recent changes in those attracted to teaching as well as changes in the purpose of education, the culture of schools, classroom dynamics and our understanding of young people and how their learning is constructed, have resulted in new expectations of the work of the teachers (Rorrison, 2011).

What is relationship between the student's personal philosophy and the practice teaching in multicultural classroom? Education should contribute to enlightenment in a broad sense. The ideas, filtered through our sense of the world, orient our thinking and produce intrinsic satisfactions. Teachers' work is basically a moral as well as intellectual endeavour. From there, in teacher education should be

emphasized the importance of students "struggling" with moral issues. The future teachers who aim to enhance their competencies to work in multicultural environments must not only recognize what they are doing but also must understand the origins and effects of their beliefs that influence their work. So many situations may test ethics and personal philosophy in practical teaching. The teachers possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. He (or she) can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration, can humiliate or exalt, hurt or heal. In all situations the teacher has a power over the children to humanize them or de-humanize (Machado and Botnarescue, 2010). Consistent with this, the many forms of philosophical support provide the students with a broad view of the nature and purpose of teaching and schooling.

The students' practice in schools has the most important role in teaching qualification. In this sense, the personal philosophy enhances students' knowledge and skills to attain the objectives of the practice teaching: to recognize and respect the unique qualities, abilities, and potential of each child, to appreciate the vulnerability of children and their dependence on adults, to create and maintain safe and healthy settings that foster children's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development and that respect their dignity and their contributions, to ensure that each child's culture, language, ethnicity, and family structure are recognized and valued in the school.

The formation of an individual belief system among the students appears as a source of numerous communication skills that are particular useful in the classroom functioning. Developing effective communication is a challenging but vital step in building functional relationships in the classroom. The future teachers should communicate with children by clarity, facilitative questioning, active listening, understanding, saying encouraging words to all pupils. In this way, the multicultural classroom will radiate emotional warmth. Then, among the children can appear reciprocity in both respect and academic engagement: the children who had previously been totally uninvolved in classrooms activities, silent and disinterested can show a complete turnaround: their interest levels, attendance, and achievement can be increased significantly. The systematic application of praise and attention may be the most powerful motivational and classroom management tool available to teachers (Landrum and Kauffman, 2011).

As an analogy, we use our knowledge of the nature of language in order to help teachers in using language and in fostering the literacy of the children in the classroom. Similarly, in teacher education, we can draw upon our understanding of the educational philosophy to help students in acquiring own personal philosophy which will reflect their attitudes and beliefs in the practice teaching (Sanger, Osguthorpe and Fenstermacher, 2013). Nurturing a shared, explicit philosophical stance among the teacher candidates that

attends to what it means to be a just and wise teacher takes time, efforts, and commitment.

### **3.1 Students' opinion regarding the impact of personal philosophy on the effective practice teaching in multicultural classroom**

In order to acquire information about students' opinion regarding the impact of personal philosophy on the effective practice teaching in multicultural classroom, at the Faculty of Education in Bitola was realized the following research:

#### **3.1.2 Methodology**

The aim of the research was to investigate the opinion of the students regarding the impact of personal philosophy on the effective practice teaching in multicultural classroom. The sample included 10 students (3 male, 7 female). It was selected such sample because this group of students already had some experiences in teaching practice in multicultural environment. Data collection took place from October 27 through November 14 of 2014. The students – future teachers, had to answer on the following question: "How you can provide equitable learning opportunities for your students"? The response should have been in the form of an essay.

#### **3.1.3 Findings**

After data analysing, we found that students' achievement is closely linked with building awareness for positive influence of personal philosophy upon the exceeding of the

prejudices and bias toward other ethnicities. The tolerance was actually defined by summing the prejudices measures and reversing the score. The prejudices measures were negatively correlated with the students' achievement, indicating that higher levels of prejudices are more likely to be found in the students who evidence lower levels of achievement. At the same time, a moderate positive correlation found between tolerance and students' achievement indicates that higher levels of tolerance are more likely to be found in the students with higher levels of achievement.

The student's achievement in the broader sense involves whole persons and all their learning capacities including those regarding philosophical and moral aspects of the learning.

According to opinion of the participants in the research (the five most frequent answers), if the teacher wants to provide equitable learning opportunities for his students should demonstrate:

- knowledge of the democratic values
- moral-reasoning maturity and responsibility
- self-awareness and capacity for empathy
- acceptance and respect of ethnic and cultural diversity
- conflict-resolution skills

Learning to teach is a very personal process. The student teacher has opportunity to bring his own unique style in the classroom which will differ from those of others. According to some researchers (Perry, 2013), teaching practice will

increase the awareness among future teachers for their strengths and weaknesses in meeting personal challenges. In the process of learning to teach they will begin to use the personal philosophy, i.e. own beliefs and values that will guide their actions and decisions making. The teachers have many different reasons for acting and responding in the way they do in particular situations. These reasons may relate to beliefs and assumptions about learning and teaching, understandings of children or situations based on specialized knowledge, obligations to meet syllabus requirements and professional responsibilities (Perry, 2013, p. 15.)

Teaching depends, fundamentally, on the quality of relationships among individuals. When teachers strive to engage students in a discussion or an activity, their interactions with them speak volumes about extent to which they value students as adults (Danielson, 2011, p. 64). In classroom with a strong culture for learning, everyone, including the teacher, is engage in pursuit of values. Such classroom is characterized by high energy and by sense that what is happening there is very important.

#### **4. Conclusion**

There are many skills in teaching that, when combined, form an important base from which initial teaching competence may be derived. Most of these skills required refinement and development over time. Therefore, as teachers, we need to make a conscious effort to pay attention to these skills to ensure that what we think we do in our practice is in accord with what we actually do, and that is not a simple

task (Loughran, 2011). In this context, we cannot bypass the influence of the personal philosophy and the individual belief system of the teachers.

Simultaneously, to think that we can live and work in homogeneous cultural environments is unrealistic. In light of the present and future realities of our social and cultural circumstances, the need to prepare students to competently live and function in a multicultural environment becomes an essential aspect of the educational curriculum at a national level. For that, we need teachers who are culturally competent to educate and equip the diverse populations in our school system. The classroom practice, with concentration on culturally specific issues is a natural place of multiculturalism. Because of that, the authentic creators of progress in education are, and always will be, honest teachers.

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***PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION IN THE CURRICULUM OF STUDY PROGRAMS AT THE FACULTY OF PEDAGOGY “ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI”***

**Abstract**

*Practical instruction has an important place in the realization of the competencies and qualifications in the initial education of future preschool and elementary school teachers. In recent years, especially with the Bologna process concerning the initial education, special emphasis is placed on the model of education of teachers, who will be competent to work with others, use the knowledge to collaborate with society and who will be in service of society. In this context, the pedagogical practice, which is based on the relation between the faculty and the schools, kindergartens or other educational institutions, with trained mentors, adequately organized practice and analyses of the experiences coming from the practice, can significantly contribute for the development of the competencies of the teachers. The practice, carried out in this way, enables the students to acquire professional teaching competencies, analyse their preparedness to engage in this profession, get introduced to the activities of the institutions and develop the primary professional skills related to the planning, realization and evaluation of the instructional process and other professional roles.*

*For these reasons, in this paper we will analyse the pedagogical practice in the curriculum of*

*the study programs at the Faculty of Pedagogy "St. Kliment Ohridski" - Skopje, as well as the way in which it is realized. We will also analyse the practical education of the future elementary teachers from the beginnings of the Academy of Pedagogy, the foundation of the Faculty, the changes that occurred as a result of the introduction of the Bologna process, as well as the passing of the Law for practical instruction by the Ministry of Education. We will also present the objectives of the practical education, the number of classes, and organization. We will compare these experiences with the realization of the practical instruction with the application of the Manual for realization of practical instruction by the students from the teacher training faculties.*

**Keywords:** *practical education, objectives of the practical education, organization.*

### **Importance of the practical instruction**

The core of the professional competencies of the future elementary teachers in initial education is developed through the realization of practical instruction classes. In terms of better organization of initial education, defining the competencies of profiles, as well as determining the needs of instructional activity, many researches confirm the importance of practical instruction for the curriculum of future teachers. The introduction of the Bologna process and ECTS encouraged new researches in the area of the education of teachers, which

confirm the importance of these profiles for the quality of education reforms in a society.

The analysis of key competences has shown that in many European countries, with some peculiarities, the teacher training includes the following elements: academic and educational sciences, content from the methodologies of the given subjects and school practice. (Green paper on teacher education in Europe, 2000, Teacher Education in Europe: An ETUCE Policy Paper, 2008 Tuning project, 2009). In this context, the thorough or general education of the preschool and elementary school teachers includes acquiring academic knowledge about nature, society, technology, communication, informatics, mother language, etc. The pedagogical-psychological and didactic-methodological education refers to the acquisition of knowledge and development of skills from the areas of pedagogy, psychology, didactics and methodology of particular school subjects. The pedagogical practice is realized by experts in schools and kindergartens in order to promote the development of practical skills and knowledge.

The purpose of the changes in the education of preschool and elementary school teachers lies in the professionalization of the professions, which includes building a wide base of scientific knowledge about the processes of learning, teaching and research methodology, as well as empirically verified procedures, which encourage the processes of learning and teaching. In this way, the teachers will be able to act independently and competently, as

critically oriented intellectuals in the interest of their students, in accordance to the ethic rules of their profession.

Initial education has the primary role in the forming of the future teachers. They will be open to innovation and critically orientated towards their experience, thus they will be able to connect the practical experience and the acquired theoretical knowledge. The future teachers should practice the critical-reflective skills both in the instructional practice, as well as in the study of the relation between the theory and practice. All this is necessary for them to get a clear perspective of their professional development.

Many empirical researches show that in the stage of the initial education of the teachers, educational sciences are not sufficiently integrated with the practical instruction. This fragmentation does not allow application of the theoretical knowledge in the planning and realization of the instructional activities. The students rarely use the theoretically described and elaborated pedagogical situations in their practical instruction. Even when they make use of the pedagogical, psychological or didactic knowledge, they rarely use two or more alternative theories.

In order to provide a better connection between theory and practice in modern pedagogical theories, 3 aspects of the initial education of the teachers are emphasized: metacultural (development of knowledge), experience (development of skills) and reflexive (acquiring experience). According to this, the teacher

training studies with this treatment of knowledge and experience must enable the development of the abilities for reflective and critical thinking in the students. Neither experience nor theory are sufficient on their own. They need to be connected in the interpretation of a concrete education experience. The subject of education is not theory as a final form, but a process of forming of theory.

### **Organization of the pedagogical practice at the Faculty of Pedagogy “St. Kliment Ohridski” - Skopje**

The Faculty of Pedagogy “St. Kliment Ohridski” is one of the institutions in the Republic of Macedonia, where a process of initial training of preschool and elementary school teachers takes place. On the basis of a pedagogical and scientific tradition that lasts for many years, including the period of work of the School of Pedagogy and the Academy of Pedagogy, the Faculty develops this tradition and is actively engaged in the process of training the teaching staff.

The data referring to the presence of the pedagogical practice in the programs for education of the future teachers at the Academy of Pedagogy confirms the importance of the pedagogical practice in the programs. The method of a model school and a kindergarten, where education activities took place, was also used.

A great deal in the realization of the unity of the theoretical education and the practical work at



the Academy of Pedagogy has been done through pedagogical-methodological practice of the students. This practice was present with more than 30% of the overall engagement of the students in their training. (Academy of Pedagogy Kliment Ohridski Skopje 1947-1972, p.17).

Having in mind these experiences concerning the study programs at the Faculty of Pedagogy, the pedagogical practice has a place in the new curricula as well. Starting from the founding of the Faculty in 1996, the pedagogical practice has been carried out through the practice classes of some specialized and very specific subjects, as well as the pedagogical internship. The department of Elementary education conducts it through realization of 34 methodological practice classes, 16 pedagogical practice

classes, as well as a pedagogical internship of 15 days. The department of Preschool education conducts it through realization of 32 methodological practice classes, 16 pedagogical practice classes, as well as a pedagogical internship of 15 days.

The introduction of ECTS in university education is of great importance for the application of the practice, with which it receives greater importance in the curricula of this faculty. For this purpose, we will present the coverage of the pedagogical practice in the curriculum of the Faculty of Pedagogy starting from the introduction of ECTS until the last changes in the study programs, which began in 2013/14, in the following tables.

*Organization of the pedagogical practice at the Faculty of Pedagogy “St. Kliment Ohridski” – Skopje*

Elementary education

School year	Semester	Classes per week	Classes per semester	Total number of classes	% of classes
2004/05  Pedagogical practice	III	2	30	150	4,33%
	IV	2	30		
	V	2	30		
	VI	2	30		
	VII	2	30		

Methodological practice	V	5	75	550	15,87%
	VI	7	105		
	VII	12	180		
	VIII	14	195		
Pedagogical internship			75		2,16%
<b>School year 2010/11</b>	<b>Semester</b>	<b>Classes per week</b>	<b>Classes per semester</b>	<b>Total number of classes</b>	<b>% of classes</b>
Pedagogical practice	I	2	30	120	3,26%
	II	2	30		
	III	2	30		
	IV	2	30		
Methodological practice	V	6	90	240	6,51%
	VI	6	90		
	VII	3	45		
	VIII	1	15		
Pedagogical internship			45		1,22%
<b>School year 2013/14</b>	<b>Semester</b>	<b>Classes per week</b>	<b>Classes per semester</b>	<b>Total number of classes</b>	<b>% of classes</b>
Pedagogical practice	I	1	15	45	1,25%
	II	1	15		

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	III	1	15		
Methodological practice	IV	1	15	195	5,45%
	V	1	15		
	VI	5	75		
	VII	4	60		
	VIII	2	30		
Pedagogical internship	VIII	4	60		1,67%

Preschool education

School year 2004/05	Semester	Classes per week	Classes per semester	Total number of classes	% of classes
Pedagogical practice	III	2	30	150	4,36%
	IV	2	30		
	V	2	30		
	VI	2	30		
	VII	2	30		
Methodological practice	V	4	60	600	17,44%
	VI	12	180		
	VII	12	180		
	VIII	12	180		

Pedagogical internship				75	2,18%
<b>School year 2010/11</b>	<b>Semester</b>	<b>Classes per week</b>	<b>Classes per semester</b>	<b>Total number of classes</b>	<b>% of classes</b>
Pedagogical practice	I	2	30	120/3285	3,65%
	II	2	30		
	III	2	30		
	IV	2	30		
Methodological practice	V	6	90	240/3285	7,31%
	VI	6	90		
	VII	3	45		
	VIII	1	15		
Pedagogical internship				45	1,37%
<b>School year 2013/14</b>	<b>Semester</b>	<b>Classes per week</b>	<b>Classes per semester</b>	<b>Total number of classes</b>	<b>% of classes</b>
Pedagogical practice	I	1	15	60	1,67%
	II	1	15		
	III	1	15		
	IV	1	15		
Methodological practice	IV	1	15	195	5,42%
	V	2	30		

	VI	2	30		
	VII	4	60		
	VIII	3	45		
Pedagogical internship	VIII	4	60		1,67%

The tables show that the introduction of ECTS gives the pedagogical practice a special place in the curricula of the Faculty of Pedagogy in both study programs. The adjustments of the programs in the school years 2010/11 and 2013/14 resulted with changing the number of classes, where we may notice a tendency of decreasing the number of classes and their percentile coverage. Namely, the tables allow us to see that the pedagogical practice, in both study programs, apart from the adjustments of the Statutes, still maintains the way of organization, in the following form: teaching observation in the schools and kindergartens within the practical classes of the different methodologies, pedagogical practice and pedagogical internship. The dynamic is different in the different semesters, beginning with the first, i.e. the third semester and lasting until the eighth semester. The pedagogical practice starts in the third semester, and beginning with the school year 2013/14, it starts in the first semester, the methodological teaching observation begins in the fifth semester and lasts until the eighth semester, and beginning with the school year 2013/14 in the fourth semester. Unlike the teaching

observation and the practice, the pedagogical internship is always carried out in the last semester, its duration varies. The table shows that the coverage of the practical instruction in the initial training of the future teachers has a tendency to decrease. Regardless of the existing differences, it is carried out within the three mentioned forms, however with improved organization and goals, which are more specifically defined. The pedagogical practice is initially carried out in the institution where the students are being trained, and later in the corresponding educational institutions, the schools and kindergartens, where the students observe the educational process and complete a protocol for observing the activities. The methodological teaching observation is carried out for every methodology separately, and the students have to observe the instructional process, and later carry out instruction themselves. With the pedagogical internship, the students have the opportunity to put their knowledge into practice. The internship is carried out in the schools and kindergartens, where, after observing the instruction of their mentors, the students get the opportunity to plan, organize and carry out instruction. The

methodological teaching observation is carried out under the guidance of the methodology professor. The pedagogical internship is organized by the professor in charge, and the entire teaching staff at the faculty is included into the monitoring of the realization of the internship. Beginning with the school year 2013/14, by using the Manual for realization of practical instruction by the students from the teacher training faculties from our faculty, the organization of the pedagogical internship gained a new dimension. The students are referred to practice at the request of the faculty in order to observe instruction and get familiar with the work of the schools and kindergartens. It includes all the professors from the faculty, who are in charge of a group of 4 or 5 students, and each group has a mentor - teacher at the school or kindergarten. The mentors are chosen from the model schools and kindergartens who collaborate with the faculty, based on certain criteria. During the practice, the students have to take notes about the work, they fill out several protocols, which are checked by the mentoring teacher. The mentors also evaluate the activity before the realized lessons of the students, and present their opinions in the final report. The student submits the overall documentation to the professor mentor, who gives a final mark for the level of success of the realization of the practical instruction.

The use of the Manual for realization of practical instruction gives better opportunities for developing the critical-reflective skills of the educational practice and the possibilities to look into the relation between the theory and

practice of the future teachers. All this allows us to get a clearer image about one's own professional development.

### **Competencies for the profiles graduated elementary school teacher and preschool education teacher**

The pedagogical practice is an integral part of the initial education of the future school and preschool teachers. Its purpose is to connect the theoretical knowledge, acquired during the studies, with the direct experience gained during the practical instruction. The basic purpose of this practice is to enable the students to gain professional competencies specific for separate teaching subjects and areas. The curriculum at the Faculty of Pedagogy includes the following competencies:

- They are able to choose and apply modern pedagogical ideas and theories according to the educational needs
- They know and understand the organizing educational cycles and their compatibility with the developing competencies
- They have skills which allow them to use modern educational technologies in the instructional process
- They understand and use terminology characteristic of the school education
- They have skills which allow them to locate and solve the ongoing educational problems

- They know and understand the content of the instructional subjects and they have the required skills for their creative use
- They understand and apply the forms, methods, principles and tools of the instructional subject, i.e. areas
- They are able to integrate and connect the educational content from different subject areas in an interdisciplinary way
- They are able to encourage and organize research and other types of active learning methods with the school-age children
- They are familiar with the developing characteristics of the children and respect the individual characteristics of each child
- They are able to train the students to work and learn independently
- They are able to develop mechanisms for group life and work
- They are able to develop collaborative learning (group work) and collaboration among the students
- They are familiar with and apply modern models, skills and techniques for management of the class, i.e. group
- They are able to individualize the instruction according to the needs and abilities of the students
- They are able to monitor, evaluate and record the achievements of the students
- They are able to create a stimulating environment for learning and collaboration in the classroom
- They are able to develop positive socio-emotional climate in the class, group
- They are able to choose and use content and activities which encourage the aesthetic and ethical experiences of the students, children
- They are able to maintain and improve the psychophysical health of the school and preschool age children.

### **Conclusion**

The professional competencies of the elementary school or preschool teacher are developed during a long process in which the initial education plays a significant role. As a result of this, it is necessary to maintain balance and interaction in the professional, academic, pedagogical-psychological, didactic-methodological and practical qualifications. The professional competence does not imply that the future teachers can imitate the already seen models, but their ability to interpret the context of action, apply the acquired knowledge, skills and abilities. The organization of the practical instruction takes the most important position regarding the level of success of relating the theoretical and practical education. The analysis of the curriculum of the Faculty of Pedagogy allows us to conclude that it is not sufficient to only include practice with a high percentage of classes during the studies, but it is also necessary to include practice which is organized, with defined goals, and determined competencies, which will produce a successful reflective teacher in practice.

The pedagogical practice in the curriculum of the Faculty of Pedagogy is devised well,

however it has several weak spots. The first problem is the lack of cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the Bureau for Development of Education, which would regulate the financial and legislative determining of the mentor – teacher. Hence, the important matter of assigning quality mentors, who will be interested and motivated for the job, who are trained for carrying out organized and quality pedagogical practice. There is need for quality evaluation, supervision and monitoring of the process of relating the theoretical knowledge and the practical experiences. In this direction, the use of the Manual for realization of practical instruction by the students from the teacher training faculties is very important.

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**THEMATIC STRAND**

**STUDENTS' PRACTICUM –PRACTICAL  
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**THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PRACTICAL  
WORK OF THE FUTURE TEACHERS FOR  
THE SUBJECT OF MUSIC EDUCATION**

**Abstract**

*Our paper refers to the first cycle of primary music education in the Republic of Macedonia. Education is an open process that continuously needs to be adapted to contemporary living. This is the main reason for continuously monitoring the state of the future teachers and their readiness for the practical schooling. To evaluate acquired knowledge and practice, in the last several years our research has been conducted among the future teachers studying at the Pedagogical Faculty "Sv. Kliment Ohridski" in Skopje for the subject Didactic of music education. The target group was students who had just completed the mandatory pedagogical internship in primary schools. For this purpose we used questionnaires with three groups of questions to reveal the influence of social-cultural factors, music abilities, and practice experiences. Regarding research data, a SWOT analysis method shows that the theoretically acquired knowledge is advantageous, nevertheless practice is disadvantage in several segments as their music abilities, playing the keyboard, the need for individualized work, and lack of instruments at home. Some of the opportunities are shown in the application of e-learning tools and methods,*

*while the main threat students see in the discontinuity between the time of graduation and employment.*

**Keywords:** *music education, future teacher, SWOT analysis.*

## **Introduction**

Education is an open process that continuously needs to be adapted to contemporary living. Generally, effective education implies necessary complementarities of several parameters that are an integral part of this complex process, such as educational policy, curriculum, teacher, didactic resources, conditions in which teaching takes place, and so on. This is the main reason for the continuous monitoring of the state of the future teachers and their readiness for the practical schooling.

The general trend in South East European countries is to increase opportunities for conducting practical classes, which means to start with practical training of students at the beginning of the study program, so their theoretical knowledge can be complemented with practical experience. The Republic of Macedonia is in step with these trends with the need for teachers who possess knowledge, skills and experience gained through practical work during the initial education. The increased volume of practical training should include more segments so that the future teachers can get a clearer picture of the external factors, work in the school and the school relations and

conditions. This concept prompted the need for unifying and systematic implementation of practical teaching, and thus making the Guideline for practical teaching.

From the academic year 2013/14, the Faculty of Pedagogy implemented Guidelines for practical teaching during the internship of students in primary schools. Among the novelties were the mandatory communication of the student with all subjects and bodies at school, interethnic relations, meetings with civil organizations and relevant institutions in the field of education. As mandatory form are also present the responsibilities of the mentor teacher and professor, which provides direct communication between the main actors of the entire practical process.

For these reasons, we were interested in the implementation of the Guideline in practical teaching on the subject of music education in order to realize all the benefits and possible weaknesses in achieving an optimal education successfully in our environment. For this purpose we conducted a survey of student interns from the group teaching in Turkish (12) - full and part-time and their mentors-teachers (5) of the school "Tefejjuz" in Skopje.

Analytical approach to the collected data represents SWOT analysis that will include internal strengths and weaknesses of the Guideline, as well as the external chances and development opportunities or limitations and dangers arising out of or related to the process of pedagogical practice in teaching. Therefore we believe that such an analysis, i.e., such an

approach will give a summary of the advantages and disadvantages in the implementation of the practice and the opportunity to develop a strong strategy.

### **Research and results**

To evaluate acquired knowledge and practice, in the last several years our researches have been conducted among the future teachers studying at the Pedagogical Faculty “Sv. Kliment Ohridski” in Skopje for the subject Didactic of music education. The target group are students who had just completed the mandatory pedagogical internship in primary schools. For these purpose we used questionnaires with three groups of the questions that reveals the influence of the social-cultural factors, music abilities, and their practice experiences.

From the first group of questions related to getting information on the socio-cultural picture of this population, we received the following response:

In terms of preference of musical genres, it was shown that the largest percentage of respondents (90%) listen to popular local and world music, dominated by the repertoire of pop music from Turkey. The responses of the students showed preference to other genres: newly created Turkish folk music (80%), traditional Turkish music (50%), spiritual (10%). This result is in addition to the second question that referred to the source from which

they receive music and shows that all of them listen to music through satellite, cable TV and Internet.

Distribution of the questions about visiting music events and concerts again confirms the preference of pop and newly created music, with attendance of 70%. This situation is due to the fact that this music with live gigs and performances of local and foreign names is offered in places where they go out. The attendance also relates to the music events organized by the local government. The number of those who attended concerts with traditional Turkish music is around 30%. Unfortunately, none of the respondents has visited the concert of art music, opera or ballet.

The second set of questions that relates to musical skills of the participants is based on already implemented methodology (Leskova-Islam, 2010: 18) with generally accepted forms of research in specialized music schools in our country: the repetition of tone from a given chord, intonation of a given melody and repeating rhythmic pattern. According to the distribution, it can be seen that 49% of respondents correctly intoned a tone of a given major-minor Quint-chord. 35% of respondents successfully repeated the whole melodic form, 52% have failed, and 13% of them repeated the same in smaller portions and in more attempts. The most satisfying results were in terms of repeated rhythmic pattern, where 82% of the population is successful in the first attempt, and 18% in more attempts.

Given the fact that our primary goal was practical experience of internship students - future teachers, particularly because of the implementation of the new Guideline, the questionnaire included the following questions: Can the report from the Guideline give the real picture of your practical work? Are you satisfied with the cooperation with mentors-teachers? Is the realization of the practical instruction in the presence of mentors important for you? The answers could be given by completing the following options: yes, partly, no and I do not know. The distribution for the first question showed that: Guideline may give the real picture (40%), partly (in part) (20%), no (10%) and I don't know (30%). The majority of respondents are satisfied with the cooperation with mentors-teachers (80%), and not satisfied and partly satisfied are 20%. Respondents were united in their responses to the great importance of the presence of mentors - teachers and professors in the course of the practical teaching (100%).

In order to get a complete picture of the results of the implementation of the Guideline, we conducted a survey among teachers who have already mentored this group of respondents. These were the five teachers from class teaching who had already followed a seminar and presentation of the Guideline, at the class of music education. All answers regarding the practical application of the Guideline were affirmative because of the view that it motivates students to greater attendance, engagement and meaningful activities. All this is reflected on the motivation of students, which is a great benefit for effective teaching. Surveyed teachers responded that the Guideline is functional for all the subjects, and the optimal number of mentored students should be up to three.

### SWOT analysis and discussion

Given that it is a small population, but is relevant because it represents an entirety in the language structure of the Faculty, in this text there are some important parameters for the use of the Guideline in the future.

SWOT analysis	
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-System unified performance of practical work in all higher education institutions for teaching staff;</li> <li>- Clearly determined objectives and goals of the student, mentors and practical teaching as a whole;</li> <li>- Compulsory attendance of students;</li> <li>- Theoretical preparedness completely correspond with the practical teaching of music education;</li> </ul>

Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of checking music skills of the students upon enrolment;</li> <li>- Motivation of the mentor – teacher;</li> <li>- Communication between the relevant institutions (BRO, Ministry and pedagogical faculties and teachers);</li> <li>- Possibility of unrealistic evaluation of the mentor-teacher;</li> <li>- Musical instruments in schools;</li> </ul>
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Communication between mentor-teacher, mentor - professor and the students regarding the activities and the overall process for the realization of practical teaching / activities;</li> <li>- Motivation of student;</li> <li>- Motivation of pupils;</li> <li>- Positive attitude about the importance of the subject;</li> <li>- Developing skills in musical activities;</li> <li>- Exploring new methods, technology materials for teaching music;</li> </ul>
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Absence of coordination between local authorities on the one side and the competent ministries and universities on the other side;</li> <li>-Excessive competence of teachers,</li> <li>-Discontinuity between the time of graduation and employment;</li> <li>-Negative self-perception regarding the music abilities;</li> </ul>

Through the SWOT analysis, as one of the strengths in the implementation of the Guideline, is the mandatory system performance of practical work in all higher education institutions for teaching staff. From here emerge clearly determined objectives and goals of the student, mentors and practical teaching in general. All this requires compulsory attendance of students. The survey

of students confirmed that the theoretical readiness on the subject of music education completely corresponds with teaching content and fosters their self-confidence (which we know is a very important factor for quality teaching in all).

The subject of music education in the training of future school teacher is among those items that besides theoretical preparedness, also

require practical engagement with an individual approach to the transfer of teaching material. This is especially true for educational topics of singing, playing and creative expression, where are most apparent the personal musical abilities, affinities and predispositions of the teacher, and the success of the lessons realized depend on that. Namely, the study of music and its performance - playing, singing, is a complex process, which despite theoretical training depends on many factors, including musicality, sense of rhythm, sense of interpretation, stage fright of public appearance, which proved to be a weakness. At the same time, a major role have the animation and communication with students, using a variety of musical instruments and accessories, that respondents identified as weak points in the equipment of schools and their use.

The motivation of the mentor-teacher should be systematically encouraged as should overcoming the possibilities for unrealistic evaluation of students.

Through organized communication between mentor-teachers and professors using the Guideline, getting the full picture of all activities of students during the pedagogical probationary period is enabled. Given all these chances and opportunities, we see increasing student motivation, and thus the students develop skills in musical activities, as well as opportunities for exploring new methods, technology materials for teaching music.

The biggest risk in the application of acquired knowledge into practice is the discontinuity

between the time of graduation and employment. In such an interface, which can last for several years, pedagogical practice loses its functionality and therefore it would be desirable to restore it. One of the most possible risks is negative self-perception regarding the music abilities.

### **Conclusion**

Considering these facts we can conclude that the role of the teacher is quite complex and includes multiple segments. This implies the need to constantly improve the quality of initial education and continuously organizing trainings of future teachers, educators and pedagogues, people who throughout the educational process will guide future young generations. Performance of practical teaching / activity is one of the most important segments in the initial education and training of future teachers, educators and pedagogues as leading actors in the professional service at the school.

Regarding research data the SWOT analysis method shows that the theoretical acquired knowledge is advantageous, nevertheless the practice is disadvantageous in several segments as their music abilities, playing the keyboard, the need for individualized work, and lack of instruments at home. Some of the opportunities are shown in the application of e-learning tools and methods, while the main threat students see in the discontinuity between the time of graduation and employment.

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***INNOVATION PATTERNS OF PRACTICAL  
TRAINING OF THE STUDENTS - FUTURE  
TEACHERS IMPERATIVES OF MODERN  
SOCIETY***

**Abstract**

*The teaching profession has a strong impact on social activities because they play a key role in shaping future generations. Therefore, teachers colleges are in front of a serious challenge to design and develop programs with a precisely emphasized practical component which will ensure high quality education for future teachers adaptable to the evolving challenges of school education. Quality initial teacher education is a prerequisite to develop their professionalism. On the other hand the professionalism of teachers is imperative to the modern society. The teacher should be reflective, analytical and a critical practitioner. Because of these efforts of modern society methodical practical training of students-future teachers is the most sensitive area in the overall structure of their initial education. That sensitivity arises from the lack of a defined model of student practice with well-defined conceptual foundation that will fully cover undergraduate studies into teaching and his various manifestations (pedagogical practice, methodological practices, implementation and evaluation of teaching hours etc.). Representatives of current approaches in teacher education advocate for the organization of student practice on integrated model in which academic content is interwoven with theoretical and practical training in the educational sciences. At their base is the idea of developing active partnerships between schools and teachers colleges.*

*In this paper we will look at the current situation in the organization of student practice of future teachers to suggest on those bases to innovate more adequate and modern models of their practical training.*

**Keywords:** *models of practical training, education, teacher, partnerships, professionalism*

### **Introduction**

The teacher is a key factor of education reform. Louder question is: what teacher needs of today's school?, what is expected of it ?, is it possible to pre-service student-future teacher to acquire all the knowledge, to develop all the skills, abilities, attitudes and values necessary for achieving quality of the teaching profession? In social circles evident doubt is the competence of teachers to meet the growing requirements that are expected. In this context is concluding the necessity of professionalization about the teaching profession. The teaching profession has a multidimensional character. Vocational training involves acquisition of theoretical and practical knowledge and develop skills for their reconstruction and application in new teaching situations in professional activities. The education of future teacher must be complementary with expectations of practice. In basic education is no place for reproduction, formal knowledge that are applicable in different teaching situations. Teachers need to be good observers, participants developed with

sensitivity to the needs of others. According to contemporary social trends of the teachers are expected to be "reflective practitioners", independently make decisions and act in specific situations in the classroom.

Last years the Bologna reforms in European countries attention is paid to review programs for teacher training. The main emphasis is put on the models for teacher training based on competencies. Within these models practical training of students plays a major role. In that sense, the Lisbon strategy for education and training for the profession calls for the development common European principles of competence and qualifications needed by teachers. When it highlights three types of competencies: 1. capability to work with others, 2. competence in working with knowledge, 3. capacity of work for society and in society.

However, despite these recommendations from several international reports show that in different countries, in the study programs for teacher education, practical training is different present. Visible differences are in duration and in ways of implementation. Somewhere is notable achievement of concentrated practice for a period of several weeks, and sometimes the practice is continued during all study programs with some number of classes. But in many European countries practice performed in two parts. The first part takes place in parallel with teaching and realized by a fund hours a week, and the second part accomplished concentrated practice.

Display representation of the practical training of students in some countries in Europe

Malta	Concentrated 6 weeks
Hungary	Concentrated 8-10 weeks
England	4-6 weeks
Romania	Continuous 3 hours per week
Denmark	Least 3 weeks
Norway	20 weeks
Estonia	10 weeks
Russia	4-5 weeks
Belgium	600 hours (summarized)
Poland	210 hours
Croatia	40-60 days

Display representation of practical training of students of Faculty of Pedagogy

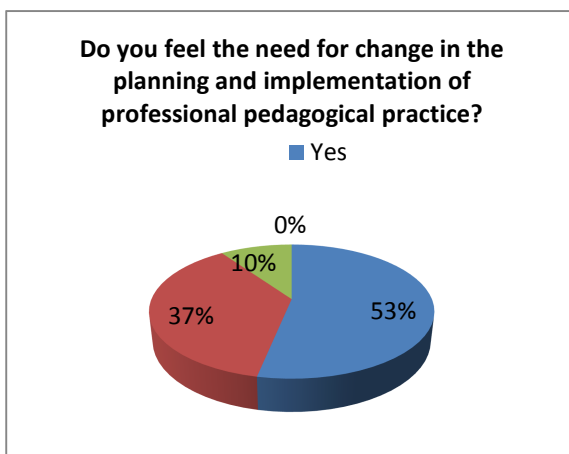
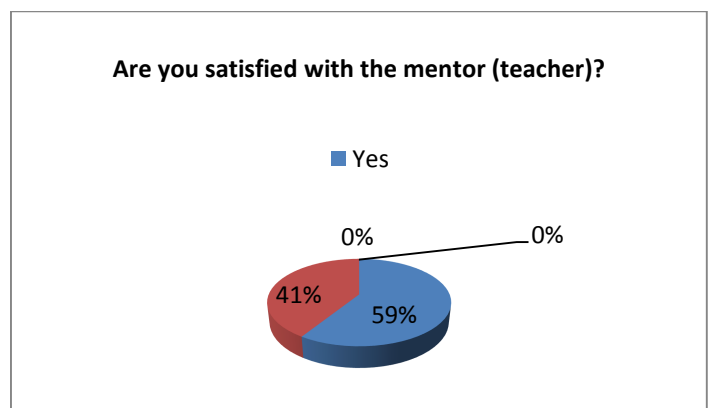
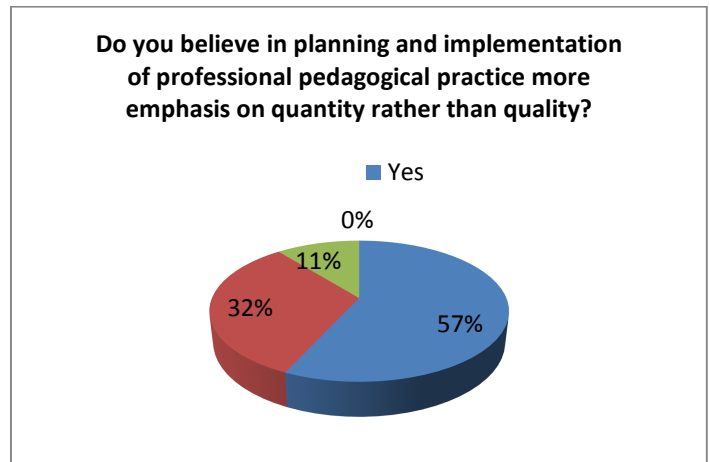
form of realization	semester	total number of hours
pedagogical practices	I,II,III	45
methodical practice	IV,V,VI,VII,VIII	195
pedagogical experience	VIII	60
		310

General objectives of the practical training of students-future teachers:

- to enter the teaching professional role; be encouraged to think about their own competence to perform the teaching profession;
- be familiar with - the work of the school as an institution;
- to develop professional skills in planning, implementation and evaluation of teaching.

### Need for change

Development of quality practical training of students involves a holistic approach and dynamic concept that despite the development of competencies of mentors means developing competencies of students for monitoring and managing the activities of their own learning and practical training, as well as responsibility for the results of those processes. In this context, the practical training of students of pedagogical faculties should be reformed and implemented so that it will maximize the capability of the candidate teaching. As part of a study for the internal design of the Pedagogical Faculty in the questionnaire intended for students of the third and fourth were asked several questions that are susceptible for this paper.



Based on the responses of students and recent experiences of PFSKO in planning and implementation of student's practice can detect several ongoing problems:

- program framework for the practical training of students is not clearly defined, reasonable and practically verified; more turns on quantity rather than quality. The problem is not the duration of practical training, but in its essential role;
- no clear criteria for selecting the schools that will be accomplished professional practice; no developed concept of selection of teachers - mentors;
- lack professional teams of mentor teachers and professors and associates of

pedagogical faculties will continuously plan, will accompany the implementation and evaluate the effects of practical training;

- reports of mentor - a teacher as a rule of thumb is always expressed in superlative and do not reflect the real situation.

To become a competent teacher is needed synergy integration of knowledge, skills and actions. "Competencies include the following elements: knowledge and understanding (theoretical knowledge in a specific academic area, capacity for cognition and understanding), knowledge of how to act (practical application of knowledge in certain situations), knowledge of how to be (values as an integral element of the way of perceiving and living with others in a social context). Competences represent a mixture of these features and describe the degree to which an individual is qualified to apply. "(Tunning 2006 A.Rončević, PP Papak, 2012, page 86). This can greatly contribute to quality planning and implementing professional pedagogical practice.

#### **Distinction of some common terms associated with the practical training of students - future teachers**

Theoretical knowledge - stems from scientific discourse and acquires the faculty, seminars, workshops and so on.

Expert knowledge - rely on their own experience, related to the context coupled with experience of success or failure. It is a professional action, practical knowledge that

arise in practice in particular grade preparation, processing and evaluation of teaching or exchange of experiences among colleagues.

Didactic-methodical skills or competencies for action assume theoretical and vocational knowledge and means and other conditions such as. having the ability to change.

#### **Choosing a school in which you realize professional practice**

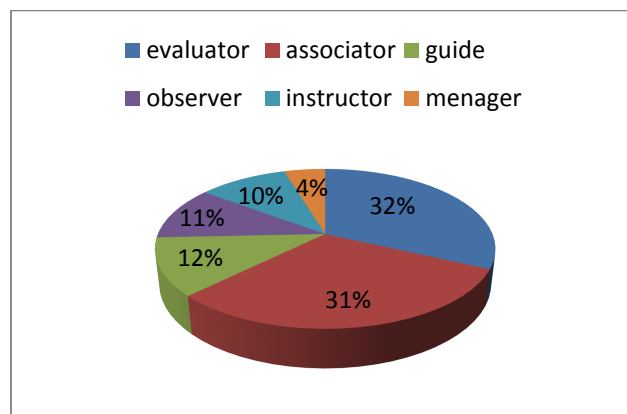
The practical training of students is an integral part of the education of future teachers. For realization of quality practical training of exceptional importance of building partnership, communication and cooperation at the highest level (precisely defined and legally regulated) between teacher training colleges and primary schools where the practice is implemented. But how to select the schools that will realize the practical training of students today is an open question to which there is still no response. Analysing some international examples could those experiences and apply them to us with some modifications. First it is necessary to adopt a new law to determine the status of school - centre or gym pedagogical faculties to realize the practical training of future teachers. These selected schools have continued to reform in line with the latest European trends in education. They should be equipped with modern facilities and equipment. This will be provided to students to develop reflective practitioners. These centres link between theoretical and professional knowledge must come to full expression. That means they can employ the highest quality already outstanding

teachers who have competence latest theoretical knowledge to apply in practice, who will be trained for mentors who have already achieved obvious results in their educational work. The role of the mentor can not be imposed from the outside. Mentoring and organizing mentoring courses have flourished in all European countries. These courses mentors should be trained to apply the mentoring techniques, neutral observation, and feedback in a constructive way, active reflexivity evaluation dialogue etc. Teachers - mentors should be subject to re-election. This is in direct connection with the responsibility for their permanent education. In this material satisfaction of these teachers is a very important point.

Mentor to answer the challenges is to adopt the characteristics of the different roles that will exercise: role of assistant, organizer, observer, manager, analyst, evaluator, instructor, counsellor, guide, collaborator, example etc . Students from the third and fourth year of the Faculty of Pedagogy asked to rate the roles of mentor according to their understanding of the importance of these roles during their successful practical training. Results show that the student is the most important role of collaborator with matter how mean them to be accepted as individuals and as interns in the new environment that you feel welcome in the classroom where they exercise their practice. Also highly ranked and the role of evaluator as feedback for the success of their teaching activities are of utmost importance to them.

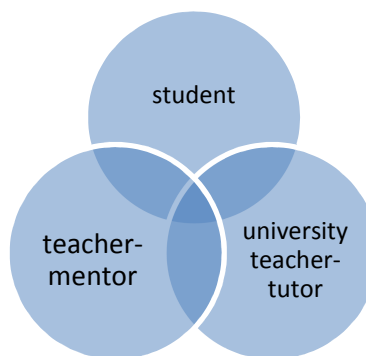
Secondary roles are ranked observer, guide and instructor. Lowest is the role of manager.

Displaying assessment of the roles of the teacher-mentor priority by students on PFSKO



Teacher- mentor should not impose their style of work but the student to allow him to build his own style of working with students. The mentor should be a source of moral support, to encourage students to encourage take action to provide space to show their worth, but to point to undertake control.

**Need quality interpersonal relationships between the student, the teacher-mentor and university professor**



To build quality interpersonal relationships between the most important subjects of

practical teaching students primarily need to respect the freedom of choice that the student be able to independently choose their mentor. Constructive interpersonal relationships allow students learning on multiple levels:

- Learning through self-reflection. Students in a deeper and more critical way reflect on their own approaches in conducting educational activities, educational attitudes, ways of teaching and so on. Reflection of independent practice is the basis for their own development and student and teacher-mentor.
- Learning from teacher -mentor (experiential learning strategies and teaching based on the activities of students, exchange of views on realized hour).
- Learning from the university tutor (the latest theories and new strategies well as access to teaching and learning, exchange of ideas).

Mentoring is a developmental process that builds and provides opportunities for development and learning not only the student-intern, but the teacher-mentor and university professor-tutor. Eg. teacher-mentor also teaches the student interns. Fresh ideas, creativity and inventiveness coming from students, their ease of use of modern teaching aids, especially computer technology incentives for professional development of the teacher -mentor.

## Conclusion

The acquisition of skills is the basis of the professional development of the teacher during all phases of his career. This process begins with the initial education and continuing in education of teachers in the course of work and lifelong learning. The development of competencies should not we reduce only the information acquisition or development of skills. The development should be seen as a professional maturation in which the student - the future teacher should primarily acquires the ability to reflect. In this respect it is important to emphasize reflexive meaning of pedagogical practice

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***OPINIONS AND ATTITUDES OF CLASS  
TEACHER IN SOME MUNICIPALITIES IN  
SKOPJE REGARDING THE CLASS OF  
PHYSICAL EDUCATION***

**Abstract**

*Physical Culture is a part of social and cultural pillars of health that contributes to the overall development of a society. As organized pedagogical process, physical education as an integral part of physical culture aims to develop the students with comprehensive capability, moving habits, high physical, moral and mental qualities. In order to gain key results that will serve us for comparison and interpretation, in this research we surveyed 120 primary school teachers from 8 schools in different municipalities of Skopje. The aim of the research was to identify and analyse the opinions and attitudes of teachers regarding the status and the realization of the subject of physical education in the elementary schools. The information that we gained during the search along with the drawn conclusions, gave us some answers about the opinions and attitudes of class teachers in some municipalities in Skopje regarding the subject of physical education. This research should be understood as a good basis to further efforts that the class of physical education wins its rightful place in education and improvement of the conditions and tools for its optimal performance.*

**Keywords:** *physical education, schools, teachers, opinions, research*

## Introduction

Physical Culture is a part of social and cultural pillars of health that contributes to the overall development of a society. As organized pedagogical process, physical education as an integral part of physical culture, aims to develop pupils with comprehensive capabilities, moving habits, high physical, moral and mental qualities. In the field of physical education and sport, pupils undergoes the team or group and try to present personal skills with which they will provide honour and respect among peers. Therefore, we can say that physical education and sport are the most important tools for developing psycho - physical, emotional and social stimulus for socialization of pupils in our multiethnic society and in general.

The curriculum for the subject physical and health education is aimed towards broader spectrum of obligatory activities, which is consisted of: corporal (physical) exercises, performing of outdoor activities and evaluation of the physical abilities of the pupils. Using corporal (physical) exercises, the teacher enables the pupils to improve their physical abilities, which formerly were not on the satisfactory level whether of some pupils or of the whole class and on the other hand, obtain the proper growth and development. The improvement of the physical abilities enables complex exercises to be introduced without difficulties.

## Importance of research

The results obtained from the survey of teachers will hopefully highlight the differences and similarities of teachers' opinions regarding the activities of the subject of physical education and quality improvement regarding the implementation of physical education classes.

The results obtained will contribute to overcoming obstacles, whether subjective or objective ones, such as lack of sports facilities, the lack of preparation of pupils for the class of physical education, lack of teaching resources for appropriate implementation of the class and replacement of physical education classes with other "more important" subjects.

## Method of work

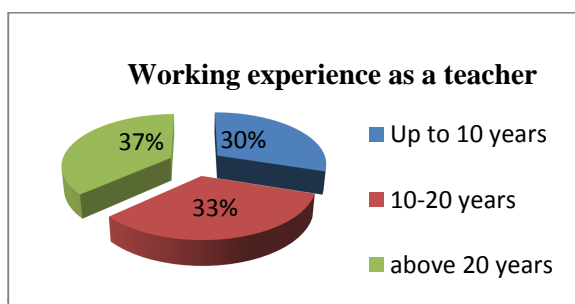
For this research were surveyed 120 teachers from eight primary schools in four municipalities in Skopje:

- Municipality of Cair, elementary schools: „Lirija“ grades 2-5 (16 questionnaires) from four classes; „Rajko Zinzifov“ grades 2-5 (16 questionnaires) from four classes; „Cvetan Dimov “ grade 2-5 (16 questionnaires) from four classes; „Nikola Vapcarov“ grade 2-5 (16 questionnaires) from four classes.
- The municipality of Gazi Baba, elementary schools: „25 May" grade 2-5 (16 questionnaires) from four classes

- Municipality of Aracinovo, elementary schools: “Skanderbeg“ grade 2-5 (16 questionnaires) from four classes and...
- Municipality of Saraj, elementary schools: „Dituria“ grade 2-5 (16 questionnaires) from four classes; “Sami Frashëri“, grade 2-5 (8 questionnaires) from two classes.
- The questionnaire was divided into two categories: in the first category were included questions showing the structure of the teachers in the schools, while in the second category are included questions reflecting the realization of the class of physical education.
- The data were processed by using statistical procedures: determining the frequency (f); the difference (d); the arithmetic mean (x); Contingency correlation (C), analysis, and interpretation of results.

### Analysis and interpretation of results

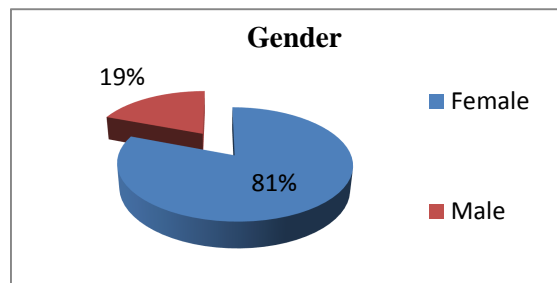
Graph.1



Considering the working experience of the teachers (graph.1), the analysis showed the largest percent of teachers have above 20 years

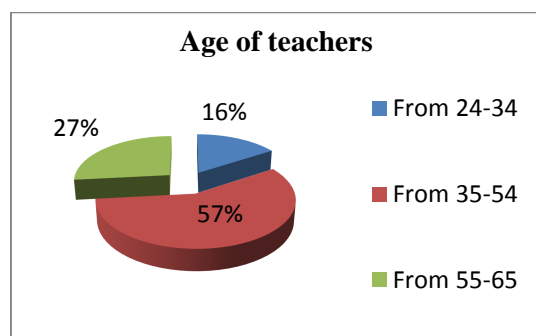
of working experience, which means that they are experienced teachers.

Graph.2



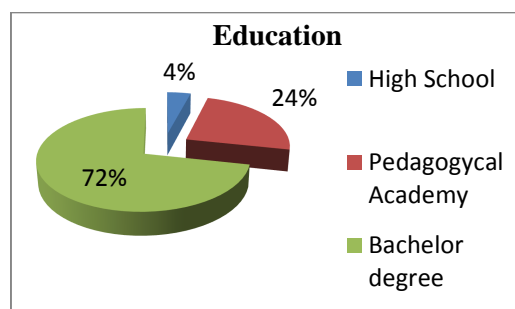
In Graph.2 it is interesting to notice that a huge percent of teachers (81%) are female

Graph.3



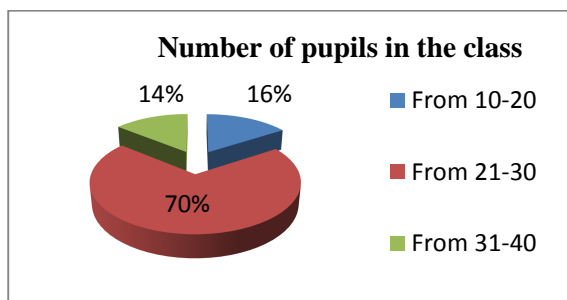
Graph.3 shows that the largest percent of teachers are between 35 and 54 years old (57%)

Graph.4



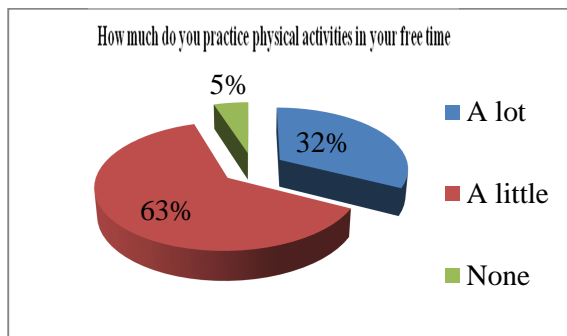
Although the majority (72%) of teachers are with Bachelor degree, in our educational system we still have teachers who have only finished high school and still teach in schools

Graph.5



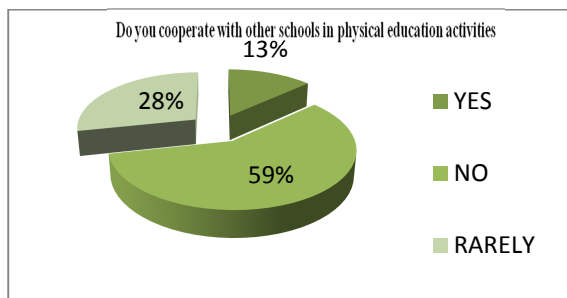
In Graph.5 we can see that the average number of pupils in class is between 21-30 (70%)

Graph.6



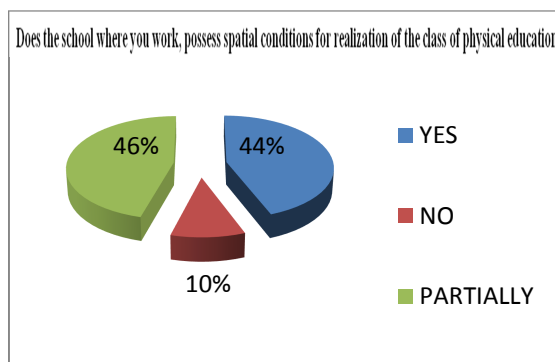
As we can see on Graph.6, 63% of teachers very little practice physical activities in their free time

Graph.7



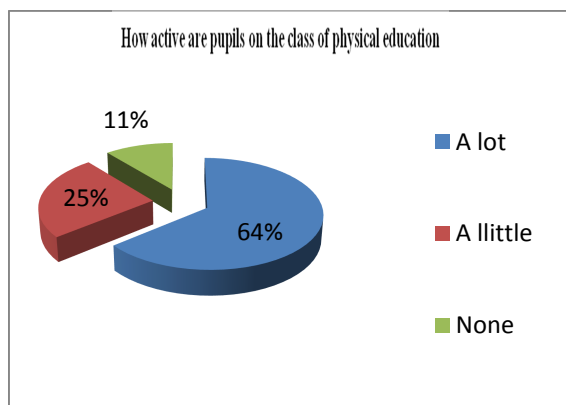
Graph.7 shows that 59% of teachers never cooperate with other schools in physical education activities

Graph.8



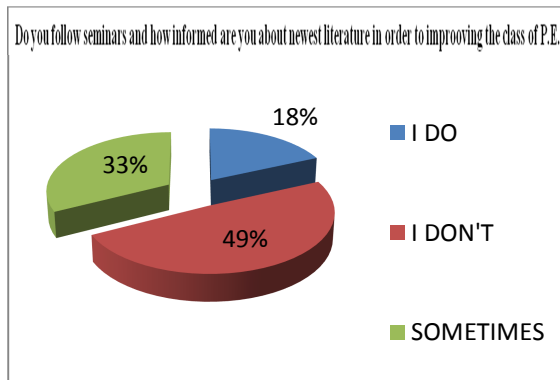
Considering this question which is also very important, 44% of teachers declared that their schools don't have spatial conditions for realization of the class of physical education.

Graph.9



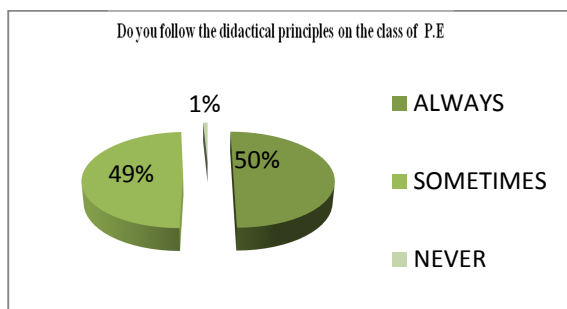
As one of the most popular subjects among pupils, Graph.9 shows that 64% of pupils are very active on the class of physical education

Graph.10



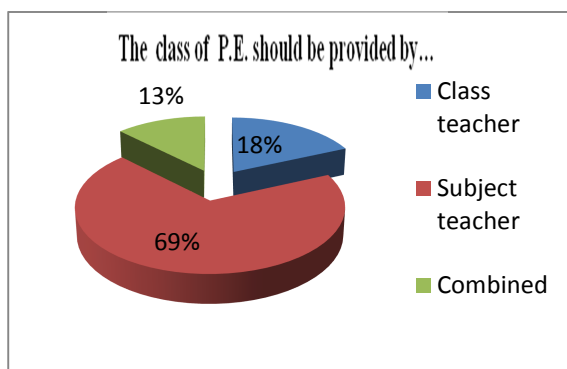
As shown in Graph.10, 49% of teachers do not visit any seminars or read literature or news about physical education in order to improve his/her class

Graph.11



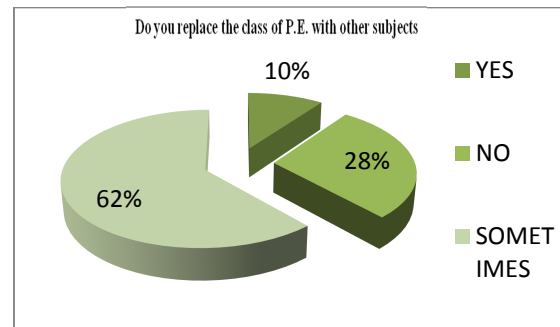
The results shown in Graph.11 that only 50% of teachers do follow didactical principles on the class of physical education and discouraging is that 49% of them only sometimes do.

Graph.12



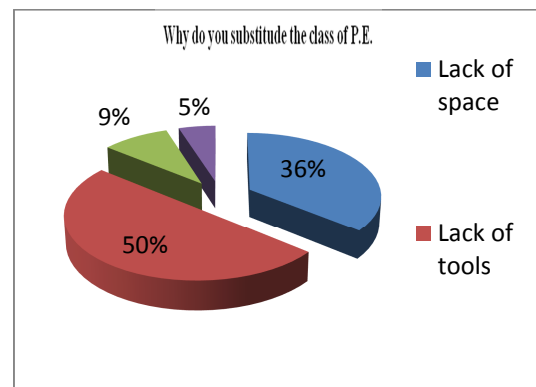
In Graph.12, 69% of teachers believe that the class of physical education should be practiced by a subject teacher and not the class teacher, which gives the idea that class teachers don't like practicing physical education with pupils

Graph.13



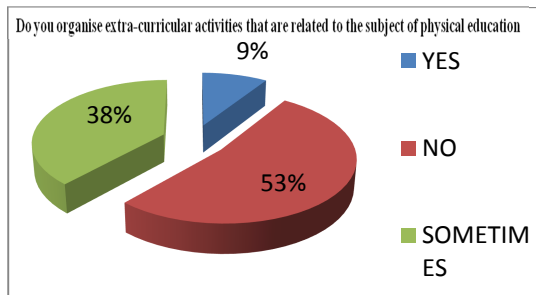
From Graph.13 we can see that as much as 62% of teachers are inclined to substitute or replace the class of physical education with another subject

Graph.14



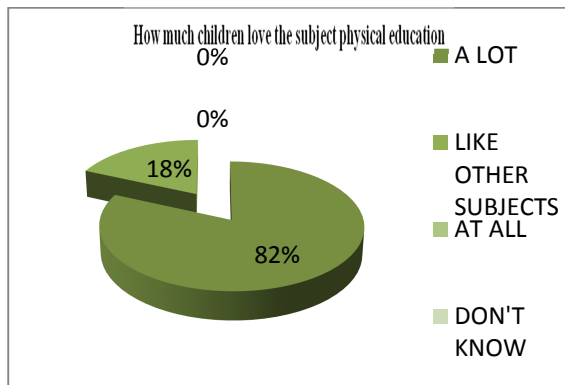
Considering Graph.14, the reason why teachers substitute the class of physical education with another subject, 36% said because of Lack of space and 50% Lack of tools

Graph.15



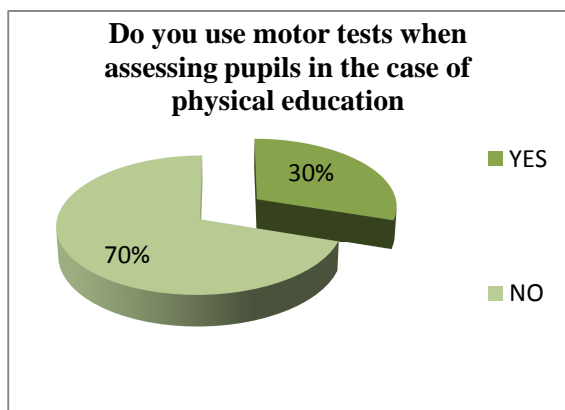
The results in Graph.15 shows that 53% of teachers never organise extra-curricular activities related to the subject of physical education

Graph.16



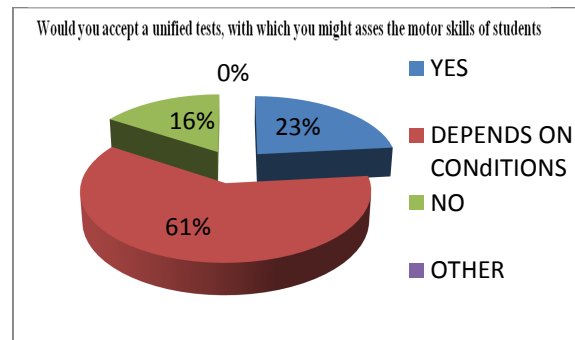
It is well known that pupils love the subject of physical education and that is shown in the Graph.16 where 82% of teachers declared that pupils love physical education a lot

Graph.17



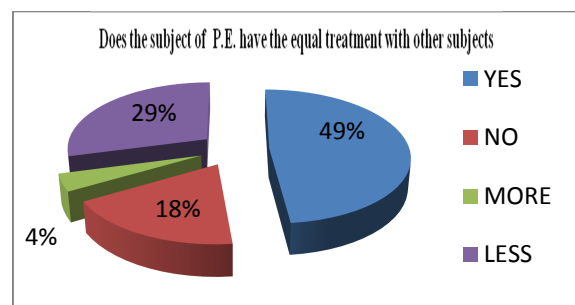
Graph.17 shows how subjective are teachers when assessing pupils, 70% of teachers do not use motor tests when assessing pupils in the case of physical education

Graph.18



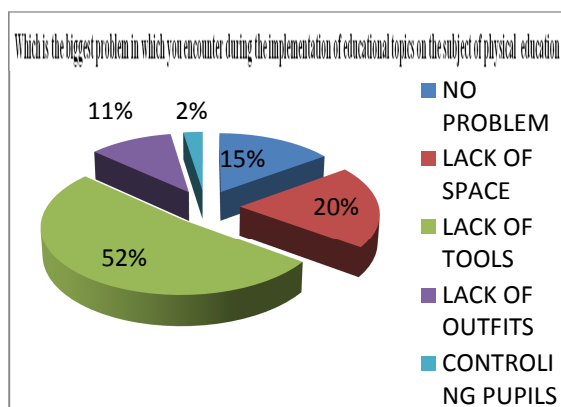
But in Graph.18, we can see that 84% of teachers would use unified tests for assessing the motor skills of pupils, of which 61% said if there are conditions for that.

Graph.19



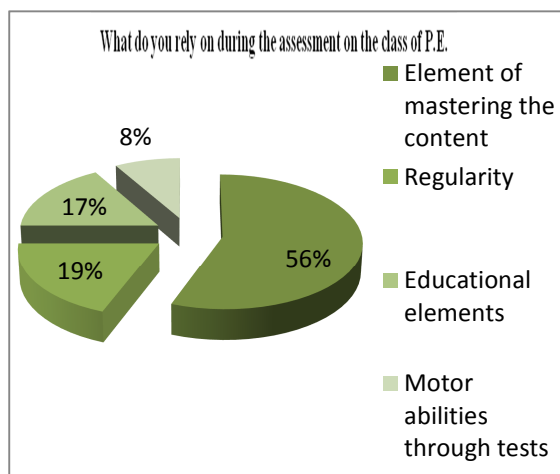
Although the subject of physical education is equally included in the educational curricula as a subject, Graph.19 shows that 49% of teachers do not treat it as equal as other subjects.

Graph.20



Considering Graph.20, 52% of teachers feel that the biggest problem in implementation of educational topics in the subject of physical education is the lack of tools

Graph.21



Graph.21 shows that during the assessment on the class of physical education, 56% of teachers rely on Elements of mastering the content.

### Conclusion

The information that we gained during the search along with its conclusions, gave us some answers about the opinions and attitudes of class teachers in some municipalities in Skopje on the subject of physical education.

This research is very important for our society because it also provides data that are important for the application of methods, forms, principles and values for the class of physical education.

This research may be appointed as AWARENESS STAGE, which starts in schools and initiate the formal and informal level among teachers, professional associates and director, how will they exchange their opinions about the issues raised about the successes that should be achieved with their pupils.

This research should be understood as a good basis to further efforts that the subject of physical education, to earn the position and its rightful place in education but even in this case will require further study and harmonization of surveys by all teachers at school, especially if they do lesson planning together for the class of physical education.

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### **Abstract**

*If you're on the right track, you'll be run over if you just sit, Sir Allen Sheppard*

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**TEACHER TRAINING FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TEACHERS' CONTENT TO "MOODLE" PLATFORM FOR EDUCATION IN MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENTS**

*Modern information and communication advances allow for the creation, distribution, and learning lessons through the implementation of educational content in any of the suitable platforms for e-learning, thereby efficiently transcend territorial boundaries and barriers of time, while saving resources.*

*The effectiveness of learning or training depends on the proper disposal of resources and their interaction in a timed framework, and to achieve this efficiency was the use of suitable platform for e-learning that allows, adding another dimension to training and to the economy.*

*The theme of this work is implementing a suitable platform for e-learning in the context of the effective functioning of the system and upgraded teacher training, especially vocational training of specialist teachers for the implementation of the teaching contents to "Moodle (abbreviation for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment)" platform to promote their education for education in multicultural environments.*

**Keywords:** *e-learning platform- Moodle, education, multicultural environments.*

### **Introductory remarks**

Cultural and civilizational times we live in an age that belongs to the time seen as a rapid movement towards progress, which is accelerating the rapid development of science and technology, our only means of survival in the world is to arm the knowledge through the development of scientific and educational institutions in order not to remain in the same place, which means regression.

The development of scientific and educational institutions is reflected in the use of modern information and communication technology that transcend state borders, regions, continents and allow unhindered access to "knowledge sources".

Modern information and communication advances allow for the creation, distribution, and learning lessons through the implementation of the teaching contents to one of the suitable platform for e-learning, thus effectively beyond the spatial boundaries and time barriers, while saving resources.

There are several different definitions of e-learning, and they usually depend on the profession and the experience of people who use them. These definitions usually fall into one of two groups:

First group of "technical" definitions puts emphasis on technology (the "e" part in the name). An example of one of the "technical" definition is:

The effectiveness of training depends on the proper engagement of resources (human and material) and their interaction in time-defined limits, and in order to achieve the efficiency of the use of suitable platform for e-learning that allows, adding another dimension to training and to the economy.

### **E-learning, comparison and analysis**

"E-learning" is one of many terms with the prefix "e" which has lately been increasingly mentioned. So more and more people are using e-banking or e-commerce, and often can be heard for e-government, e-health, e-justice ... In general, all of these concepts prefix "e" (electronic, eng. electronic) means performing certain activities with the help of information and communication technology (ICT).

So for the "e-learning" that is e-learning or in a broader sense, e-learning can be said that this is the performance of the educational process with the help of information communication technology, namely computers and the Internet very often.

"E-learning is any form of learning, teaching or education that is supported by the use of computer technology, especially computer networks to the Internet technologies."

Second group of "pedagogical" definition has an emphasis on education, it is the teaching and learning ("learning" part in the name). One such definition is:

"E-learning" is interactive or two-way process between teachers and students with the help of

electronic media with emphasis on the learning process while the media only adjuvant that completes the process.

E-learning is the performance of the educational process with the help of information communication technology (ICT). At the same time we must not focus only on technology and ignore the importance of quality teaching and learning [1].

"E-learning" as a form of education exists on several levels: as a full-fledged form, but also as an integral part of or supplement to traditional education.

Classification is performed most often on the basis of the level of distinction from traditional learning strategies and is usually a listing of two approaches:

1. A mixed or hybrid education or teaching ("hybrid learning", "blended learning", "mix-mode") - a combination of traditional classroom teaching and learning with technologies (ICT) [2].
2. "Pure" e-learning ("pure e-learning") - form of learning in which students learn independently and "online" [3].

History of distance education dates back to 1728, when it was first published call for this kind of training. Certain Caleb Phillips, "Teacher of the New Method of Short Hand" in the Boston Gazette published an announcement asking students for lessons that would circulate weekly [4].

The development of postal services in the 19th century led to a large increase in the number of tutoring and the development of programs at colleges that offer this kind of training. The London University was the first university that offered distance education by establishing his famous "External Program" for correspondence study in 1858 [5].

### **The advantages of e-teaching and traditional teaching**

- E-learning allows customers quality participation in class when distance, a schedule, a large number of users and similar circumstances make it impossible in a traditional classroom.
- fully modern e-classroom is open 24 hours a day, which provides the most efficient possible use of time.
- Customers themselves choose when and how to access the e-learning since they have constant access to materials and teaching which is the subject of their interest.
- E-learning via the Internet to a special dynamic interaction between teachers and users, and the users themselves. Each individual contributes continue initiating, or participating in discussions concerning current issues.
- within the system enabled easy integration and access to other sources relevant to the material that is taught.

### **Disadvantages e-learning in comparison to traditional teaching**

E-learning requires the user specific knowledge and skills to be able to use.

- To implement e-learning it is essential that each user has dedicated equipment.
- the best quality equipment that runs e-learning is not always reliable.
- Enabling autonomous determination of the manner and time of learning, e-learning users brings more responsibility.
- In certain forms of e-learning users must motivate yourself to work individually assess the need for learning, which can lead to problems in the evaluation of results and objectively the lack of progress in the learning process.
- A more elaborate system of e-learning encounters problems with the copyright for the contents of other systems.

In addition to the above advantages and disadvantages of e-learning compared to traditional teaching will mention some of the options that e-learning allows access to learning materials, scripts, multimedia presentations and other educational resources on the Internet, with continuous testing, testing knowledge at all levels, electronic communication with teachers and other participants of the course, the use of ICT (information and communication technology) for the purposes of learning, the convergence and connection of the Internet and learning, or Internet enabled learning, knowledge and skills based on the information

and guidance delivered by using different information technologies and other forms distance learning, formalized teaching and learning system specifically designed to be functional at a distance using electronic communication, the process of approaching educational resources - providing learning conditions, for different remote places of the classroom, school or city in the form of multimedia and / or through a combination with traditional methods of knowledge transfer.

### **Interactive procedure, the comparative analysis suitable platform for**

#### **E-LEARNING**

The paper presents a comparative analysis of the following platform for e-learning:

- Moodle 1.9
- Blackboard Learning System Vista 4.1 Enterprise License
- ILIAS
- Sakai 2.3
- CCNET
- JoomlaLMS
- Olat
- Claroline 1.8.1
- ATutor 1.6.3
- EFront 3.6

After product selection is done by selection of functional and technical characteristics for comparison through the selection of areas and functions that are essential for the product. The weights of coefficient are created based on the specifics of teaching that is carried out. Rating

functionality is performed based on the representation of functions in a given product.

The process of interactive comparisons has been carried out using "Edutools Summative" tool, and the results are shown in Figure 1.

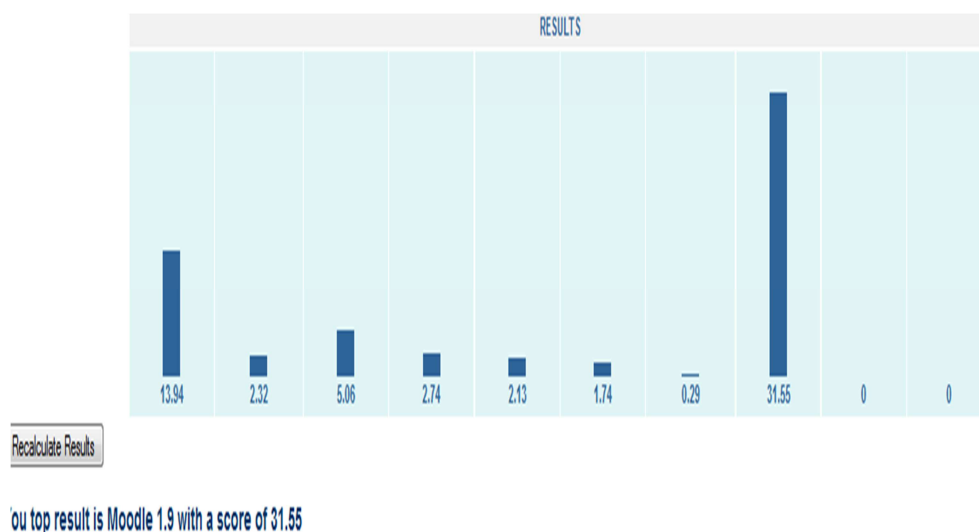


Figure 1. Graphical presentation of results

Based on the results of comparison in which the analysed system for e-learning, using the "Edu Tools" tools as a basis for initial research leads to next conclusions:

- Work on the level of discussion and the management thereof at the rate supported by all analysed systems for e-learning,
- Sending of internal e-mails provide the best presentation for users "MOODLE" platform, while other systems offer a small number of administrative settings for some options,
- Calendar of events structured "MOODLE" platform allows the display of events related to each subject individually,
- Administrative Tools are supported in all of the described systems. Authentication is realized at the basic level on all platforms described, except that "MOODLE"

platform enables encryption of the session using the specified protocol,

- When analysing the possibility of creating tests, we conclude that the "MOODLE" platform offers the most variety of types of questions,
- The description of the technical characteristics of the system architecture and use of database management "MOODLE" platform is the number of systems to which it can operate far more place.

#### Training teachers for the implementation and evaluation of expert system

Improving the quality of the training involves, inter alia, the modernization of training using modern teaching aids (tools, programs, techniques) and use of modern information technology. The process of improving training tool for e-learning, implies the need for

computer cabinets are equipped with the ability to use the Internet. In order to improve the training process going in the right direction and to have positive results, it is important that contractors attend training seminars that aim to improve the operation of the training in the use of modern teaching methods and forms of work, then goals are and mastering knowledge of modern learning technologies empower the work of training in the individualization of teaching in multicultural environments, assist

training providers in the planning of the training process, assisting in evaluating candidates and so on. [6].

Entering the educational content and the determination of activities during the implementation of the course is done by activating the option "add resource" or "add activity", by activating one of the options in the drop-down menu as the offer gives the names of resources or activities that we want to activate, display these options is shown in Figure 2.

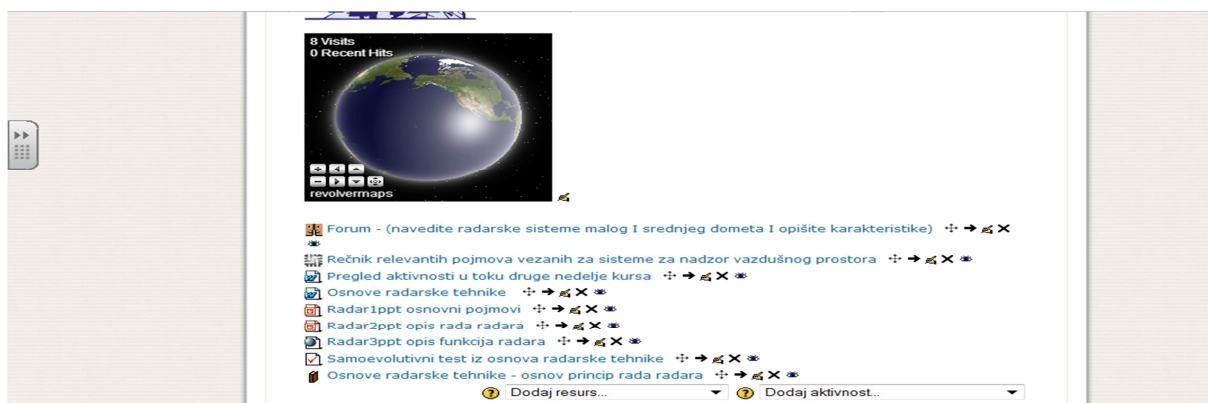


Figure 2. The "Add Resource" and "add activity"

In order to achieve better results in training on the "MOODLE" platform we can use suitable tools for presentation and explanation of certain terms, circuits, modes, etc. Convenient tool for the creation of educational content in 3D is "EON Creator 4.8."

"EON Creator 4.8" software is a tool for creating 3D lessons. Course creators can create a 3D environment for the trainee using thousands of 3D models EON portal and enrich

teaching materials video and audio effects as well as additional resources (Wikipedia, Qwiki, power point presentations ...). With this software can be used to create 3D interactive labs, which represents an additional quality in the teaching process. Sharing lessons from the creator - the user is possible by using the "EON experience Player" or direct links. Entering a resource from a palette EON portal, is as simple as selecting the desired object and adding it to the desktop, input resources and facilities to create 3D content is shown in Figure 3.

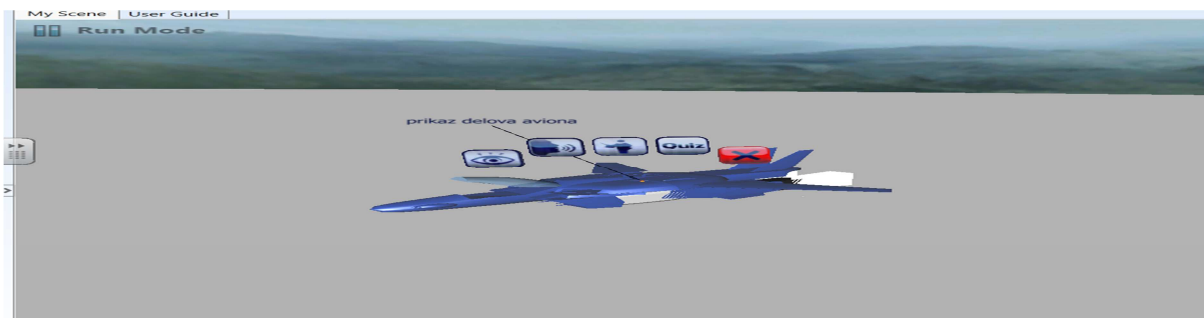


Figure 3. created courseware

Interactivity with the syllabus user by activating some of the options (shown as icons in the figure) that are at his disposal, such as a direct connection to the "wiki" pages that explain the individual elements (selection of proper "wiki" site was made by the creator of lesson) . By activating icons "Quiz" user access to knowledge test (questions - multiple choice answers). User can active navigation and movement through space. The creator of the course does not have to use the final products but are allowed to create and set up within the lesson or as a text or as a "power point" presentation that the user can activate by simply selecting the appropriate icon.

Simulation is a simplified imitation of the real behaviour of some situation or some process that is performed usually with the aim of learning, testing, or training. The introduction, implementation and analysis of simulation results allows the learning process takes place according to the principle "learning by doing" experience that builds in bezbenom environment without fear of negative consequences that are possible in the real world.

By using the aforementioned platforms teacher is able to continuously monitor the work of students, corrections and enables automatic transition to the new content, but only when they have previously been provided to the media yet fully learned by students.

### **Key teacher competences for inclusion in multicultural environments**

Competencies include knowledge, skills and attitudes, and the associated autonomy and responsibility in fulfilling personal and business goals. Looking for competencies that are necessary for active and inclusion in the knowledge society, the European Commission has made a list of eight key competences needed by all citizens in the function of personal development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment.

Communication in the mother tongue and foreign languages, mathematical competence and basic science, digital competence, learning to learn, social, civic, cultural and entrepreneurial competencies are the foundation of modern education. It can be said that all competencies are equally important and mutually complement each other. Critical thinking, creativity, initiative, problem solving,

risk assessment, decision-making and constructive management play a role in all eight key competences.

In this paper, as essential prerequisites for teacher education and inclusion in multicultural environments in particular are two separate competition:

Learning about learning is the ability of the learning organization, including effective management of time and information, both individually and in groups. Competence involves understanding the process and learning needs, identify existing opportunities for learning, overcoming the barriers to successful learning. Motivation and confidence are crucial preconditions for individual success.

Cultural awareness and creativity includes respect for the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a variety of media, including music, literature, performing and visual arts. Cultural knowledge includes knowledge of local, national, European and world cultural heritage. Sound knowledge of their own culture and cultural identity is the basis for respect for the diversity of cultures and customs

### **Conclusion**

In technical terms, pedagogical and methodological and didactic-methodical, seeks to prove that "e-learning, in relation to "traditional" has certain advantages. Sure, it is necessary to prove an empirical approach to the

research. In this paper a modest display of such research.

This is realized classes would further contribute to a more efficient and motivated teaching process that significantly raised the quality of education.

Embodiments of e-courses allow overcoming the problems related to the implementation of teaching content, which is reflected in the temporal, spatial and cultural barriers.

In addition to overcome these barriers to e-courses allow high-quality training, through practical examples and with the use of simulation models described in this paper. In this way, enabling users to practical application of the lessons learned while minimizing the risk to a minimum.

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***MUSIC EDUCATION AT THE FACULTIES  
OF PEDAGOGY AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO  
BUILD MULTIETHNIC PRACTICES***

**Abstract**

*The role of music education in building the identity is a topic that is increasingly paying attention on in ethnomusicology, musicology and education of future generations. Since music is an integral part of human existence, the relation of identity, human and education requires a broader perspective for thinking and action. The purpose of this paper is to emphasize the "action" in teaching or education as a major tool in modern education worldwide. Active teaching is a global trend that enables practical implementation of education and opportunity, and music and music education to be seen as active agents in the construction of culture, education and ethnic identity of people.*

*Ethnic characteristics of the music, its examples, rhythmic features, folk instruments, can easily be practical examples in modern teaching aids, textbooks and other teaching tools. Teaching music education in the country is in need of modernizing teaching aids and general practices, aiming at receiving various features music of all ethnicities easily and their implementation in teaching the youth and future generations of educators and teachers.*

**Keywords:** *music, music education, multi-ethnic practice, active teaching, teaching music*

## Introduction

The role of music education in identity creation is a topic that draws more and more attention within the field of ethnomusicology, musicology, and the education of the future generations. Because music is a compound of human existence, the relationship between identity-man-education, requires a broader perspective for contemplation and work.

The aim of this thesis is to underline the “activity” throughout the lectures or active teaching as the principal tool in the contemporary education worldwide. The active teaching is a global trend that enables practical lecture realization and opportunity for music and music education to be grasped as an active force in the building process of culture, education and ethnic identity of one nation.

The ethnic characteristics of music, its examples, rhythmic characteristics, the national instruments can easily be operative examples in the contemporary teaching tools, books and other teaching instruments. Music education in the Republic of Macedonia needs contemporary teaching instruments and practices that shall allow easier acceptance of diverse music characteristics of all ethnicities and their practical realization in the teaching process of the young and future teachers and lecturers.

As Barson<sup>30</sup> once stated, in this world remain three interesting questions: what is the universe, what is life and what is music. The answer to one of these puzzles gradually would explain

the other two. The secret of life is imprinted in the universe; music unveils the secret of life and the universe’s core is depicted through music. In order to get any answers people who will be willing, educated and ready to seek for concrete answers are needed.

In order to get concrete answers and also answers to a line of questions that are imposed by contemporary way of life it is necessary to organize contemporary teaching that shall train and prepare future generations of young people that shall be skilful and seek to find answers in the ocean of questions. A happy and dignified man is a physically healthy, educated, technically sharp for everyday challenges with moral values and with a developed sense for the beautiful in nature, life and art.<sup>31</sup>

Throughout the last decades globally there is greater and greater concern for children’s and youth development, especially those that are talented and their rights for adequate possibilities that provide a wholesome development of children’s potential.<sup>32</sup> Music is part of the preparatory process of future generations and within that process it takes over the cultural education of the individual. Music is part of the preparation process of future generations and in that process music takes over the part of the cultural education of the individual. In other words, music with its powers has an effect in the character building of the individual and the desire to create and be

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<sup>30</sup>Anri-LuiBarson, French Philosopher

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<sup>31</sup>Pozgaj J.,1950, “Methodology of Teaching Music”, Institute in Croatia, pg.3

<sup>32</sup> The World Council for Gifted and Talented –WCGT, Council of Europe

creative. The individual and culture are a union. One person cannot be described without previously analyzing and getting to know that person's cultural identity, place of origin, the toy he/she played with, the language he/she speaks, the songs he/she sings... Organized contemporary education envisages active teaching that shall meet the cultural needs of that particular individual in the act of creation and creativity. Organized music education in the entire process of primary education is a compound of pre-school education, primary, high school as well as academic level of education of the future lecturers and teachers.

This type of organized education is part of the overall educational process in the Republic of Macedonia. Music education is a mandatory school subject in primary schools, and the curriculum is realized with a fixed number of lessons that are determined by the Ministry of Education and science and the Department for Education Development. The music education curriculum from fifth grade to ninth grade is carried out by teachers.

The future teachers-students at the Faculty of Pedagogy in the Republic of Macedonia in their music education attend the following courses: musical instruments, basics of music education, methodology of music education, orchestra and choir. As modern trends dictate active organized education is a characteristic of one contemporary education, and students may attend the active education program all courses.

In the overall music education, i.e the teaching curriculum for the above mentioned subjects

there are specific teaching curriculums that help students procure knowledge and the future teachers – students of the Faculty of Pedagogy need to obtain skills and knowledge so that they pass on the knowledge onto their students in the future. This teaching curriculum is in correlation with the needs of the community and the individual and the responsibility for improving the esthetic dimension of their life.

In order to describe the notion of multiethnic practices in music education, the concepts of intercultural and multicultural education needs to be explained. Some authors use these terms as synonyms in different language origins: for example, in Europe, the term intercultural education means education development that is adapted to the smaller communities as well. This type of education in English speaking countries is called multicultural education<sup>33</sup>. Others claim that these two terms have a complete different concept. The term multicultural education is a model of preserving cultural differences while the term intercultural model would mean an exchange of different cultural differences. According to the first multiethnic model the music education should be guided towards the development of the educational process which in some way will be adapted to specific cultural needs of the students from smaller communities while the intercultural education would mean an exchange of different cultural accomplishments.

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<sup>33</sup>Puzic S. 2007, Intercultural education in European context: Curriculum Analysis of Pre-chosen European Countries, Institute for social studies, Zagreb

Guiding music education in the faculties of pedagogy towards building multiethnic practices among the future education staff would be guiding of programs towards maintaining cultural differences among communities (but not as a separately didactic method). The programs in their core shall encourage values towards tolerance and mutual respect of cultural differences and in the case of avoiding the education's purpose shall form a well-rounded individual that will fulfill their citizens duties.

For men it is said that he/she is a cultural being due to effect of culture throughout the structuring process of his/hers internal and external world. Culture has made its impact in the formation of the thought process which enabled a person to rationally think, to conclude-reach decisions for things that are important and of value and to make decisions about one's lifestyle.<sup>34</sup>

When you analyse the term culture more factors are taken into consideration for the formation of the individual thought, characteristics, believes, feelings of one individual from one community with a recognizable culture. It is impossible to understand culture as a term if we do not think of it in singular, by comparison there is always a talk of cultures in plural.<sup>35</sup> Naturally, under the influence of media, science, entertainment, globalization, fashion and other different trends,

the comprehension of the term "culture" becomes important. As Thomas Hylland Eriksen would say "Culture represents a useful sum of ideas and it changes when a group of people work together."

Music education has an important role in the development of the multiethnic education by getting to know diverse music cultural characteristics of the communities (folklore, folklore instruments, folk songs and dances etc...). However, music should not be considered as the only subject that is the sole factor which in future shall prevent prejudice and at the same time shall successfully promote culture diversity.

### **Conclusion**

"Man is a segment of the whole, restricted by time and space. Man has always seen him/herself, his/her feelings, and thoughts as something more special than the others – a thought that represents an optical disillusion of his consciousness. This disillusionment represents a frame for all of us and restricts us and our wishes and love towards some of our close ones. Our task is to free ourselves from that frame, to enlarge the feelings circle and to accept all living creatures and nature in their entire beauty. There isn't a man that can succeed in all this, but the very persistence towards it is a foundation for inner security." Albert Einstein.

Variations in multiethnic communities mean more perspectives and ideas. Each music culture and tradition provides different music

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<sup>34</sup> Cvetanova G. 2007, Cultural differences and social integration: Macedonia before and after the Framework Agreement, Institute of Economic Strategies and International Relations – Ohrid, Skopje

<sup>35</sup> Intercultural education, T-KIT, No.4, Group, "Let us do...", CoE, EC, Belgrade, 2005.

terms, values, and opportunities for a variety of innovations. Music tradition and culture are the compounds of education and the different educational levels. The future teachers should set their own aims where they would follow the contemporary trends as globalization and multiethnic society and at the same time create new contemporary practices in education. The tasks that are imposed in this type of a situation are: assessing the importance of the multiethnic music education, devising a plan for its implementation, problem identification, and possible solutions.

Despite the fulfilment of these tasks in a world and a socio-political climate like the ones we live in, we must be sure that students-future teachers, in spite of their knowledge about western-European classical music tradition, shall gain experiences and knowledge about a variety of music cultures in the country. All of this shall lead to better understanding and bigger tolerance for all of those that are different from us. Following the rhythm and music and learning the characteristics within a multicultural society future generations shall have the opportunity to get to know the spiritual differences amongst one another. At the end in the words of Plato, rhythm is the expression of order and symmetry; it passes through the human body and soul, thus revealing the individuals' personality and at the same time it teaches about the culture of those nearby. (Jaques-Dalcroze, 58).

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***THE PRACTICUM PLACEMENT OF  
FUTURE TEACHER IN INFORMAL  
TRAINING ENVIRONMENT***

**Abstract**

*In today's society, teachers bear a large share of the responsibility of providing all children with equal opportunities for personal growth and development. One way to ensure that teachers are systematically equipped with the right set of skills is to include such skills in the initial teacher-training at university, and to expose teachers-in-training to children from many different social, economic, ethnic and educational background and abilities.*

*Therefore, since 2009, the OSCE Mission to Skopje has been implementing a project providing students (future teachers) with an opportunity to conduct a part of their practicum in the non-formal education sector, at NGOs that provide learning support to children of different ethnic, cultural, religious and/or social background. Prior to the placements, the students attend a seminar on the social aspects of the teaching profession. The seminar is followed by the actual placements at the NGOs, where the students develop an individual approach to the work with each child as each student continuously works with up to three children for the duration of the semester. Furthermore, giving future teachers the possibility to interact and work with children from different ethnic and cultural background during their practicum assignments enables them to better understand the children's learning needs, their approach to learning and the obstacles that they might face.*

*This paper will present the experiences that the OSCE Mission to Skopje gained during five years of project implementation in partnership with all five teacher-training universities in the country and six civil society organizations.*

**Keywords:** *students, teacher-training institutions, civil society organizations, children of different ethnic, cultural and social background*

### **Introduction**

The teaching is a highly complex and challenging profession. To be a good teacher means that a person should continuously invest in its personal and professional development, as they are considered to be the “shapers” of the future generations. Thus, a person that “shapes” the future generations has to be open-minded and receptive towards new methodologies and approaches, and should be a person with clear vision, mission and moral values. Moreover, every teacher has to practice teaching approaches adapted to the learning needs of the children. Last but not the least, they should treat every child with dignity and respect regardless of their ethnic, cultural, religious and/or social background.

The societies as well, especially the multi-ethnic ones, should pay particular attention in nurturing respect, tolerance and acceptance of the differences arising from their cultural and/or ethnic identity among their citizens. The latter, is a precondition for preventing separation,

segregation and discrimination along ethnic, linguistic and/or religious grounds. However, it is important to note that the children should embrace these values since their early age. The family and the teachers equally play an important role in this process, as they both influence the creation of the children’s positive or negative perceptions towards the other ethnicities. That the teachers are perceived as important shapers of the student’s perceptions was concluded in the OSCE Mission to Skopje study as of 2009, conducted among 4,000 secondary school students. According to the research results nearly 50 % of teachers sometimes or often make derogatory comments about children of other ethnic groups<sup>36</sup>. Another study of the OSCE Mission to Skopje as of 2011 conducted among 1,321 parents in 2011 shows that one fourth of the parents view the teachers' conduct as one of the main sources of tension in ethnically heterogeneous schools.

According to Nuland (2009) “an often-quoted expression defines a “teacher as a teacher 24/7, that is, a teacher is always a teacher and may be held accountable for in-and-out-of-school behaviours that have an impact on student learning or the teacher’s “employment role” (Stewart,2006: 353)”. Nuland points-out the important role the teachers have as role models for their students in-and-out of the classroom. In today’s society, teachers bear a large share of responsibility in providing all children with equal opportunities for personal growth and development. One way to ensure that teachers

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<sup>36</sup> <http://www.osce.org/skopje/41442?download=true>



are systematically equipped with the right set of skills is to include appropriate trainings already in the initial teacher training at university, and to expose the teachers-in-training to children from many different social, economic, ethnic and educational background and abilities.

The educational institutions perform a significant function in providing learning experiences to lead their students from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge. The key personnel in the institutions who play an important role to bring about this transformation are the teachers. As stated by the National Council for Teacher Education (1998) in their publication "Quality Concerns in Secondary Teacher Education" — the teacher is the most important element in any educational program. It is the teacher who is mainly responsible for implementation of the educational process at any stage<sup>37</sup>. According to the Goods Dictionary of Education teacher education means all the formal and non-formal activities and experiences that help to qualify a person to assume responsibilities of a member of the education profession or to discharge his/her responsibilities more effectively. Thus, the schools and the faculties play important role in students' preparation for their future career. Whereas the faculties build the students' theoretically, the schools equip them with practical knowledge for coping with the challenges they may face as classroom teachers. Therefore an intensive course of practical work in formal educational institution should be a

must for every student that will seek his/her future employment in education institution. Studies on existing teacher training in the region (Pantić, 2008; Rajković and Radunović, 2007; Zgaga 2006) invariably show that present provision concentrates on theoretical and subject related knowledge and skills with little hands-on experience of teaching in real-life classrooms. In fact, some courses involve no classroom experience at all and provide no opportunities for the teachers to increase their capacity to deal with a number of out-of-school factors (European Training Foundation, 2010:13).

#### **Practicum in non-governmental organization**

The Macedonian teacher training system provides the students with an opportunity to conduct their practicum in schools. However in this process the faculties, primarily the students, face many challenges. For example, some of the faculties send their students to conduct the practicum in schools located in urban areas; many schools "open" their doors to the students only because of the good personal contacts between the faculty mentor-professors and the school directors; many times the students end up being mentored by mentor-teachers that have neither necessary competencies, nor skills for this complex job. Other faculties due to lack of cooperation with the local schools struggle to find proper practicum places for their students, thus the students' very often have to work in improvised conditions. Consequently, the students remain unprepared not only for

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<sup>37</sup>[http://www.mu.ac.in/myweb\\_test/ma%20edu/Teacher%20Education%20-%20IV.pdf](http://www.mu.ac.in/myweb_test/ma%20edu/Teacher%20Education%20-%20IV.pdf)

classroom work, but most of all, for work in diverse environments.

Following the situation in the teacher training in 2009 the OSCE Mission to Skopje approached all five teacher training institutions in the country proposing them new teacher training approach which included students' practicum outside the formal education sector. Prior to be offered to all teacher training faculties in the country, the concept was firstly piloted in Skopje, and included a NGO specialized in the field of education and two teacher training faculties. The NGO Sumnal, included in the pilot project is located in the Topaana Mahala, mainly inhabited with ethnic Roma population. The NGO exists since 2004 and since then they work with the children from this area on literacy classes and help in overcoming different learning difficulties. However, their work goes beyond the work with the children, so in order to secure more successful reintegration of the children in the formal education system the NGO develops different programmes, which include work with their parents too. Like many other Roma neighbourhoods in the country, the citizens of the Topaana Mahala too, face poverty, substandard living conditions, illiteracy, lack of employment possibilities.... The effects of this situation have their impact on the younger generations. Hence, many children due to lack of proper clothing, school materials and food instead of being in the schools they try to help their families by earning on the local traffic lights.

Therefore, NGO Sumnal by organizing literacy classes in their premises took over the responsibility to help those children find their path to the school. The success of their work is evident as not only that they have managed to reintegrate a number of children into formal education system, but moreover they continued to support the children all the way till the end of the primary and further on to secondary education.

The pilot project included 20 students, future teachers, from the Faculty of Pedagogy "St. Kliment Ohridski" and the Institute of Pedagogy of the Faculty of Philosophy of the Ss Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. The students conducted their practicum in Sumnal working with a group of 40 children, minimum four hours a week over a period of eight months. The learning support was consisted of support in learning of Macedonian<sup>38</sup> language and math. The students had the possibility to develop their own unique teaching approach and to practice various techniques in the work with the kids. Moreover, whenever possible and needed they were encouraged to visit the children homes and to communicate regularly with their parents.

Due to the success of the pilot project, evaluated via the increased literacy among the kids and the significant number of kids returned back to school, in 2010 this concept was presented and offered to all other teacher

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<sup>38</sup> Many reports show the tendency the Roma children when they reach the fifth or sixth grade, the period when the schooling becomes more demanding, to leave the school due to lack of knowledge of the Macedonian language.

training institutions<sup>39</sup> in the country. Besides the individual approach in the work with the children, moreover the students have the possibility to interact with children from diverse economic, social, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

The project is implemented in two phases, an introductory seminar and practicum. Prior to the placements at the NGOs, the students attend an introductory seminar on the social aspects of the teaching profession where they attend courses in six different topics i.e. conflict resolution, non-violent communication, working with children from marginalized groups, multicultural education, recognising signs of domestic violence and preventing human trafficking. The training topics are taught to the students in non-formal setting via interactive teaching techniques. The students work in six mixed groups in terms of gender, ethnicity and faculties. Some of the activities have competitive character between the groups. The seminar is a place where the students meet their colleagues from the other teacher training institutions, are given space and time to freely express their views and opinions. Most importantly, at the seminar the students meet and work closely with students from other ethnic groups.

After the seminar the students continue with a practicum in NGOs<sup>40</sup>, following the Sumnal's example, have been chosen for this project based on their achievements and work in the field of education. The practicum is realized from three to six months depending of the available funds and always coincides with the students' formal practicum.

The cooperation between the respective NGO and the teacher training institution is formalized with Memorandum of Understanding. Under mentorship of a project coordinator, a person with strong background in the field of education, the students develop an individual approach in the work with the children and each continuously works with up to five children at maximum for the duration of a semester. Furthermore, giving the students the possibility to interact and work with children from different ethnic and cultural background during their practicum enables them to better understand the children's learning needs, their approach to learning and the obstacles that they possibly face. The project coordinator, who has a role of teacher-mentor organizes the students' work at the NGO, leads them through the process and help the students to better understand the learning difficulties of the children that they are working with.

Each student is encouraged to establish and maintain regular communication with the school/s the children attend in order to get first-

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<sup>39</sup> Faculties of Philosophy and Pedagogy of the University of Ss Cyril and Methodius in Skopje; Faculty of Philosophy of the State University of Tetovo; Faculty of Educational Sciences of the University of GoceDelcev in Štip; and Faculty of Education of the University of St. KlimentOhridski in Bitola

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<sup>40</sup> "Macedonian Organisation for Youth Education and Teacher Training – Happy Life" (Tetovo), "Aurora" (Tetovo); "Lifestart" (Bitola); Association for Human Rights Protection of Roma" (AHPRP) (Stip)

hand information of their learning problems and needs. They are also encouraged to communicate with the parents and, whenever possible and needed, to visit their homes in order to get sound knowledge of their socio-economic situation. All of this helps the students to develop unique individual approach in the work with the children and more competent in addressing their learning needs. The regular communication with the school teachers helps the students to continuously follow the child's progress in school. As the quality of the practicum experience positively or negatively impacts the students' perception of their teaching profession and influences their future professional development, therefore it is important that this first-hand practicum is organized in highly professional and motivating manner.

Based on the Memorandum of Understanding with the respective NGO, the faculties fully recognize the practicum hours of the students and count them toward the ECTS<sup>41</sup> credit point for the subject "Pedagogical Practicum".

Today this concept is fully recognised and practiced by all five teacher-training institutions from Skopje, Tetovo, Štip and Bitola, and so far nearly 600 students benefited from the seminar and the practicum in the NGOs. Furthermore, around 1,800 children of Macedonian, Roma, Albanian and Turkish ethnicity received support in learning and thus improved their results in school.

### **Why this approach?**

The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities recommendations as of 2009 directly addresses the primary, secondary and higher education in the country and call upon improvement and reforms in these areas. The document directly addresses the teacher training system by proposing the following recommendations:

#### A standardized pre-service teacher training

- Increased amount of practical hours
- Sufficient sensitivity and knowledge of inter-ethnic issues
- Practicum in a multi-ethnic environments
- Adequate pre-service training for teachers from all ethnic and linguistic backgrounds.

Following the above recommendations OSCE has developed and initiated the teacher training project as it considers that the students' can become better prepared for their future work in a multi-ethnic and a multi-cultural society should that is introduced already during their initial studies. For that reason OSCE has come up with this idea and project which basically fosters positive and constructive cooperation between the teacher training institutions and non-governmental sector.

The European Training Foundation in its 2010 report for the Republic of Macedonia indicates that having young people from different ethnicity in a same room together it will help to improve their relationship, however that is not enough. Therefore this communication should

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<sup>41</sup> European Credit Transfer System

go further more to cooperation and joint activities. The structure of the contacts, according to Allport's theory, is influenced by the following factors: personal contacts, cooperation rather than competition, equal status, and support of relevant authority (as cited in Deenen H, 2014). This project goes along with the Alport's theory for the structure of contacts as:

- It provides the students possibility to interact with students and pupils from an ethnic group different than their own over a longer period of time;
- It encourages and supports cooperation between the students from the different teacher training institutions;
- It promotes relation based on equality between the students and the pupils;
- It is recognised as beneficial, thus supported by the teacher training faculties and the OSCE Mission to Skopje, as well as the Ministry of Education and Science.

During the practicum, the students have the possibility to put in practice their theoretical knowledge gained during the years of initial study. Each student works with up to five children to whom he/she helps to imbibe those subjects in which they show lower scholastic results. Usually help is provided in literacy classes, math and writing homework. Besides the latter the students are also encouraged to organize various activities together and for the pupils such as theatre play, exhibition of

drawings, excursions to historical and religious objects, visiting other organizations etc.

This type of practicum provides the students with a unique opportunity to work with children from other ethnic groups. In Tetovo, for example, the e/Albanian students work with the children of Macedonian, Turkish and Roma ethnicity in Macedonian language. This helps the students to overcome the language barriers they may feel to have, as they are required to work in a language different than the language taught at their faculty. The students from Skopje do their practicum in the NGO Sumnal where they mainly work with e/Roma children. As the NGO is located in the centre of the Topaana neighbourhood, inhabited mainly by ethnic Roma, makes the students more mobile in terms of visiting the children's homes when and if needed. This, on other hand, helps the students to understand better the socio-economic situation of the children as a possible obstacle for their performance in school. Many times OSCE heard the students say that when they started going to the Sumnal they thought that the Roma kids are not intelligent as the "other" kids they meet. After being several of months together with the kids, they say, they realize that the children are children and all the same regardless of their ethnic of cultural belonging and should be given attention and support the learning results will be tremendous.

The practicum conducted in the NGOs helps the students to develop skills necessary for assuming their social role in a classroom and be able to understand and work with every child

regardless of their ethnicity, religion, social and/or cultural background, and the most of all of their learning abilities. Being aware that the quality of the practicum experience positively or negatively impacts the students' perception of their future profession, a lot of efforts are invested in providing quality practicum at the NGOs. According to Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, people can learn new information and behaviours by watching other people (observational learning or modelling). Following this theory, the behaviour of the teachers influences the behaviour of the children, since the teachers are important role models in their lives. Preparing (future) teachers for teaching in a multi-ethnic environment and thereby creating positive attitudes towards students of a different ethnicity, is beneficial to the inter-ethnic contacts between students (OSCE Mission to Skopje, 2013). The exposure of the future teachers to children of other ethnic groups during their training will help them to understand the differences arising from the ethnic and cultural identity. Some of the students and university professors who participated in the previous projects stated that the traditional practicum placements offered little opportunity for students to interact with children of other ethnic groups. Moreover, in the regular schools they usually work in a group of 25 to 30 children at once. Therefore, this project offers the students possibility to have an individual approach in their work with the children, by working with up to five children during a semester.

### **Project results**

As a result of this project and for the need to have more students benefiting out of the seminar training content in 2011 the OSCE Mission to Skopje supported development of a handbook on Teachers' Social Roles and Responsibilities. The handbook contained theory and activities on the seminar training topics i.e. conflict resolution, non-violent communication, working with children from marginalized groups, multicultural education, recognising signs of domestic violence and preventing human trafficking. The handbook is available in Macedonian and Albanian language and aims to serve to a larger group of students who cannot directly benefit out of the seminar.

The Mission's efforts to provide better preparedness of the future teachers, especially concerning the students' mentoring during their practicum have resulted in developing "Guideline for Students' Practicum in a Multi-Ethnic Society". The Guideline was developed by the Mission in cooperation with a team of professors from all pedagogical faculties in the country and an expert from the MoES. Later, more university professors, BDE advisers, primary school teachers and kindergarten educators had their contribution in further improvement of this document. The Guideline include a description of the aim of the practicum, the responsibilities of the mentor teachers and the students, a description of the structure of the practicum and templates for reporting on the student's performance during the practicum. Moreover, the Guideline unifies

the students' practicum at all teacher-training institutions in the country. The Guideline is endorsed by all teacher-training institutions and currently, is being used by students and mentor-teachers during the practicum assignments.

### **Results of the project evaluation**

Many external researches, as well as internal evaluations of the OSCE project, show that this type of programme is effective and improves the students' competencies for working in a multi-ethnic environment. Reyes and Bishop (2005) studied a programme that involved a partnership between a teacher training institution and urban after-school programme. The programme provided the students with an opportunity to experience working with students from diverse background and showed that was effective in overcoming the challenges the teachers face in multicultural education. Taylor and Sober (2003) found that opportunities for interaction with other ethnicities and chances for applying the theoretical knowledge in practice were highly valued by future teachers. Yet, the teachers develop competencies for integrated education only when they have possibility to interact with diversity in practical context (ETF, 2010) (as cited in Deenen H., 2014). Thus the OSCE project throughout the seminar and the practicum in the NGOs aims to provide the students with knowledge and necessary skills for working in ethnically and culturally diverse environments.

In 2011, the external evaluation of the teacher-training project found that by, basically, being

involved in this kind of activity the students are given the possibility to conduct high quality practicum in the local partner NGOs. Thus, the students increased their preparedness to teach in a multiethnic environment and practice the skills and knowledge they had received at the faculties. Moreover, the report stipulates that the children, mostly representatives of socially disadvantaged groups and with different ethnic backgrounds, due to their significant learning gaps, required constant support and individual approach. Many of them lack support by their family and face domestic violence and economic exploitation (OSCE Mission to Skopje, 2011).

An independent research conducted in 2011, conveyed among a group of students that have participated in the OSCE project and a control group composed of students that did not, showed that the teachers indeed play a significant role in shaping of the children's positive and/or negative perceptions towards the other ethnic groups in the society. The majority of the respondents have answered that their primary and secondary school teachers have been equally "responsible" for creating of their positive, as well as negative attitudes towards the other ethnic groups (Simonovska-Janackovska E. 2011). This goes in line and justifies the implementation of this and other similar projects that in their portfolio nurture the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural component.

Moreover, the same research explores the types of feeling the respondents nurture towards the other ethnic group. It concludes that the

students that have participated in the OSCE project show more positive feelings than the control group. Moreover, the “project” students stated that this type of practicum helped them to better understand and view the students from the other ethnic groups in a more positive manner than before the project. 87% of the respondents shared the opinion that this type of practicum should become mandatory during their studies (Simonovska-Janackovska E., 2011).

Deenen in her research paper on the inter-ethnic relations as of 2014 observes positive correlation between the participation of the students in the project and the competency scale. According to her the students that have participated in the project score higher of the competency scale than the students that did not. The students who have participated in the focus group have stated that the biggest benefit they got from their participation in the project is the interaction and work with other ethnicities and work in a small group of children during the practicum. The project and the faculty coordinators have been in an opinion that the stereotypes and the prejudices towards the other ethnic groups “vanish” during the project. The students learned to accept and respect the differences and acknowledge the equality. Though many students before the start of the project were very sceptical about the idea of teaching in multi-ethnic classes, yet at the end of the concept they showed to be far more positive about this concept.

According to the students-respondents in Deenen’s research as a result of the project they have gained more knowledge of other cultures, developed problem solving and conflict resolution skills and diminished the stereotypes and prejudices they had towards the other ethnic groups.

### **Conclusion**

A well-structured practicum is a guaranty for well-trained students and successful future professional. A student rich with theoretical and practical knowledge is imperative for excellent teacher. The variety and the diversity offered during the practical preparation of the students can result in nothing else but a teacher ready to take up and cope with the different professional challenges. Therefore, every student during the studies should be given the possibility to do his/her practicum in different types of settings whether that is in urban, rural, multi-ethnic, monotonic, multicultural, NGO, central or branch schools. The students’ partum should be well-structured process, mentored by competent in-service teachers who will help the students to develop a set of competencies and prepare them for work in multi-cultural and multi-ethnic environments.



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**THE GREEK NURSERY EDUCATION  
DURING THE ECONOMIC CRISIS  
PERIOD: WESTERN MACEDONIA  
KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS'  
INTERPRETATIONS AND  
CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Abstract**

*The present paper is concerned with Western Macedonia kindergarten teachers' interpretations on the shaped conditions in kindergartens during the economic crisis period. Through teachers' interviews, an attempt is made to realize how they perceive their instruction within kindergarten through multiple fields of relations. The latter form the outcome of the new policy for nursery education concentrated on cost-curtailment, increased number of students, teachers and salaries' reduction in combination to limited access to educational material. The elevation of the economic crisis-related thematic is concurrently pursued through the teacher-student contact in which each of them corresponds to different socio-economic environments.*

*A research with semi-constructed questionnaires and repetitive interviews about the crisis impact on nursery education was elaborated throughout 2009-2012, which was the period of escalating crisis and the development of an educational policy aligned to cost curtailment while the families' economic conditions were simultaneously changing. The teachers are therefore able to present combinatory data portraying the crisis effects. The region of Western Macedonia was selected due to its highest percentage of unemployment in Greece and the teachers' close collaboration with the local university. The research prerequisite on repetitive interviews is fulfilled*

by the stable sample for clarifications or additions.

Given the interviews content analysis, the results were grouped on the basis of five thematic units defined as follows: a) teachers' viewpoints about their occupation, b) teachers' viewpoints about the class organization, c) teachers' viewpoints about the educational policy, d) teachers' comparative viewpoints about the function of preschool education prior and after the economic crisis and e) their students' stances, attitudes and behaviours.

The teachers' concern about the downgrading of their instructional role is indicatively documented in the conclusions as they are not able to work as scientists-teachers in an insecure and uncertain professional environment. Their access to knowledge is simultaneously enfeebled because seminars, journals and books, among other materials, are rather limited in the Kindergarten. It is regarded that cost curtailment is not the right solution. On the contrary, this is a problem as the possibility of an education contributing to development and innovation is absent.

The presentation of the student community is of special interest. Students interpret the economic crisis in their own way by portraying images from their own families as well as broader social areas. The students' everyday life is depicted in the teachers' interviews who feel weak to confront emerging emotional issues in schools.

**Keywords:** economic crisis, teachers' viewpoints, teacher-student contact, socio-economic environments.

### Methodology

The present research was conducted during the period 2012-2014 across the educational sector of the Prefecture of Florina. The sample consists of 23 Kindergarten teachers.

In terms of demographic features, the Prefecture of Florina was selected as it is considered an area facing significant problems due to the economic crisis (Unsworth, 2009). According to statistical data Western Macedonia is characterized by high unemployment rates<sup>42</sup>. The sample is characteristically representative of both the urban and rural areas since the participants comprise 1/5 of the active Kindergarten teachers across the prefecture. Interviews with semi-constructed questionnaires were carried out. The questionnaire served as a baseline to study special issues related to economic crisis effects both on the educators' personal life and on the formulated educational conditions (King & Hoorocks, 2010).

The time period of conducting the research was decided on the grounds of school merging and abolishing during 2011, as educators could articulate their standpoints on the effects in full detail. A qualitative research was conducted as

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<sup>42</sup> Quote, it is not possible to investigate the actual unemployment rates due to subsidiary training programs which yield a fictitious view of employment.

the interpretations of the subjects about experiencing the current conditions were of great interest. Emphasis was also placed on their wishes and expectations of the future and how they regard the developing educational conditions, as they are the “protagonists” within a period of uncertainty and insecurity. The formal or informal creation of three fields in which interviewees were grouped was deemed important (Creswell, 2013).

- a. Field of economic crisis
- b. Field of Educational Environment
- c. Field of self-formation on the grounds of the two former fields

The interviews were conducted by the Kindergarten teacher – researcher, who is also the interviewees’ colleague, at local schools. Therefore, a positive climate was easy to develop to enable sample expansion and free communication between the interviewer and interviewees.

Data for merged or abolished schools were collected. Meanwhile, texts of union and political carriers and the legal framework for merging and abolishing schools were studied. Besides, parliamentary minutes and circulars of the Ministry of Education were explored. Prior to research, a number of texts and articles published in press and scientific journals were scrutinized. Throughout the research a multitude of material uploaded in media and social networks was also available. The considerations generated by authors and participants in social discourse were particularly useful to organizing and enriching

the research as well as to the illustration of its findings (Diaz, 2012).

### **Discussion – analysis of findings**

Although female participation was primarily considered a disadvantage, it was soon turned into an advantage because women, as realized from previous researches, are particularly analytical and explanatory about issues related to their viewpoints. The number of male Kindergarten teachers is dramatically small across the country and there is no male Kindergarten teacher in the prefecture. In this respect, it was possible to profoundly investigate their viewpoints focusing on how they experience the economic situation, uncertainty and insecurity as well as the fluid professional conditions after school merging and abolishing (Kalerante & Kontopoulou, 2012). This was done in combination to assessment perspectives and the threat of permanency being the outcome either of shifting to another area after the loss of their base position or due to negative assessment. Gender was correlated to corresponding social stereotypes, namely their role of family caretakers and, in some cases, breadwinners due to the increased unemployment of husbands, companions or boyfriends.

At the beginning of the research the researcher was cautious as to whether Kindergarten teachers would be willing to participate and whether the teacher – researcher would be convincing enough towards the creation of a confidence climate among colleagues. Eventually, the Kindergarten teachers seemed

to be positive to dialogue and perceived the research as a channel to present their viewpoints which were either a form of protest or psychoanalysis, in terms of content (Brickmann & Kvale, 2014). Both options were particularly useful because in the case of protest they strongly disapproved the current economic, social, political and cultural situation (Allen, 2013). Special concentration was placed on social inequalities, cancellation of civil rights and access to the consuming society (Allessio, 2013). The educators' low social status was tied to the shrinking of their income. The policy of rights was associated with the loss of stability in their work and everyday life with emphasis on the fear of unemployment and social disdain. Psychoanalysis illustrated their fear of rejection, marginalization and a dismal future (Krugman, 2009).

Their discourse and emotional state unveiled feelings of sorrow, fear and despair. They were particularly preoccupied with their children's future, unemployment and cancellation of optimistic life plans (Kalerante, 2013d). Besides, they also belong to middle social strata, which benefited from a policy of rights and privileges redistribution in a liberal system which seemed to create prospects for these strata (Kalerante, 2013e). Surprisingly enough, most of them do not wish to immigrate and are not ready to do so<sup>43</sup>. Therefore, they apparently want to stay in their country and create opportunities both for them and their offspring, benefiting from their educational capital that

can be transformed into information to give them a further advantage compared to other population groups of lower educational capital (Kalerante, Momory & Momory, 2013b). Therefore, education seems to be the only solution for them and their offspring hoping to reach more rational choices (Boudon, 1974).

School merging and abolishing is associated with economic crisis and is regarded as a negative situation for educators<sup>44</sup>. The risk of being laid off, economic insecurity and salary reductions are some of the general effects of economic crisis on education (Bauman, 2006). Consequently, professional insecurity, intensified by the fear of assessment (Dove, 2011), is highlighted<sup>45</sup>. Salary reductions and dismissals due to negative assessment were reported as effects of assessment<sup>46</sup>. Nevertheless, they were observed to be positive towards an assessment independent from their economic and professional development, namely a repetitive and multilateral assessment with emphasis on self-assessment<sup>47</sup>. As a result, they were emotionally charged and full of disappointment, pessimism and embarrassment<sup>48</sup>.

A transitional period seems to be formed towards readjustments. Additionally, the fact that educators are presented ready to fight, an issue of future research, is rather encouraging. Moreover, the large number of students in the classroom is troublesome for both educators

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<sup>43</sup> See 1. diagrams, annex a5a &a5b

<sup>44</sup> See 1. diagrams, annex a1, a2 & a3

<sup>45</sup> See diagram 7

<sup>46</sup> See diagram 14

<sup>47</sup> See diagram 15

<sup>48</sup> See diagram 6

and students. The policy of school merging and abolishing is deemed irrational and conducive to downgrading the state school (Kalerante, 2013a). The increasing numbers of students per classroom along with the reduced costs for materials, which are necessary to Kindergartens to implement the curriculum, are estimated to downgrade the work and role of educators (Kalerante, 2013c). Their educational mission is confined as they assume roles of safeguarding the infants but without substantial educational work. Another issue of concern for Kindergarten teachers is the fact that Kindergarten students have been emotionally charged by the economic crisis which they experience in their families as consuming goods are reduced and parents are in conflicts more often<sup>49</sup>. Interestingly enough, the abandonment of province due to the loss of school as a core of communication and culture<sup>50</sup> is deemed part of the effects (Heath, 1981). Furthermore, students' transportation and difficulties in adjusting to crowded classrooms is another important factor which has emerged due to the crisis<sup>51</sup>. The positive outcome, though, is that participants are aware of the political situation and appear to be ready to face it, hoping to a better future<sup>52</sup>. Educators continue to make plans for the future about an efficient education containing alterations in teaching methodology, emphasis on the pedagogical and psychological support within a flexible program adjusted to

the students' needs and based on the educators' estimations<sup>53</sup>.

On the basis of a reformed education, seminars for educators are suggested to help them manage the problems more systematically and effectively in their classrooms<sup>54</sup>. Educators realize that education is not functional under the current circumstances while the insecurity and uncertainty of the educational community is intensified.

### Conclusions

Kindergarten teachers are significantly preoccupied with the economic crisis in relation to their future. Both economic and professional dimensions are pinpointed with emphasis on the loss of their scientific role because after the school merging and abolishing they ought to work under unfavourable circumstances with an increased number of students and decreased amount of materials (Hamre, 2012). Participants are especially irritated due to the downgrading of preschool education, which has recently been compulsory. Their panoptic supervision by bureaucratic structures is negative to them since they perceive them as authoritarian and confining of their rights. They also refer to assessment as an anomy, namely the lack of confidence to institutions, questioning of the legal framework of assessment and pose questions about who the assessors will be, how they will be assessed and what the consequences of assessment will be (Jackson, 1987). The fear of marginalization is

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<sup>49</sup> See 1. diagrams a4

<sup>50</sup> See 2. diagrams 3

<sup>51</sup> See 2. diagrams 4

<sup>52</sup> See 1. diagrams a6

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<sup>53</sup> See diagrams 8,9,10

<sup>54</sup> See diagrams 11,12

implicitly stated in a local society in which a negative assessment may be conducive to their educational - social exclusion or job loss during a period of growing unemployment and insecurity (Sernau, 2010). The humanistic content of their studies has been apparently conducive to the formation of positive attitudes towards educating their students (Cole, 2012). At the same time, they hope for a better future. Another issue of major concern, which should be further explored, is the infants' interpretation of the economic crisis that is how they describe the crisis in terms of consuming less goods and despair for the ordeals in the family.

The present research among Kindergarten teachers in the Prefecture of Florina contributes to the highlighting of preschool educators' stances and beliefs during the specific period and could possibly spark off further quantitative or qualitative researches with complex research tools. Being a case study, findings of other research about uncertainty and insecurity and the generation of anomic phenomena due to the lack of the citizens' confidence to institutions are verified. Besides, more general educational phenomena about the cancellation of the right in education with school merging or abolishing or the planning of monitoring and authoritarian policies, such as assessment, are assured. It is very important that although educators experience rejection and belittlement of their work as well as insecurity, they do continue to be efficient in their work as they strongly believe that they can play a role in change or reformation.

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### **Abstract**

*The issue for the successful implementation of the practice of future educators and teachers is indivisible from the issue of the overall quality of teacher education itself.*

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### ***EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT A PREREQUISITE FOR QUALITY PRACTICE OF FUTURE EDUCATORS AND TEACHERS***

*The contemporary condition as a place, role and approach to realization of the quality practice of future educators and teachers, emphasize the need for permanently effective management. The reasons for this are numerous and unavoidable, starting from modern requirements which are consistent with existing dynamic changes in the educational system and society. The existence of several different models, approaches and strategies at the European and world level, indicated on the need for efficient management of the practice of future educators and teachers, presenting that as a prerequisite for quality realization of the practice and education in whole. In this context, supporting the realization of the practice in a multicultural environment, is valid desirable model for develop the required competencies of future educational staff in preschool and primary education.*

*The efficient management of the practice of future educators and teachers in a multicultural environment presumed planning and strategic managing, developing of communication skills, abilities, forms, applying of different approaches, methods of evaluation, as well as care for characteristics and requirements of the*

*participants and the concrete multicultural environment.*

**Keywords:** *effective management, practice of future educators and teachers, multicultural environment.*

### **Intrioduction**

For quality realization the goal and the process of the practice of future educators and teachers, it is necessary to apply efficient management of the same.

Considering the importance of practice into developing the necessary competencies of future educators and teachers, as well as defining the essence of management in education, the practice is important and complex issues that require serious, comprehensive and systematic approach.

Educational management is closely linked to the practice of future educators and teachers. Indeed educational management comprehensively deals with educational practices either in terms of pre-service or in-service training and professionalism of educators and teachers from all educational subsystems. Educational management represents a dynamic process and side of the education itself, including the treatment of various educational forms, types and institutions, but also the human (children, students, educators, teachers, parents, principals, university professors, educational professionals and head of the departments,

local, state, national, etc.), material resources (finance, buildings, equipment, materials, etc.), and the mix of all these aspects into a whole actually is educational management (Paul Monroe).

The application and the presence of educational management in the field of education, particularly in the practice of future educators and teachers is significant in terms of the effective adoption and training them for the proper application of a number of procedures, approaches and techniques that characterize the practice of successful classrooms i.e. the practical operation of the educators and teachers.

The need for efficient management of the practice of future educators and teachers is reflected in the purpose of the educational management itself who is related to democratic principles and human rights (among other things, rights of children), through efforts to provide the right of children and students for education from the side of the real and competent teachers, with the financial basis and support from the state, and with the ultimate goal profiting a children and students from their own learning and becoming a responsible citizens of the real society (Sir Graham Balfour).

### **Some understanding of the practice of future educators and teachers and its efficient management**

The practice of teachers and future teachers is important not only for the purpose of acquiring

and developing skills, abilities and attitudes (skills, dispositions, understanding), knowledge of certain areas, but also to develop capabilities for decision making, the right and real choice and carrying the responsibility for all the needs and requirements in which will work and with which people will work. All this points to the complexity of the work, the role and mission of the profession teacher and educator. Future teachers and teachers should be able for applying, understanding and developing the approaches, methods, techniques, activities, etc., not forgetting when it should have possess abilities and skills reflecting, developing critical and creative thinking and action. Within it as part of future educators and teachers should be able for open, continuous and significant (significant) communication with parents, community and other employees of the school and education in general. The development of communication and social abilities, skills and habits is one of important links in the process of teaching and learning of future generations, as well as the development of a modern civil society.

Today understands of the practice of future educators and teachers, except the professional aspect, i.e. practical training, linkage of theory with practice, etc., includes certain other aspects, such as:

1. more than successful transmission of certain knowledge, abilities, skills and values to future generations;
2. active, critical, responsible, challenging approach to the existing practice,

introduced structure and mode of implementation;

3. becoming of mediator of child development and student, through opening a new avenues and opportunities;
4. through its operations and activities, educators and teachers should contribute to establishing, fostering and development of dialogue with all the differences, needs and specificities and their inclusion in education and training;
5. maintenance and development of social dialogue and democracy in a multicultural environment.

In terms of their own work and role, the efficient management of the practice of future educators and teachers should help them to realization of some certain modern pedagogical requirements, and that educators and teachers should to:

1. be dedicated to children's and students, their learning and development;
2. be the members of learning community;
3. know the areas and subjects they teach;
4. possess the necessary pedagogical knowledge, abilities, skills (ie competence);
6. responsible for monitoring and managing the learning and development of children and students;
7. continuous and systematic thinking about their own work and practice and learn from their own and other experiences;
8. always pursue lifelong learning and professional development.

The issue of effective management of the practice of future educators and teachers comes from the contemporary understanding of the educational management which means, among other things: science, art, organization, person, behaviour.

The introduction of management education and with that in the practice of the future educators and teachers is in accordance with specified such it is:

- a. scientific discipline - treats issues with determining philosophy, laws, theories, principles, processes and practices that can be applied in different situations, including schools and other educational institutions, agencies, etc. Educational management as a scientific discipline treats different topics and areas of different scientific disciplines, as well as acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes specified area that can be obtained through the learning experience and during the pre-service education and professional career development of educators and teachers . On the other side is a set of management processes, approaches, activities, things such as decision making, problem solving and action planning. These processes include the management of resources including human, material, financial and time;
- b. art - refers to the execution of educational, organizational functions and tasks, including various procedures and techniques (communication: including decision-making and problem solving,

social: relationships with children, students, parents, educators, teachers, other professionals and others personally, personal: managing of daily operations, but and with the changes, professional: work and involvement in various professional bodies where faces appointment and sharing of responsibilities and duties.);

- c. organization - creating formal structures and functioning based on placed educational goals based on the mission and vision of the educational institution;
- d. personality, each educator and teacher faces the need and requirements for managing the educational process needs and conditions and it in several levels: at the level of each child, student separately, then the level of group-level manager or member of the team; etc.);
- e. behaviour - the approaches, planning, application, monitoring such as and evaluation procedures, approaches, processes, etc., in education presupposes certain behaviour of educator and teacher, also the adoption, adoption and bring responsibility for decisions, then address certain problems, etc.

Connecting the efficient management with the quality of the practice of future educators and teachers, among other things can be seen from the very aspects of educational management which are in a dynamic and interdependent relationship, including: planning, organization, direction and supervision, evaluation.

Aspect of planning is related to the efficient and effective planning of the practice of future educators and teachers. This aspect include: a) focus on the mission and vision as the pre - service education of educators and teachers also as of the preschool and school educational institutions and subsystems; b) finding and determination of the main points and routes for real linking theory with practice; c) inclusion of the necessary modern theories, approaches, strategies, procedures, techniques, tools, technologies, etc. for practical training of future educators and teachers; d) training for the duties, rights, responsibilities arising and related profession educator and teacher; f) providing the knowledge and practical training in innovation and modern demands of the profession, as well as enriching experiences and personality development of future educators and teachers.

The aspect of organization is perceived in the way of implementation of the practice of future teachers, as well as the allocation of human and material resources. For this purpose it is necessary to prepare an action plan or action plans with the intention of achieving goals (which actually is the long-term, medium-term, short-term, as well as dynamic and changeable character) that are aimed at more efficient and effective achievement of the practice of future educators and teachers. This aspect includes the allocation of human and material resources according with required, planning stages, as well as the distribution and dynamics of the time for the exercise of the practice itself.

Aspect of directing relates to the implementation of planned activities, plans regarding the practices of future educators and teachers. Also this aspect includes the allocation of obligations and responsibilities (in the case of employees and students of higher educational institutions and educators, teachers and officials from the preschool and elementary schools, as well as other relevant professionals), then motivating everyone involved participants, adherence towards organized, as well as coordination and control of all the stages of realization of the practice of future educators and teachers.

Aspect of supervision includes several elements: a) monitoring the process of implementation and execution of the practice of the future educators and teachers, b) ensuring that all activities and steps are carried out in accordance with agreed criteria and standards for the implementation of the practice; c) taking steps to resolve the problems and certain deficiencies or concerns.

Aspects of evaluation concerns the final part of the cycle of realization of practice designed for future educators and teachers, through the evaluation of the results and their comparison with the set goals. Mentioned aspects include assessment of all participants as well as the possibility of getting feedback which is important and necessary to adapt to future plans to implement the practice of future educators and teachers.

The consideration of all aspects of educational management in order to effectively managing

the practice of future educators and teachers indicates cyclical, dynamical and mutual connection all aspects, their conditionality and the opportunity to constantly monitor and improve the practice provided for future educators and teachers. Also the clarity and specificity of these aspects is important for efficient access, implementation and improvement of the practice by the higher education institutions for the initial education of educators and teachers.

### **Areas and principles of practice of the future educators and teachers and its efficient management**

Considering the above, according to some authors to the practice of future educators and teachers, it is necessary the teachers colleges to access special seriousness because it is an important consideration to the professional establishment and acquisition of the necessary competencies of future educators and teachers.

For successful and quality practice of future educators and teachers in the today modern context, it needs the efficient management of the following areas:

1. pedagogical;
2. systematic;
3. cultural;
4. communication - social.

Effective management of the pedagogic area (Coburn 2003; Nelson & Sassi 2005; Robinson 2007) refers to the increased opportunity and a share of the educators and teachers in

participating in their own learning and professional development, projecting the self as a person who permanently learn and deepen their knowledge, abilities and skills. Also in this context is very important to support the quality of knowledge about learning and teaching in terms of completeness and in respect of each child, student individually and in relation to the different needs, challenges. It is especially important for the future educators and teachers to be able to know how to learn the existing professional requirements (planning, monitoring, evaluation, curriculum, standards, expectations, goals, etc.), to manage them and to become part of a professional community that learns.

Efficient management of the systematic area relates to issues connected with the issue how the educational and institutional system works, what are the innovation, areas that require running a special care, improving or strengthening. This area includes all resources, assets, strategy, planning, required for the functioning, realization, improvement and development as a personal, individual aspects also and institutional and professional aspect of future educators and teachers.

Cultural area refers to a subtle and broad dimension that includes the personality (contender for future educators and teacher), the children, students, also the culture of the educational institutions (kindergartens, schools, teachers Training Faculty, etc.) and the society in whole. The main issue, question in this area refers to the values, and the all cultural

experience and behaviour that we wear, but also what we develop in relationship with others. There are a number of studies that indicate the need for efficient management of good practice in terms of a specified area, because clearly indications of links to the overall success as of educators, teachers, children, students also and of educational institutions from all educational subsystems, through understanding, respect and connection to the values that each of us possess, and carry them as part of a socio-cultural group, etc. (Stoll et al. 2003; Robinson 2007; Bishop et al.2007).

Communication - social area has long been considered as implied, in relation to achieving the necessary educational goals and expectations to future educators and teachers, forgetting the fact that their profession is actually a profession where are going and coming to fully, true expression "a meeting of the personalities "(Bratanić, 2007). The efficient management of communication - social area indicates the possibility of increasing the quality of knowledge, abilities, and skills-building communication - partnership with all stakeholders in education. While, It allows promotion of models and strategies for building and developing interpersonal communication skills, overcoming and resolving conflicts of all kinds, as well as building effective professional learning communities, including multicultural characteristics, diversity, etc.(Biddulph et al. 2003).

Creating quality practice of future educators and teachers and efficient management of the same including these areas will allow laying a solid foundation for the development of future professionals will also be able to work and creation in a multicultural society.

As certain principles for achieving quality practice of future teachers and teachers shall state the following: (Chickering, A.W; Gamson, Z.F, 1987)

1. encouraging contacts between students and faculty;
2. developing reciprocity and cooperation among students;
2. using active learning techniques;
3. giving prompt feedback;
4. emphasizing of time on task;
5. communicating of high expectations;
6. respecting the diverse talents and ways of learning.

Without detailed analysis when reviewing these principles for achieving good quality practice of future educators and teachers, we can conclude that are significant and the other aspects except the personal, professional training of every future educator and teacher separately. The practice covers and part of the development of the collaborative - partnership in the process of training, learning, solving certain problems and dilemmas, as well as the process of reflecting, monitoring and individual approach. This meaning suggests the need for qualitative and efficient management of the practice, without forgetting of all that every prospective educator and teacher brings such a person (expectations,

predispositions, talents, experiences, etc.), I.e. their cognition and comprehension like a "teacher identity" which actually represents part of the knowledge, skills and values that continuously are evolves and gain a new dimensions.

Efficient management of the practice of future educators and teachers if encompass these areas, principles and if carried out according to the guidelines for a quality management of the implementation of the practice, then there is a good basis for professional achievement and developing of the same. This approach is important because of the possibility of becoming an acceptable and applicable model for further professional training of students of teaching faculty, but also beyond. In fact, according to research the transfer, i.e. the connection between effective professional learning and effective teaching practice is important in the area of professionalism and professional development of educators and teachers.

### **Conclusion**

Efficient management of the practice of future educators and teachers allows them the true professionalism of within the current overall modern requirements and changes. Implementation of process of the practice of future educators and teachers it need to be linked with posed goals, targets, expectations, models, curriculum aspects, etc., as and the bottom line, the mission and vision of faculties for teachers and pedagogy with expectations, values, experiences, needs, specificities, etc., of

students themselves. This interconnection will allow not only linking theory and practice in relation to the profession educators and teachers, but also their connection to real embodiment of the mere practice. This kind of understanding of practice represents its achievement not only for, but by and through the future educators and teachers. After all learning, collaboration, development continues.

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***PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE BETWEEN  
TEACHERS AND FUTURE TEACHERS IN  
MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENTS –  
EXPERIENCES***

### **Abstract**

*The multicultural education is a process which firstly starts with getting acquainted with your own culture and continues with getting acquainted with the other cultures that exist in your environment and surrounding. It begins individually, with persons carriers of cultures, which practically means that interaction between the cultures is done by individuals - representatives of their own culture and carriers of certain attitudes and beliefs, with their own perception of the world.*

*The challenges in our educational system derive from the social changes and needs. The concept of nine years primary education and schooling contains the principles of developing of child's personality. The principle of understanding the others and multiculturalism is also present among the other principles.*

*Accordingly, it can be concluded that the aim of the educational and behaving process is not only acquiring a knowledge by the pupils but rather mutual respect, and respect of the different than us. Pupils will achieve this with mutual cooperation with the pupils from different cultures coordinated by their teachers. The teachers, in order to respond to this challenge and successfully guide not only the pupils but also the students' future teachers, attend seminars on working with pupils in multicultural environments, which enables them to enlarge and improve their own competences as well as their professional development.*

*Being a teacher means a professional with different skills, who is continuously learning and improving oneself while calling this occupation. The pedagogical practice that they take in schools is one of the ways of training and improving of the skills of the upcoming teachers. This has great importance for the students - future teachers, as it develops their competence, especially in the multi-cultural environments.*

*Having a thorough knowledge of the pedagogical methodology and scientific disciplines are not enough for the student future teacher to realize its compulsory pedagogical practice especially in the multicultural environment.*

*Therefore, the role of the teacher-mentor is of great importance for the students when doing their pedagogical practice. Mentor should be in a position to emphasize its role of a consultant and to convey his own experience to the students -future teachers.*

**Keywords:** *multicultural, respecting, pupils, teachers, students.*

## **Introduction**

Pedagogical practice of students presents a kind of partnership between the faculty of pedagogy and schools. This partnership should be well organized and should provide good- quality practice for students/future teachers. For better quality in carrying out the pedagogical practice, teacher-mentors should be familiar with the pre

knowledge of students who are carriers of pedagogical practice, so that they will be able to make successful bondage between the theory and practice that they will perform in schools especially in multiethnic schools.

For successful realization of pedagogical practice the communication between the teacher-mentors and students is very important and crucial. This communication should also be reflected in the communication between the students- future teachers and pupils. Namely communication between them should be lead with language and terminology that is understandable for students especially in multicultural environments, since the content that is taught might be forgotten but the relationship will always be remembered.

Mentorship between the teacher and the students is a process in which a teacher mentor supports a student-future teacher in getting practical experience during the last years of education while the pedagogical practice is going on.

The students that come to do pedagogical practice in schools previously should get acquainted with teaching plans and programs, as well as the innovations that are in use in primary education. That is necessary because only on that way students can successfully fulfil pedagogical practice. For that purpose, faculties are supposed to introduce students with everything that is include and carry out as an innovation regarding the programs, methods, techniques, but also the projects that are

realized in schools and that are connected with education.

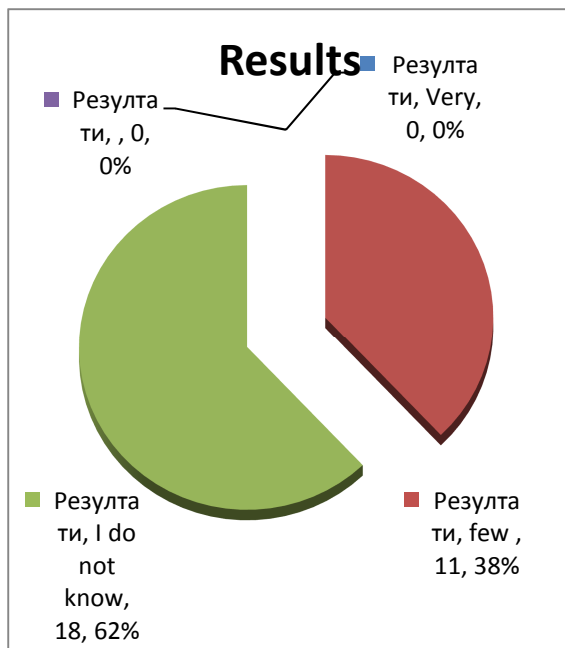
To find out to what extent teachers- mentors are satisfied with students' pre knowledge and their realization of pedagogical practice , as well as students' acquaintance with teaching programs,

and the realization of pedagogical practice on the other hand the poll was carried out in primary school "St. Kliment Ohridski" Bitola. The poll enclosed 29 teachers and same number of students. The result from the poll is the following.

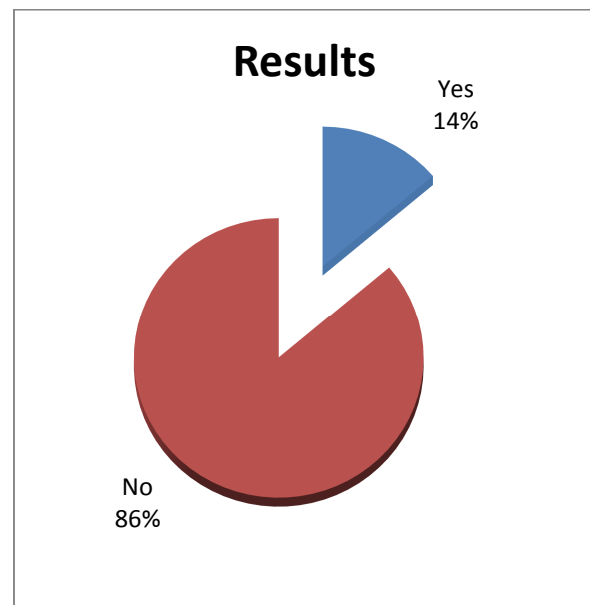
POLL FOR TEACHERS	Working experience		
	Up to 10 years	From 11 to 20	From 21 and more
To what extent do you think the students are familiar with teaching plans and programs			
very			
not very	3	3	5
They are not familiar at all	9	5	4
Do students have any information about new teaching programs?			
Yes	1	1	2
No	17	5	3
Do students encourage cooperation between the pupils regardless the ethnic and religious affiliation?			
Yes	10	4	5
No	2	1	7
To what extent are you satisfied with the realization of classes from the part of students?			
Vey	6	3	2
Partly	5	2	6

I am not satisfied at all	1	2	2
To what extent are students satisfied with these classes?			
Very	6	3	2
Partly	5	2	6
they are not satisfied at all	1	2	2

The results taken from the poll show that the teachers' opinion is that students are very little familiar with the teaching programs and plans (very 0 %, a little 28 %, not familiar at all 68 %)

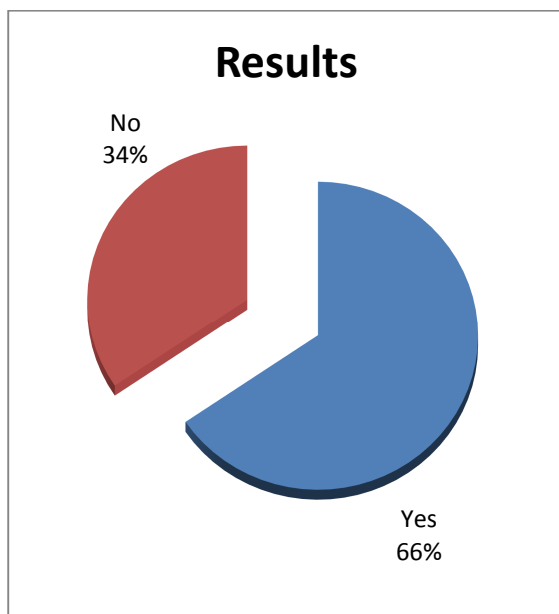


is that a large number of students are not familiar with them (14 % yes, 86 % no).

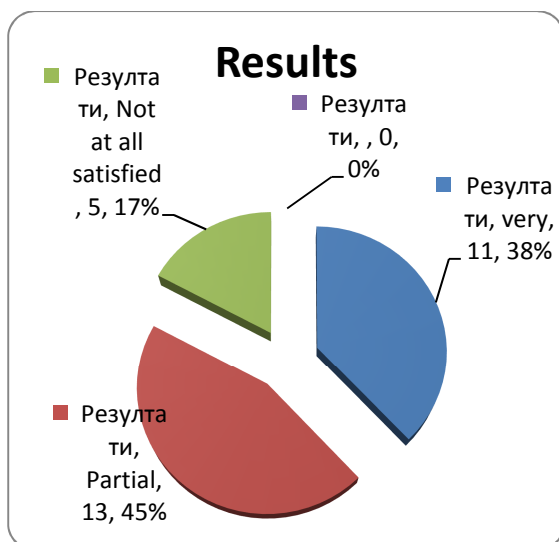


Regarding the third question, what teachers thought about the encouragement of cooperation between the pupils regardless the ethnic and religious affiliation from the part of the students, the results show that many students successfully realized that (66% yes , 34 no )

Regarding the second question if the students had any information about new educational programs the results show that teachers' opinion



Regarding the last two questions about students and teachers satisfaction from realization of classes from the part of students a great part of them are partly satisfied ( 38 % very , 45 % partly , not at all 17 %).

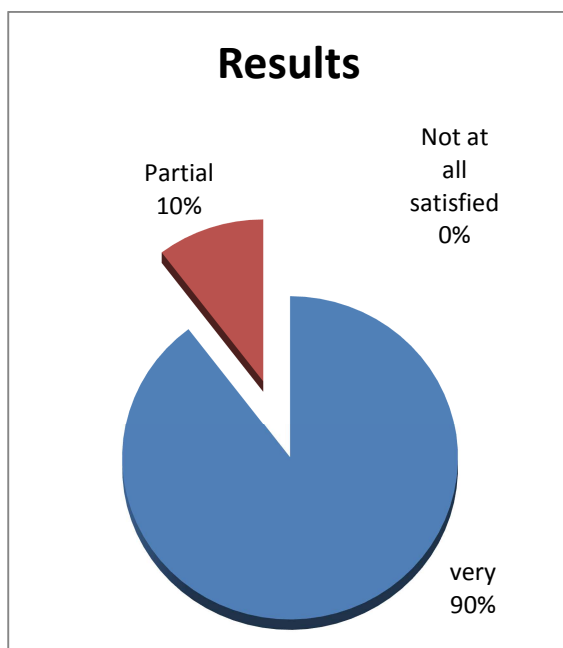


POLL FOR STUDENTS

To what extent are your familiar with teaching plans and programs?	
Very	13
Little	7
Not at all	9
Do you have any information about new teaching programs?	
Yes	12
No	17
Do you encourage cooperation between pupils regardless the ethnic and religious affiliation ?	
Yes	29
No	/
Do you use terminology and language that is close to pupils' age in multicultural environments?	
Yes	29
No	/
Are you satisfied with cooperation between you and the teacher mentor in multicultural environment?	
Very	26
Partly	3
Not satisfied at all	/
To what extent are you satisfied with realization of classes?	
Very	29
Partly	/
Not satisfied at all	/
To what extent are children satisfied with these classes?	
Very	29
Partly	/
Not satisfied at all	/

The results taken from the poll that was carried out with students who do pedagogical practice in primary schools in multiethnic environments, match with the answers that they are very little familiar with the current teaching programs and the adopted ones. And on the questions about using terminology and language appropriate with pupils age in multicultural environments and to what extent children and students were pleased from realization of classes they all agreed that they were very pleased- 100%.

As to the cooperation between teachers and students, students in large number are satisfied from this cooperation ( very 90 %, partly 10 %, not at all -0 % )



### Conclusion

When these two polls are compared - the poll carried out with students and the poll carried

out with teachers regarding the realization of pedagogical practice in multicultural environments, we come to a conclusion that students, before they realize their pedagogical practice, should get better acquainted with current teaching programs as well as adopted ones and also with the projects that are realized in schools. Considering the cooperation between the teachers - mentors and students who carry out the pedagogical practice one can conclude that it is good and that both, teachers and students are partly satisfied from realization of classes from the part of students. They will be all satisfied when students -future teachers are familiar with the current teaching programs and also with the changes that occur in pedagogical and educational process

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**THE USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TEACHING MATERIALS ON THE "MOODLE (ABBREVIATION FOR MODULAR OBJECT-ORIENTED DYNAMIC LEARNING ENVIRONMENT)" PLATFORM FOR EDUCATION IN MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENTS**

**Abstract**

*Learning is a glorious sun of heaven Wm. Shakespeare 1564 - 1616 English Writer*

*This paper is designed to describe a short historical retrospective of the introduction of computers in the education system, explains the concept of learning and the concept of e-learning, it describes the current situation and the future of e-learning system in the Republic of Serbia, describes the concepts and the role of the e-learning to enhance teaching and education system as a whole, giving an overview of the standards for the implementation of e-learning and defines the meaning of the "LMS - Learning management system", as well as some of the options for enforcing particular, especially the use of "Moodle" platform for education in multicultural environments.*

**Keywords:** *e-learning, "Moodle" platform, multicultural environments.*

**Brief historical retrospective of introducing "computer" in the education system**

At the end of the sixties of the last century, only a small number of scientific research institutes had computer equipment from different manufacturers, where they gained first experiences.

Universities throughout the former "Yugoslavia" wanted to be integrated into a single computer system. Instead of being left to each university, at its own discretion, to choose equipment and initiate development, the state passed a far-reaching decision and got seven identical computer systems that were installed at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering in Ljubljana, Zagreb, Belgrade, Sarajevo, Nis, Podgorica and Skopje. This has established intensive cooperation between these centres.

Problems in working with new computer equipment and systems are solved by working together, exchanging experiences and for less than two years following schools are taking precedence in the development of computer science in the country, while institutes continue to painstakingly cope with often incompatible hardware, for whose use is not enough knowledge and experience.

### **Current status and future system for electronic learning in serbia**

From its beginning, the education system in Serbia is always rewarded in the dynamism and striving to follow contemporary developments in the field, although this phrase seems quite worn, but the fact that it is present at all stages of technology development can find certain educational institutions or organizations that are in terms of research and application of modern teaching methods were very close to the most advanced centres in the world.

Just conclusion "... cannot find a particular educational institution or organization with

respect to exploration or the use of modern teaching methods were very close to the most advanced centres in the world" indicates a problem in resolving the introduction of e-learning in educational institutions at all levels and especially at the start of the educational process or in elementary schools [1].

The use of information technology in education and science in Serbia was the subject of numerous conferences and meetings, for example, one of the recent conference was devoted to the completion of the regional FP7 project SEER-EI (South East European Research Area for e-infrastructure), in which participated Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Serbia and the Belgrade University, entitled "use of information Technologies in Education and Science". At the meeting they discussed state and prospects of development of information society in Serbia, activities RCUB and Academic Network of Serbia as an engine of development of information society, there was talk about the use of information technology in scientific research and education activities, the new IT services that are available to the academic community, as well as the prospects of e-infrastructure in the region and plans for the future.

### **The concept of learning and the concept of e-learning**

The concept of learning is described in the traditional sense and made the correlation between the concept of learning in this regard and electronic learning (e-learning).

Learning is a complex mental process of changing behaviour based on acquired knowledge and experience; adoption habits of information, knowledge, skills and abilities. Learning is the process of storing data in "memory" [2]. Learning can be simply defined as the process of acquiring knowledge that we need and with the help of which we can better and live better. Although the concept of learning is linked to school and learning in the different subjects, learning actually begins in early childhood when we begin to learn to speak and walk.

Following this conceptual definition of learning made the connection with the time in which we live, and in relation to significant changes caused by the rapid and dynamic development of information and digital communication technologies that affect every aspect of human life including the educational teaching.

All this talk about the necessity of the use of new technologies for reasons of interoperability both at the higher levels of education and in the real sector of the manufacturing industry. Just interoperability requirements necessary given the need for the introduction of e-learning still at the level of eight years of education and more importantly lets you upon completion of formal education, people can continue uninterrupted - lifelong learning, which essentially is the basic concept of "do not give the student the hunt (ready-made lessons) but students learn to hunt (logical thinking). "

Correlation of the term e-learning with the established notion of learning can best be seen

through the explanation that made e-learning a whole system of procedures, processes and teaching materials that provide versatility and efficiency of learning as an individual activity (mental processes), and as an important social activity not only procedure of learning in the school system, but in "Knowledge society", a formative activity development of the whole community and part of the professional development of professionals from different fields. "[3].

### **Concept and role of e-learning in order to improve the teaching-education system**

E-learning "... including a system of student and teacher's activities in the classroom supported and shaped developments of information and communication technologies and electronic technical solutions. This concept in the theory and practice of e-learning, especially in the form of the English language (e-teaching) is used in a twofold sense - to refer to teaching as a mutual interaction of teachers and students, but also as a synonym for the teachers' teaching activity "[4]. Further, in his book the author states that "e-learning is not a prerequisite for learning, but it is one of the most significant innovations in education." The statement that e-learning is not a prerequisite for e-learning, but it is one of the most significant innovation in education is a prerequisite for improving the teaching-education system, innovation would be an evolution of teaching and the education system, and the availability of teaching materials via the Internet and interactive teaching enriched simulation models and

visualization themselves teaching content would certainly go towards improving the teaching-learning process as a whole and therefore inclusion in education, especially in multicultural environments.

### **Some definitions of inclusion**

Inclusive schools are organizations in which various aspects of diversity, with a common mission that emphasizes education for all students.

- Being a member of a class of regular schools in accordance with the age, attending the same classes, have friends in extracurricular activities.
- Inclusion should be understood as a shift spreading the reach of ordinary schools, in order to incorporate greater diversity of students.
- Inclusive schools transmit knowledge to students through agreed programs, which are different from those used in the schools that exclude some students from regular classes.
- An inclusive school is one that accepts all children.
- Inclusion refers to the possibility that persons with disabilities to participate fully in all educational, occupational, recreational, family and social activities of modern society.

For us as teachers is one of the main issues when organizations work in an inclusive classroom is how well planned lessons and how

to adapt an existing program to needs of students.

### **E-inclusion**

The European Commission promotes the development of digital strategy with the goal that no one should be left out or excluded from the information society. Inclusiveness means equal opportunities and access for all members of society. E-Inclusion represents all activities that encourage the use of ICT to overcome social problems. Information Society opens up the possibility of access to information and knowledge to all residents without discrimination on any grounds.

To build such a society need to make ICT accessible to everyone regardless of their particularities. The realization of the concept of e-inclusion requires considerable investment in infrastructure, but also brings long-term benefits to all members of society. By creating easier access ICT users, such as the elderly or persons with disabilities are given access to products and services which have not been able to access, and they have a possibility to improve the quality of life.

### **Some of platforms for implementation of e-learning**

The aim of illustrating some of the platforms for the implementation of e-learning is to assess the basic features and capabilities.



"Moodle" platform (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment) is an

"open source" or open source - free software for e-learning, distance learning, which is also the system of course management or learning management system and virtual learning environment. The name "Moodle" in translation would most closely represent - Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment.

This association includes the independent developers who contribute to the advancement of "Moodle" software and "Moodle" partners - commercial part of Moodle project which provides funding for training and certification program [5].



Like, "MOODLE" platform "ATutor" is an "open source" platform is intended for education or to support the education system. The concept of "ATutor" platform is designed as a construct that allows quick and easy administration and use of the platform by students. The design of the platform is in operation quick and easy navigation through classroom lessons and activities (forums, quizzes ...)



"WiZiQ" platform is "online" platform conceived as a free "online" virtual classroom with an interactive "online" communication between teachers and students in real time. Within the "WiZiQ" platform creators of content can manage instructional content and update the library in terms of teaching content.



"Blackboard" platform for e-learning is not "open source" platform. This platform is finding its way into different organizations, systems and institutions, from universities to complex organizations such as the example. military organizations.

### Comparison of platform for e-learning

Main advantages of using the system for e-learning are directly related to the characteristics of the system in general should allow:

- Extremely simple procedures utilized by all participants,
- work in the Intranet and Internet versions.
- Create, connect, and distribution of courses and tests,
- defining the conditions of training of the users,
- a high level of interactivity between applications and users,
- monitoring the progress of user rates,
- Access modules from any networked location in accordance with the hierarchy of access,
- independence of server platforms and software tools (Open Source Technology)
- overcome the drawbacks of Internet infrastructure in Serbia
- Use no special requirements for the configuration of workstations and servers,
- use a variety of "Browser" application,
- achieving a low price at the rate of use for the end user and

Linking to:

- on existing databases,
- on existing or new information systems,
- on an appropriate system for strategic human resource management,
- on other Internet sites and
- Import of existing learning materials or materials independent artists.

As a criterion of optimality take the following parameters:

1. Content that offers specific platform,
  2. Tasks that particular platform can support,
  3. The tools used platform for e-learning,
  4. Types of questions within the test platform which offers as an option,
  5. The methods of communication that support specific platforms.
  6. Types and contents of courses offered by the platform and
2. The cost of deployment platforms that are subject to analysis.

Having described and performed comparative analysis of some elements of the system suitable for the implementation of e-learning as an optimal option for implementing e-learning, which is also the highest percentage meeting the expected requirements over the elements, most notably "Moodle" platform.

The reason for using "Moodle" platform in teaching for students from the fifth through the eighth grade is a "familiarity" with the said platform (most teachers and students have "heard" and have some knowledge regarding

the "Moodle" platform as well as experience of working with the same).

Reliability and security in dealing with "Moodle" platform, a tradition in the work and the use of "Moodle" platform worldwide with a large number of satisfied customers is another reason to use "Moodle" platform.

### **Setting procedure and setting curricula at "moodle" platform**

"Moodle" platform presents a well-organized platform that respects the pedagogical principles, the teaching staff and the students-users to the conditions for achieving desired effects with both sides of the construct as well as with the student-user. Using PHP, which is itself a free solution, we can successfully create, modify and manage content on the Web, so we can say that "Moodle" platform can be defined as a Web CMS.

Pre exploitation "Moodle" platform, it is important to define roles, or consider that all possibilities in terms of disposal of human resource management offer a "Moodle" platform, in order to define the proper procedures to work on this platform.

The general division of roles within the "Moodle" platform is:

- Administrator,
- Creator of the course,
- Tutor
- Lecturer,
- Student-student and
- Away.

Roles define the specific type of job that you need to perform, for the successful operation of the platform.

Appearance created e-course, which is within the realization of exams on the "Systems Management Electronic Learning 2012",

"online" master study program Technics and Informatics - Master of e-learning to "Moodle" platform of the Technical Faculty in Čačak, implemented student Vasiljevic Juliana called "Pythagorean theorem, polygon and circle", is given in Figure 1.

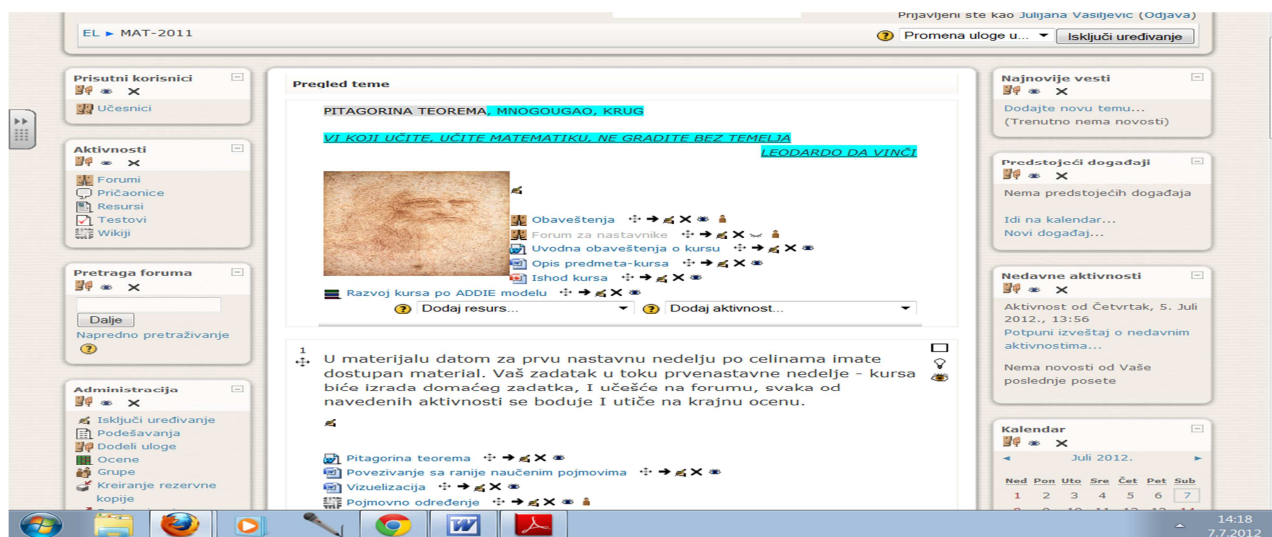


Figure 1. Home page when creating a course

## Conclusion

Development of science and technology to advance the entire humanity through the creation of better conditions for working and learning with the help of modern technology. Creating working conditions inevitably leads to greater productivity and prosperity of both individuals and entire communities and on the global level of the entire population in all spheres of life. Stopping the development of technology and disabling of permanence in education and learning would inevitably lead to the stopping of the entire humanity. In order to progress humanity had its steady stream it is necessary to continually provide conditions

necessary for a good education from an early age.

Modern information technology has opened up new vistas, provides users access to a large literature, allows to discover new "sources" of knowledge and most importantly they go beyond the strictly controlled and limited education system simply allows the acquisition of knowledge "without borders". The aforementioned limits are often a factor of stagnation and frequently reversible processes in society.

In this paper, an introduction of the "Moodle" platform in the implementation of curriculum topics and lessons for students from fifth to eighth grade, just because students at this age both physically and mentally mature and most

intense in some facts, maybe at the moment irrelevant, may decide the fate.

For example, Mathematics integrations with "Moodle" platform will enable a qualitative leap in learning teaching contents and enable the so-called. "Heavier tasks" become more interesting to work or challenge that can be solved. Solving complex a task requires intellectual effort that will not only resolving the given tasks to develop the logic of the students in overcoming proclaimed Sets of plans and programs.

Taking into account the legislation of the Republic of Serbia in regards to the Law on Primary Education, we can conclude that there are no legal impediments to the implementation of e-learning as described in this paper.

Through a comparative analysis platform for e-learning and later through the synthesis was demonstrated expediency of the use of "Moodle" platform for implementation e-learning in the further course of this work it was proved that the mentioned platform for e-learning to improve teaching-learning process especially in the inclusion.

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**STRATEGIES FOR REALIZATION OF  
PRACTICAL WORK IN VISUAL ART  
EDUCATION IN MULTICULTURAL  
ENVIRONMENTS**

**Abstract**

*The contemporary approach in visual arts education is faced with challenges which are affected by concept, methodology, structure and contents with the basic aim to fulfil needs for cultivated visual literacy. World cultural heritage in visual art is valuable almost instantly with contemporary digital technology with all its richness and multiplicity.*

*To provide excellent practical work for future teachers, visual art educators, the creation of specific guidelines for implementing visual art examples which have to be realized in preschool and primary school classroom is more than necessary.*

*Content in preschool and primary school curricula defines visual art problems according to particular age, but richness and life in practical realization is left to creativity of each teacher, and his/hers abilities to implement multicultural contents in practical work with pupils. To do so, future teachers have to achieve high level of content knowledge and world cultural heritage artifacts. They have to be able to distinguish and evaluate level of visual art examples, to organize them in accordance with visual content and to present in adequate way to students with specific age.*

*This paper examines the strategies that should be implemented in practical work with students during realization of visual art classes in preschool and primary school. Special attention*

*will be given to selection and organization on visual art works.*

**Keywords:** *visual art education, studio work, visual culture, cultural heritage, multicultural environments*

## **Introduction**

Culture is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. The anthropological definition of culture is a sum of total artefacts (language, customs, means – technologies, institutions, communication, way of life, etc.). Culture determines what people think, do, produce and attend. There are many other definitions of culture:

- historical – culture is a heritage,
- behavioural – learned behaviour,
- normative – ideals, values, rules of living
- functional – ways of solving problems and adaptation,
- mental – complex of ideas or learning habits,
- Symbolic – transmitted knowledge and ideas.

Culture is system of learned behaviour characteristic for each particular society, a template for specific groups or individual cultural activities. Cultural approaches and behaviour is learned, we are not born with it. Symbolic quality of human thought materialized in cultural appearances can be spread through space and time – we can learn,

observed or participate in cultural patterns from the past, or from another part of the world.<sup>1</sup>

When we think about contemporary acculturated person, it is necessary to connect one's behaviour with many components: beliefs, style, activities, kind and level of communication. Latter is mainly based on level and concept of education. One of the most important characteristic of culture is its adaptivity. The selective approach to cultural values starts in human nature.

## **Children and culture**

From very young age, children have to adapt large amount of cultural values and complex relationship in a very short time. This process starts with psychological development. Base for cultural adaptation is when a child reaches a specific level in somatic, emotional and imaginative consciousness. Members of society have to learn standards of their own culture, in order to become efficient members in social activities. Child development requires reached knowledge about customs and skills for implementation. It represents collective nature of human cognition and incapability of individual to separate itself from cultural context.<sup>12</sup> Participation in culture's patterns lead to changes of each child's psychology. The process of mental growth goes together with cultural adaptation.

But even when adapted cultural level influenced social behaviour and social appearances, it is intrinsic and deeply intimate. In contemporary society is a very tuff obligation to present, lead

and prepare someone for successful aculturation.

### **Contemporary approach in visual art education**

Contemporary approach in Visual Art Education is faced with challenges affected by the way of presenting:

1. concepts - what to teach
2. methodologies – how to teach
3. structure – how to express content
4. content – visual art literacy.

Basic aim of visual art education is to fulfil needs for cultivated visual literacy. Through visual art activities, children should start with processing, analysing and responding to sensory information through the language and skills unique to the visual arts. Children have to perceive and respond to works of art, objects in nature, events, and the environment. They also have to use vocabulary of visual arts to express their observations.

World cultural heritage in visual art is valuable almost instantly with contemporary digital technology with all its richness and multiplicity. Cultural characteristic of various countries and different styles can be used to realize visual art educational content.

To provide an excellent practical work for future teachers, visual art educators, creation of specific guidelines for implementation of visual art examples which have to be realized in preschool and primary school classroom are more than necessary.

### **Introduction of world cultural heritage in preschool age**

Content in preschool and primary school curricula defines visual art problems according to particular age, but richness and life in practical realization is left to creativity of each teacher, and his/her abilities to implement multicultural contents in practical work with pupils. To do so, future teachers have to achieve a high level of content knowledge and knowledge about world cultural heritage artifacts. They have to be able to distinguish and evaluate level of practical visual art examples, to organize them in accordance with visual content and to present them in adequate way to students in different age.

If our civilization is to continue to be both dynamic and nurturing, its success will ultimately depend on how well we will develop the capacities of our children, not only to earn a living in a vastly complex world, but to live a life rich in meaning.

Visual Art Educational content in preschool age contains introduction of visual art elements: line, size, direction, colour, texture, space and repetition as principle of design. At very young age, children learn through participation and imitation, so it is an excellent method of learning to draw, create, design and modelling together, leave in the same time space for individual effort for each child. Visual art samples should be for example carpets from different part of the world as presentation of primary colours, prehistoric pottery design as examples for different character of line,

modelling with plasteline, clay or dough for fine motor development and basic understanding of three dimensional forms and space.

Visual arts cultural heritage can be excellent stimuli for recognition and description of simple patterns, name and form of different materials, to make a collage with cut or torn paper shapes/forms. Play is essential and sometimes the most valuable methodical tool for learning and understanding, so it's implementation at preschool age in visual art education is crucial.

#### **Introduction of world cultural heritage in visual art education in primary education**

During education with visual arts in lower classes in primary school, children have to develop active perception (to perceive and describe rhythm and movement in works of art and in the environment, to describe how artists use primary and secondary colours and tones in paintings, to identify and describe how the creation of the illusion of space is realized, to compare and contrast two works or two pieces of design).

Teachers should make the conditions to support children effort to identify artists from his or her own community, county or state and discuss local or regional art traditions. Children have to be able to distinguish and describe representational, abstract, and non-representational works of art. Large number of visual art educational activities have to be

realized trough different kind of play, guessing, quiz, creating in pairs, group activities etc.

Children in the primary education have to learn to use one-point perspective to create the illusion of space, to create gesture and contour observational drawings, to demonstrate beginning skill in the manipulation of digital imagery (e.g., computer-generated art, digital photography, or videography), to assemble a found object sculpture or a mixed media two-dimensional composition that reflects unity and harmony, use perspective in an original work of art to create a real or imaginary scene. They have to identify and create icons, logos, and symbols for various design solutions.

Students have to analyse, assess, and derive meaning from works of art, including their own, according to the elements of art, the principles of design and visual qualities. They have to be able to identify how selected principles of design are used in a work of art, how they affect personal responses on the work of art.

#### **Strategies for realization practical work in visual art education in multicultural environments**

Multicultural art education strives to foster self-esteem, promote group identity, reduce stereotypes, and eliminate systemic biases and prejudices.<sup>4</sup> Specific guidelines for the implementation of visual art examples in preschool and primary education have to be defined with respect to the chronological age, cognitive and motor skills, and emotional development.

Developing sensitivity to otherness begins with securing a sense of self. After locating our own cultural identity we can begin world traveling, moving among and within communities different from our own (Clark, 1996)<sup>11</sup>.

Understanding and appreciating the diversity that exists among us, we share an understanding of our own culture. (Rodriguez, 1999). Self-awareness is the first step toward cross-cultural competence or capacity and it starts with an exploration of one's heritage.

Cultural self-awareness is the bridge to other cultures.<sup>11</sup> Art education based on critical cultural inquiry has transformative possibilities; it can change people or the audience from being passive viewers to questioning viewer, to create meaning and to create visual art works.

Teachers and art educators can provide opportunities for students to develop new ways of seeing and knowing and to be able to read and recognize their own world. Thus, art education based on critical cultural inquiry has transformative possibilities. Art has the potential to reach a mass audience in a public place such as a museum. Educators should teach learners to be a critical thinker through critical pedagogy. And they should reach the act of self-expression and use the creative process as a profound part of visually literate student. Critical cultural inquiry-based art education and visual art practice could become a vehicle for self-development and the formation of self-identity...<sup>10</sup> Visual Art Education content has the substantive role in social change using multicultural heritage visual art piece to

stimulate critical approaches. Teachers should link cross-cultural, multicultural visual art works as motives for reaching main aim in contemporary visual art education. They should create understanding of common interest and different aesthetic style, same motives, but different expression, same elements, but different composition, etc. That is the way to fulfil gap and support tolerance and understanding among different nationalities.

### **Conclusion**

Only the educational system which has the capacity to teach the visual arts from a diversified and inclusive point of view corresponds with contemporary needs, it is able to engage students in meaningful learning, to understand and appreciates values and cultural traditions fundamentally distanced from their own, can be capable to deal actively with future changes in curriculum.

Contemporary curriculum for pre-school and primary school teachers requires contents, which provide understanding the importance of a transformative pedagogy and critical thinking skills.

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***HOW TO BRING SCHOOL CLOSER TO STUDENTS, HOW TO TAILOR SCHOOL TO THEM***

**Abstract**

*This paper analyses the issue of how to bring school closer to students and how to tailor education to them so that they are able to present themselves to the world when they finish school, and communicate with it. The purpose of this study was to find the applicable reformist methods of teaching biology - methods that will make biology lessons look like creative workshops. For this purpose, nine semi-structured interviews with experienced teachers of biology were conducted.*

*UNESCO's Conference on Education in Paris (1997) clearly set educational goals, and that is that students need to acquire applicable knowledge. However, the new European educational system, which seemingly offers innovation, proved to be completely different; it gives priority to the form rather than to good content and orientation towards solutions. Evaluations of students from the year 2012 show that there is too much statistics in biology, and unnecessary obsolete data and information.*

*The project "Computer for Every Child" is one way of adjusting the manner of presentation to children. In this way, parents do not have to tell children that the computer is not good for learning because it interferes with the child's working routine. However, none of the teachers showed pleasure in the experience of replacing frontal communication and group presentations. Good thinking skills cannot occur in a vacuum, there must be something to*

*think about. And the nature of scientific research imposes certain limitations on the process of solving a problem because everything is controlled by variables that are considered prestigious, and in social sciences ethics and aesthetics are essential where the art of deduction plays an important role.*

*The study included 9 biology teachers (3 male and 6 female). In this study, which consisted of a 120 minutes long interview teachers were first given a list of 10 strategies and then they were encouraged to add a new strategy. They were asked about what their goals in teaching biology were, and what their experience in teaching was. Teachers mostly agreed on the need for systematic leading of students so that they work out the solutions of the problem on their own. Among the interviewed teachers two different poles in thinking were noticed - pessimists and optimists.*

*Although these were all teachers with experience, the authors conclude that the fact is, that although biology is considered a well-developed science, in Macedonia it is taught very differently by different teachers. The educational reform must be based on well-defined strategies for teaching that all teachers can incorporate into a common curriculum.*

**Keywords:** *biology, reformist methods, teaching biology, systematic leading.*

### **Do we learn in school how to think**

Firstly I would like all of us to ask ourselves the question: "Do we learn in school how to think?".

The question implies an answer to the basic problem: first of all we need to determine what "to learn how to think" specifically means.

In my opinion, the root of many misunderstandings is the tendency to identify two different terms almost as synonyms and these are "thinking" and "cognition".

The opinion that "to give knowledge" means the same as "to teach how to think" is generally inculcated in our minds.

It is true that learning encourages a skill to learn, but this is still not about automatism that would lead to the development of mental abilities. If the original meaning of "to think" is to carefully "contemplate", to "ponder upon", we should ask ourselves how much space in pedagogical practice is scheduled for this important exercise. The introductory question will become even more important if we take into account the fact that our young people today use a sea of information, but are at the risk of being overcome by such an abundance of information, if they have not already been overcome.

Perhaps the greatest challenge of our contemporary culture refers to the complex world of data which requires professional use of the process of selection, analysis and synthesis of knowledge. It is a very important issue that



depends on something more important: moral issues, choice, use and management of cognition.

It is not, then, just about learning and cognition, but also about the ability to direct one's thoughts towards wisdom and constant search for what can improve human living conditions. The ability of questioning ourselves, finding the answer to the issue of good and evil, trying to promote something or avoid something so as not to fall into the trap of insanity, all these represent the real activity of the mind looking for a sense of social ethics direction in which we should move. Because of this we should all feel called to consciousness because of the fact that young people are exposed to the hazard of easily gaining "the habit of stupidity" and negative opinions if our educational communities overlooked "the skill for studying real intelligence."

### **To learn how to think for a well-formed mind**

One might ask: "Can a person study the ability of thinking?"

In order to answer this question, we need to admit that we live in a complex world that is undergoing rapid change. That is why it is not possible to gain all the knowledge and get answers to all the questions that life imposes. Then, the ability to think gets greater importance to the extent when teaching or learning the ability of thinking and the strategy of thinking could become a basic discipline that will be introduced in schools.

How can you learn to accurately perceive things around you? How to reorganize information? How to learn to abstract and to control the mental process? The ability to analyse, control, and reorganize one's own mental processing that are required in the process of creating knowledge are some of the capabilities that can be effectively studied.

In this sense, ever since the seventies of the last century, interesting didactic programs in different cultures have been set. There are two basic assumptions of these formative research programs:

- The importance and the constructive role of a personality in the process of thinking;
- Evaluation of the ability to think as a personal discipline applicable in different contexts – education in school and adult education.

For studying it is primarily necessary to "learn how to learn" and this applies not only to the method of teaching, but rather to the processes of construction and deconstruction of mental schemes.

As for this, I think it is important to stay shortly on one aspect that directly deals with cultural and intercultural issues and processes. A simple example of this today is the so-called "challenge of globalization. "Faced with dramatic issues attacking mankind - manipulation with information, poverty, wars, various forms of terrorism - we should primarily make sure that the biggest danger are

not wars or various forms of terrorism, but rather the difficulty of changing our traditional mental structure, i.e. consideration of the relationships between communities, the composition of groups, systems, peoples, economy, culture, and policy. Often it is a dramatic problem: it should be responded to carefully taking into account the ethical plan and disclosure of curiosity on the intellectual plan. Of course, all of this has to do with the ability "to know how to think", but primarily with moral issues and civilization choice.

In the beginning, it is necessary to understand that changes do not apply only to the "others" but rather to ourselves, i.e. our "old maps" are no longer operational today. This is not a random logical operation, but an essential, unavoidable condition necessary for broadening our horizons and heart and turn to solving problems which involves considering the problem from many aspects, to get rid of all manipulations, prejudices and superficial generalization and to be guided only by sincere respect for the truth.

The next requirement for broadening and opening of the mind is to get rid of the arrogance about the size of our opinion in relation to others. It also happens very often that in families, schools, our communities, and in politics, the use of this model is strengthened. We rarely manage to imagine and think in a manner different from our learnt schemes that are beyond our borders for a history that is different from our own.

I am sure that in the world there is no country, a region, or a better country than the one we live in and a really good place is where we learn that there is no better place for growth and education. I call this place "perceiving things from many angles."

### **Thinking and leadership of "inner teacher"**

#### *a. Centralization of a person and self-confidence*

There is a problem that I want to share and which in my opinion represents of main prerequisite of basic pedagogy and which precedes any other educational program: to treat students as persons. During the emphasized collectivism of the mass media, to reaffirm this priority is not only pedagogically correct, but it is the re-establishing of upbringing itself.

If you call upon of ability of thought, the idea of a "person" seems even more important, and grounded in the idea of freedom, self-awareness and autonomy. It may be said that "to be a person is the greatest achievement of nature."

But for an individual to be a person, he/she must be placed in the centre of his/her being. A person has the ability to penetrate into the heart of his/her Ego.

Persons are those one who have the ability to penetrate into their experience and acquire knowledge about themselves and their actions. That is, each content has meaning if it makes sense to the person, i.e. if any content actually acquires any meaning that makes sense for the person, or if it is implanted as a vital element,

"if it tends to get closer to our reality and the construction of our internal being ", and it moves a dynamic process of intention and zeal of our Ego focused on "must be."

Furthermore, if on one hand the school gives real value to the development of perceiving abilities, on the other hand, we should give new dignity and new spaces of upbringing, intention of "awareness", and "matters of reason". We are an integral part of the society which is learning and which would also need the development of self-awareness. It is necessary to try to integrate the centre of logic with the centre of method in terms of active dynamics of the mind and consciousness. So, the method as a personal venture should include an evaluation of the subject as a conscious person who perceives, examines and surpasses itself, and is open to itself and to the world.

*b. Teacher as a role model*

An open mind is active and curious, it constructively faces difficulties, errors of personal and global constraints. It is a mind that knows how to listen and is always able to walk on new pathways and generate new situations. In doing this, it is a constructive, skilled strategist who does not back out in difficulties and is not afraid to "start again". Many young people hold on to their success, thanks to the constant justification received from their educators who find the right way in every change, even at spiritual level. The art to know to start from scratch is based on an irrevocable condition: the reincarnation of ourselves. The educator who transmits this force knows how to

use all situations. He/she leads young people in situations in which they can actually face the experience of limitation and the perseverance to "overcome" this limit, to fight and to "swim upstream". Educator is the one who constantly encourages young people to pursue a constructive sense of life. He/she not only leads them on the path of cognition, but also encourages them to compete and be fertile, cunning in the strategy "to think well" with an unspeakable and persistent desire to "do good", not as an instrument of domination over others, but as a means of change and helping their neighbours.

That is the real teacher of thought and culture because he/she is open to continuous pursue of what can contribute to the improvement of unity among people and nations.

**Why think?**

If we follow up on the initial ideas, or if we go back to the main question of this paper, you might ask: "Why think? "And what is "the sense of thinking "? These matters may seem trivial in their simplicity, which disarms. The question "why think? "Brings as clear and disturbing answer as it is the case with the question: "we think in order to exist", not in the simple meaning of "existence", but in the sense of self-reviewing and overcoming oneself. It is a long and often a difficult road to search for truth, as claimed by Hegel, for the love of truth. If that road on one hand is the process of research and personal reflection, on the other hand a person lives from internal-external circulation between himself/herself and the

world, and it is like opening the spiritual eyes in an ongoing dialogue with others. Will the school know how to accept this challenge? The starting point is the potential of intelligence and the fact how good and qualitative the solutions to the problems of youth and humanity are. We cannot let young people tackle the bewildering globalization on their own. It constantly seeks men and women who possess a deep awareness and have great fortitude and will for positive action, who can lead a dialogue, who are able to think together and create, who know how to recognize the "signs of time ... and in deep darkness notice many indicators that widely revive hope...". You need to have the courage to open your eyes and the eyes of our young people to hope and to constant desire for change. If we, educators, first know how to encourage and nurture a culture of good and positive will, we will not leave our youth alone faced with the challenge of knowledge and risk of danger. Thus, all mankind will re-open to hope because with wisdom it will know how to use the potential of thought.

Questions like what constitutes good thinking or how to foster students' thinking in school in general, and in science lessons in particular, have been increasingly discussed in the educational literature over the past few decades (Beyer, 1988; Costa, 1985; Glaser, 1984; Pogrow, 1988; Sternberg, 1987; Zohar, 1999, 2004a; Zohar and Dori, 2003). Resnick (1987) suggested the concept of 'higher-order thinking,' which avoids a precise definition of thinking but instead points towards some general characteristics of higher-level thinking,

as follows: higher-order thinking is non-algorithmic, complex, yields multiple solutions, requires the application of multiple criteria, self-regulation, and often involves uncertainty.

Costa (2002) mentions two advantages of infusing the teaching of thinking skills into teaching science. First, skilful thinking cannot be performed in a vacuum – there must be something to think about. Second, the nature of scientific inquiry imposes certain constraints on problem-solving processes; scientific problems, in which the control of experimental variables is paramount, differ from social and aesthetic problems in which ethics and artistic judgment play a significant role.

### **Method**

The study involved the participation of 9 biology teachers, 3 females and 6 males, most of them having over 14 years of experience in the teaching profession.

This enables concentrating the discussion on the knowledge and attitudes of teachers having a common professional background while reducing the influence of factors related to the differences between the disciplines or the diversity of the population served by the schools. It is also worth mentioning that the study addressed the teachers during their regular work throughout the school year, rather than under special circumstances, such as teaching a new curriculum or participating in an in-service course.

The interviews, which lasted about 120 minutes, started out by presenting the teacher with a list of 15 strategies often used in teaching biology, such as formulating a research question, controlling variables, or drawing inferences from an experiment. These instructional strategies were selected from the current literature on biology education and materials used in teachers' courses in Macedonia. The interviewees were asked to comment on each strategy, for example, the extent he/she uses it in class, its advantages and disadvantages, or where he/she had learned it. The interviewees were also encouraged to add additional strategies they knew or used. The conversation, however, did not adhere to this format but rather developed into divergent directions according to each teacher's interests or preferences. The participants were asked about their instructional goals, current and past instructional teaching experience, or attempts to make changes. The interviewer, the second author of this article, has herself been a biology teacher for about 10 years.

### **Discussion**

While teachers' explanations as to how or why they use a specific teaching strategy refer mainly to educational practices, the reasons they give for maintaining conventional teaching give us a very good idea about their perceptions of reform-based science education. Beyond the common claims that the obligation to convey mandatory content does not allow enough time for more progressive instruction, the teachers mentioned other reasons for continuing to use

traditional teaching. Two interviewees perceived the development of thinking as an issue separate from the teaching of biology, and suggested providing students with special courses to foster thinking skills. One teacher said the following:

"It is necessary to include the learning of logic in the curriculum. This is important."

Other teachers believed that the mere teaching of biology develops students' thinking, as the following quotes show:

"Nothing develops thinking like biology, for example graphs, this is abstract thinking, it requires concentration... solving problems... understanding concepts like energy conversion." Or: "It's easier to develop thinking in biology because you have the tools to do so. What are the tools of thinking? You have a collection of principles and rule... you use them to solve a problem or a conflict... therefore this discipline, biology, helps to develop thinking." Since, as we have already mentioned, biology is commonly regarded as a difficult subject, when teachers in the current study talked about fostering thinking by teaching the subject matter, they probably took into account students having relatively strong scholastic backgrounds. Another argument used by the teachers in their preference for conventional teaching was that the intensive delivery of subject matter is necessary in order to control the class:

"In today's situation, if you stop teaching you lose control over the class, the students start talking." Or: "If I had a quiet class I could hold

more discussions. In our school, discipline is a problem. In a class that has discipline problems, all you can do is to teach technically.”

And also: “Since the students lack the culture of discussion, it is difficult. They start shouting at one another and so it is a waste of time.” Three teachers specifically stated that they felt insecure in using compound instructional strategies, as illustrated below:

“I don’t like discussions... I don’t know where they lead and I don’t have the tools to deal with this later. In discussions, they the students sometimes exaggerate, so then what do I do?”

### **Summary**

This study aimed at exploring the practices and beliefs that biology teachers have about introducing reform-based instruction into their class. Although all the participants in this study were experienced teachers, and the fact that biology is considered to be a well developed field in R. Macedonia schools, extensive differences have been identified among the teachers in issues such as the use of rich instructional strategies in the class, their self-confidence in utilizing progressive instruction, and their beliefs about their students’ abilities to develop higher-order thinking.

Therefore, despite the fact that the constructivist view of learning has been placed at the centre of teachers’ pre-service and in-service programs for at least two decades, teachers often regard reform based instruction as an idealistic view of education rather than a

clear schooling practice. The significant diversity of the teachers, as well as the cases in which the teachers highly evaluate their students but show moderate or low self-confidence in their own abilities to teach higher-order thinking, indicate that many teachers are confused or embarrassed about reform-based instruction. Further work is therefore required in teachers’ pre-service and in-service training to make the fostering of higher-order thinking a common ingredient in science teaching.

We summarize this paper by noting two examples of approaches to foster thinking in the science class to emphasize that the notion of reforming science education must be translated into well-defined instructional strategies that teachers can infuse into teaching the common curriculum. All this will contribute to school being closer to students so that they could adjust to it and to teachers as well.

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**PRACTICUM IN THE INITIAL  
EDUCATION OF PEDAGOGUES:  
STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND  
EXPERIENCES**

**Abstract**

*Practical training is an important part of the initial education of the pedagogues, teachers and preschool educators. It gives them a unique possibility to verify the gained knowledge in the real life situations, and enables them to develop their critical thinking and create a clear picture of their professional development. It is well known among the professionals in education that the theory of education has developed from the practical experience and it's aimed at its advancement. Therefore theory and practice need to be regarded as a unity that is based on a dialectic interaction.*

*Efficient practical training of the future education specialists requires collaborative efforts and partnership between faculties and educational institutions that provide practicum placements for their students, as well as mentorship expertise and substantial theoretical preparation of the students. Following these guidelines, as well as the changes that were made in the legal regulations that refer to the organization of the practical training provided by teacher faculties in Macedonia, the Institute of Pedagogy at the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje during the past few years has made significant efforts to improve the organization of students' practicum. In order to detect the students' experiences regarding their practical training during the last academic year, a qualitative research is conducted. The analysis gives a closer look at the student's views and opinions on the realization of the practicum, its*



*benefits as well as difficulties and challenges they were facing with. Consequently, research results point to directions for advancement of students' practicum by coordinated action of the policy makers, higher education institutions and practitioners involved in the practical training of the future pedagogues.*

**Keywords:** *students' practicum, students' perceptions, initial education of pedagogues, professional competences of pedagogues*

### **Introduction**

In the last decades, the initial education of the pedagogues, teachers and educators in Europe has undergone through many reforms that contributed to increasing its relevance and quality. The topic being constantly present in all reports, discussions and research that refer to the teacher and pedagogue education, was a creation of an effective model of pedagogical practice, which will ensure a balance between theoretical knowledge within the academic disciplines that are taught at the universities and knowledge to develop practical professional skills and competencies. For a long period of time, higher education throughout the world was firmly based on theoretical grounds and oriented towards acquisition of general knowledge. However, the professional training of future pedagogues based simply on gaining theoretical knowledge is an outdated concept. Today, new and flexible approaches have been developed, aiming at reconsideration of the role of the pedagogue in the changing social

conditions; new requirements and strategies have been built in order to develop necessary professional knowledge and competencies. The future pedagogue should be aware of the community's needs in which she operates, she should be able to communicate, build partnerships and improve the relationships in the learning community. She should also be able to evaluate her own work and the work of the others, as well as to be prepared for lifelong learning and continuous improvement. (Maleš, Stričević, Ljubetić, 2010).

In recent years, there is an increased interest for a pedagogue who develops abilities for theoretical reflection in practical circumstances, and vice versa, for reflecting on practice as a pathway that leads to creation of a theory. The reflective practitioner is an active individual who explores solutions and different way of action in response to the practical problems (Šagud, 2006). The introduction of the term reflective practitioner is related to the educational theory of the American educator John Dewey and his "life laboratory" (Dewey, 1966; Tanner, 1997), which is based on students' learning through experience of what is important for themselves and their future profession. Nowadays, the concept of connecting the educational theory and practice and the need for active student participation in the process of teaching and learning, has its answer in the transaction-transformational approach in designing the curriculum (Miljak, 1996). According to this approach, knowledge is seen as something that is constructed and reconstructed by all the participants in the

educational process. Education is regarded as a process of dialogue, interaction between the teacher, the student and the environment. The student is active, and, through the construction and reconstruction of his knowledge, is changing himself and his surroundings (ibid.). This approach is based on humanistic oriented curriculum that is not fully pre-determined, but it is built, modified and improved through the educational practice. It can be implemented at different levels of education, from early pre-school to university education. In the initial education of the pedagogues it requires development of skills and abilities for integration of the theoretical knowledge, its transformation and application in practice. Hence, the reflective practice is the key factor for developing students' ability to self-monitoring, decision-making, continuing research-based learning, collaboration and communication.

### **Practicum in the initial education of the pedagogues in the Republic of Macedonia**

The practicum is an important part of the initial education of pedagogues and an essential component for their success as professionals in the field of education and social care. The graduated pedagogue in the Republic of Macedonia, according to the law, has a wide range of opportunities for work: primary and/or secondary school pedagogue, class teacher, preschool educator, pedagogue in the field of social care and adult education. Therefore, the faculties that prepare pedagogues in the country need to offer programmes that will help

students to face the complex realities of the pedagogical work by providing them with a clear understanding of the educational and social care contexts. Key factor for achieving this goal is the practicum.

The benefits of the practicum are well known among the researchers in the field of higher education:

- It plays a major role in bridging theory and practice by providing students the opportunity to practice what has been learned during the lectures and seminars;
- It enables students to acquire and develop professional knowledge and competencies;
- It gives an opportunity to continue academic and professional growth (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Hammerness, 2006).

These elements refer especially to the teaching profession and emphasize the need for teacher education that will be “based on a well-balanced combination of solid academic research and extensive practical experience” (European Commission, 2009, 1). Actually, the “strong practical component” of initial teacher education is the element that has been highlighted in all the EU documents and programs.

Following these guidelines, the Republic of Macedonia in recent years has made efforts to improve the quality of initial education by increasing the volume of the practical work during the studies. The Amended Law on

Higher Education enacted in 2008 (Закон за изменување и дополнување на Законот за високото образование, 2008, Art.14) prescribed a minimum of 30 days of compulsory practical teaching per academic year, and based on this, a Rulebook on the manner and conditions for organizing practical training of students was adopted in 2010 (Правилник за начинот и условите за организирање на практичната настава за студентите, 2010). The implementation of these regulations was supported by the Guidelines for practical teaching of students from teacher faculties that was prepared in 2013 by the teacher faculties' representatives, in collaboration with the Macedonian MES (Упатство за изведување практична настава на студентите од наставничките факултети, 2013).

The Institute of Pedagogy at the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje as one of the two higher education institutions in the country that prepares future pedagogues has adopted these regulations and guidelines and since last academic year introduced a 30-day student practicum for each study year. It also made significant efforts to improve its organization: students had opportunities to visit different institutions (kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools, Centre for social work, schools and centres for adult education) and collaborate with the educators, teachers and pedagogues that work there; they were provided with the necessary instruments (reflection forms developed on a base of the instruments given in the Guidelines for practical teaching of students

from teacher faculties) for keeping record of the activities they were involved in and helping students to reflect on them; students and institutions were informed in time and in detailed way about the practicum schedule and their responsibilities. Beside the practicum, students have practical work that is incorporated with a certain percentage in the curriculum throughout the four years of study, as well as practical training within the seminars of the teaching methodology courses. This situation differs from the model that was implemented in the years before, when the study programme included 15-day practicum only in the third and the fourth year of study, plus additional practical training within the different elective and teaching methodology courses. Hence, the changes introduced with the latest study programme of the Institute of Pedagogy reflect the tendency to increase the opportunities for more field experience that is gained in extended duration and from the very beginning of the university studies.

### **Students' perceptions on practicum: research methodology and findings**

In order to detect the students' perceptions and experiences regarding their 30-day practicum during the last academic year, an empirical research was conducted on a sample of 80 students of the II, III and IV year of study at the Institute of Pedagogy. The analysis gives a closer look at the student's experiences and opinions on organization and realization of the practicum, its benefits as well as difficulties and challenges they were facing. For collecting the

data a questionnaire was used with three closed and two open-ended questions.

At the beginning the students' satisfaction with the way the practicum was organized was assessed on a scale of four categories: very much, sufficient, little, not at all (Table 1).

According to the research findings, majority of the students, 75%, expressed the second level of satisfaction (fairly satisfied), 12,5% of the students were very much satisfied, 8,75% were little satisfied and only 3 students or 3,75% were not satisfied at all.

Table 1. Students' satisfaction with the organization of the practicum

Students' responses	Question No 1: How much are you satisfied with the way the pedagogical practice was organized during the last academic year?				
	Very much	Fairly	Little	Not satisfied at all	Total
F	10	60	7	3	80
%	12,50	75,00	8,75	3,75	100

The successfulness of the realization of the practicum was assessed on a scale from 1 (the lowest level) to 5 (highest level) (Table 2). It is evident that similar percentage of students give the grades 4 (46,25%) and 3 (43,75%), same number of students (3 out of 80-3,75%) assessed the practicum with the grade 2 and 5,

and 2 students or 2,5% give the lowest grade. These results have leaded us to further examination in order to identify the difficulties and weaknesses in the implementation of practical teaching that would reduce its quality.

Table 2. Students' evaluation of the implementation of the practicum

Students' responses	Question No.2: How do you evaluate the success in the implementation of the pedagogical practice?					
	1 (lowest)	2	3	4	5 (highest)	Total
F	2	3	35	37	3	80
%	2,5	3,75	43,75	46,25	3,75	100

On the basis of the given answers to the third question in the survey (Table 3) we can see that the majority of the students (62%) think that the pedagogical practice has helped them fairly to gain experience in the field of education. 23,75% of the students answered very much, 13,75% little, and there is no one student that didn't benefit any practical experience. These

results show that the practicum has helped the great part of the students to practice their critical thinking skills, to link the theory and practice and, as a result, to get a clear picture of their professional development.

Table 3. Students' perceptions on practicum as a tool for acquiring experience

Students' responses	Question No 3: How much the pedagogical practice helped you in gaining experience in the field of education?				
	Very much	Fairly	Little	Not helped at all	Total
F	19	50	11	/	80
%	23,75	62,5	13,75	/	100

The next two questions in the questionnaire were open-ended and they enabled us to collect significant descriptive data that refer to the competences that the students have developed during the practicum and to their ideas about the possible activities for improving the quality of the practicum, regarding both its organization and realization.

The majority of the students agree that the practicum enabled them to develop different competences. We have grouped the answers in several clusters:

- Interaction skills: students identified that they made a progress in establishing relationship with the students and teachers in the classrooms, pedagogues in the

schools, clients in the Centre for social work, children in the day care centres.

- Communication skills: students improved their communication skills with the children and teachers, especially as a result of the possibilities to work in teams.
- Skills for dealing with problems and conflicts: students experienced conflict situations among the students and regarding the individual student behaviour, thus were put in a position to learn how to "manage a discipline" and create a positive and relaxing atmosphere in the classroom.
- Expertise: practicum enabled the students to have closer look into the work of the class teachers and pedagogues, to link their

previous knowledge to the real classroom situations, to expand their knowledge, to develop skills and abilities for learning and teaching, to experience creative workshops and learn about the process of planning, organizing and implementing activities in the institutions they visited.

- Teaching skills: students had opportunities to prepare and perform lessons, to assess students, to work with different teaching materials and information sources.
- Teaching methodology competences: students could practice different teaching methods that have learned about during the lectures, implement new teaching methods, understand and practice specific methodological approach in work with first graders, gain experience in implementation of the ICT in teaching and in work with e-diary.
- Knowledge and skills regarding the organization of the schoolwork: students became familiar with the annual program of the school, annual program for work in class teaching, organization of the school work and teaching process, writing reports, evaluation of the school activities. They also found useful being part of the meetings of the teaching staff in school and meetings with the parents.
- Personal qualities: the practicum helped many of the students to gain greater self-confidence and independence, to become more careful, organized and responsible, to

cope with new situations, to be more efficient in managing time.

There is a small percentage of students that didn't recognize any competence developed during the practicum. As for the reasons, they stressed the insufficient visits of teaching classes, insufficient meetings and discussions with mentor-teacher and mentor-pedagogue and lack of their support and help. Although the number of these students is not large, their statements deserve attention and will be further examined in relation with the analysis of the students' answers to the last question in the questionnaire, which refer to their suggestions for improving the quality of the practicum.

According to the research findings, the following needs were identified in the field of organization of the practicum:

- "Diverse range of institutions and NGO-s where we could have practical training". Students prefer variety of institutions to choose from, according to their professional interest. That corresponds to the diversity of places where pedagogues may work. Still, when the choice is made, students differ in their opinions whether the practicum should be realized in one or in several institutions.
- A great number of students would like to have practicum during the whole year and not only in a certain period. On the other hand, they prefer shorter daily stay in institution instead of a full-time 8-hour stay per day.

- “I wish we could have fewer instruments for evaluation of the observed classes”. This statement is a represent of a large number of students’ answers that emphasize the student overload when it comes to keeping records of the observed teaching process in the classroom.
  - “Institutions in which we carry out our practicum should be better informed about students’ visits” and should “better organize” them. Many of the students noticed that the institutions were not sufficiently prepared to receive the students and organize their work in a longer period. These experiences put forward the question of the selection of the institutions, their interest, capacities and conditions to host a large number of students and to help them learn about the everyday work of their teachers and pedagogues. At the same time, it emphasizes the need for closer collaboration and coordinated action between the faculties and institutions involved in the practical training of the future pedagogues.
  - “There must be a greater supervision of the students’ work during the practicum”. Some of the students think that the presence and support of the university professors-mentors would contribute to greater student engagement and to the quality of the practicum. However, having in mind the limited number of teaching staff at the Institute of pedagogy and the large number of students they need to supervise during the practicum, as well as their multiple professional responsibilities, it is difficult to provide continuous presence of the university mentors in the practical training of their students in institutions.
- Regarding the realization of the practicum, research findings indicate three areas in which, according to the students’ experiences and opinions, there is a need for improvement. One refers to the activities they would like to be involved in. They ask for greater participation in the realization of teaching and other school activities, more meetings and discussions with teachers and pedagogues, more contacts with students, greater accessibility of the lesson plans and working materials. Students’ answers show the great interest they have for developing personal teaching competence by acquiring knowledge of teaching and developing professional values and attitudes. At the same time, many students prefer activities that will help them understand better everyday responsibilities of the school pedagogue and the team work of the pedagogue in the area of social care. Through these activities students expect to develop professional knowledge, communication skills and inter-personal sensitivity, competences that are crucial for the professional life of the pedagogue.
- Most of the students’ suggestions for improving the practicum refer to the role of the institutions they visited and the mentors they have worked with. “We shouldn’t be left by ourselves”, “We

should be better accepted by the institutions”, which should be “more open for collaboration”, “more interested” in the students’ activities, and should provide students with “support and directions”- all these statements are indicator that some schools and institutions are not motivated to play an active role in helping student teachers and pedagogues to make effective transitions from university learning to classroom teaching and real life situations. As a result, many students identified lack of mentor’s guidance through systematic observations, assistance and advice. “There should be better communication with the mentors”, mentors should be “more open”, “interested” and “engaged in students’ activities”- say some students about the identified weaknesses of mentor’s behaviour. They also stress the need of “trained mentors” that will “know to give students directions” and to guide and facilitate reflective practice. This need of training for mentors put forward once again the question of building partnership between faculties and institutions that provide practicum placements for their students.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

The practicum as an integral part of the initial education of the future pedagogues enables students to attach to educational and other institutions, in order to develop clear understanding of the meaning of their profession. Therefore, it gives them opportunity not only to practice, but, at the same time, to reflect about their practice, enables them to be both “in action” and “in reflection” (European

Commission, 2009, 7). The students’ experiences and perceptions that were discussed in this paper are actually their reflections about the quality of the practice they had during the last academic year. They represent a useful material that helps us reconsider the organization and implementation of the student practicum and define directions for its advancement. On the base of the analysis of the students’ answers and the current situation regarding the realization of the practicum in the country, several conclusions and recommendations can be drawn:

- It is necessary to strengthen the cooperation between the faculties and institutions for practical training of students. This is a fundamental factor for effective organization and delivery of the students’ pedagogical practice. Many issues that have been raised with the analysis of the students’ responses (readiness of the institutions to host students, organization of students’ stay in institutions, quality of student supervision, quality of mentorship) have their solution in building partnership between higher education institutions, participating schools, kindergartens and centres (their managers and mentors), and student themselves. This partnership should be based on effective communication between mentors-professors and mentors-practitioners and their collaborative efforts in planning, implementation and evaluation of the practicum. However, to achieve this goal it is necessary to provide



mechanisms on a national level that will support the cooperation, such as: clear criteria for selecting institutions where the practicum will take place and regulation of the financial aspects of the mentorship.

- Although a great part of the students were satisfied with the organization of the practicum, there is still much room for its improvement. The Institute of Pedagogy needs to make efforts in creating and offering to students more specific tasks and activities that will be related to the courses they attend at the faculty, so that the linkage between the theory and practice become more stronger. At the same time, taking into account the need expressed by the students for the greater participation of the university-based mentors in students' activities during the practicum, it is necessary to strengthen the human resources capacities of the Institute of Pedagogy and provide administrative support of the faculty regarding the organization of the practicum.
- Having in mind that mentors-practitioners play key roles in supporting students during the practicum and have complex tasks that require developed mentoring skills, they need to be well prepared through training programmes that could be offered by the faculties or through work with other mentors. In such a way, the status of the mentors will be strengthened, their responsibilities will be clearly defined and they will have sufficient time to develop their competencies, the issue of the selection of the mentors will be solved and the institutions where they work will become stimulating learning communities that will support professional development of their employees.
- On a national level, the issue of mentorship should be regarded as a part of the systemic examination of the professional development of the pedagogues, teachers and educators, which includes preparation of a financial plan for different ranks of promotion. In that way, student mentorship will become a criterion for promotion in a higher rank and will contribute to the recognition of its status.
- The law regulations that refer to students' practical training are very limited (Закон за изменување и дополнување на високото образование, 2008; Правилник за начинот и условите за организирање на практичната настава за студентите, 2010; Правилник за условите кои треба да ги исполнува истакнатиот стручњак од практиката..., 2010) and don't offer clear directions to the faculties and practitioners for organizing and implementing the practicum activities. Therefore, it is a policy makers' responsibility to provide sound legislative foundation that will consider the issue of the practicum in a comprehensive and detailed way.

Effective practicum requires an integral and systemic approach and coordinated action of all stakeholders: national and local education authorities, higher education institutions, schools and institutions that are involved in the practical training of the future pedagogues. They are all interrelated in their functioning, so the interventions that are made for improving the practicum need to be linked, too. Thus, acting in a comprehensive way will allow the changes to lead to the expected outcomes.

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***SITUATION AND PERSPECTIVES OF  
PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE FOR FUTURE  
TEACHERS AND EDUCATORS***

**Abstract**

*Initial education at the Pedagogical Faculty consists of two parts: theoretical and practical teaching. The practical training as an integral part of the studies is geared toward application of theoretical knowledge. It is implemented throughout the entire study, with curricular differences in each academic year of study. In early studies characteristic is that students are familiar with the program and organizational structure of the educational process and teaching through pedagogical practice. In the following years of study they are familiar with educational and course content through methodical practice for each methodology separately. In the fourth year realizes the pedagogical experience, through which students are introduced to the overall activity of the preschool and primary teacher. Given the great importance of pedagogical practice it is necessary constantly monitoring and upgrading of all segments through which it passes.*

*Accordingly, this paper try to indicates a real situation and needs related to quality process of pedagogical practice for students who educate for preschool and primary teachers of pedagogical faculties. For this purpose, is conducted a survey of students in fourth year at the Pedagogical Faculty "Sv. Kliment Ohridski" in Skopje from both institutes for elementary school and pre-school education in Macedonian and Albanian language. The end of labor is given suggestions and recommendations in accordance with the*

*theoretical studies for the practice, as well as the practical insights from the analysis of the survey results.*

**Keywords:** *teacher education, practical teaching, pedagogical practice, preschool teacher, primary teacher.*

### **Summary**

Initial education at the Pedagogical Faculty consists of two parts: theoretical and practical teaching (training). The practical training as an integral part of the studies is geared toward application of theoretical knowledge. It is implemented throughout the entire study, with curricular differences in each academic year of study. In early studies characteristic is that students are familiar with the program and organizational structure of the educational process and teaching through pedagogical practice. In the following years of study they are familiar with educational and course content through methodical practice for each methodology separately. In the fourth year realizes the pedagogical experience (service), through which students are introduced to the overall activity of the preschool and primary teacher. Given the great importance of pedagogical practice it is necessary constantly monitoring and upgrading of all segments through which it passes.

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for preschool and primary teachers of pedagogical faculties. For this purpose, is conducted a survey of students in fourth year at the Pedagogical Faculty "Sv. Kliment Ohridski" in Skopje from both institutes for elementary school and pre-school education in Macedonian and Albanian language. The end of labor is given suggestions and recommendations in accordance with the theoretical studies for the practice, as well as the practical insights from the analysis of the survey results.

**Keywords:** *teacher education, practical teaching, pedagogical practice, preschool teacher, primary teacher.*

### **View and importance of practical training**

(This refers to the practical teaching of Faculty St. "Kliment Ohridski" in Skopje).

As a result of globalization, changes in all spheres of social life, raising standards at all levels, as well as the principles that underpin ECTS, in recent years there have been changes in higher education. This creates conditions for overcoming some of the traditional conditions regarding the education of teachers and mentors. First, it takes modern higher education institutions to meet the requirements in terms of education of educators and teachers. Furthermore, universities should ensure integration of science and teaching: science that constantly evolves following the changes in scientific thought and teaching that incorporates these changes in their own organization.

Studying the faculties that educate teachers realize studying the profession in terms of its scientific and academic merits and determination and study of pedagogical-psychological and didactic-methodological content, strategies and models of educational work.

Students of the Faculty acquire knowledge and skills that represent the accurate realization of the profession they have chosen. Theoretical knowledge is necessary but not always sufficient in preparing the appropriate staff. Namely, it is necessary theoretical knowledge to be supported by appropriate practical skills and knowledge. The practical training is able to provide adequate practical support of theoretical knowledge. Students through practical training are given the opportunity to be involved in the educational process, initially indirectly by observation and later directly with the implementation of certain tasks.

Practical teaching is a summary of the pedagogical practice, hospitations and pedagogical internship. Pedagogical practice is the kind of activities that students observe the educational process. Monitoring is organized and systematized. Students were previously given instructions to follow, which elements to perceive, how in it to refer to note. In the implementation of pedagogical practice students can gain performance of the overall organization of life and work in the kindergarten / school. In the realization of educational activities in the kindergarten / school, students are involved in so-called the second stage of practical training - Hospitation.

Students realize Hospitation - activities / classes, which previously are instructed by the mentor. Such activities preceded the proper preparation and planning. The internship is implemented in order to complete the process of practical training, with appropriate involvement in the educational activities of the kindergarten / school. In this, student, except implementation of activities / classes should be included in other educational activities, such as the various sections, parent meetings, events, organizing leisure activities and so on. Through practical training students are expected to develop listening skills, understanding, observation, reflection, discussion, evaluation, self-evaluation.

### **Methodological approach**

Considering the importance of practical training in the system of education of educators and teachers, we conducted research with students of the fourth year of studies at the Faculty of Pedagogy "St. Kliment Ohridski" Skopje, R. of Macedonia. The research was conducted in several stages in the academic year 2012/13 and it included students from the fourth year of studies of the Institutes for preschool and elementary school in Macedonian and Albanian language. All students who participated in the research had spent all forms of practical training: pedagogical practice, methodical experience, pedagogical internship. In order to obtain the necessary data we have used a questionnaire, that comprised issues of open and closed kind. Besides the survey, we conducted structured interview in order to

obtain relevant data on the issue that was the focus of our interest.

The main goals of research was :

- To determine the status related to the quality of practical teaching.
- To determine the needs related to the quality of practical teaching

Regarding the purpose we were specifically interested in the following questions: the meaning that students attribute to certain activities of their practice, evidence that they lead to the realized activities, as well as its functionality in terms of their practical skills, the opinion of the students in terms of their distribution in educational groups or classrooms, as well as topics of conversation that students realize with the teachers during their practical activities. At the end of the questionnaire we were interested in the opinion of the students and their suggestions and proposals for improvement of practical teaching in initial education of future preschool and primary teachers.

### **Interpretation of results**

The data analysis resulted in interesting findings, which could be considered as a basis for change and development of practical teaching in initial education of preschool teachers and primary teachers. In this context, we shown are those results that treat as important for the adoption of specific conclusions and suggestions.

In terms of the effects on the development of competencies that three forms of practical teaching of Pedagogical faculty leaves over them (pedagogical practice, methodical experience, pedagogical internship) respondents were unanimous. All of students of the two institutes of the Faculty considered that all the forms have their purpose and meaning and none stands out as more important than others. The interview with students pointed to the conclusion that need more tailored connection between them in order to establish continuity in the acquisition of practical skills and competencies of students. Thus, according to them, would enable better and systematic connection between theoretical knowledge and practical skills and competencies among them.

In question that refer the types of activities during the implementation of practice we are interested for students opinion regarding PRIORITIES that they have about following activities: Maintenance of educational activities; conversation with the teacher - tutor ; conversation with the director; chat with pedagogical counselor / psychologist, monitoring activities and insight into pedagogical documentation. Of all the activities all of students (100% of them) prefer the involvement in the maintenance of educational activities and lessons. In 90% of cases they have decided for talking to the teacher as an important activity, while 75% of surveyed students give priority to talking to counselor / psychologist. Interestingly, the conversation with the director and the monitoring of activities of various types are set to the lowest

level of the priorities in the opinion of the students interviewed. In an interview conducted with them came to the conclusion that such their determination due to the lack of opportunities to be in contact with the director on the one hand and the passivity of students across monitoring activities opposed their role if they are involved in them.

Regarding the records, emphasis placed on whether students kept a diary of activities realized in practice that are listed in the previous question (written preparation for each activity mandatory leads each) Interesting was the opinion of the students that they would like to keep a diary of all activities but they need dedicated instructions to that action. In the absence of instructions, only 20% of them led notes in its sight.

According to our knowledge of the presence of a larger number of students performing practice in one educational group or department we are interested in the impact of this situation on the quality of the practice and internship students. The results indicate the reverse-proportional relationship of these two variables, ie, a lot of the students in a given group or classroom shows lower quality and vice versa. Regarding the issue a lot of students, 90% of respondents comment the need for independently performing practice, ie, a one student-in one group / classroom. According to them, it leads to more experience and thus to greater confidence in the practical implementation of the acquired theoretical knowledge.

The question for the topics that have been the subject of conversation with the educator / teacher was open-ended. In this respect, the results show that the most common topics of conversation were the ways of keeping the pedagogical documentation, pedagogical content of Documentation, the treatment of children / students, motivating children / students, the organization of the day in the garden, working conditions, monitoring of development achievements of the children, the openness of kindergarten / school, exterior of room for children in kindergarten / school etc. Students from preschool direction, despite the foregoing, the discussion focused on the adaptation of the children, as well as cooperation with parents, and students from the primary education shown interest in modern learning strategies, ways of stimulate of children, as well as the involvement of parents in teaching . The responses of the students pointed to the fact that they very successfully selected issues that are current for preschool and primary education. No since students not kept a diary of activities through practice (according to the fourth question) appreciate that knowledge gained through talks with educators would not be functional enough.

In respect of the opinion of the students to improve their practical teaching, we found interesting proposals. Namely, they propose their internship as an important segment of practical instruction, should last longer; to have fewer students who conduct activities together in one educational group / grade; to keep a diary of overall activities through practice and

through internship in kindergarten and school that will bring the most significant moments of the implementation, monitoring and conversations that students practiced through pedagogical practice, pedagogical internship. Also, students propose to make a final report that will summarize the experiences and knowledge acquired through practice.

### **Conclusions**

According to the survey results, it can be concluded that students are positive about the need for practical training through three forms of realization-pedagogical practice, hospitations, pedagogical intership. This confirms a quality concept of the program of education of teachers. The practical training provides students more experience, and understanding of certain problems and aquired through theoretical instruction in initial education of teachers / educators. In this context, we found a significant number of concrete conclusions, ie:

- -Pedagogical internship as a form to be a longer and to establish a connection and continuity among all the listed forms of practical teaching students.;
- To have fewer students who conduct activities together in one educational group/grade;
- To keep a diary of overall activities through practice and through internship in kindergarten / school. A journal to bring the most important moments of the implementation, monitoring and

conversations that students practiced through pedagogical practice through hospitation and internship.

- Based on diary would be better to prepare a final report that will summarize the experiences and knowledge acquired through practice.

This means student shave to be well prepared and instructed for all activities through practice .Namely, the realization of practical teaching students only in terms of maintenance of educational activities and teaching hours will not provide the complete experience of the student, and not fully experience the educational atmosphere in the institution. It would have meant unprofessional approach to the development of future teachers and educators.

### **Some suggestions for successful practical teaching**

The practical teaching, in relation with the kindergarten / school should allow application of knowledge that students acquire. Since practical training is included throughout all four years of study, there is a good opportunity for parallel acquisition of knowledge and relevant skills that are developed through practice. Any possibility of teaching opens perspectives of student and creates a situation in which questions about the practical applications are resolved in parallel with any studied area.

Each practical teaching requires solid preparation. In the beginning it assumes contacts with partner institutions on two levels:



the managerial authority and staff in charge of students. Then, of utmost importance are the instructions and guidelines that students receive from their teachers and mentors. Needed special manuals that would contain the necessary instructions and guidance for students. Students based on it should prepare and plan practice. Relevant data and knowledge that will come during the practice should note in particular, of certain journals. It would be of great importance, because it will be able to classify and preserve all the practical experiences from practice. In later years, experience will complement and expand. So the student will be trained how to monitor, develop, promote and evaluate their own practical activity early during the study, and then work.

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**TEACHING IN RURAL AREAS IN  
COMBINED CLASSES**

**Abstract**

*When it comes to rural development, the involvement of stakeholders' countries and communities in rural areas is a prerequisite for real progress in teaching. True progress of rural development can be achieved only by uniting all the relevant factors for success in teaching in rural areas. That means mobilization - activating local initiatives arising from the community but also the building of partnerships between sincere and interested parties' respective governments. This should come from the communities themselves, but must be supported by those who make decisions and political strategies. It's a two-way process to be feasible, unless serious efforts require real tools and specific objectives in teaching in rural areas.*

**Keywords:** *teachers, rural areas, combined classes, practicum*

**Introduction**

According to my personal experience, as someone who comes from a new member state, when you remind yourself of how things develop in my country, I know that the strengthening of communities on issues such as rural development is imperative, not the exception. The task is difficult because rural areas are more exposed to economic problems not to mention the development in education. Bad economic problems insufficient links

between town and country migration and the infrastructure poor public services reflect the educational system, the very realization of the educational process.

I'm aware that this can be extremely serious challenge, but I also know that this is the only way to go forward. We need to find better methods which will give better participation. With workshops through the Western Balkans project, beside trying to bring these countries to Europe and their aims to understand their needs and to assess the relationship between governments and relevant stakeholders. What is found and which new ways of socially engaging are needed to bring together stakeholders in the implementation of teaching in rural areas. Its importance goes beyond process poshiruvanje the EU as it is to be useful and to adapt to any political initiative at the EU level.

### **Education in the rural areas**

When it comes to designing the EU policies - and rural development, we need new methods, new ideas and new tools that will encourage citizens, stakeholders and governments, to create a climate of building confidence for effective teaching in rural areas. Farmers, entrepreneurs, NGOs, rural communities - they all need to be involved, to participate, enabling decision makers to have a clear picture of the reality and needs of education in rural areas.

Teaching facilities that are normally built for teaching purposes but overall pedagogical theory somehow withstands the test because it requires a complete dynamic teacher

organization or completeness in methodic adjustment teaching in rural areas. With methodic adjusting teaching facilities and student-subject teacher must remove any gaps in teaching. In combined classes in rural areas the teacher is forced to realize educational goals and educational one for the other grade equally.

Modern and contemporary teaching requires solutions for carrying out a successful and complete instruction in combined classes. When entering the classroom where they realize the simultaneous teaching requires a special arrangement of benches for more neutral monitoring of teaching and pupils and with both totals. In addition to general teaching options in creating teacher should schedule in a combined class, methodical be careful when choosing and combining objects. There must be a classroom corner and a space where students should smoothly acquire knowledge and skills in the educational process. Frontal form of work is impossible to be present simultaneously for both units combined into one class. In realization of teaching certain subjects such as natural science or realization of a project it is necessary to perform surveillance in the vicinity or perhaps visit the vegetable garden or farm. Here's a specific reason for the smooth implementation of the teaching of certain subjects in the combined classes. Large and methodical preparedness didactic required teacher who works in mixed classes in rural areas. Pedagogical standards summarize the main steps of pedagogy-centred child, and the basis for developing a constant focus on quality

education and significant support in teaching in rural areas. Requires:

- Interaction between teacher and children
- Participation of family and community in the educational process
- Inclusion, respect for differences and values democracy
- Assessment and planning
- Using strategies and techniques for teaching
- Create a learning environment
- Professional Development

Pedagogical standards are designed to promote professional discussions and encourage teachers, school assistants in kindergartens, schools, education authorities to follow innovations in the field of education and to make changes in accordance with the national context, and teaching in rural areas. We want to emphasize that educational - educational process depends on many factors and that the teacher should see her/himself as someone who makes decisions, not only as a finished implementing plans and programs as part of his "professional responsibilities prescribed. And of course it is not just in the combined classes. "

In this abstract, we use the term teacher in the broadest sense of the word, someone who teaches someone while thinking of educators and kindergartens and teachers in classroom instruction. Accordingly, teachers and children, and among children is crucial to promote the concept of continuous learning. It affects their social, emotional and cognitive development

and encourages them to develop and share knowledge, experiences, feelings and attitudes.

It is through interaction children develop awareness of themselves, realizing that they are part of a community, and know the world around them, must not cause neglect of students in rural areas of any entity. The role of the teacher is to enable children to participate in the teaching processes through gain new knowledge and discover new meanings, carefully follow the learning and development of children and to give a good example of interaction with other students from other urban school environments. The interaction that can serve as a good example of communication between all stakeholders in the process, which is heard and accepted the opinion of each helps children to gain confidence and further develop into caring and attentive members of society. Accomplished teacher friendly relationship with the children and treat them with respect, which contributes to the development of the notion of self in each child and to improve learning.

1. Interaction of teachers is hearty and full of diligence which expresses respect for students and job satisfaction with them.
2. The interaction of teachers and their expectations of their children in accordance with their development and learning.
3. Teacher during the day often interacts with each child individually, helping them to become more secure and stimulating their learning and development.
4. The interaction of the teacher in accordance with the emotional, social,

physical and cognitive needs and abilities of the child.

5. The teacher gives the children the opportunity to make choices that will be admired by others perceived.
6. The interaction of the teacher encourages initiative, independence and the need for leadership to children, regardless of their origin urban environment or rural.

The interaction of the teacher contributes to the development of a learning community in which every child has the feeling that he belongs, has complete support to realize all its potentials.

1. Teacher encourages social development of children helping them get through mutual interaction and mutual understanding, support and develop a sense of belonging in the community, to achieve developmental and educational goals.
2. Teacher prepared activities for kids in which they need to learn how to distinguish feelings, to recognize in themselves and in their peers and to freely talk for them.
3. Teacher nurtures democratic values so that each child is encouraged to express their opinions in a manner appropriate to his age and to participate in decision-making.
4. Teacher of the various ways it stimulates and supports the development of language students and their intercommunication.

Accomplished teacher designed the interaction and two-way for adults to facilitate the development and learning of children.

1. In relation to the families, colleagues and other community members, teacher support and stimulate social interaction that is based on respect.
2. The teacher collaborates with other experts from the educational institution and the community in order to enhance the development and learning of children.

Pedagogical practice in quality assessment and planning play a very important role. Teacher in a cohesive framework combines the expectations appropriate to developmental level of the child national education standards, creativity and freedom of research and individual and group interests and needs. Cycle assessment-planning supports the development and learning of each child, relying on the child's curiosity, the full exercise of teaching in rural areas.

It is important process to foster the development of self-assessment and the use of skills for lifelong learning. Using systematic observation of children and other appropriate strategies, teachers create long-term and short-term educational plans that include both individual and group interests, which encouraged children to new achievements. Master plans based on what children already know and understand the plan and determine what is needed for each child to be able to fully realize their potential. When planning should take into account the different abilities and learning styles of each child and to overcome individual neglect of rural areas, which may affect adversely. They should be able to be

modified if the need arises. In the cycle of assessment and planning should include children, families and professionals in the field. Assessment and planning needs to be precisely defined, but there is room for flexibility, taking into account progress in learning and what happens in a child's life, the community and the world, the interaction between urban and rural areas. They need to determine where we can make improvements and to define next actions. Learning conditions have a significant impact on cognitive, social, emotional and psychological development of children. By creating a secure physical and psychological environment that features a variety of materials, tasks and situations adapted to the development of the child, the teacher encourages learning through independent and group research, through play and interaction between children and adults, between students of larger environments and lower. Allowing each child to feel welcome, the teacher builds and maintains an atmosphere in which each individual is respected, every child and family are important part of the community in the classroom and each child can participate in the development and maintenance of common space in it. When or children will be offered a secure environment although rural corresponding to their specific needs, they will be motivated to work together, to engage in various activities and learn to be initiative. The environment of the school and the sources of it are equally important components of the learning process. Quality pedagogical practices that teachers implement consistently invest in their personal and

professional development, which use their knowledge in everyday practice and collaborating with others in the creation of lifelong learning. The task of the teacher is to implement the requirements and standards contained in the national program that is based on the theory that each child is a successful learner if it adopted the educational knowledge and skills. Teacher offers its development and improvement and is ready to meet the challenges in everyday life and work, social change, an increasing number of information and the emergence of new technologies. To adopt and presented to the student in rural area. Active participation, critical thinking and partnership working with others to enable the teachers to acquire new knowledge and skills, to shape attitudes, to create friendships that will help them to work better, to enrich their personality and become more determined in advocating quality education to students in rural areas. Teacher continuously develop their skills in order to reach and maintain a high quality of teaching in accordance with the modern trends and demands of the modern world.

1. The teacher is aware of the importance of lifelong learning and uses all opportunities to develop professionally.
2. Teacher thinking, evaluate, seek feedback, evaluate their pedagogical work and the level of professional knowledge and make changes where necessary.
3. The teacher is willing to cooperate in order to improve their work and reach a higher professional level, the implementation of teaching in rural areas.

4. The teacher is one who makes the decisions about their profession by using their knowledge, skills and independent and critical thinking.
5. The teacher actively participates in social events and repeatedly emphasizes the importance of quality education and the need to be available to every child.

Teacher helps children to understand, accept and respect differences.

1. The teacher is able to appreciate and engage in teaching the differences that occur in families with other members of the community.
2. The teacher consistently, with respect and approval, pointing out the differences that children are out of school.

Teacher helps children to understand the values of civil society and to master the necessary skills to participate even though it does not meet all standards in the combined environment.

1. Teacher grants and honors those children who have different views and helps them develop skills to express those views appropriately.
2. The teacher helps children understand how stereo isomers and prejudices can influence their attitudes and behaviour.
3. The teacher guides the children that they should consider all the same to them and the children to be treated with respect and

expect the same from others attitude towards them.

4. The teacher introduces the concept of personal responsibility for the environment and allows children to apply it.

The teacher, in addition to realizing the goals of teaching, may: prepare individualized programs which will contain information about the strengths and weaknesses of the gifted; modifying the curriculum; develop strategies that will teach; To apply differentiated access / instructions or to classify tasks and learning outcomes according to the level at which all activities will focus on gifted and the development of moral values in rural areas. For example, students in combined classes should also attend and the other grade and one 45 min call time for realization of certain specific material

This way all students are involved in the work of the same content, but the outcomes will be different - gifted gain deeper knowledge about the use of Replacement forms in terms of speech and their relation to moral values, in symmetrical and asymmetrical relations.

When we talk about teaching in rural areas, it's really a big challenge for the government sector, local government ministry of education and finally the teachers and students as insignificant factor for successful implementation of the educational process in combined classes. This implies the need for better organization and continuous implementation of teaching in rural areas. My



experience of five years teaching in rural areas, speak clearly enough and focused on objective reasons in the combined classes. I would like to seriously consider (relevant factors) for the current situation in the rural areas and of course I think the combined classes ... current structure Provision classes with two or more units is really great evokes as much efficiency has in such classes. How many students gained high quality, knowledge and skills? Because insignificant is the fact that the students left halfway there also used to express school class is really too small to realize the educational goals of the curriculum. I'm talking about the quality of teaching which is divided timing-school classes. Often in my practice going students from one grade to engage in curriculum content in another department, while I explain or present. Or are distracting and concentration of their duty, and they do not finish their job but are included in other educational content.

### **Conclusion**

Opportunities for improvement in education in rural areas, there are of course in terms of enabling teachers even for a small number of students. Better would be teaching the structures allowing equal access to follow and implement the teaching and the students from grade one and the other. Certainly, that will cause burden on the budget but when it comes to the educational process and -teaching centre when students are certainly that it exceeds any cost. It is desirable to include more partners'

faculties, ministries, civil society, international organizations and other.

Main subjects in practical teaching future student's intellectual layer, the future of a nation state. Again refer to the full implementation of school classes in the combined class in rural areas. Providing technical terms where students will acquire knowledge and skills. It is necessary in my experience as a teacher in a rural environment - providing the conditions for cabinets practical teaching in certain subjects, such as science. Separate rooms or offices where students can truly and smoothly implement the curricula in these subjects. Experience and experience with all the relics and materials. Quality predisposition is a requirement for implementation of educational process in rural areas. The practical training is an integral part of the implementation of teaching and quality depends on the students themselves who need to continue their education further. All subjects and objects to contain in realizing a better quality of teaching combined classes in rural areas. Would potentiate the European Training Foundation and the European Agency for Education and Training of the European Union are potential for better and more efficient implementation of teaching combined classes in rural areas.

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**THEMATIC STRAND**

**INTEGRATED EDUCATION**

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**“UNDERSTANDING “THE OTHER” AND  
INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION  
CHARACTERISTICS IN TEXTBOOKS”**

**Abstract**

*The culture of other is becoming a more and more commonly promoted value, while cultural differences come into the focus of research as an important integration category for each society of cultural diversity. Since human beings are bound by their culture, the respect for the other's culture encourages and increases confidence in us and in society in general. Intercultural education gives importance to and supports the differences in all areas of human life. This makes students sensitive to the idea that people naturally have developed ways of life, traditions, and this diversity of human life enriches us all. This paper, by analyzing the contents and interpretation of (educational) textbooks, attempts to describe and answer some questions on intercultural education, such as what culture is, how it is manifested? How can we learn about other cultures? Is it possible intercultural learning in schools? What are the competencies of intercultural education? The second part of this paper will treat intercultural competence, such as the ability of recognizing and using different cultures. Results of this research suggest that people can learn from each other only when they have mutual differences.*

**Keywords:** *intercultural education, intercultural competence, knowledge, diversity*

## **Introduction**

In essence, the concept of education in modern society and modern theory represents the notions of cultural cohesion and the educational integration, which is also linked to national education systems in the framework of contemporary education. Culture comprises the material and spiritual, intellectual and emotional features that characterize society or the social group. In addition to art and literature, culture includes lifestyles, basic human rights, systems of value, traditions and faith. Culture opens man's horizon of observation and reflection on himself. This is what it makes us human beings, reasonable and morally shaped.

Through culture, we discover values and explore possibilities. Through culture man expresses himself, becomes reasonable for himself and is recognized as an unfinished project, he doubts in his achievements and insists tirelessly towards new knowledge and creates works that transcend him (UNESCO). The word culture means (1) the overall process of civilization in terms of growth and education; (2) faith, practices and ways of living which distinguishes an ethnic group or a society from the others, as well as social strata, youth subgroups, occupations etc., and (3) works and practices of intellectual activity, especially the artistic one (Williams, 1983).

One of the key goals of education in the modern world is the advancement of democracy in society. The education system should definitely consider the multicultural character of society

and aim to actively contribute to peaceful coexistence and positive interaction between cultural groups. Traditionally viewed, in this regard there are two approaches to education: multicultural education and intercultural education.<sup>1</sup> Multicultural education is one that through learning from other cultures tends to accept or at least tolerate other cultures, whereas intercultural education tends to exceed the passive coexistence and lead a sustainable way of life in a multicultural society.

This can be achieved through understanding, dialogue and mutual respect between groups belonging to different cultures, as well as through the provision of equal opportunities and fight against discrimination. Many experts and researchers who deal with the culture of societies with high ethnic, religious or racial diversity level, stick to the thesis of the huge impact of education on the degree of separation or cultural intolerance: it is a fact that the more intercultural textbooks or lectures from the culture of the other, the lower the degree of impatience or ethnocentrism in these societies, and vice versa: the more nationalistic texts that favor our culture and insult the culture of the other, the higher the degree of ethnocentrism or cultural intolerance.

## **Acceptance, not exclusion-model of societies with cultural diversity**

Culture sociologists and education policy experts, such as Berthoin-Atal and Friedman (2003), McGonagle (2010), Bennett (1993), Phinney (1990), Kimilka (2004), Shnaper (2004), Bauman (2009), predominantly agree

that the aim of education is to promote, develop, and build the following values: a proper understanding of culture in modern society; ability of communication between people of different cultures; more flexible attitude to cultural changes in society; greater preparedness of people for more active involvement in social interaction with people of different cultural background, as well as the recognition of fundamental human qualities as a common thing. Intercultural education is a process, which requires from each of us to know ourselves and our culture, in order to be able to understand the cultures of others. This process is challenging and includes deep fundamental beliefs associated with what is good and what is bad, looking at world in terms of personal life. All that we get as a ready occurrence during intercultural learning is discussed and analysed in critical way. Intercultural learning is a personal identity challenge and it may become a way to enrich this identity. Since intercultural learning is a process in which we learn how to live together in the world of differences, this is the starting point for building a peaceful life together. Intercultural education is considered the education, which respects and supports the differences in all fields of human life. It makes students more sensitive to ideas, because people have developed different ways of life, traditions and viewing the world naturally and that this diversity of human life enriches us all. At the same time, education promotes equality and human rights, opposes injustice and discrimination, and promotes values that build

equality. Intercultural competence is the ability to recognize and utilize different cultures, as one of the sources of learning. The first impression is that people can learn from each other only when they have mutual differences. Therefore the necessity of mutual respect and an adequate degree of curiosity, in order to overcome tensions, that usually follows an intercultural meeting. Some of the basic elements of intercultural competence are: awareness of ourselves, as a complex cultural being; awareness of the influence the culture we belong to has over our thinking and behaviour; to ability to commit ourselves to joint discovery of secrets, goals, which affect the behaviour of the individual; transparency to test various aspects on the world, ways of thinking and solving problems. Knowledge of the dimensions of cultural differences, can serve as valuable support and initial framework for intercultural communication. Ethnocentrism hinders the intercultural communication and understanding, sometimes even makes it impossible. Therefore, it is necessary to work in various fields in order to overcome them, especially through educational reforms and intercultural integration of the components in school curricula. This does not mean that at the same time we should not remain loyal to our origin and our cultural heritage or to give priority to other cultures before our culture. As McGonagle (2010) also argues, the more the different ethnic groups know of each other and the more they interact between them, the smaller the risk of tensions in society. However, the manner of presentation and portraying in

school contents has a special importance, since the latter is the most common source of mutual recognition in multicultural societies. Often, peoples' and ethnic groups' perceptions are affected to a great extent on how they are exposed in textbooks. Their concepts for other groups are basically formed from what is aired in the media first and then in educational contents. In such a reality, the educational contents on culture, history and life of the other can play a key role in alleviating interethnic and intercultural relations or otherwise, considering the current situation, it could deepen the cultural differences and increase the degree of ethnic intolerance between different ethnic groups, especially between Albanians and Macedonians.

This problematic aspect of contested educational contents is continuously present in education, especially in high school textbooks, such as music, history, geography, cultural-historical heritage, native language (Albanian and Macedonian language), civics. With small exceptions, in these textbooks, the Albanian culture, tradition, heritage, is denied and considered as a less important culture compared to Macedonian culture. Ethnocentric language in textbooks can be easily detected, with negative implications, which for years will not be avoided. In Macedonia, textbooks are not built according to multicultural contents but based on ethnic culture and history. Authors of textbooks, with few exceptions, all Macedonians, conceive the contents of textbooks through the prism of their ethnic culture. In many studies this trend has been

noted, examples of ethnocentrism have been highlighted, negative stereotyping, as well as symptoms of xenophobia and intolerance against other groups' cultural identity, usually the Albanian one.

### **Characteristics of good intercultural education curriculum**

Intercultural education is a process, which requires each of us to know ourselves and our culture, in order to be able to understand the cultures of others. All we take as ready during intercultural learning is put under the loupe and critically analysed. Since the intercultural learning is a process, in which we learn how to live together in the world of differences, this is the starting point for building a peaceful life together. In this way, instead of ethnocentrism policy, we should pursue a policy of acceptance, which can only be achieved through intercultural education because, an intercultural education is considered the education, that respects and supports the differences in all areas of human life. Respect, acceptance, makes students susceptible to ideas, because people have developed different ways of life, traditions, opinions about the world and this diversity of human life enriches us all.

Intercultural competency is the ability of understanding and using of various cultures, as one of the resources of learning (Berthoin-Atal and Friedman, 2003). Macedonia's government has distorted the idea of integrated education that de facto means intercultural education while insisting that Albanian pupils to begin mandatorily to learn the Macedonian language

from the first grade, while the Albanian language and languages of other ethnic communities, except the Macedonian one, was left at the willingness of the parents of Macedonian pupils.

The newest initiative of mixed classes where Macedonian and Albanian students of "Migjeni" primary school, called so by Albanian students and "Bratstvo", by Macedonian students, to develop the so-called extra-curricular activities. Both projects are destined to failure. Different practices and experiences show that it can be talked about society, including integrated education, only if this process is bilateral. This is a multidisciplinary process and the results will be achieved after a long-term commitment and a hard road.

We should start with the building of the policy of acceptance, respect and trust. We should start from the curricula, media support encouraged by institutions and politics. In no way Macedonians should not feel threatened if they learn about the Albanian culture. In contemporary societies the culture of the other becomes a highly supported value.

For ordinary planning for the inclusion of multicultural content in a curriculum, one should consider the following elements: learning about human rights, equality and freedom; learning about the culture, values of the culture of others, learning to evaluate the differences of civilization as a universal value. The relation between the knowledge gained at school about the world and how that knowledge

can be applied to a wider world, is part of the process of empowering the student's personality. Intercultural education aims to prepare students for a world where every individual is valued, free and able to participate in personal development and a sustainable society.

Intercultural education supported by human rights promotes the acquisition of knowledge, and forming attitudes and habits required to achieve this goal. Intercultural learning encourages students to develop basic skills for understanding human diversity and responsibilities for appropriate action. This sense enables students to experience the value of community at school, where the learning environment supports the respect for others. Students are encouraged to listen to the views of others and freely express their opinions without insulting others.

Teachers and school leaders can model the appreciation for the people who are different, including in their programs of study different cultures, such as knowledge of the habits of different cultures and training the students to resolve conflicts peacefully, and overcoming stereotypes and ethnic cultural and linguistic problems. It is important for the curriculum, through various forms, to represent all diversities that exist within each group. Even highly homogeneous groups have different kinds of diversities. Each ethnic group has interests, hobbies, rituals, tastes for music, favorite foods, and different ways of celebrating holidays. By bringing this diversity at school,



by practicing some of these activities, the education fits the children with politeness, respect and appreciation for differences.

### **Conclusion**

Numerous problems and challenges the education faces at this time, in particular for knowledge-based societies, with problems in the context of limited resources of education, various forms of inequality, diversity and educational exclusion, especially in multiethnic and multicultural societies, oblige the governments and educational institutions to find new models of dealing them. This is the reason why there are educational problems in multicultural societies. Expansion, diversity and enormous growth of educational institutions, especially those with private capital, together with the democratization of education has led to increased care within the sociology of the school, especially of cultural policy and the quality of education. In such a context, the role of the state, through education policy is to provide the highest educational equality and then take care of quality within the education process. One of the ways of achievement of these educational goals is the construction of educational concepts for establishing a situation of justice and equality in the education system. In this context the role and duties of the educational institutions in Macedonia are to build appropriate mechanisms for the creation of sound educational policy. The interculturalism Macedonia needs the reflexive multiculturalism, such as the European one, which suggests that the dominant culture can

also learn and take from small cultures, that the culture in the viewpoint of globalization is open and flexible. The concept of reflexive multiculturalism "guides" Macedonia to the re-composition of relations between cultural communities, regardless of size, value, history, reproduction or cultural artifacts. This form of interculturalism seems that manifests a kind of mutual borrowing between two cultural groups according to the model: one culture (be it the one of the majority, or of the minority) takes something from another culture and the other one (which ever it is) will take something from the second one. Eventually they create something in common, new, valuable for both cultures, keeping and cultivating their own specifics, which distinguish them. In other words, this means that in order to successfully implement this interculturalism, different cultures (both of the majority and of minority as well) should be well prepared to give and to accept. Institutional education with intercultural curriculum may be a fruitful initiative.

### **Remarks**

1. The prefix intercultural (defined by Micheline Rey, a professor at the University of Geneva and recognized by the Council of Europe) assumes interaction, exchange, reciprocity, interdependence and solidarity. Interculturalism also gives high importance to the notion of culture: acceptance of cultures, lifestyles, symbolic performances, which human beings take them as a reference between them, acceptance of interaction, which exists during the multiple reflections of specific cultures, and

also between the different cultures. In the context of these exchanges and reactions both space and time are part of them. In other words, interculturalism is based on dynamism and process. The notion clearly affirms the reality of interaction and interdependence. Intercultural option as a starting point takes the necessity of positive interaction between the all integral factors in society, which also appears as a point of reference, an action method and perspective. When we use the term intercultural, it means, that we recognize the multiple interactions that exist within a culture, those between cultures, as well as the changes of dimension and space. Cultures are dynamic and creative. Each individual portrays his culture. Everyone has the opportunity to portray different cultural elements in his way and then transform them through his experiences and relations with others.

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**MULTIETHNIC WORKSHOPS DURING  
PRIMARY EDUCATION**

**Abstract**

*The concept of primary education in Republic of Macedonia is nine-year educational period in three developmental stages. In that period the child incurs significant cognitive, affective and social changes. It is very important to the formation of positive attitudes, values and social competencies to other members of the family, school and wider social community. The realization of multiethnic workshops as educational method in working with students is of great importance for the formation of positive attitudes towards members of all ethnic communities, raising to a higher level of tolerance, non-violence, respect, antidiscrimination, and reducing ethnic stereotypes and prejudices.*

*Multiethnic workshops should be in accordance with the age of the students or their educational period. Special attention in the preparation and realization of multiethnic workshops should be involvement of each student according to his abilities and interests. My experience shows that students gladly accepted multiethnic workshops. I would like to present my poetry-music workshop multiethnic Macedonia sing .. The workshop is realized through seven stages, where students work on seven folk songs that sing about love with seven ethnic communities in Republic of Macedonia, then together we share findings.*

**Keynotes:** *multiethnic, workshop, during primary education.*

### **Intrioduction**

Multiethnic and multicultural workshops during primary education are a very important educational segment. In my extensive work experience in primary education, I have implemented different workshops on nonviolence, tolerance, folk customs, children's rights, ethnic prejudice, ethnic stereotypes, trafficking, education for peace, and others. There are two types of multiethnic workshops: workshops that include students from different ethnic communities who work on a specific topic regarding multiethnic sensitivity and workshops that include students from one ethnic community who work on a specific topic regarding multiethnic sensitivity. I will cite some titles of my workshops: Macedonia is singing, Emma and Theo, A longing for the index, My children's rights, Child is born, Let's go to the wedding, My grandfather died, Peace child, Baby sleep songs, etc. I think multiethnic workshops are very important because we live in a multiethnic society. Children from an early age should be educated that all who live in our country need to respect each other and help. Also nurturing tolerance, nonviolence, respect, antidiscrimination and cooperation are important in the process of education.

The concept of primary education in Republic of Macedonia is a nine-year educational period, in three developmental stages. In that period the child incurs significant cognitive, affective and social changes. It is very important to the formation of positive attitudes, values and social competencies to other members of the

family, school and wider social community. The realization of multiethnic workshops as educational method in working with students is of great importance for the formation of positive attitudes towards members of all ethnic communities, raising to a higher level of tolerance, nonviolence, respect, antidiscrimination, and reducing ethnic stereotypes and prejudices.

Multiethnic workshops should be in accordance with the age of the students or their educational period. Special attention in the preparation and realization of multiethnic workshops should be involvement of each student according to his abilities and interests.

### **Multiethnic workshop "Macedonia is singing"<sup>55</sup>**

In this occasion I would like to present my multiethnic poetry-music workshop titled Macedonia is singing. The purpose of the workshop is to raise the awareness of children that in Republic of Macedonia live more ethnic communities, regardless of all sing of love.

Before the workshop conducted were needed following preparations.

Writing a text titled Macedonia sings needed for the workshop, recording text with music in the background. Choice of seven folk songs sing about love from seven ethnic communities in Macedonia:



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<sup>55</sup> Zlatevska, B.A. (2013).

- Macedonian folk song Ah, where is my darling;
- Albanian folk song J took the mandolin;
- Serbian folk song J have one wish;
- Roma folk song J love you;
- Vlach folk song Mother marry me;
- Bosnian folk song Dear mother sent me to the water;
- Turkish folk song J've promised.



- Translation the songs from Albanian, Bosnian, Serbian, Vlach, Roma and Turkish language in Macedonian language.<sup>56</sup>
- Preparation of necessary materials for group work.
- Preparation of typical traditional cookies for all seven ethnic groups.

### During the workshop

1. Students at random pull the petals are classified into seven groups \* justice, love, tolerance, respect, cooperation, trust and support (they sit round the table).
2. Listening to recorded material titled Macedonia is singing.
3. Students from every group read together folk song, discuss and filling working paper.
4. Every group presented their working papers and emphasized.
5. Then send the recorded tracks, one by one, and students from every group determine

whether correctly have determined songs of the ethnic community. If the folk song is not performed correctly estimated adjustments in the working paper with red paint.

6. All students play together in a dance, during all seven songs.

7. At the end of the workshop students and others at the workshop served to typical traditional cookies for all seven ethnic groups (Macedonian, Albanian, Serbian, Roma, Vlach, Bosnian, Turkish).

### Conclusion

The implementation of multiethnic workshops is of great importance during the period of primary education. The respect between us regardless of our ethnicity is very important in daily child-rearing, because no matter which ethnic group we belong to all people and we all share the same planet.

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<sup>56</sup> Would like to thank my friends Dzanish Kokalari, Svetlana Stojić, Bekir Elezi and Esma Rizvanova for translation the songs.

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***TEACHING CULTURE IN  
A MULTICULTURAL CLASSROOM***

**Abstract**

*In the practice of teaching a foreign language, the four skills- reading, writing, speaking and listening are considered to be the most important ones for the students to master, in order to become proficient in speaking and uttering the English Language, regardless if it is for studying or teaching. But in recent years, the cultural element became very present in the teaching and learning of the English language. Studies have shown that the culture of the target language is of the utmost importance and needs to be equally present in the teaching of that language. The cultural components need and have to be present in the teaching process as well as in the resources that are being used in the class. Culture can be taught through the most creative ways by selecting the most representative aspects of the target culture and presenting them to the students. Even in a multicultural setting, if the appropriate cultural aspects are chosen to be presented in front of the students, the projections will be achieved.*

*What is also important to mention is that the resources used in class need to have cultural segments in every unit beside the language and literature input in them. And not just to contain them, but to contain the most appropriate ones and such elements that will interest the student.*

*The aim of this paper is to show which are the most common cultural aspects incorporated in the resources used in class in the schools in Macedonia and how teaching culture in a*



*multicultural classroom can be modeled to be more productive for both students and teachers.*

**Keywords:** culture, teaching, foreign language, multicultural setting

### **Introduction**

Understanding a foreign language does not mean just understanding the grammar, the phonology and the lexicon of a vocabulary. It also means understanding certain characteristics of the target language, that is, the culture of L2, the language being taught and learned. Language cannot be imagined isolated from its culture, and vice versa. That is the reason why culture is considered to be the fifth skill when acquiring new language- the other four being, as it is well known, reading, writing, speaking and listening. Culture can make students appreciate and understand values more. “It is an attitudinal change that is expressed through the use of language” (Farnia and Rozina:243). To solve the communication problems in the target language in the EFL classroom, the learner needs to learn the target culture within the syllabus, and the teacher should be sensitive to the learner’s fragility so as not to cause them to lose their interest and motivation.

At any rate, foreign language learning is foreign culture learning, and, in one form or another, culture has, even implicitly, been taught in the foreign language classroom—if for different reasons. What is debatable, though, is what is meant by the term “culture” and how the latter

is integrated into language learning and teaching. Kramersch’s keen observation should not go unnoticed:

Culture in language learning is not an expendable fifth skill, tacked on, so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It is always in the background, right from day one, ready to unsettle the good language learners when they expect it least, making evident the limitations of their hard-won communicative competence, challenging their ability to make sense of the world around them (Kramersch:1993).

The teaching of culture is not akin to the transmission of information regarding the people of the target community or country—even though knowledge about (let alone experience of) the “target group” is an important ingredient. It would be nothing short of ludicrous to assert that culture is merely a repository of facts and experiences to which one can have recourse, if need be. Furthermore, what Kramersch herself seems to insinuate is that to learn a foreign language is not merely to learn how to communicate but also to discover how much leeway the target language allows learners to manipulate grammatical forms, sounds, and meanings, and to reflect upon, or even flout, socially accepted norms at work both in their own or the target culture.

There is definitely more than meets the eye, and the present paper has the aim of unraveling the “mystery,” shedding some light on the role of teaching culture in fostering cross-cultural understanding which transcends the boundaries

of linguistic forms—while enriching and giving far deeper meaning to what is dubbed “communicative competence”—and runs counter to a solipsistic world view. After all, communication requires understanding, and understanding requires stepping into the shoes of the foreigner and sifting her cultural baggage, while always ‘putting [the target] culture in relation with one’s own’ (Kramsch, 1993: 205). Moreover, we should be cognizant of the fact that ‘[i]f we teach language without teaching at the same time the culture in which it operates, we are teaching meaningless symbols or symbols to which the student attaches the wrong meaning...’.

### **Raising cultural awareness in a multicultural classroom**

Cultural awareness is the foundation of communication and it involves the ability of standing back from ourselves and becoming more aware of our cultural beliefs, values and perceptions. Cultural awareness becomes central when we have to interact with people from different cultural background. Cultural awareness helps a person to explore cultural issues with one’s care recipients more sensitively. There are many different cultures present in every school and it is the teacher’s responsibility to make sure that s/he is incorporating culturally responsive instruction and materials in the curriculum. When students are being engaged in cultural learning, they will naturally compare the foreign values, behaviour and customs with their own and this reflection can help them know their culture better, or

modify pre-conceived conceptions (Moss, 2002).

Having in mind that all people should be treated equally, regardless of the culture that they belong to, they should also be aware of the existence of the other cultures. They should be aware of the above mentioned aspects of target culture-habits, meaning of words, gestures, customs, holidays, significant days, rituals and activities. This process, which can be referred to as “socialization”, prepares the individual for the linguistically and non-linguistically accepted patterns of the society in which s/he lives. Thus, culture helps the person to know how far s/he can go as an individual and what the responsibilities that it elicits are. Students have to be aware of the appropriate ways, linked to culture, to address people, to agree or disagree with someone, to make requests or to express gratitude. To do so, teachers should be aware of the cultural studies and to try and raise students’ cultural awareness and to improve their communicational competence. Kramsch (1998) says that a foreign culture and one’s own culture should be placed together so that learner can understand a foreign culture. When learners interact with native speakers or text, they construct their own meaning rather than simply transfer information about people and their culture, and therefore non-native speakers should have opportunities to make their own meaning and to reflect on both the target culture and their own. Cultural awareness should be viewed as an important component which informs and provides communicative competence. By communicative competence,

we mean verbal as well as non-verbal communication, such as gestures, the ability to integrate within a specific group.

In EFL classrooms, as we teach the language, we would automatically teach culture. The forms of address, greetings, formulas, and other utterances found in the dialogues or models our students hear and the allusions to aspects of culture found in the reading represent cultural knowledge. Gestures, body movements, and distances maintained by speakers should foster cultural insights. Students' intellectual curiosity is aroused and satisfied when they learn that there exists another mode of expression to talk about feelings, wants, needs and when they read the literature of the foreign country. For depth of cultural understanding, it is necessary to see how such patterns function in relation to each other and to appreciate their place within the cultural system. If language learners are to communicate at a personal level with individuals from other cultural backgrounds, they will need not only to understand the cultural influences at work in the behaviour of others, but also to recognize the profound influence patterns of their own culture exert over their thoughts, their activities, and their forms of linguistic expression.

### **What and how much?**

Today culture and multiculturalism are new trends that are emerging in today's curricula. As stated in the above text, according to findings in the books, the presence of culture in any form in textbooks for foreign language learning is most suitable for learning the language and for

getting acquainted with the target culture. As said before, culture and language go hand in hand and that is why culture should be present in foreign language textbooks. But the question explored and researched for the purposes of this paper is- What and How much?

For the sake of coming to answers to these two questions, two books have been taken into considerations that are being used in the fourth grade in elementary books: Project 1 and Welcome 2.

Project 1 is intended for the students in 4th grade elementary school. The book is written on an easy level, which is suitable for the grades intended. Every unit is comprised of four parts; each of them is dedicated to one of the four skills, which are taught for learning a language: Grammar, Vocabulary and Pronunciation (Speaking), Listening, Writing. The section English across the curriculum, which deals with cultural aspects, is looked into and analysed. In this section, throughout the book, themes that are connected with culture and at the same time they help for a better learning of the language are presented.

In Unit 1, the content of the section English across the curriculum is connected with the material that is being taught and learned in the previous sections. Through a game with numbers and math, pupils are exercising what they have been learning in the previous parts. That is done by using terms and names from the British area and names of places. For example, for learning how to express distance, there are names of places in Britain, and that is how

students learn to say the distance in kilometres and by that, they learn names and places in Great Britain. In the Culture section, the topics for discussion are the titles, names and nicknames.

In Unit 2, which deals with the topic of Family and Friends, the section English across the curriculum is concerned with geographical names, places. In this section, students learn the English names for geographical terms, how to read a geographical map, how to say where they come from, how to say the name of the street, town, state, etc.

In Unit 3, which deals with vocabulary terms about science, technical equipment, school subjects, in the English across the curriculum section, students are becoming familiar for terms and names for pets, science terms, although those terms are not too elaborate, but equal to their level, terms connected with animals, parts of the body. As what accounts to the Culture section, there is a comparison between the schools in England and Wales. So students, through the comparison of the schools in England and Wales learn expressions connected with education, pupils, teachers etc.

In Unit 4, which deals with daily routines, expressions of time and how to tell the time, the English across the curriculum deals with names and terms for musical instruments, which is again connected with previous section, about daily routines? The Culture section deals with sports terminology, people that practice sports, and contains questions that require the student to make comparison between the sport culture

in their country and the sport culture illustrated in the book. So in this section, again, through culture information and terms for musical instruments the students learn new words and new forms for expressing musical terms.

In Unit 5, which deals, from grammatical point of view, with adverbs of place and objects in the house, the English across the Curriculum section deals with the names of towns in England, analysing them in details, and giving interesting details about their names, which is again connected with the material previously learned? The Culture section, on the other hand, gives a description of the British houses, how are they decorated, how many rooms they have, etc. That is again connected with learning the language through texts that are connected with the culture of a particular land, Great Britain in this case.

In Unit 6, which deals with people, describing them, describing the clothes and features, the English across the curriculum section deals with describing, but this time the description is connected with art. So while children are learning how to describe people, they learn about some famous painters and pictures. The Culture section is comprised of texts about people from different cultures and countries from the world, and students learn how to describe them. Also, there is a discussion about the student's countries and information about how people in other countries live. Here is where multiculturalism takes place, which is something very important today in the contemporary curriculum.

All in all, this textbook is well balanced for the age that is meant to be used for. For every lesson that the students learn in grammar, speaking, vocabulary, there is also cultural information about different places, people, customs, and often students are asked to make comparison between their motherland and what are they reading about in the textbook. Also in these textbooks, students are learning through songs, games and interesting puzzle games.

### **Welcome 2**

In contrast with this textbook, the other example, which is considered to be a non-cultural example of a textbook, is Welcome 2 which is intended for pupils in the early stages in learning English as a foreign language. There is very little or none cultural information that could be useful to the student, as for learning new vocabulary, so much for learning about different cultures and customs..

In contrast with the previous textbook, Welcome hasn't got cultural information of any kind- not even a text, a song, or some new vocabulary, which may be connected, with some other and new culture for the students. Students should learn about culture for the earliest level of study.

### **Conclusion**

Culture texts should be available at every level of language study, since they are very good way for students to enhance their vocabulary and to learn new information about a foreign culture. As it was stated earlier in this paper, language

and culture go hand in hand. It is important to have culture texts in the textbooks in use. The newest trend that emerges today is multiculturalism, and by putting culture texts in the textbooks, students not only learn new vocabulary through the text, but they also learn about a new culture. Cultural content (since firstly creates the motivation to learn a foreign language), also indirectly promotes interlingual competence. Culture text are necessary not only for learning about foreign culture and language, but also for making the class more fun, more relaxed and creating more relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.

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**SCHOOL CULTURE AND BEHAVIOUR AS  
A BASIS FOR SUCCESSFUL  
QUALIFICATION OF THE YOUNG  
GENERATIONS FOR COHABITATION  
AND TOLERANCE**

**Abstract**

*The intensive changes in all spheres of societal living in general, and especially of multicultural and multiethnic environments such as the Republic of Macedonia, bear with them challenges in front of which all relevant institutions and subjects stand still. This is particularly the case with the qualification of the young generations from all communities (ethnic, cultural, confessional, etc.), which enables them to construct permanent cohabitation and tolerance, which is particularly important as it ensures equal democratic and decent living conditions for all of them. In dealing efficiently with the mentioned challenges, the successful realization of education is one of the basic postulates both in our country and worldwide. That is why this paper focuses on the organization and functioning of schools as elementary carriers of this process. It also touches upon the creation of school culture and behaviour as the most important links in the qualification of the young generations for the previously stated purposes.*

**Keywords:** *school culture, multicultural, multiethnic, cohabitation, tolerance*

**Introduction**

One of the greatest challenges of contemporary times, undoubtedly, is the establishment of a democratic society, which is also a prerequisite for securing basic assumptions for the equal

development of all resources, particularly human resources. The institutionalization of democratic principles in particular becomes a major challenge for multi-ethnic and multicultural countries such as the Republic of Macedonia. Hence, it could be inferred that regional institutions, in order to be able to successfully keep track of and meet the high compatibility, efficiency and efficacy standards of advanced democratic countries, should mandatorily build a system which will advocate respect for the ethnical and cultural differences which are part of our reality. Only thus, we could take pride in the fact that multiethnicity and multiculturalism are not merely a meaningless premise or a democratic ideal, but our social practice, which enables peaceful cohabitation and positive interaction among the various ethnic and cultural groups. Personally, I am deeply convinced that education, as one of the most significant parts of the social system, should play the key role in all our endeavours in that reaction. That is why this paper focuses on improving the situation of schools by means of very significant elements such as school climate and behaviour.

### **Culture**

Although in our everyday lives and mutual interactions we come across the term culture very frequently, it is very difficult to find one single meaning or a unanimous viewpoint accepted by most theoreticians as to defining this term. Thus, Heder in his foreword to *Thoughts on the Philosophy of History* stated that there is not anything more indeterminate

than the word culture (Kloskovska, 2001). However, this statement has not discouraged theoreticians who deal with this issue from making further efforts in defining the term culture. The insight that I have gained from my research on the definitions of the term culture is that most of the theoreticians who deal with this issue describe it as something, which opposes nature. These definitions also lead to the conclusion that culture is solely one specific dimension of social life. In other words, it is a determined crystallization of social life, expressed through each and every man-made material and spiritual product. In connecting culture with tradition, it is unacceptable to believe that culture, in fact, refers only to what has been created in the course of history by our ancestors. Equally unacceptable is the belief that culture comprises solely the creations of current generations, as this claim eliminates tradition as part of culture. On the contrary, the term culture refers to both our complex social heritage and our life style, and it includes an anthropological aspect as well, which points to the fact culture could not be completely and easily separated from social life (Zhoglev, 2003).

### **School culture**

Since school culture is the focus of our interest, the following two questions arise almost immediately: "What is school culture?" and "Can it be controlled and managed?".

According to some sources, school culture is a term which generally refers to the beliefs, perceptions, relations, viewpoints, and the



written and unwritten rules which shape and influence every aspect of school functioning. Moreover, the term encompasses a lot of concrete issues such as, for instance, students' physical and emotional safety, the neatness of the classrooms and the school premises in general or the extent to which the school accepts and respects racial, ethnical, linguistic and cultural diversity (Hidden Curriculum, 2014).

Similarly, there are deliberations about school culture as a sum of school traditions, beliefs, politics and norms which could be shaped and improved, and which could be supported by the school principle and leader teachers (Defining the School's Culture).

The term school culture refers to the life style and the work style in the school itself, the influence of the school history and tradition on its educational success as well as the behaviour of the colleagues, i.e. the employees; and it also refers to the rules and the rituals, which take place in the school. This means that school culture, on the one hand, is a complex term and phenomenon which cannot be put in some rigid boundaries and frameworks, but which, on the other hand, is very important as it enables schools to adjust more easily to the demands imposed by the environment. That is why efforts should be made to define it in more precise terms. Culture makes teachers aware of how they should behave in the entire teaching process. It also makes students aware of how they should develop positive climate in the classroom so that they could make full use of

the potentials, which alleviate the process of faster, and more efficient mastering of the material as well as acquiring all the necessary competences (Jovičić & Zarić, 2011).

On the basis of the previously mentioned and many other deliberations, it could be concluded that school culture has two significant elements - one visible and one invisible part, as well as three levels, which differentiate among themselves according to their visibility and the accessibility to the individual.

The first level of culture includes all those elements which could be seen, heard, noticed or experienced (work outfit, equipment, mode of communication, behaviour etc.)

The second level refers to the school values and beliefs, which according to many analysts are, in fact, the integral elements of the true school culture.

The basic assumptions are the third level of school culture and they are systematized basic human insights and experience in the functioning of the world around them.

### **School culture and behaviour as providers of cohabitation and tolerance**

Historically, the Republic of Macedonia has always been a typical example of multiethnic, multicultural and multi-confessional environment, i.e. a region where diverse national, cultural and confessional communities coexisted. Under these conditions, a challenge for each and every state is finding and institutionalizing adequate mechanisms for the

functioning of the different ethnicities, in the direction of ensuring proper cohabitation and tolerance among the different communities as a very significant factor for the stability of the state. These efforts are an imperative for our schools as well, as it is generally known that all these processes would be much more sustainable if they commence very early in peoples' lives.

Unfortunately, practice and latest research show that our schools are not up to this task. Namely, despite the accepted values of the multiculturalism in the education process they have not improved the multiethnic relations. In other words, our students are still burdened with ethnic stereotypes and prejudices, which are mainly positive for their ethnic group and negative for all the 'others' (UNICEF, 2009).

In my opinion, our schools in order to successfully overcome these negative conditions have to establish and maintain appropriate culture and behaviour on the part of all stakeholders in the educational process. I support this claim with the well-known fact that people throughout their lives should continuously be 'exposed' to cultural influence, since culture is something, which could be learned.

What is the thing that the students, the teachers, the administrative staff, and all the rest involved in this process should learn in order to be able to build such favourable school culture and to secure such adequate behaviour? In that respect, first and foremost, I would like to express my deepest conviction that it is impossible to

expect students or teachers to culturally upgrade themselves, if they are not familiar with their own culture. The process of familiarizing oneself with one's own culture is called enculturation (Shirilova, 2001). Apart from the parents and the environment as very significant factors, schools also should hugely influence the process of enculturation. They should build mechanisms which will enable students from a very young age to become aware of not only the fact that they are part of a particular culture acquired in the process of socialization, but also that they have a complete freedom of choice with regards to what culture they would belong to when they grow up. However, that is not sufficient. More precisely, in the conditions of multicultural, multinational and multiconfessional environment, knowing only one's own culture could not ensure cohabitation, tolerance or positive interaction between the different cultural groups. To put it more simply, in order to enable schools to build proper culture and behaviour, which will have positive implications on cohabitation and tolerance not just in the school but even in a wider context, familiarizing with one another, accepting and recognizing diversity from different aspects (cultural, ethnical, religious etc.) becomes a must.

Only by knowing each other very well, people will also know how to respect and appreciate themselves, since that is the only way in which they could ensure joint projections for an adequate progress and development of society in general. This implies that **acculturation** imposes itself as a necessity.

Acculturation is a process of two cultures getting in touch with each other, namely, a process in which the groups and individuals which are in contact, alter the cultural characteristics and acquire new ones (Prangoska, 1999).

**Acculturation** is a kind of a cultural change, which is a process of dialectic interaction among the cultures of two or more social groups, which come into contact for whatever reasons. It is a process in which two cultures encounter and get in touch with each other and mutually influence each other.

Furthermore, acculturation is defined as:

1. Modernization of a primitive culture,
2. Taking over and adopting elements from other cultures,
3. Accepting the culture of the new environment in which an individual or a group has found themselves (Shirilova, 2001).

Once they have secured the previously mentioned assumptions, surely the school will find it much easier to create, upgrade and maintain their school culture and behaviour continuously and in the long run.

The first level of school culture refers to the external manifestations. Accordingly, this part does not depict the entire school culture, but merely its most visible, obvious and accessible aspect which people could notice. These visible manifestations of school culture include forms of behaviour which could be seen and heard and

which could 'send a message' to all the participants in the students' character building and educational process (parents, students, teachers etc.)

However, in order to get the message through to everybody, a very important task for every school is to make sure that the elements applied at the first level of school culture are widely acceptable, i.e. that they are a reflection of the cultural diversity, and, consequently, a basis for eliminating whatever barriers to all participants' equality in the educational process.

The most notable elements of the school culture typically include: **the artifacts** (furniture, equipment, work outfit), **the language** (the mode of mutual communication), **the norms** (the expected forms of behaviour based on the values of the school and the beliefs that they provide a guidance for everyone's behaviour), **the rituals** (a repetitive sequence of activities that express and strengthen the core values and beliefs), **the slogans** (short phrases which are changing regularly, and which are used for advertising and motivating employees), **the stories** (they are usually based on real events, but they may also include a mixture of real and imaginary things), and **the logos/symbols** (the distinguishing marks).

The **second** level refers to **school values and beliefs**. The values and the beliefs are the key elements whose task is to make people aware of what they should strive to and how they should behave. It is very difficult to distinguish between these two terms and that is why they are frequently used interchangeably. The values

and the beliefs could be found under the surface events and they present their underpinning. Although these values are invisible, they are capable of making individuals become aware of their existence. Exactly these values and beliefs are the elements, which differentiate one school from another. Namely, according to many analysts, these are in fact the elements, which comprise the real school culture. What exactly are these values, which are part of the school culture? Normally, they are wide tendencies based on moral, social and religious principles, which could be acquired in the childhood and are subject to changes due to one's experience, i.e. organizational solutions to problems experienced in the past.

Taking this into consideration, it becomes obvious that the school culture mechanisms provide schools with an opportunity to build beliefs about and values of mutual respect, cohabitation and tolerance in the case of the young generations, as a major solution to the problems which arise in this sphere in the Republic of Macedonia for quite some time now, let alone their negative implications.

The **basic assumptions** are located on the **third** level and they represent the deepest component of the school culture. These are systematized basic human insights and experiences, which pertain to both the way in which the world around them is functioning and the nature of the things that surround them. Basically, these are the assumptions that individuals have with regards to the school system; its successfulness in building a system of cohabitation and

tolerance; then, the assumptions about the system's functionality and its relationship with the environment, etc. They are invisible, subconscious and are taken for granted. That is why they could hardly be depicted. The subconscious character of the basic assumptions reduces, but does not eliminate the possibility for the schools to have an impact on this part of the school culture as well.

### **Conclusion**

Most probably, school culture, as a relatively new term, would not have been currently so popular, provided there had not been indications that it significantly influences the successful functioning of not only the school but the wider context as well. This conclusion emphasizes the school's new role in overcoming negative practices, primarily, with respect to assisting younger generations to achieve balance in respecting other people's freedoms and rights, i.e. to achieve balance in securing adequate cohabitation and tolerance. This is exactly why special emphasis is placed on school culture especially with respect to:

- *Reaching strategic decisions.* Reaching strategic decisions in both the schools and the wider context is heavily influenced by the assumptions and the beliefs of those who reach the decisions. The correctness of the strategic decisions, especially as far as the measures taken in the direction of cohabitation and tolerance are concerned, greatly depends on the initial assumptions imposed on those who reach those

decisions exactly by the school culture itself. Naturally, the stronger and more homogeneous the school culture is, the better strategic decisions will be made.

- *Adjusting to changes.* Successful schools are exactly what they are, probably because they have a culture, which prefers flexibility and openness to the general public. That is why it must be pointed out that, if the school wants to be successful, it must have a system of values and beliefs, which would prioritize the need for adjusting to the changes in the environment, which is something that we should all strive to. These values and beliefs especially refer to acknowledging and respecting the ethnic and cultural diversities, building an adequate system of joint ethnic and culturally diverse findings, securing equal opportunities for all the individuals and groups, and improving human dignity and democratic ideals.
- *Coordinating activities.* It is a well-known fact that the strong and comprehensive school culture not only alleviates, but also accelerates significantly the process of coordination of all the stakeholders in the process. Only via successful coordination, the measures, which are taken for enhancing cohabitation and tolerance, will turn into a value system, which will be supported and accepted by all (students, teachers, administration staff and parents).

- *Controlling the school behaviour.* Control is being exerted by imposing particular cultural values, beliefs and norms in the school behaviour. Once all students and employees accept these norms and values and adopt them as their own personal rules, opinions and behaviour, then the behaviour control will be rather simple. Sometimes, school culture is a much stronger mechanism for controlling than imposing any other formal regulations or monitoring processes.
- *Reducing conflicts.* The most frequent reason why conflicts in schools occur, in general, are the different and incompatible assumptions which individuals apply in order to understand the world around them. When two or more people have different assumptions, values and beliefs about the world around them and when they work or take decisions together, conflicts among them are practically unavoidable. Hence, the role of the school culture in reducing these conflicts becomes more than obvious, since not only it improves the entire situation, but also it ensures less wasting of time and energy on unproductive goals, such as, for instance, resolution of conflicts, which should not have happened in the first place.

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**MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS IN A  
MULTIETHNIC ENVIRONMENT**

**Abstract**

*Resolving conflicts/disputes is part of peoples' efforts to avoid violence. The varieties of ways of resolving a dispute that are characteristic to certain cultural region are associated with the basic values of the community and the willingness to implement them in practice. Conflict/dispute prevention, fast response, their management and the handling of the outbreak of a conflict or a dispute requires a very complex action of different factors in the community (formal- institutional or informal).*

*If conflicts/disputes are managed appropriately, they will not cause an escalation of hostility and produce violence, and they can represent a process of purification and liberation through which a whole series of misunderstandings and erroneous information can be cleared. That way they can become an opportunity for change and creation of mutual respect, understanding and reconciliation.*

*The desired interethnic setting cannot be established solely by legal, political and other declarations, but through a long and complex process of socialization of a person. This in turn means that all social agents, starting from family to educational institutions, media, non-governmental associations and others should enable the individual to adopt the correct value orientation towards the culture and ethnicity of other groups. More specifically, the educational activity of the aforementioned socialization factors should enable people, especially young*

*people, for deeper understanding of intercultural relations and for acceptance of ethnic diversity and tolerance as an existential social value and important condition for the development of both individuals and the society.*

**Keywords:** *education, ethnicity, environment, values, tolerance.*

### **Introduction**

The states (such as Macedonia) that represent a set of different ethnic groups with different cultural roots and religious commitments are faced with special challenges in dealing with disputes and managing conflicts. In these states, particular attention must be paid to conflicts/disputes involving members of different ethnic, cultural and religious communities, which, if not resolved in time, may grow into inter-ethnic disputes conflicts.<sup>57</sup> Disputes/conflicts between communities can create mistrust, fear, and even hatred. Left alone they can escalate and turn into social disturbances and, in the worst case, into direct violent clashes. Prevention of conflicts/disputes, prompt responsiveness, their management and dealing with the outbreak of conflict or after a dispute requires a very complex action of different factors in the community (formal-institutional or informal).

Management is the process by which we attempt to successfully achieve the objectives of

the organization. All activities contained in management can be divided into several managerial functions. Basic management functions met with almost all authors are: planning, organizing, staffing, leading and controlling. In addition to these basic management functions, there are some others, such as deciding, ordering, coordinating and motivating.

All employees, students and other stakeholders in school have different education, values norms, styles of behaviour and communication, different interests, etc. so there is an indisputable need for management in school. Management and its functions extend across the entire organizational structure. According to the position of local managers in the pyramidal-hierarchical structure, three management levels are distinguished.

- top level managers;
- middle level managers;
- first-line managers.

Management levels are determined by the objectives of the organization. Practically, for each level there are defined and appropriate objectives, ranging from top level where the organization's objectives are, and descending down the pyramid to the middle level – objectives of certain sectors, and to the line-level managers - work oriented objectives.

If we look at school management levels, it can be concluded that:

- Top managers are: principal, deputy principal, head of the regional school;

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<sup>57</sup> [www.epoms.mk](http://www.epoms.mk) – Протокол за разрешување на меѓуетничките спорови



- Middle level managers are: presidents (heads) of professional bodies;
- Straight-line managers are teachers, especially class teachers and class masters/mistresses.

Didactic knowledge deeply suggests that, before it is implemented, any kind of work must be well designed in advance or planned and implemented seriously. This pre-planning and thinking seriously is called a vision. Planning a vision is a skill and knowledge, or an ability of vital importance for achieving specific goals and objectives.

The vision of development and the ability to run an educational institution or school is a dynamic and interactive process that would not constitute a whole if that vision is not incorporated into the vision of the teaching staff in the school.

Interethnic conflicts, teaching in different ethnic shifts, fights and disagreements between students – these are the problems that occur in the schools in the Republic of Macedonia.

Reports on an increasing tendency towards separation along ethnic lines in schools have lately been taking a significant place in the media and public life. There is a lot of research and assumptions on the main reasons for such a tendency indicating a number of weaknesses at national and school levels.

Given that multiculturalism and good interethnic relations are important characteristics of quality education that leads to

improved performance of students in the next phase of education reform, these elements should be particularly emphasized. This is consistent with the application of the program Child Friendly School in the frames of the national level reforms, as an approach based on children's rights with regard to all aspects of education and their contribution to overall child development.

Multiculturalism and addressing inter-ethnic relations in education are the basis of mutual understanding and building a cohesive society. Although the aspirations for EU/NATO membership are common to all citizens of the country, the question of the readiness of students to live in a multicultural and multiethnic family of the European Union must be asked.

Students in this country should first learn to understand, accept and respect the differences in their own country in order for them to integrate in their own society. Then they may aspire towards the full integration into the European family.

Interethnic relations are an important content of community life in which there are more minorities (ethnicities) and they express the impact, not only on society, but on the personal (mental) life of man as well.

Ethnic diversity is characteristic of many modern societies. Basically, each state is built by integration of different cultures and ethnic groups. In Europe, only Iceland can be said to be a mono-cultural society, but the conditions

there also change. Unresolved interethnic relations (which also represent an evident phenomenon in the modern world) cause serious economic, political, social, cultural and other issues that further deepen inter-ethnic hatred and conflicts.

The global analysis of world's socio-political processes shows that ethnic differences are often a source of violence, discrimination, inter-ethnic isolation, fear and other forms of alienation of man from man. Inter-ethnic differences produce violence and discrimination - violence and discrimination deepen inter-ethnic hatred, and so a circle of relationships that push humanity towards an apocalypse is created.

The interethnic situation in the world is so complicated that we can freely say that peace and development of humanity are primarily determined by the ability of progressive humanity to curb the destructive inter-ethnic relations that tend to grow into interethnic blind forces.

In terms of the newly created conditions on the Balkans, interethnic relations also tend to deteriorate and they carry an enormous destructive power that can cause devastating and tragic consequences. Such inter-ethnic states are a serious limiting factor in relations between the Balkan peoples and states, and without their resolution, it is not possible to build the desired relations in the Balkans, to

ensure peaceful development and to pass on higher, more qualitative forms of life.<sup>58</sup>

On the ethnic map of Macedonia, more than 30 ethnic groups can be seen. According to the 1994 census, the Republic of Macedonia registered just under 2 million people, of whom 1,228,330 or 66.5% are Macedonians. Of national minorities, the most numerous are the Albanians - 442,000 or 22.9%, Turks - 77 252 or 4.0%, Roma - 43 723 or 2.3%, Serbs -39 260 or 2.0%, and Vlachs with 0.5%.

### Conclusion

The educational system is expected to take concrete steps in order to introduce a model of integration in place of the pattern of ethnic division that now dominates schools. For this purpose, we need to implement changes in schools in several different domains.<sup>59</sup>

When it comes to multiculturalism and integration in teaching activities the following should be done:

- strengthen the implementation of education for life skills in elementary schools, introduce life skills education into the curriculum for secondary schools, and train teachers for their implementation,
- schools should make maximum use of the possibility of organizing joint educational activities such as, for example, joint

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<sup>58</sup> Аслимоски П. (2006) Дефендологија, Охрид

<sup>59</sup> Студија за мултикултурализмот и меѓуетничките односи во образованието, Уницеф, Скопје, Ноември 2009

classes in physical education, science, foreign languages and

- Albanian students should be stimulated to learn and use the Macedonian language and Macedonian students to learn and use the Albanian language.

In the domain of teachers' capacity development the following should be done:

- train teachers to recognize ethnic stereotypes and prejudices in themselves and in others so that they are able to actively oppose the prejudices manifested in school practice
- train teachers to work on joint activities in ethnically/linguistically mixed teams and ethnically/linguistically mixed groups of students,
- train teachers to use instructional materials offered and to choose and use alternative teaching materials in a manner that will ensure the promotion of ethnic integration, rather than ethnic divisions, and
- exert regular and long-term stimulation of teachers of different languages in teaching for professional collaboration (from preparation for teaching and evaluating students, to solving current problems).

From the aspect of municipal activities the following should be done:

- ensure cooperation of interethnic relations commissions and committees for the rights of children in the municipality with schools,

- realize joint projects of municipality and schools directed to the promotion of multiculturalism in the local community,
- ensure inter-municipal cooperation in multilingual schools
- schools with ethnically/linguistically mixed structure should receive additional benefits from the municipality (eg. financial resources, material resources, additional staff) and
- municipality should stimulate and support the transformation of larger ethnic/linguistic "mixed" schools into smaller "mixed" schools that will function as independent units.

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**TEACHERS IN MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENTS, EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES**

**Abstract**

*Teachers in multicultural environments, experiences and challenges This paper is a product of my long experiential knowledge about the characteristics of the multicultural environment in which I worked as a teacher. This paper will focus on the understanding and acceptance of multiculturalism by the teacher as its identification in the living environment and facing the overcoming stereotypes. Teachers always were and are in multicultural environments. In them they routinely communicate, work and create, to live their life. Teachers in multicultural environment should be especially open to accept other cultures, be prepared for tolerance of differences that they bring to them to be treated with respect. Then we will focus on whether there is a need for education of future teachers of multiculturalism. Subject to review and openness will be the full acceptance of multiculturalism as a necessity rather than occurrence. I will give a brief overview of my experiences of working in a multicultural environment. Will be developed and the factors that influence the acceptance of multiculturalism by teachers. Through the findings of the research, I will give an answer to questions about the representation of multicultural content in curricula for subjects, the interest of teachers to engage in project activities related to multiculturalism, strategies that teachers used in teaching teaching students of multiculturalism.*

**Keywords:** *terms of learning / multiculturalism, stereotypes, tolerance, openness of teachers to accept multiculturalism, multiculturalism factors, strategies to teach multiculturalism.*

## **Introduction**

When we talk about multiculturalism and multiethnicism need to be with a thought that they are an asset, not a lack of a society. Some individuals are sceptical about the existence of such a society, but we as teachers we should be convinced that their societies future can take the path of development. Understanding and acceptance of multiculturalism and multi-ethnicity of the teacher is identification in his living environment and facing and overcoming stereotypes. Teachers always were and are in multicultural environments. In those environments, they routinely communicate, work, create and live their life. Teachers in multicultural environment should be especially open to accept other cultures, be prepared for tolerance of differences that they bring to them to be treated with respect. The modern teacher in their environment should always be ready to share some of their culture with others around him, and to show understanding and tolerance towards foreign culture and respectfully refer to it. In the multicultural environment, he is under the influence of different beliefs, attitudes, understanding the things that surround. All those challenges he should be prepared to strengthen and enrich their attitudes, beliefs and understandings. Specifically, to be open to the

concepts of cultural diversity and needs of people from the surrounding members of other cultures and ethnicities. In this multicultural environment, he needs to be aware and ready to act in the direction of acceptance and implementation of multicultural education and education of future generations, as well as creating conditions for equal participation of members of different ethnic communities in cultural processes. The multiethnic and multicultural environment for me as a teacher is a wealth of different opinions and thoughts of the people around me for the lifestyle. In this wealth come their language, beliefs, traditional melody, their customs, their histories, traditional cuisine, etc. All their ethnic features I tried and I try to understand and treat with respect and tolerance.

## **Understanding and acceptance of multiculturalism by the teacher and his identification in the living environment and facing and overcoming stereotypes**

In the early seventies, the term multicultural understood as "compromise", interdependence, universal relativizing the wider intellectual community

Today the term is not associated with social unity, but diversity in it. Multiculturalism in a society can be addressed as coming together of cultural differences and their positive affirmation in society, because they are a necessary condition for human existence.

Examining the term multiculturalism, I notice that it appears with three different

understanding between people. First, there are people who understand this term as describing the actual conditions in society. Second understanding is how - normative prescription for the organization of the society - sometimes described as the; politics of difference; identity politics or policy recognition; and Third, as the main term for various government policies, including the issue of the use of language integration in society, supporting festivals and cultural community centres, etc.

In a modern lifestyle, teachers in our country should be aware of multiculturalism in our country. It is best understood by them and accepted. When I say that he should be understood I mean that the teacher is the one who should have a sense (sharp sense) of existence of people with different cultures (different understandings, habits, attitudes, customs, beliefs etc.. towards things that surround). Surrounded by such people the modern teachers need to place and upgrade their own identity, while not to hurt someone else's. In this context, the teacher should accept the existence of differences in cultures, but it does not mean to adopt as its own way of acting and living.

„Many theorists agree that an essential precondition for building multiculturalism is tolerance. Tolerance is a fundamental assumption of civil society. The tolerance should not be understood as inferiority and indifference towards various, which must endure, caring towards others. Tolerant attitude towards "the other" and "different" means a

dialogue with "those who are near us". The dialogue refers to the exchange of cultures, each receiving-giving, which is a much higher level of tolerance."<sup>60</sup>

Stereotypes are previously accepted beliefs by individuals for a particular person or group of people. Stereotypes are closely related and prejudices. Both should be foreign and unacceptable for the modern teacher.

In his work, modern teacher should be pivotal to accept differences and applying the same tolerance. His personal example of attitude towards multicultural differences should put an end to ignorance, disrespect, intolerance, isolation of people who are different from him. Him is one of the main links in building coexistence in schools where there are and there will always be differences. Only thus will overcome stereotypes and prejudices win.

### **Openness from teachers to accept multiculturalism - experiences and challenges**

When I talk about openness of the teacher towards multiculturalism, I am thinking more of his willingness to show his tolerance to it. He's acting in his own profession and beyond necessity is to focus on bringing the future generations and to enable them to recognise their qualities and values and not feel foreign to others. His openness to multiculturalism is in

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<sup>60</sup> M-r Sinisa Pekevski, Promoting multiculturalism in education,2013

his open talk about it. You should always strive to comprehend the differences between cultures and openly state his opinion in a positive connotation. The openness of teachers to multiculturalism is a bridge, which unites. His own experiences on this issue should always be ready to share with colleagues and future generations.

In my experience, I found myself in an environment, which interweaves various cultures (Macedonian, Albanian, Vlach). The existence of such people in my environment retracted a reason for everyday joy. Every opportunity I have used to learn more about them and become closer to them. Our friendship stemmed from gatherings in colonialism hours. I always encourage my students to express their beliefs, to make us familiar with the tradition in foster homes, and to respect them and other traditions, beliefs, customs. That is how I came to encourage interest among students to visit churches, mosques, learn songs in different languages, to learn the customs of others, constantly socialize outside of school, people to get together and share a lot of things. The ceremony which had songs and dances from all their traditions and cultures said they were the best ever performance. In this our community here of course was the contribution of parents. Many meetings and workshops exchanged experiences, opinions and gave further insight as to what we must do more to socialize and to contribute to teaching young people about mutual understanding and coexistence. We all agree that we should have more forms of association and they strive to take an active role

in order to contribute to improving the quality of life and work of all generations.

### **Factors affecting the acceptance of multiculturalism by teachers**

Based on how a teacher will accept multiculturalism and differences that he brings with him depends on the system of education in which the teacher spent so far, formed his views on the matter, his beliefs and experiences, his self-education, the environment they live and work in, and the politics that get created etc.

In my opinion, the biggest factor influencing whether the teacher will accept multiculturalism or not depends on his traits as a person and his information of the involvement in this issue. My view is that in the upbringing and education of future generations are already doing it, and thus directly involve teachers as direct implementers of activities related to multiculturalism.

As already pointed out earlier many teachers need to think of the differences between people in general, not only reduced the differences between ethnicities. In informal conversations, most of my colleagues think that the differences steam primarily from us as individuals, then as members of different ethnic communities. From this, I would conclude that we need to adopt a culture of behaviour that will respect each other's differences and show respect and tolerance towards them. For future generations of teachers this could introduce Reformed Curriculum content for tolerance, respect, professional culture etc. The future teachers not

that they not going to have a prejudice, but should be working to raise awareness among them that they have and their willingness to be open and talk about removing them. With new content teachers need to be trained and to reveal prejudices at their students. To respect other cultures and to be able to express themselves by refraining from evaluation (approval or disapproval) of cultural values, customs and practices of others.

In the educational process, they are those teachers who are constantly trying to understand the views and feelings of others and who can see and feel things from the perspective of others. Using multiperspectivity as a basis for looking at things, these teachers can create a safe environment where students are not afraid to demonstrate their cultural values and needs when different cultural values and needs of others. These students gain their trust, which allows them to collaborate with other teachers from different group of them in circumstances where it is not common or preferred practice.

### **Strategies that teachers used in students of multiculturalism**

One of the most important tasks of the teacher in modern teaching to me is to teach his students to be tolerant and respect each other's differences. It can make a variety of ways, and below I will describe some of the strategies that I have applied and who have given excellent results in the process of teaching students of multiculturalism.

**Playing characters** - is one of the most beloved ways that students learn and encourage learning. Example: I gave them an assignment to prepare Macedonian, Vlach and Albanian wedding. In each of these roles have given both weddings. Students quickly learned the customs of all weddings, it is my pleasure to play roles, and what struck me is the fact that students from different ethnicities accepted to take part in the wedding, which is their family tradition and culture.

**Strategy "Window"** - Students are asked to say what they saw? And you want to see? This strategy provides a broad opportunity to come to knowledge that students learned about the differences of others, and we are interested to learn further.

Another strategy is the **"introductions"** - students are asked to draw around and answer questions / What I like to eat? Where do you want to live? What I want to be in the future? - These questions and invents of teachers and students worksheets and the aim of the strategy is for the students to capture the differences that exist between them and gain knowledge that they need to respect.

Strategy **"Keywords"** - the students are required to example: describe a celebration of the religious holidays in their home through already given words to use when describing in their sentences. This strategy helps students with written expression, and can be given different threads.



## Conclusion

Teachers are a major factor in the development of events in the educational process in a multicultural environment. They had acted in this matter to put stamp on generations to educate. By processing the data from a survey of my colleagues about whether the curricula are represented content of teaching multiculturalism, they clearly expressed that such contents are present on almost all subjects that are taught in our primary schools. Lately as implementers of educational process, teachers are offered opportunities to participate in various project activities, teach multiculturalism and their behaviour in a multicultural environment. For that, particular spot for this show most interest younger teachers up to 35 years of age. „ People tend to their culture and their way of life is treated as a natural state and I judge other cultures, starting from their own cultural standards. When we have enough information about the other culture, we usually approve (or not) actions and statements by people from other cultures and comparing them only to the standards arising from our culture and our way of life. (Not said without reason that "we do not see things as they are, but as we are.") To establish successful intercultural communication and understanding, you have to be open-minded and the attitudes and behaviour of people from other cultures we see from their point of view. „<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>M-r Sinisa Pekevski, Promoting multiculturalism in education, 2013

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***PRACTICUM OF FUTURE PEDAGOGUES,  
TEACHERS AND KINDERGARTEN  
TEACHERS IN MULTICULTURAL  
ENVIRONMENTS – EXPERIENCES AND  
CHALLENGES***

*The subject of this analysis is the multiculturalism, its influence on school culture and how it affects the different cultural levels. According to the population, we live in a society, which is declared as society in which members of a numerous ethnic groups, nationalities, religious and cultures circulate, then it must impose a need for research in the relations between people in that society in order to assist the upcoming teachers and professional associates in the elementary school on how to work in a multi ethnic environment. Seeing what is stated in the outbreak, or the existence of various cultures and religions in our country, a discussion of intercultural relations, especially in the schools, is inevitable.*

*There is great motivation to analyse this area in the institutions, which are breeding the future of our country - the schools. The proper development of teachers as future teachers and supporting staff directly influences the improvement of the school atmosphere and culture.*

*Insufficient research of the influence of multiculturalism has an obvious impact on the participants in the pedagogical and educational process, even on those who, in the future, will participate in it - the students. The development of teachers, as future teachers and supporting staff, directly influences the improvement of the school atmosphere and culture.*

**Keywords:** *multicultural, school, teachers*

**Abstract**

### **The concept of multiculturalism and interculturalism**

The term *multicultural* has to describe the nature's diversity of human society. Multiculturalism does not apply only to the elements of ethnic or national culture, but it includes linguistic, religious and socioeconomic differences.

*Interculturality* is a dynamic concept that describes the relationship and mutual communication between different cultures. It is defined as "the existence and equitable interaction of diverse cultures and the possibility of generating shared cultural expressions through dialogue and mutual respect". Interculturality presupposes multiculturalism and is the result of "inter-cultural" exchange and dialogue at local, regional, national or international level.

The interactive relationship between cultures is a key indicator by which a society should be appointed as "multicultural". The term multiculturalism refers to: pluralism of cultures, guarantees for protection of all social groups, the right to identity and cooperation. This concept establishes the reality of interdependence, i.e. the necessity of interaction between the various components of society; moreover, the preservation of their own cultural identity, entering into a relationship, relationship with other cultures in the course of

their essence, their character, way of life, their view of the world.<sup>62</sup>

In order to strengthen democracy, educational systems should take into account the multicultural nature of society, and with their function to actively contribute to coexistence and positive interaction between different cultural groups. Traditionally, there are two approaches: multicultural education and intercultural education. Multicultural education is used for learning about other cultures in order to produce acceptance or at least tolerance of these cultures. Intercultural education aims to go beyond passive coexistence, to achieve sustainable development and a way of living together in a multicultural society by creating understanding through dialogue and respect between different cultural groups.

### **Intercultural education**

Each idea on intercultural education builds implicit and explicit idea of culture, and each one sees culture as something created by man. There are many theoretical and practical evidence, and discussions on the concept of culture.

Although intercultural education should take place at all levels of society, there is no doubt that intercultural education is focused on the relationships between children and young people.

Intercultural learning with young people and children functions in two ways:

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<sup>62</sup>Т.Атанасова, Ѓорѓева-Петрова, Е. 2006, *Онута педагогија*, Кио Дандаро, Битола, стр. 128

- It helps to acquire the capacity to recognize inequality, injustice, racism, stereotypes and prejudices;
- It provides knowledge and skills that will help them in trying to change these mechanisms whenever they are confronted with them.

Working with young people should be based on stable foundation, which will carry processes that are characterized by continuity.

### **Multicultural schools**

By respecting ethnic and cultural differences, we can help in filling the gap between democratic ideals and social practices. Such practices are too often against members of ethnic and cultural groups. These schools should take this new responsibility (respecting ethnic and cultural differences). Their socialization practices should incorporate ethnic diversity as an integral part of the democratic commitment to human dignity. Schools must demonstrate a commitment to the following:

- a. Recognition and respect for ethnic and cultural diversity;
- b. Promoting social cohesion based on the joint participation of ethnically and culturally diverse nations;
- c. Increase of equal opportunities for all individuals and groups;
- d. Facilitate constructive social changes that enhance human dignity and democratic ideals.

The personal ethnic identity and knowledge of other ethnic identities “are essential to a sense of understanding and a sense of well-being” that promote international understanding. Multicultural education should stress the process of self-identification as a crucial aspect of understanding the underlying commitment to the dignity of the human race in the world community.

### **Culture**

In everyday language and in various disciplines of social sciences, the more common and widespread use of a term is, the more it seems difficult to find a single meaning or a single paragraph in its definition by most theorists. Such is the case with the term culture, because in practice it is synonymous for many different phenomena in society.

Tracing the definitions of the term culture, we found that many of the scholars dealing with this issue often describe culture as something that opposes nature. According to Cicero<sup>63</sup>, the meaning of the term is related to its etymological genesis relating to farming. Similarly, in culture, Herder sees a source of human dominance over the animal species, which, in turn, dominate a man with their physical strengths, skills and abilities.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>Д. Петровски, Административна култура и административно однесување, 2006, Универзитет „Св. Климент Охридски“, Битола, стр. 13

<sup>64</sup> Истражувачка статија: Што е култура? , <http://zenica.mk/2012/09/23/shto-e-kulturata/>, преземено на 12.03.2014

- 1) Symbolic compiles: language, rituals, heroes, legends, clothing, forms of behaviour, logo and spatial arrangement;
- 2) Norms and Standards: maxims, ideologies, prohibitions (visible and invisible);
- 3) Fundamental beliefs: relation to the environment, the truth, the essence of man, the essence of human action, the essence of human relations.

If you carefully examine the definitions of organizational culture, it will be noted that they have several common elements, among which the most significant are:

- 1) Content: In the content of most definitions we can encounter significant elements occurring in interactive relationships between members of the organization (school), that are common to all or most of them. At the same time, in the content, we can see the beliefs, values, assumptions, norms of behaviour, the behaviour of members of the organization, as well as symbols and other elements that have particular meaning.
- 2) Social character: An important characteristic of culture is its social character. It appears only within social groups, such as organizations, social classes, professions, nations etc. Organizational culture exists at the level of the organization as a social system. Values, beliefs, forms of behaviour or symbols must be common to all or at least the majority of the members of the organization in order to make organizational culture.
- 3) Effects: organizational culture is often defined in terms of the effects it has on the organization or its members. It is usually indicated that organizational culture determines or directs mental processes and people's behaviour.
- 4) Establishment method: It can be noted that the organizational culture is formed in the process of social interaction between members of the organization. In order to have common beliefs, values and norms of conduct, members of the organization have to interact and communicate during their work. Therefore, the creation of organizational culture takes some time to acquire that experience.
- 5) Stability and maintenance: When we want to define the organisational culture, we have to establish that it is constantly present, renewed and transferred to the new members of the organization.
- 6) Specificity: One of the defining characteristics of organizational culture is that it is very specific to a particular organization. In other words, we cannot find two identical organizational cultures.

### **School culture**

It is well known that every country has or will develop their own school culture.

If you study the theme school culture thoroughly, you will notice that it is a complex concept. This means that it is not easy to identify the parameters and dimensions that form the school culture, and it is evident that the school culture is a kind of sub national culture.

However, it illustrates that the educational worker and his perspective of the world, his view of natural and functional goals, the political-administrative environment, the socio-cultural norms and ideals of society, his perception, his understanding and his responsibility in giving help to citizens, determine the school culture of any society.

In efforts to improve the elaboration and understanding of the essence of school culture, we believe it is better to remind ourselves of its close association with the organizational culture in general.

The importance of school culture can be clearly discerned among many secular authors dealing with this issue.

By using the services of many organizations, especially educational institutions, in order to meet our daily needs, we can see the culture prevailing in these institutions.

### **Levels of school culture**

The model of organizational culture by Edgar Hendry Schein is also widespread, i.e. widely accepted. The fundamental view of Schein is that culture is a division of views and sharing basic assumptions among employees in the

organization. He also points out that the top managers in an organization can manage these basic assumptions if they understand the essence of the culture and understand its functioning.

- External manifestations of organizational culture
  - ✓ Artifacts, ceremonial courses (directions)
  - ✓ Attitude towards the environment, the nature of reality, truth, human activities and human relations.

The first level is external manifestations. For Schein, this is not the culture of the organization, but only it's most visible, obvious and accessible aspect that can be observed by people. Superficial manifestations include forms of behaviour that can be seen and heard. That way, they send a message to some visitors to the school, to clients and employees.

At this level, culture is manifested through specific school facilities, its architecture, rituals and language.

- Values and beliefs

The second level of Schein's model refers to organizational values and beliefs. Values and beliefs are fundamental elements, which have to give people directions in their aspirations and behaviour. It is very difficult to separate these terms, so they are often regarded as identical concepts. Values and beliefs are the foundation for other developments. Although these values

are not visible, they can get individuals to be aware of their existence.

Regarding the third level, the basic assumptions present the deepest component of the organizational culture. Assumptions generalize and systematize basic human knowledge, the world around them and what is the nature of things, which surround them. These include the assumptions, which individuals have about the organization and how it functions. Assumptions refer to aspects of human behaviour, the nature of reality and the relationship of the organization to its environment. They are invisible, subliminal and “taken for granted”. For these reasons, they are hardly depicted.

Contemporary management in general and human resources management in particular, are essentially based on the premise that man is the key to the successful operation of any organization. As a result of the rapid economic and technological development, the essential resources for people’s existence are almost used up. If the organization wants to use these human potentials, it should have an appropriate strategy and policies for the implementation of this strategy, which will contribute to stimulate their development. Only in this case the organization can provide the necessary standards and quality, that can, in modern terms of market operations, be competitive in the market. To achieve the desired quality of work, it is required to continuously increase the knowledge of employees. This is achieved through a continuous process of training and

continuing education that provides permanent and career development of employees.

### **Conclusion**

Multicultural education is in fact, part of the multicultural society. Building love, feeling the peace and existence. Relatively building a safer better, brighter future for the children who live in that society, improving the team work between the educational personnel, situating a positive wing in the work environment bringing out the better performance in the organization. The educational culture can have both a positive and a negative affect towards the functionality of the Scholl. That can be the secret formula to accomplishment” or a “silent killer “regardless of the fact the culture can articulate to the situation the institute is in. In todays over all practical theory very few of the authors have presented the negative impact of the culture in the institutions. That can be harmful either way the negative impact on the Scholl culture does not reduce its importance.

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### **Abstract**

*Our goal is to live and work in a new era of tolerance and respect. Teaching about multiculturalism and working with young learners' means gaining knowledge and awareness that we live in a multicultural country. This is the first step for the future of our society, to educate tolerant and understanding children.*

*Integrated learning at a very young age is creating a positive attitude towards other cultures, their heritage, customs and traditions. We gathered our students together with students from different ethnic population and they worked on different topics; we used stories, songs, dialogues; our students were drawing and creating together, their parents were our best support and our country was our motivation.*

*Learning foreign languages is another key point in our paper. We were working on the international project about peace. Distances between the countries were not boundaries for creating and sharing.*

*Our students have created a book about the life of a French soldier.*

*School as an institution is one of the most important tool for delivering the process of integrated learning.*

*We are eager to inspire other teachers and students, to motivate the officials and to*

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### ***ETHNIC DIVERSITY AND SIMILARITY – INTEGRAL PARTS OF THE EDUCATIONAL***

*introduce our best practice on this conference. Parents and officials are just another chain in developing our idea of integrated learning, multiculturalism and ethnic tolerance in communication and understanding.*

**Keywords:** *integration, ethnic, diversity, similarity, research*

## **Introduction**

Our goal is to live and work in a new era of tolerance and respect. Teaching about multiculturalism and working with young learners' means gaining knowledge and awareness that we live in a multicultural country. This is the first step for the future of our society, to educate tolerant and understanding children.

Integrated learning at a very young age is creating a positive attitude towards other cultures, their heritage, customs and traditions. We gathered our students together with students from different ethnic population and they worked on different topics; we used stories, songs, dialogues; our students were drawing and creating together, their parents were our best support and our country was our motivation.

Learning foreign languages is another key point in our paper. We were working on the international project about peace. Distances between the countries were not boundaries for creating and sharing.

Our students have created a book about the life of a French soldier.

School as an institution is one of the most important tools for delivering the process of integrated learning.

We are eager to inspire other teachers and students, to motivate the officials and to introduce our best practice on this conference. Parents and officials are just another chain in developing our idea of integrated learning, multiculturalism and ethnic tolerance in communication and understanding.

### **1. Theoretical frame**

#### *1.2 Teachers' influence and students' ethnic diversity – integral parts of the educational process*

Our school "Kole Kaninski" primary school in Bitola and the municipality of Bitola are working on a task for creating positive and creative surrounding about implementing the project of multiculturalism and understanding. Here, our students learn about the peace, tolerance and love. Our school is mainly Macedonians, this is the reason we have worked on a project with "Goce Delcev" primary school from Bitola and their Albanian students.

Therefore our main outcomes are:

- By integrating students they become aware of ethnic diversity and similarity,
- To introduce them different culture, traditions and customs in our country.

- To become familiar with persistence of other language.
- To involve parents and officials from our country into integrated education.
- To promote integrated education and strengthen the awareness of the importance integrated society including tolerance and respect especially in the ethnic diversity areas.

Our students are our future, and our task is to make their life better and happier. According this, our students will become healthy and open minded persons. We teach them that our future depends on them.

In our school we have qualified teachers and professionals. Together we cooperate and collaborate; we share tolerance, peace and respect. Our school curriculum besides our mother tongue Macedonian includes English and German language. Here we promote and we encourage our students to react and to become knowledgeable about intercultural and international traditions and customs everywhere in the world.

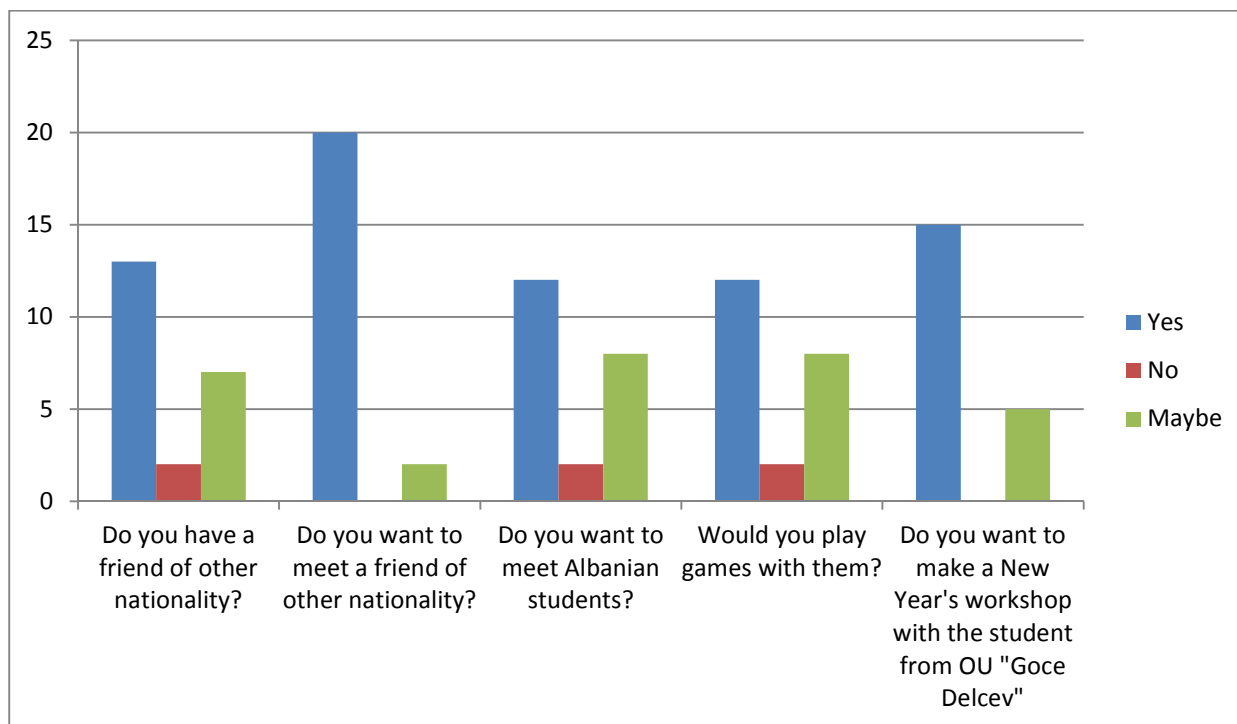
Out of the school curriculum, we have our additional lessons where we work on the international projects and here is one of them. We will introduce you our project about peace with French school from Rennes, Ille-et-Vilaine in Brittany, France.

## **2. Integrated activities with partner school – best practices**

### *2.1 Project description.*

According to the project of Multicultural Integration in Education we were working on a project with a partner school from Bitola, OU “Goce Delcev” This project was organized by the following teachers Lidija Nedanovska, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, primary school teacher, Karolina Nedelkovska, ESL teacher and Fatmire Mahmudi 5<sup>th</sup> grade, primary school teacher from our partner school from Bitola, OU “Goce Delcev”

Before we started with the project, we have made a research and our students filled the questionnaire, here is the chart with the questions and the results of it.

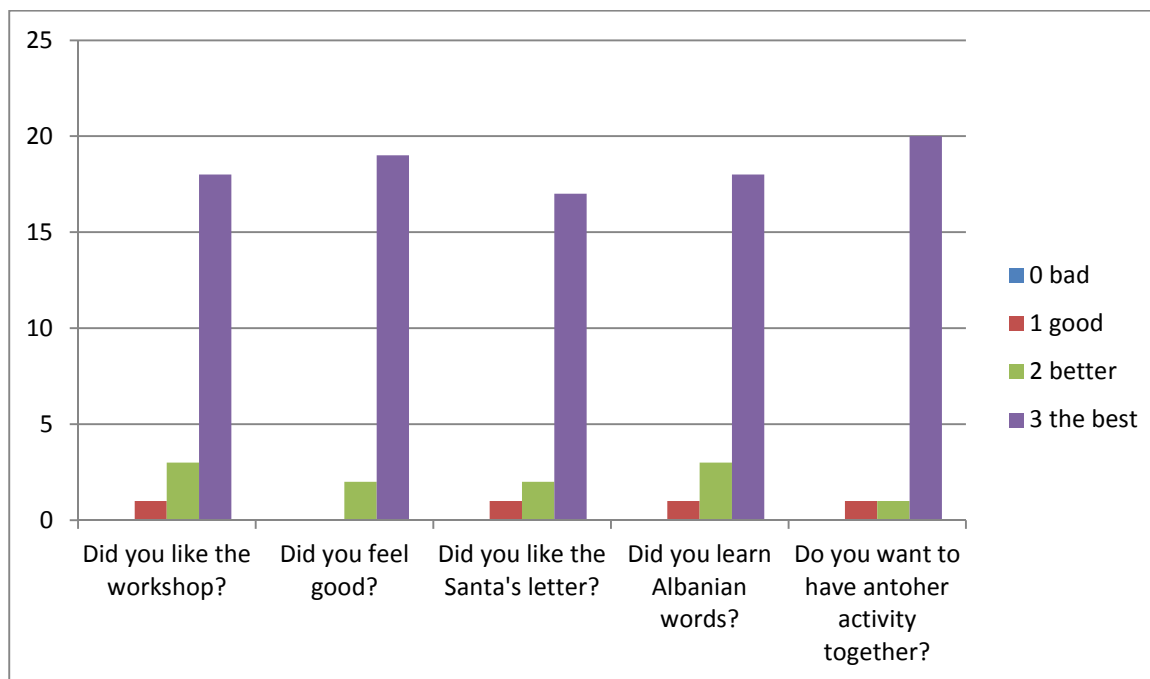


### 2.2 Workshop activities

- Introduction – We prepared a game and we all introduced together.
- Playing games, listening to music and having fun together
- Writing “Happy new year” cards and exchanging – here we were writing on three languages Macedonian, Albanian and English
- Writing a letter to Santa Claus and making wishes together

### 2.3 Analyses and another research

After the mentioned activities, we had to prepare the last questionnaire just to have a clear picture about the importance of these kinds of activities and here are the results we got:



### 3. International cooperation integrated in our school curriculum

#### 3.1 Description of the project "Drawings for peace"

The aim of learning foreign languages means creating sensibility for understanding other cultures with its similarities and differences. Young learners gain intercultural competences for their attitudes in multiethnic and multicultural surrounding.

Students of the French school from Renes, Ille-et-Vilaine, French Brittany, together with our students of Kole Kaninski Bitola were drawing and together we created a book about a French soldier Henri Victor Rochefort. The soldier died in 1917 near the town Prizren and we found his tomb in Skopje, French cemetery.

We were communicating by internet: we used Skype, Youtube, Flickr, and eTwinning twinspace.

French teacher Mahiey Rolland Marmier and his students found the soldier's letters and we sent our drawings. Here are the important links concerning the project.

#### Conclusion

"Being in a multicultural environment in childhood is going to give you intuition, reflexes and instincts. You may acquire basic responsiveness later on, but it's never going to be as spontaneous as when you have been bathing in this environment during childhood".<sup>65</sup>

"Definitions of multicultural education vary. Some definitions rely on the cultural characteristics of diverse groups, while others emphasize social problems (particularly those

<sup>65</sup> Carlos Ghosn; <http://www.brainyquote.com>

associated with oppression), political power, and the reallocation of economic resources. Some restrict their focus to people of colour, while others include all major groups that are different in any way from mainstream Americans. Other definitions limit multicultural education to characteristics of local schools, and still others provide directions for school reform in all settings regardless of their characteristics. The goals of these diverse types of multicultural education range from bringing more information about various groups to textbooks, to combatting racism, to restructuring the entire school enterprise and reforming society to make schools more culturally fair, accepting, and balanced. For this reason, the field of multicultural education is referred to interchangeably as multicultural education, education that is multicultural, and antiracist education.”<sup>66</sup>

“The childhood is the best growing period to get to know one another.”<sup>67</sup>

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#### youtube channel

<http://youtu.be/arMKDbfR6ao>

#### some photos

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<sup>66</sup> Geneva Gay, Ph.D., professor of education and faculty associate of the Center for Multicultural Education at the University of Washington-Seattle. It was published in 1994 by NCREL's Urban Education Program as part of its Urban Education Monograph Series.

<sup>67</sup> *Musa Xhaferi* - Deputy Prime Minister for implementation of the Ohrid Framework agreement

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***THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN THE  
SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF  
INTEGRATED ACTIVITIES IN SCHOOLS  
WITH MULTIETHNIC STRUCTURE***

**Abstract**

*We live, teach, and study in the time of globalization and the teacher’s role in the implementation of integrated activities in multicultural classes is the most important part of the process of integration. In the first part of this paper I am going to present the main characteristics of the good multicultural teacher: has courage to question mainstream knowledge, shows respect and passion for social justice, builds the atmosphere during the class and through equal treatment he/she can make it easier for the students coming from different backgrounds to feel good in the group and helps to develop students’ intellectual, social, and personal abilities. The second part of the paper deals with a few examples of successful integrated activities in a primary multiethnic school in Krushevo (Macedonian, Vlach and Albanian students). The intention of the integrated education is creating successful and effective facilities, which will promote the multiethnic values, the individualized approach towards students and a positive emotional climate. Only the students, which are fulfilled and are not limited during the development of their talent will one day be successful and best on what they will do. In addition, these students need a good teacher who is going to show them all advantages of the integrated education and to help them to learn how to succeed studying in multicultural environment.*

**Keywords:** integration, culture, communication, education

## **Introduction**

Classroom teachers are responsible for creating a positive and disciplined learning environment in the classroom and in all extracurricular activities. This is their main responsibility in order to challenge their students to grow in knowledge, according to their potential, in all aspects in their lives. Today we teach and study in the time of globalization and we need to find the best way to include and to integrate the students, their parents and the teachers in the school curricular and extracurricular activities in order to improve their way of living, teaching and studying. In my opinion, the best way to be integrated is to study and work together with people from different ethnic groups. This paper deals with the idea of integrated education, the main characteristics of a good multiethnic teacher and one great example of a model for integrated education, which enables successful integration of students, parents and teachers from different ethnic groups through the educational process: the Nansen model for integrated education.

## **The idea of integrated education**

Numerous definitions of multicultural education have been proposed by scholars, researchers and organizations over the past 30 years. To assist teachers, students and parents in understanding multicultural education, the National Association for Multicultural Education defines multicultural education as a philosophical concept built on the ideals of freedom, justice, equality, equity, and human dignity. Teachers who work in multiethnic

classrooms would probably say their role differs in some ways from that of the traditional classroom teacher. But the biggest advantage for a teacher is to raise the awareness about the need for interethnic integration through the education. In the past years we accepted some projects about the integrated education and we implemented them in our classroom.

The idea of integrated education means that first we need to learn how to know and understand each other. We need to learn to cooperate - teachers, students and parents from different ethnic groups - in order to appreciate our differences and to raise the awareness about the stereotypes and prejudices towards the other ethnic groups. With integrated education, there is no division between school and society, study and human life, knowledge and goodness. We are aware that the interethnic integrated education is the best way for students to get to know each other and learn to work, study and function together, which is our very important goal.

## **The role of the teacher in multiethnic classroom**

The first part of the paper deals with the necessity for some reforms in the teachers' educational programs in primary schools in order to emphasize the importance of the integrated education in our schools and to help teacher to improve the educational process in order to accomplished some of the multiethnic education's goals. The role of the teacher in schools with multiethnic structure of students is



the most important part for successful implementation of the integrated activities. One of the highest priorities is to help teachers acquire knowledge and skills to work effectively with the students of different cultures and ethnic groups. Schools and departments of education must assume the responsibility of preparing all teachers to teach in culturally diverse classrooms. Most teacher education programs acknowledge the importance of an increasing diversity among school pupils. That is the main reason why it is very important to have a good multiethnic teacher in the multicultural classroom.

Because of the newness of the concept of multicultural education in many schools and the lack of published materials available to teachers, it becomes the responsibility of the teacher to design a program aimed at meeting the needs of their classes. Each school has to introduce a program and activities for the students from different ethnic groups because a multicultural education helps to prepare students for life in an ethnically diverse society and can bring about cognitive and affective benefits to students. And the teachers are responsible for the quality of the program and its realization.

A characteristic of a good multiethnic teacher would be a teacher who has equity in the classroom. This means that all students have equal opportunities and the ability to reach their fullest potential. This teacher will provide her students with the accommodations they need to succeed. This teacher does not group students

by ability or ethnic group. A good multicultural teacher should be able:

- **To change the school climate:** In order to create more effective multiethnic schools and classrooms we need to start changing the school climate. Changing the school climate will have a good impact on students' educational outcomes. Students' life is centred in their classrooms. The teachers should try to motivate the students, starting from their earliest age, to support and foster student development and the development of students' ethnic identity. This means that the teacher should provide and promote an atmosphere in which cultural differences are respected and explored. Also, the teacher should be able to expand students' knowledge of their own cultures and their capacity to appreciate differences in others, and helping them move toward a multicultural and global perspective in their thinking. Language difference is another important thing for the teachers who work in a multicultural classroom. A teacher who tries to learn the native language of her or his students, if only a word or two, will show respect for the culture of his or her students.
- **To build positive relationships between students, teachers and parents:** Cooperation is the key to successful integration educational process. The teacher should try to integrate the students, teachers and parents from different ethnic groups in order to improve the way of

teaching and studying in the multicultural school. The teacher should organize common events, such as New Year workshops, common celebrations of their holidays, Multicultural day (or week), multicultural art, craft and music workshops etc. On the other hand, in the Nansen model for integrated education<sup>68</sup> there is also co-teaching or tandem method of work which have an influence on the improvement of the quality of the educational process and on the development of numerous competencies and life skills among the students, teachers and parents necessary for a quality coexistence in communities of a multiethnic character (two teachers from different ethnic groups work together, at the same time, in the same classroom, with one group of students, also from different ethnic groups).

- **To be the change he/she want to see in the classroom:** The good multiethnic teacher should be able to make the classroom a place where all students are going to feel comfortable and safe. The teacher should first understand one's cultural perspective and how it affects the ongoing teaching/learning relationship. Teachers in multicultural classrooms must be open to their students and put forth the effort needed to get to know their students inside and outside of class. If a teacher is

hesitant about being open, the students will become estranged from one another and the teacher.

According to the professor Jill Bourne, some of the main characteristics of the successful ethnic schools are<sup>69</sup>:

- All teachers are language teachers'
- Support for language of the curriculum
- Shared procedures for bilingual support in mainstream classrooms
- Teaching of heritage languages in curriculum alongside EU and other languages
- Any special provision had clear objectives, time limited, agreed with students and parents, sometimes outside school time.
- Teachers integrate aspects of home culture into the classroom.

#### **Nansen model for integrated education (short review<sup>70</sup>)**

Integrated education is the most important link that can be used to connect the students, teachers and parents of different ethnic groups to study, work and cooperate all together. Integrated education brings children and staff from different traditions, as well as those of other faiths, together in one school. Integrated Education aims to provide children with a caring and enhanced educational experience.

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<sup>68</sup> <http://ndc.net.mk/index.php/en/latest-news/91-news-eng/722-official-start-up-of-the-nansen-model-for-integrated-education-in-ps-bratstvo-migjeni-and-vss-mosha-pijade-in-tetovo>

<sup>69</sup> Dr. Jill Bourne, *Making the Difference: Teaching and learning strategies in multi-ethnic schools*, Centre for Research in Pedagogy and Curriculum, University of Southampton,

Empowering them as individuals is a priority for staff so that as they grow and mature, they'll be able to affect positive change in the shared society we live in.

Nansen model for integrated education in primary and secondary schools is a great example of this type of education. This model is a part of the project of the Nansen Dialogue Centre (NDC) in Skopje, in order to promote the co-operation of the ethnic communities. Nansen Dialogue Centre (NDC) in Skopje is promoting integrated education through training of teachers, students and parents in multiethnic schools in Macedonia. The project is financially supported by Norway. The project includes students, parents and teachers (Macedonian and Albanian) and the goal is to increase the level of integration and cooperation. The Nansen model for integrated education is implemented through three core programs: integrated extracurricular activities for students, capacity building programs for teachers and programs for cooperation with parents. This model is part of the educational process in Macedonian educational system through the extracurricular activities in a few primary and secondary schools in Macedonia.

### **Nansen model for integrated education in practice**

In this part, I am going to present my experience as a teacher working in a multiethnic school. I work as a teacher in a primary school in Krushevo, with children from three different ethnic groups: Macedonian, Vlach and Albanian. There is no difference

between Macedonian and Vlach students, they study together, have common curricular and extracurricular activities, play together after classes etc. They are integrated in all aspects of living and studying. The Vlach students study in Macedonian and attend one or two classes Vlach language per week, with a native Vlach teacher (the number of the classes vary according to their grade). The Vlach teacher works according to a Vlach syllabus, approved by the Ministry of education (The Vlach language is part of the extracurricular activities in my school). On the other hand, the Albanian students study in Albanian, with Albanian teachers and they attend two or three classes in Macedonian language per week and speak it fluently. Albanian students want to participate in all extracurricular activities, together with the Macedonian students. They are part of all celebrations of common holidays and also celebrate together the holidays such as Easter or Ramadan. But, in my opinion, there is no good cooperation between the teachers and parents from different ethnic communities, which is an important part of the process of integration in education. The teachers should plan some extracurricular activities together, for the students of the both ethnic groups and these activities can be the essential part of the interethnic integration in this school. These activities are part of the Nansen model for integrated education and our school is going to work according to this model in two villages with multiethnic structure of students – Macedonian and Albanian. Last year, we had a great celebration for the integrated education

week – Building bridges. This event was used as an introduction of this model in our school and I hope that in the next period we are going to integrate all the activities, which are going to improve our multiethnic education process. We live in a colourful world and we should learn how to paint our classes and classrooms in different colours every single day. We are the teachers of the future and we need to teach our students how to swim together in the sea of different cultures, languages, colours, and nationalities and how to use the differences in order to improve their life.

### Conclusion

Times have changed, has your classroom changed? The new role of the teacher in the 21st century classroom requires changes in teachers' knowledge and classroom behaviours. The role of a good multiethnic teacher is also new and very important role because he/she is responsible for creating equal educational opportunities for students from diverse racial, ethnic, social-class and cultural groups. Also, the role of the teachers is to help all students to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to integrate in the diverse society in order to interact and communicate with people from different ethnic groups. The good and effective educational process is the first step toward integration between people from different ethnic groups because children from the earliest age should become familiar with the terms such as integration and multicultural classroom. They should know to tolerate the others, to accept the differences between people

from different ethnic groups and to know how to use these differences and use them as a foundation for growth and development. Only the teachers who address these differences and add them to the curriculum will succeed in creating a multicultural classroom that will advance the educational goals of all students.

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**EDUCATION ON MULTICULTURALISM  
AND INTERGROUP ATTITUDES**

**Abstract**

*Intergroup relations represent one of the many challenges faced by multicultural societies. In order to better understand and develop intergroup relations many researchers have treated the phenomena of stereotypes and prejudices. Education and the recognition of others are just some of the strategies offered by psychologists with the aim of reducing bias attitudes and increasing tolerance towards others. In particular, the aim of this study is to see if there are differences between students who have received training on multiculturalism in positive attitudes towards the out-group opposed to those who did not attend any training on multiculturalism. The research included 230 students of pedagogy, namely 130 Albanian students from the State University of Tetovo and 100 Macedonian students from the Faculty of "Saint Kliment Ohridski" in Skopje. Results show that students who attended training on multiculturalism express more positive attitudes toward the out-group, unlike the students who did not attend the training. Moreover, Macedonian students expressed more positive attitudes toward the out-group opposed to the Albanian students.*

*Intergroup relations are vital and especially valuable for multicultural societies. The investment in educating young people about the multicultural phenomena and recognition of others provide the basis for developing tolerant individuals that will result in a stable society.*

**Keywords:** *intergroup attitudes, out-group, multicultural education.*

## Introduction

Monocultural education represents the situation in which the school structure, policies, curricula and the pedagogical strategies are representative only for the dominant culture (Nieto, 1994). On the other hand, multicultural education is not a unique concept, nor a fictitious content or program. Essentially, multicultural education is a teaching approach, which values diversity in schools, in class, the student, the teaching contents etc. (Banks & Banks, 1995).

According to Gay (1994), multicultural education includes different purposes such as: development of cultural and ethnic reading and writing, which includes the historical past, language, cultural characteristics, important events and people that have contributed to the culture, and that for both the dominant and the minority ethnic groups, as well as the ethnic groups that are not included in the textbooks. Personal development is another goal of multicultural education which implies (particularly for minority groups or groups not represented in the textbooks) providing the possibility for students to better understand their positive representation, which leads them to better understand themselves, resulting in a positive self-concept. As another purpose of multicultural education is the clarification of attitudes and values which includes preparing the students to live in a culturally diverse environment. In this regard, the aim would be for students to learn to respect pluralism and

that the cultural difference does not mean inferiority but represents an integral part of the human life. In addition, the purpose of multicultural education is the development of multicultural social competences, respectively learning specific multicultural techniques for interaction with individuals who belong to different cultures. Numerous authors have addressed and developed different models of multicultural education in order to capitalize the most from it. Banks (1995) argues that there are at least five dimensions of multicultural education, which are content integration, knowledge construction process, equity pedagogy, prejudice reduction and empowering school culture and social structure. Nieto (1994) offers a multicultural education model that encompasses four levels, which help in determining school policies and practices with the aim of including pupils from different communities. The first level to consider in Nieto's model is tolerance, and then follows acceptance, respect and affirmation and finally, affirmation, solidarity and critique.

Multicultural education is a powerful tool in creating intergroup relations, while one of the five dimensions of multicultural education as mentioned above is prejudice reduction. Prejudice reduction would be possible if multicultural education affects the cognitive, affective and conative component, which may further result in prejudice reduction and progress towards positive intergroup attitudes (Camicia, 2007). Nevertheless, to implement and achieve any of the above mentioned purposes of multicultural education, the

teachers' attitudes are significantly important. The research conducted in Macedonia shows a presence of negative stereotypes from Albanian towards Macedonian students and vice versa (Petrovska-Beska, 1998) while the schools are oriented towards monocultural education. Moreover, according to the teaching contents, the pupils studying in Albanian and Turkish have more opportunities to learn about the culture, history and tradition of the Macedonian people compared with the opportunity offered to the Macedonian students to learn about the culture, history and traditions of other ethnic communities in Macedonia (Petrovska-Beska, 2006).

First and foremost, multicultural education is a bundle of beliefs and together with teachers' values and attitudes is very important, since those beliefs and values teachers directly or indirectly, completely or partially convey to children, respectively, the future adults of a society. This is why we decided that the pedagogy students should be direct participants in this study since they are trained to be future teachers. Whereas the aim of this study was to see whether there are any differences in positive attitudes toward the out-group between the students of pedagogy by attending informal multicultural education .

## **Method**

### **Sample**

The research included a total of 230 students of pedagogy from the State University of Tetovo and the Faculty of Pedagogy "Saint Kliment Ohridski" in Skopje. Specifically, 130 declared themselves as Albanians and 100 declared to belong to the Macedonian ethnic group. The average age of the students included in the research is 21, 56. The research was conducted in late April and early May of 2014.

### **Measures**

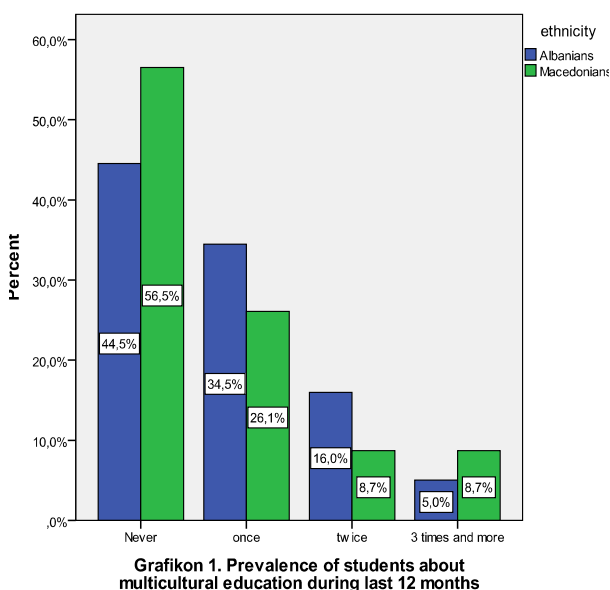
The attitudes towards the out-group were assessed through the average results obtained by using the Allophilia scale (Pittinski, 2010). The scale measures the positive attitudes towards the out-group and includes 17 questions, which provide 5 factors: affection, comfort, kinship, engagement, enthusiasm. The participants were asked to answer how strongly they agree with all of the questions at a six-point scale, ranked from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). For this sample the Cronbach's alpha was .95. Alpha was particularly similar for both Macedonian and Albanian students.

Multicultural Education is measured through the question: "Have you attended trainings, seminars, workshops dealing with topics of multiculturalism (e.g., stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, ethnic identity, similarities and differences between ethnic groups, ethnocentrism, nationalism, etc.). The

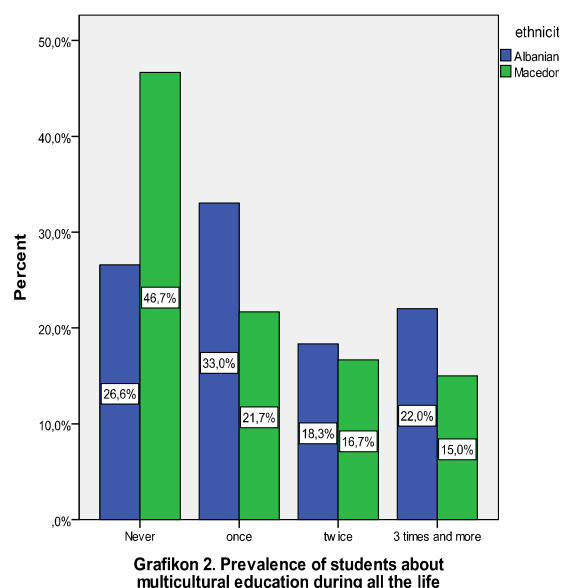
participants have responded by choosing one of the four offered options, that of “never”, “once”, “twice” and “3 or more times”. The students have responded separately for the trainings held in the past year and separately for the trainings held throughout their whole life.

### Results

In relation with attending education on multiculturalism, from the total number of students 49.8% of them report that they have not participated in any such education during the past 12 months, while only 30.8% say that were part of such training only once, and 12.8%, respectively, 6.6% report that they have been participants of such trainings two respectively three or more times. Students’ participation in trainings on multiculturalism during the past 12 months by ethnicity is presented in Chart 1.



Regarding the participation of pedagogy students in trainings on multiculturalism, 33.7% claim that throughout their lives they have never taken part in such trainings. From the students involved in this research 29% of them have participated in such trainings only once, and 17.8% respectively 19.5% of the students say that they have attended trainings on multiculturalism 2 respectively 3 or more times.



Pedagogy students’ participation in trainings on multiculturalism throughout their lives by ethnicity is presented in Chart 2.

There is no statistically significant difference between the Albanian ( $M = 1.82$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ) and Macedonian students ( $M = 1.70$ ,  $SD = .85$ ),  $t(209) = .939$ ,  $p = .349$  in attending trainings on multiculturalism during the past 12 months. Whereas in relation to attending trainings on

multiculturalism throughout their lives the data shows that there is a minor but statistically significant difference between Albanian students ( $M = 2.36$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ) and Macedonian students ( $M = 2.00$ ,  $SD = 1.12$ .)  $t$



(167) = 2,009,  $p = .046$ . Respectively, the Macedonian and Albanian students do not differ in attending trainings on multiculturalism during the last year. However, the differences exist when arguing about attending trainings on Multiculturalism throughout the subjects' lives, respectively Albanian students claim that have participated in trainings on multiculturalism more than Macedonian students.

The participants, respectively the pedagogy students at the State University of Tetovo and the "St. Kliment Ohridski" weakly express positive attitudes towards the out-group. The average obtained for the positive attitudes towards the out-group ( $M = 37.2$ ,  $SD = 18:32$ ) is below the mid-point of the Allophilia scale which indicates that there are relatively weak positive attitudes toward the out-group (Table 1).

Table.1 Mean and Standard deviation of the Allophilia scale

N	Valid	170
	Missing	60
Mean		37,2588
Std. Deviation		18,32394
Minimum		17,00
Maximum		102,00

Furthermore, let us see whether there are any differences between Albanian and Macedonian students regarding positive attitudes toward the out-group. The results show that there is a statistically significant difference in the positive attitudes towards the out-group between Albanian pedagogy students ( $M = 32.56$ ,  $SD = 12.91$ ), and Macedonian ( $M = 44.31$ ,  $SD = 22.61$ ),  $t(168) = -4303$ ,  $p < 0.01$ .

In order to see the differences in participation in trainings and the positive attitudes towards the out-group, One-Way ANOVA was used. The results show that there is a small but statistically significant difference between the participation in multicultural trainings by students and their positive attitudes towards the out-group members at  $p < .05$   $F(3,120) = 3.63$ ,  $p = 0.015$ .

Since there is a statistically significant difference between the participation in multicultural trainings of students and their positive attitudes towards the out-group, we continued to analyse in order to see the differences in the intensity of attending such trainings and the positive attitudes towards the out-group. The Post Hoc difference using Turkey HSD, tells us that positive attitudes towards the out-group of students who have attended trainings on multiculturalism three or more times during their life have statistically significant difference ( $M = 44.00$ ,  $SD = 17:26$ ) from the positive attitudes towards the out-group of students who have attended such trainings only twice ( $M = 29.67$ ,  $SD = 13:38$ ). There are no statistically significant differences between individuals who attended trainings

only once with those who have attended trainings two and three or more times.

### **Discussion**

This paper aimed to track the potential difference in positive attitudes toward the out-group according to the participation in trainings on multiculturalism. There are no differences between Albanian and Macedonian students in attending trainings on multiculturalism during the last year, but they differ in attending trainings on multiculturalism throughout the period of their life. Albanian students claim that they have participated in trainings on multiculturalism more than Macedonian students have.

The pedagogy students poorly express positive attitudes towards the out-group, however, based on their ethnicity, Macedonian students express more positive attitudes towards the out-group opposed to the Albanian pedagogy students. Macedonian students express moderately positive attitudes towards the out-group, whereas the positive attitudes of Albanian students towards the out-group are quite weak. However, both the Albanian and Macedonian students are far from expressing strong positive attitudes towards each other.

Such an outcome is expected, considering the presence of negative stereotypes of Albanians against the Macedonians and vice versa (Petroska-Beska, 1998). Besides, the relationships between the groups in our country are cold and sometimes even aggravated. Usually, in investigating intergroup relations,

researches have used constructs related to prejudice or tolerance. However, such differences between different ethnic groups, where according to the social status one of them represents the majority and the other the minority, find support in the theories, which explain intergroup relations. Such result is within the framework of the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) which explains that attitudes towards the other group will depend on the status of the group to which the individuals belong. Minority group members express more prejudice against the out-group members than the members of the majority group and this among other things happens for reasons of experiencing the threat, the strong perception of discrimination of minority members in comparison with the majority group.

In addition, pedagogy students who have attended education and training programs on multiculturalism, respectively, those who have participated three or more times in such trainings express more positive attitudes towards the out-group than the students who have not attended or participated less than three times in such trainings. This data is in the framework of the concept of multicultural education. Constructing knowledge, prejudice reduction leads towards tolerance and further intergroup relations. This means that multicultural educations contribute to the development of positive attitudes towards the out-group and positive intergroup relations. Therefore, it is highly important to direct all institutions in the country to aim at promoting

multicultural education, ranging from primary to university, in formal education but also as well as in informal.

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***THROUGH COOPERATIVE LEARNING  
AND HUMANIZATION OF THE  
EDUCATION TO MULTICULTURALISM***

**Abstract**

*Whether everything started with the occurrence of the man, or the socialization, upbringing and education has spurred the man to be identified with certain groups, to strive to promote them as more valuable, while the others have been rejected by him as "ineligible" / unacceptable?*

*According to which human characteristics he chooses to live and to communicate with? Which pedagogical paradigms are encouraging us to get rid of the prejudices and stereotypes that for centuries, those in the minority, remain on the margins of society?*

*In consideration that the cooperative learning as a didactic-methodological approach takes into account the cognitive and affective aspects of learning, emphasizes the activity of students, promotes collaboration and support, and also provides an opportunity for making a balance between individual and collective feelings of success / failure. We thought it is a worthwhile to examine its contribution for the development of multiculturalism as one of the overall goals of the modern school, and the multiculturalism to be considered in the context of humanistic education.*

**Keywords:** *cooperative learning, multicultural practice, humanism*

## **Introduction**

In scientific discussions devoted to educational issues in various documents on educational policy and practice the terms humanism/humanization, democracy /democratization, cooperation/cooperating, anti-discrimination, equality, individuation, differentiation, integration, and inclusion are often encountered for expressing aspirations for the creation of an educational system in which everyone will have equal opportunities to meet their educational needs and get their rightful place in society. Thus, social cohesion of a students' collective is set as one of educational goals, and there is also a long-term strive for social cohesion of the society.

Multiculturalism that is the result of differentiated human development mainly in terms of religion, ethnicity and socio-economic status is the universal feature of the world we live in. The differences are often a source of problems in communication, especially when there is no opportunity to learn about "others", different ones. To live in a community with those who are culturally different, to show mutual support, to work in the interest of the common good, to strive for a common goal without deviating from oneself is not an easy task. Spiritual, emotional, moral and material requirements in the global world have apparently become so great that for an individual it becomes increasingly difficult to find positions that are desirable for themselves and acceptable to the society (Janković, Blažeka, Rambousek, 2000). It seems to be the

case with cultural groups that are in a minority position. The search for social and life positions begins at birth and lasts throughout life, and it takes place through the processes of socialization and education for which there are irrefutable scientific evidence that they leave the deepest and most visible traces during childhood and adolescence. Given that education is realized in schools and societies in the most organized and systematic manner, groups and individuals rightly expect it to contribute to building a humane society in which everyone can recognize and express their own cultural identity without a sense of discrimination in in "others"; a society in which we will live with one another without prejudice, stigma and labelling.

## **Humanistic education and multiculturalism**

If we start from WielVeugelers' assumption (2007) that the constant struggle between the development of personal autonomy and social demands lies in the heart of the humanistic education, it is useful to think about the development of the humanistic approach in the educational process that will contribute to reducing the negative consequences of this struggle.

The multicultural organizational model of education conceived as an introduction to interculturalism has a task to develop intercultural communication that involves approximate understanding of the minds of others, whether or not we agree with their way of thinking (Piršl, 2007), which can be seen as balancing between personal and cultural

autonomy and social requirements. According to Piršl (2007) intercultural communication is based on intercultural sensitivity as the ability of the individual to perceive and recognize the different worldviews that enable acceptance and recognition of their own identity and their own cultural values, as well as cultural values and identities of members of other cultures (Piršl, 2007). But we always have to bear in mind that "Developing autonomy and humanity is not a natural process, but an interactive process between people under social and political power relationships. Enhancing autonomy and humanity is part of social, cultural and political developments. Like autonomy that cannot be separated from humanity, human development cannot be separated from social, cultural and political struggle for a world of social justice. (WielVeugelers, 2007)) But if school is required to develop intercultural sensitivity in students, then it must be a space for meeting, intertwining, complementing, and even opposing different cultures. Limited contacts among students from different backgrounds (cultures) stimulate the creation of stereotypes and racial tensions (Crain et al, 1982; Oakes & Wells, 1995), and negative stereotypes are commonly used to justify hostility and contempt for others. (Lilli & Rehm, 1990).

In school, humanism can be implemented as a paradigm, as a philosophy, and as a methodical-didactic approach. However, the central premise of humanism is that people act intentionally and with value judgment, and education represents a personal act through

which the potential of the individual is realized (Huitt, 2001).

In this context, in the last thirty years, relying on humanistic psychology, educational sciences promote pedagogical goals that are mainly concerned with the nature of children and young people, their development and wellbeing. These are more or less successfully realized through different approaches in terms of creating curricula and didactic-methodical approaches in the educational process that promote unity, solidarity, and social justice.

Promoting the full development of human potential humanistic psychology has set the largest civilizational values on a pedestal - the dignity of a human being. It promotes the creation of self-realized, self-actualized and responsible personalities as the goals of human development and it is committed to providing their "full functioning". Offering an eclectic interpretation of human growth and development built on the theory of the hierarchy of human needs and motivations of Maslow (Maslow A.), Rogers' theory (Rogers, C.) of self-actualization and Glasser's theory (Glasser) of individual responsibility, the humanistic psychology set the foundations of humanistic education whose main goal is the creation of mature persons. In this context Maslow (Maslow, 1968) explicitly described mature persons as being: competent, steady, modest, and willing to listen to others. Self-fulfilled, self-actualized and responsible persons are not ashamed to admit that they are not omniscient and that they are ready to learn.

They take responsibilities and are committed to their work. They give their best, are flexible and open to change (Rogers, C., 1983). Moreover, these individuals possess the strength and confidence to defend their views and values, accept their own nature and as such, others accept them. They collaborate with others, accepting them as they are, admitting they have individual potential for growth. Self-fulfilled, self-actualized and responsible persons develop harmonious relationships in groups on the principles of nonviolence, respectability and caring (Watson, J., 1967).

The multicultural organizational model of education must not disregard these findings. If humanism relates to personal autonomy, moral responsibility and solidarity, and if intercultural sensitivity involves the ability for recognition and acceptance of cultural values and identities of members of other cultures, then there is no doubt that the education for which responsibility, tolerance, commitment, self-esteem, willingness to cooperate, empathy and openness are the expected results for their students will be the foundation for building a truly intercultural world.

Humanistic approach to educational work particularly emphasizes learning in groups, learning from one another, learning and acting for each other. Feelings and knowledge are equally important for the learning process. (Sonja Petrovska, Snezana S. Veselinovska, 2008) Consequently, school education that carries the epithet humanistic must take care of the development of skills for intercultural

dialogue and offer content that will be the basis for meeting the educational needs of students belonging to different cultures (What is it that equally intrigues our children and young people?) "The main goal of intercultural dialogue is to avoid violence, to reconcile differences ... Intercultural dialogue is the mean value of the collective survival strategy ..." (Dragana Nešković, 2012)

Cultural differences and their roles in everyday life have a reflection on the behaviour of students and teachers who bring their own cultural patterns to school. According to Giroux (1992) schools play a vital role in helping Children and adolescents understand, through various representations and practices, the ways in which difference is constructed. (Robert E. Slavin, Robert Cooper, 1999)

According to Kirschenbaum (1975) humanistic education is manifested in three areas of educational work: 1. Humanistic curriculum providing contents (topics) directly related to students' lives. 2. Humanistic educational process anticipated in the curriculum that includes a focus on every student in the process of teaching. 3. Humanistic school that involves structuring of groups and restructuring of the entire schedule of school activities. This area needs to materialize on two levels: on school level through the creation of open classrooms, class meetings and finding alternative ways of assessment; and on class level - students select and control activities, the curriculum focuses on what children are most interested in, focusing on life skills (development of thought combined

with the development of capabilities for sharing and helping by practicing cooperative learning) and an emphasis on self-monitoring and self-evaluation of the achievements.

Banks (2004) developed a five dimensional model of multicultural education and gave guidelines about how in this framework schools can implement multicultural components: content integration, knowledge construction, equity pedagogy, prejudice reduction, and empowering school culture and social structure. (Banks, J. A, 2004, pp. 39-29)

The model promoted by Bennett (2003) is in the same line. According to him, multicultural education has four dimensions: movement for equality and equity by creating a curriculum that helps to develop a common history; knowledge and understanding of others; process that includes the way a person becomes multicultural; and commitment in the fight against discrimination through the development of appropriate skills and attitudes. (Bennett, C, 2003).

It is evident that multicultural education has the same features as the humanistic education. It is reflected in three areas of school activity: Curriculum, methodical - didactic approaches in teaching, and organizational forms of activities in school.

### **Cooperative learning and multiculturalism**

Cooperative learning as a strategy for learning and teaching takes into account the cognitive and affective aspects of learning, it emphasizes

students' activity, promotes collaboration and support, and at the same time, it provides an opportunity for creating a balance between individual and collective feelings of success / failure. (Slavin, R.E, 1990).

For these reasons, we thought it worthwhile to examine and systematize findings that confirm the power of cooperative learning for the development of multiculturalism in education. Not only selected skills are taught and learned through the teaching process. Through teaching social abilities and skills are developed, attitudes are built, values are promoted, and the worldview is formed. Teachers can organize and implement their educational work upon the principles of competitiveness, individuality, and cooperation, but, using their pedagogical autonomy in choosing a methodical approach, they must be aware that it determines the interaction among students, their knowledge and attitudes. Extensive research has shown that the educational process based on the principles of competitiveness among students develops competitive spirit, and the value of personal success is measured by the failure of others (Johnson & Johnson, 1991; Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1986). In classrooms that still practice individual approach students are directed to achieving individually set goals, quite independent of the goals of other students that practice individual approach, students are directed to the achievement of individual goals, quite independent of the goals of other students (Johnson & Johnson, 1991). In contrast, cooperative learning encourages positive social interaction among students of different ethnic



and racial background. Learning in cooperative groups has great potential in fostering cross-ethnic friendships and in reducing racial stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination. When students work in cooperative groups, they have the opportunity to evaluate each other based on merit, not according to previously established stereotypes. (McLemore & Romo, 1998) Through cooperative learning, for example, students learn trust, sensitivity, open communication, and prosocial behaviour (Didham, 1993:3).

Intensive research efforts in the last decade of the twentieth century (Johnson, DW & Johnson, R., 1989; Johnson, D., Johnson, R. & Holubec, E., 1992; Johnson, D. & Johnson R., 1993) resulted in the discovery of the power and scope of cooperative learning in terms of different aspects of student achievements:

**Achievement:** Higher individual achievement; Increased retention and persistence; Greater achievement motivation and intrinsic motivation to learn; More positive attitudes towards faculty, advisors and staff; More positive attitudes toward discipline specific learning and education in general

**Critical Thinking Skills:** More frequent higher-level reasoning, deeper-level understanding, and critical thinking; Greater long-term maintenance of skills learned; Increases flexibility in solving problems jointly; Active learning promotes greater conceptual understanding.

**Improved Cross-Cultural Relationships:** Greater ability to view situations from other's perspectives; More positive, accepting, and supportive relationships with peers regardless of ethnic, sex, ability, social class or handicap differences; Facilitates creation of a learning community; Greater development of trust, cohesiveness and esprit de corps.

**Personal Benefits:** Greater social support; Greater psychological health, adjustment, and well being; More positive self-esteem based on self-acceptance; Greater social competencies. (according: Sonja Petrovska, 2012).

Bennett (1990) defines multicultural education as learning - teaching approach founded on democratic values and beliefs; an approach that supports cultural pluralism within culturally diversified societies at national and international level. Building democratic values is impossible to imagine without establishing a positive mutual dependence within cultures and between them. (Bennett, 2003) When students are in a situation to learn in cooperative groups, a positive interdependence is developed so that everyone is connected to the other, the success / failure of one is conditioned by the success / failure of other members of the group. (Johnson and Johnson 1989). Another feature of cooperative learning that, of course, is crucial for the development of interactive relations and connections in multicultural school environments is the promotion of interaction. According to Johnson and Johnson (1989) promotive interaction means support from individuals in a group and mutual encouraging

of everyone to perform their task successfully and to achieve common goals. So, if students work in cooperative multicultural groups, they will be motivated by the set common goal. However, the formation of multicultural groups for cooperative learning, ad hoc, does not necessarily mean a guaranteed success or positive interaction. A continuous and systematic approach to the introduction of cooperative learning enables the development of interpersonal skills and the skills for working in small groups. (Sonja Petrovska and Snezana S. Veselinovska, 2008). Cooperative learning involves efforts by the teacher to develop these skills through motivating students for such activities. (Johnson, Johnson, and Smith 1991). It is useful to form cooperative multicultural groups when the goal of getting to know each other is set. Students discuss, present, debate. This encourages social interactions. Within the cognitive theory, Damon (1984) promotes the concept by which interaction between students aimed at solving common tasks develops their critical concept. When students discuss and express their personal perspectives and views on the given problem, a higher level of understanding of the material that is taught follows, and the struggle to resolve a potential conflict during cooperation results in a higher level of understanding (Slavin, 1990). In this case, the aim is to understand that we all belong to the human race.

In fact, multicultural cooperative groups should be put into the function of developing human capacity for mutual understanding, and this because of work and life in multicultural

environments and development of interculturalism. According to Hofstede (1991) intercultural understanding accumulates: capacity to communicate respect, capacity to be non-judgmental, capacity to accept the relativity of one owns knowledge and perception, capacity to display empathy, capacity to be flexible, capacity to allow everyone to have their turn to speak; and, tolerance for ambiguity. (Yvonne Pratt-Johnson, 2006)

### **Conclusion**

In the global world educators, scientists and politicians comment more openly on the need to improve the inter-group relationships between different cultures.

Through various activities and didactic - methodical approaches, school can help children and young people understand the world of diversity as an opportunity for learning and development. The realization of the principles of humanistic education across the curriculum, didactic-methodical approaches to teaching and in functioning of school organization seems necessary for the development of multiculturalism as a transitional stage of interculturality.

The power and scope of cooperative learning is strongly determined by the way of introduction into schoolwork. The application of cooperative learning techniques in an accidental unplanned manner and only as a form of social organization of students is ineffective. Therefore, the introduction of this approach should be treated as a continuous process

through which, above all, cooperation will be incorporated as a value in the class collective. Of course, the basic prerequisite for the establishment of multicultural groups (ethnicity) is creating an educational system in which children and young people from different cultures will learn in a common space.

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**CHALLENGES FOR TEACHERS IN  
MULTICULTURAL CLASSROOMS**

**Abstract**

*Classroom is always a challenge for teachers. Diversity of children, of approaches, of new situations is their everyday life. Teachers should be well prepared to face with all challenges they will meet in their work. One of the specific challenges is working in multicultural environment and developing multicultural skills at children during educational process. At the first sight, it is an easy task, normal environment for working. And yes, it is but only for teachers which have lived in multicultural region, which have many years practice in multicultural classroom. It will be successful practice for every teacher who has been well prepared during his initial education.*

**Keywords:** teacher, multicultural classroom

**Introduction**

The classroom is always a challenge for teachers. Diversity of children, of approaches, of new situations is their everyday life. Teachers should be well prepared to face all challenges they will meet in their work. One of the specific challenges is working in a multicultural environment and developing multicultural skills at children during educational process. At first sight, it is an easy task, normal environment for working. In addition, yes, it is but only for teachers who have lived in multicultural regions, which have many years practice in multicultural classroom.

It will be successful practice for every teacher who has been well prepared during his initial education.

### **Why Multicultural Education?**

School is a unique environment for all participants in school life. Teachers, supporting staff, pupils, as well as parents meet in one place and share common interests. They all seek for a good and effective education for children. They should share the same values, beliefs and expectations. But they also share the same challenges. In the centre of all activities, two players take the main role: teacher and pupil. For every stakeholder the teacher's role is the most responsive one by the nature of their work and responsibilities. That role is not simply one, but very complicated. Imagine one school working in neighbourhood where all citizens belong to one ethnic and religious group. Since the nature of society and its functioning principles reflect over work in school, we expect one peaceful, routine kind of work with pupils in classroom. There is mutual understanding based on a same cultural and religious background, so the level of misunderstanding is very low. Now imagine opposite situation: neighbourhood where different ethnic and religious groups share living space. Reflection over school is different from the first situation. We can expect the same reflection over schoolwork since we deal with different kind of expectations, different attitudes, stereotypes, beliefs. The level of misunderstanding is higher, and we need skills to overcome expected conflicts. We need skills

to offer quality and safe environment for learning for all pupils.

We talk about two things: multicultural education and the way teachers are prepared to deal with working in multicultural environments and developing skills for living in multicultural society at pupils. Despite all other responsibilities teachers have an obligation to work with pupils on make them citizens with multicultural spirit. Also many teachers work in multicultural schools, which mean that they should be well prepared for all situations that arise from this unique moment. Awareness for those questions slowly becomes equal among other educational question in Macedonia the last few years. We become aware that our schools are places where future citizens, which will be those who are responsible for our society, learn how to practice active citizenship and understanding between differences.

Multicultural education is a philosophical concept built on the ideals of freedom, justice, equality, equity, and human dignity as acknowledged in various documents. It affirms our need to prepare student for their responsibilities in an interdependent world. It recognizes the role schools can play in developing the attitudes and values necessary for a democratic society. It values cultural differences and affirms the pluralism that students, their communities, and teachers reflect. It challenges all forms of discrimination in schools and society through the promotion of democratic principles of social justice.

(<http://www.nameorg.org/resolutions/definition.html>)

It is clear that all stakeholders expect from school to deliver philosophy of multiculturalism into practice, which means delivering concrete learning outcomes related to multiculturalism at pupils after leaving school. Society and school of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century must not neglect present and should be prepared for future living of their citizens and pupils.

### **What must school do?**

The first step to reaching goals related to multiculturalism is to be aware of the situation and to make good plan for implementing all needed actions. The practice until now has shown that: multicultural education is most successful when implemented as a school wide approach with reconstruction of not only curriculum, but also organizational and institutional policy. Unfortunately, most educational institutions are not prepared to implement multicultural education in their classrooms. Multicultural education requires staff that is not only diverse, but also culturally competent. Educators must be aware, responsive and embracing of the diverse beliefs, perspectives and experiences. They must also be willing and ready to address issues of controversy. These issues include, but are not limited to, racism, sexism, religious intolerance, classism, ageism, etc. All staff should know the basic facts: Culture refers to the "traditions, rituals, beliefs, and values that are shared amongst a group of people. Each person is a part of at least one culture. Some families

participate in several cultures. Multiculturalism refers to the "sharing of many cultures." (<http://www.teachhub.com/multicultural-education-your-classroom>). Every person in school has his own tasks related to multicultural education. They all make their own contribution to this issue. Despite all teachers are in the focus of interest and they are persons on which high pressure is taken. Everyone expect teachers should do their best.

### **What should teachers do?**

Teachers need a deep understanding of diversity first of all. They need knowledge and skills to create multicultural classroom and to practice multicultural environment for teaching and learning. Deeply understanding of multiculturalism and the way of practicing it in classroom is a process like building a house. First we need a platform for putting foundation, and then we start to put brick by brick until our idea is finished. This means that our teachers during their initial teacher training process should acquire basic knowledge and skills for working in multicultural school and to teach in the way so pupils will develop their own skills. It is a question: Do our institutions offer such training for future teachers? Do we offer enough theoretic facts, opportunities to practice that knowledge in real classroom? Do our curriculum materials pay enough attention to this issue? Is there any space at all for completing their competences related to multicultural education practice?

Practice suggests what are teacher's responsibilities and some advices for teachers:

- Integrate a diverse reading list that demonstrates the universal human experience across cultures
  - Encourage community participation and social activism
  - Go beyond the textbook
  - By supplementing your curriculum with current events and news stories outside the textbook, you can draw parallels between the distant experiences of the past and the world today.
  - Creating multicultural projects that require students to choose a background outside of their own
  - Suggest that your school host an in-service professional development on multi-cultural education in the classroom (taken from <http://www.teachhub.com/multicultural-education-your-classroom>)
2. To what national, cultural, linguistic or religious group(s) I belong to? How do my teaching practices reflect this?
  3. What do I know about the cultural, linguistic, religious and educational backgrounds of my students and other staff?
  4. How could I learn more about the diversity of my students and staff colleagues?
  5. What are my perceptions/assumptions of students and staff colleagues from diverse cultural groups? Or with language or dialects different from mine? Or with special needs or requirements?
  6. What are the sources of these perceptions (e.g., friends/relatives, media, stereotypes, past experiences)?
  7. How do I respond to my students (emotionally, cognitively, and behaviourally), based on these perceptions?
  8. What experiences do I have as a result of living, studying or working in culturally and linguistically diverse cultures? How can I capitalize on this experience?
  9. How can I adapt my teaching practices to be more responsive to the unique needs of diverse student groups?
  10. What other knowledge, skills and resources would help me to teach from a more culturally inclusive perspective? (from [http://www.griffith.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/184853/Creating-a-Culturally-](http://www.griffith.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/184853/Creating-a-Culturally-)

Now: Do we really pay attention for preparing teachers to complete those tasks? Or we consider that when teacher will be in a position to practice multiculturalism, automatically he will know how to do that? To be a reflective practitioner is another one dimension of teacher profession. Practice also suggests ten questions for teacher reflection over multiculturalism, which will guide and evaluate teachers work.

#### **10 Questions to Guide Self-Reflection: Creating a Culturally Inclusive Classroom**

1. What is my definition of “diversity”?



[Inclusive-Classroom-Environment-mcb2.pdf](#)

### **What should we as institutions do?**

Teacher Faculties must make revision over their teaching conception and approach to teacher preparation of their students. Initial teacher training must have all needed perspectives of equipping future teachers with competences about multicultural education. We are responsible for preparing future teachers with all needed knowledge, skills to deal with all challenges about working in multicultural classroom, and flourishing multicultural competences among their pupils. Theoretical base of multicultural philosophy should be delivered in other, modern way. Delivering only historical facts now days is not enough, but we have to talk about multicultural philosophy in modern society. Understanding of multicultural nature of modern society and its ways of development should be done in interactive way. Also putting students in a multicultural classroom during their practical work is crucial one. That approach will inspire them to think about real teaching situations and to propose concrete steps that should be taken. Working on whole school approach, revising curriculum, implementing teaching strategies is not an easy task. First of all students must observe a good practice and in a next level they have to be in a position to practice multicultural approach. They have to be aware of their values, stereotypes, believes, so they should learn how to be reflective teachers. This will help them to evaluate their practice to point out their

weaknesses and good sides. Interactive communication full with respect with pupils and their parents is another important issue. In practice, this means that our students must be put in a situation to practice this kind of verbal and non-verbal communication. They have to be prepared to deal with many problem situations that could be expected because of the specific nature of this work, but to deal on time and effectively. Conflict resolution is important part of teachers work. Practical work must show students how teachers deal with those situations. We as institutions must have deeply approach over practical work of students. This is very important for every student, especially for those who do not have many opportunities to be part of multicultural environment. The future for every teacher is unknown and unpredictable: where he will work and how he must deal with multicultural challenges.

Maybe the most efficient step will be to make one approach over students' practical work in an elaborated way, so every institution and in-charge person has a clear picture about this issue.

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## Abstract

*Multicultural education observes cultural identity and heritage as powerful, decisive factors, which influence individual thinking and learning processes. Devising effective teaching /learning approaches to meet the needs of students from culturally diverse backgrounds presupposes catering for educational equity and providing equal opportunities not only for the prosperous, but also for the underrepresented or more prone to failure groups or individuals.*

*The introduction of multicultural education into the existent formal educational system triggers reforming of aspects such as curriculum design, learning assessment, student instruction etc. But profiling of multicultural educators also requires intervening in one of the crucial factors: teacher education. This, in turn, entails certain profound adjustments of teacher educators' attitudes and approaches towards the core concept of multiculturalism, which is best, reflected in recognizing and accepting 'otherness' as an indispensable idea of the modern world.*

*The aim of this paper is to look closely into the existing possibilities for teacher educators to assist prospective teachers in their effort to cope most effectively and professionally with the complex tasks of multicultural education placed in front of them by the ever-growing needs of modern multicultural societies*

**Keywords:** equity, multiculturalism, educators.

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**TOWARDS MULTICULTURALISM IN  
TEACHER EDUCATION**

## Introduction

A Visit to The land of Them  
All good people agree,  
And all good people say,  
All nice people are like Us, are We,  
And everyone else is They:  
But if you cross over the sea,  
Instead of over the way,  
You may end by (think of it!) looking on we  
As only a sort of They.

*(Rudyard Kipling)*

The world of Them is getting even closer in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This era is characterized not only by large migrations, but also by a rapid technological development that opens up widely, previously unforeseeable, communication channels. Information about other social, religious, national groups constantly downpours from all different sources thus causing an inevitable need for broader and deeper understanding, accepting and evaluating of recently unknown concepts, beliefs and values. Past, firmly held concepts of homogeneity begin to fade and slowly but surely get abandoned and replaced by more updated concepts of “otherness” which, alongside with promoting heterogeneity on all societal levels, bring about some substantial challenges regarding the long held attitudes and beliefs and undermine subtly, yet profoundly, their survival.

Placed in the heterogeneously composed reality, humankind recognizes only one possible way of coping with its numerous challenges: re-evaluating and adjusting its approaches according to the principles of the newly founded multicultural world. It goes without saying that multiculturally oriented education would most efficiently cater for the various challenges of the multilayered, multi-faced, multicultural society that seems to mark our era.

## Multicultural education

Multicultural education may be defined as an educational approach that focuses around the philosophical principles of acceptance, justice, equality, freedom, equity and human dignity while stressing the role of educational institutions in preparing the students for their responsibilities in the interdependent, democratic world. It recognizes cultural differences and helps all students accept their own as well as other cultures.

For achieving the goals of multicultural education, issues concerning racism, religious intolerance, sexism, xenophobia and alike must be directly addressed by the school curriculum. Furthermore, pedagogic context must be familiar to the students and should address multiple ways of thinking. All this and more can be achieved in this sphere only with culturally competent staff with clear cultural, racial and linguistic diversity.

Hence, it becomes unambiguously clear that the basic principles and goals of multicultural education can be met through amendments and

adjustments in the existing system of education, which, will, in turn, entail certain profound and serious interventions regarding the:

- *Curriculum*

School curricula could be redesigned to display commonly excluded subcultures whose backgrounds and perspectives can enrich learning experiences and teaching materials by displaying a diversity of new, unfamiliar or neglected beliefs, values and attitudes thus helping the students to understand and accept not only different cultures, but , more importantly, to obtain a better understanding of their own cultural values.

Learning standards should also be redefined so as to comprise educational experiences of learners from various backgrounds. On the other hand, some educational programs may focus on specific cultural groups (such as gender studies, for example).

Although Macedonia has always been the home of several nationalities (besides Macedonians, there are other ethnic groups such as Albanians, Romes, Vlachs, Serbs etc.) who have lived together and learnt to respect and accept each other, the issues of different subcultures have only started to get addressed recently, but school curricula do not seem to precisely reflect neither national nor cultural aspects in this broader sense. It seems that they mostly focus on the culture of the predominating national group and the widely accepted norms, beliefs and values that have determined the standard way of living for a long time.

Adjusting/changing of public attitudes can be perhaps initiated and the most effective way to do it is by changing the population's mind frame. This is a process that requires serious consideration and preparation, which can be most successfully carried out through formal education. Therefore, it is a matter of crucial importance to intervene in the school curricula by introducing materials that include various subcultures present in Macedonian society today. Teacher educators are responsible for the increase of prospective teachers' awareness of this need and for training them to be able to respond to this need of the modern society.

- *Adjustment of teaching materials*

Multicultural education encourages the use of teaching materials that are comprehensible to a wider range of cultural backgrounds or that observe various cultural experiences thus respecting the main multicultural principle of equity and creating widely acceptable and beneficial teaching situations for all students. It is of greatest interest to allow other cultural perspectives to be represented and acquainted instead of insisting upon commonly or sometimes exclusively represented cultural perspectives that contribute towards the formation of a somewhat distorted and impoverished impression about the real situation. Inclusion, not absence, of all the existent subcultures in the teaching materials can enrich the teaching situation and gradually bring to the students' attention groups that have been unjustifiably placed at an educational

disadvantage because of previously overlooked or ignored cultural or linguistic obstacles.

Teaching materials should be subject to analyses performed by educators to detect weaknesses regarding prejudicial or biased attitudes. Teachers and students alike can discuss the points in teaching materials, practices or school policies, which allow for biased or prejudicial views to affect their own cultural assumptions and thus interfere with achieving better results.

Principles of need and fairness should be equally accounted for in allocating and distributing educational resources, programs and learning experiences as to ensure that all students, regardless of their background, are given fair and equal opportunities to cope with the learning situations without fear of being left behind in any sense.

- *interventions in teaching practices*

There is an increasing need for prospective teachers to recognize the need for employing instructional strategies that best reflect the diverse cultural identities of individual students, particularly in the sense of accommodating the needs of the talented, the disabled, the less successful students who are today commonly placed in regular classes and have to cope with the same material as their peers. Prospective teachers will therefore need training with regard to the specialized assistance they will need to provide for these individual students, as well as the possible ways and techniques used in

assessing their progress, giving feedback or testing their knowledge.

There has been a substantial move forward in this sense in the formal educational system in Macedonia, particularly when it comes to the talented or disabled students. Nevertheless, it seems that many questions are still open and subject to further assessment and evaluation. It is therefore of great importance that prospective teachers not only adjust their attitudes towards these issues, but also approach them from an elevated and highly sensitive perspective.

- *flexible learning assessment*

Accommodating students' needs presupposes developing sensitive ways of intervening in learning assessment which subtly cater for some of the most sensitive aspects of individual students, such as for example low language proficiency (for example of Albanian students in Macedonian), or inappropriate accommodation of testing situations for the disabled students and alike. In spite of the belief that regardless of the cultural background, all students should be subject to the same high expectations, teaching and measuring of acquired knowledge of specific individuals should be approached with greater flexibility which allows for actual detection of their progress. Various demonstrations of learning, teacher-created tests, oral presentations or alike could complement or completely replace standardized tests whenever such an action is seen as a valuable alternative to the greatest benefit of the student.

- *adjusting teacher education to the multicultural reality*

Preparation of prospective teachers to work in a multicultural setting and respond to the requirements of multicultural education is undoubtedly the major challenge since an appropriate approach to it will yield better results in efficient realization of the multifold goals of this type of education. Teacher education should therefore include programs that include multicultural coursework and training. It is a fact that in Macedonia some minor, pioneering steps are being undertaken towards the fulfilment of this goal, but the major part of the task seems to be a little behind schedule: social reality is already characterized by many aspects of a multicultural setting, with education policies hardly keeping the pace with many newly-emerging issues rooted precisely in this area. It is among the gravest responsibilities of the concerned institutions to pass a legislative implementing compulsory multicultural teacher education.

- *teaching staff*

Macedonia has done a lot towards observing the standard of equal representation and employment of teachers with various cultural backgrounds, but in most cases these teachers educate students originating from the same cultural background as their own (for example, Albanian teachers teach Albanian students). Creation of a real multicultural setting would be accomplished much easier should students be exposed to teaching staff from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

- *Legislative and legal issues adjustment*

Prior to making a full introduction and implementation of multicultural education into Macedonian education system, it is not only desirable but inevitable to adjust the legislative and deal with the possible legal issues emerging from multicultural education. And before that, it is of crucial importance to make all concerned highly aware of the almost petrified traditional attitudes that impede the multicultural aspect of modern societal development in Macedonia.

### **Preparing prospective teachers for multicultural education tasks**

There are some practical steps, which could help us approach multiculturalism and implement it in the educational system. But the first and most important step is that all concerned recognize the need for doing so. Teacher educators must first work on raising the prospective teachers' awareness of multicultural aspects present in all spheres of societal reality before attempting to educate them in the spirit of multicultural education. They should be guided to understand that multicultural education is a process related to all subject areas and that it comprises all students and teaching staff. Its aim is to eliminate inequities in education and thus make it active and more inclusive which enables the students to gain a better comprehension and understanding of the world in which they can successfully commit to building cross-cultural relationships.

Teacher educators should point out that successful multicultural teachers see education as a continuing, life-long process in which educators themselves participate not only in teaching, but in learning and self-improvement as well. Therefore, they follow the change and growth of the world and try not only to learn from their own and their students' experience but also to be challenged and stimulated by various perspectives. They are comfortable with the challenge of their own standpoints, biases and prejudices and are ready to reassess them for the sake of readjusting their expectations of and relationships with all concerned (students, parents, teachers).

It is of great importance that multicultural teachers reflect upon their own school experience and understand how their own identity influences the way they experience different people and situations. They should always be aware that the work they perform has a profound impact on both personal, but also social lives of their students, as well as on the society in a broader sense and hence they can make a remarkable impact on equity and social justice. They can engage in battles against any form of inequity and strive to bring it to all underrepresented, underappreciated or neglected social groups. They can also actively engage in conflict with all disputes occurring in the class stemming from reasons of difference and act as facilitators in resolving any issues successfully and providing their students with understanding and valuable learning experiences.

Successful multicultural educators should allow for the students voices and opinions to be heard and evaluated and will invite critique from both students and colleagues. Concerning the latter, they will try to appreciate diverse opinions and build sound relationships with colleagues from different backgrounds.

Becoming a multicultural teacher sometimes might also entail abandoning of preferred teaching styles and learning to accept and appreciate various styles of learning and displaying knowledge. It is important to appreciate each student's personality and individuality separately and to a full extent, so each student should be treated with full respect and recognition. Remembering their exact personal names, for example, may be the first step towards it.

### **Drawbacks**

The first question about the drawbacks of multicultural education arises with regard to the possible misplacement of emphasis on underrepresented groups, which might unjustifiably disadvantage better-performing students by failing to provide sufficient challenge in the courses. Addressing multiple cultural viewpoints may be to the benefit of particular groups but it could sometimes cause paying insufficient attention to all the students.

The second question entails concerns about the uneven distribution and allocation of educational resources, which might cause giving advantage to the underrepresented or less fortunate but, at the same time, deprive the



more deserving students of the chance to prosper.

Students' admission at education institutions is sometimes based on the attempt to achieve counter balance in the equal representation of minority groups, but this principle might sometimes interfere with the fair selection of students, which should be primarily based on the performed academic achievements.

The use of standardized means of testing for all students regardless of their background may also be questioned. Using of other forms of evaluation adjusted to the needs of individuals of different abilities or cultural background may raise questions as to whether unequal and diverse testing standards put the rest of the students in a somewhat disadvantageous position.

### **Conclusion**

Even though multicultural education may have certain drawbacks, it seems to currently provide the only viable solution to achieving educational equity and fair inclusion of all culturally diverse societal groups. Applied to our own educational system, multicultural education may adjust certain long held beliefs and traditions that impede societal progress. Teacher educators therefore need to work devotedly and persistently to raising prospective teachers' awareness of cultural diversity, prejudices and biased attitudes and help them increase their understanding of their own "selfness" so that they begin to fully

understand "otherness" and make good use of this knowledge in their professional work.

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**THEMATIC STRAND**

**TEACHERS' COMPETENCIES**

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**WHY STANDARDS ARE IMPORTANT FOR  
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION?**

**Abstract**

*Most of the 30 member countries of the OECD – an international organization committed to democratic government and the market economy – became concerned about early care and education after the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) highlighted the close relationship between school attainment and student social background for a number of countries. Up to now, the educational systems have not been able to compensate for social inequalities. Many experts, many studies done in recent years confirm and indicate that preschool programs as a promising means of establishing equal educational opportunities for children from different social backgrounds. In this paper we are try to determine why standards are important for Early Childhood Education. What is the Teachers Standard important to quality? What are the connections between the Teachers Standard and the other standard such as – Curriculum?*

**Keywords:** *early childhood, teacher standard, integrative planning.*

**Theory and Research**

Until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, little scientific attention was given to studying how children grow and develop. In the past 90 years, research has provided a great deal of information about childhood as a separate and distinct stage of life

with its own characteristics. The application of this body of knowledge to teaching is called developmentally appropriate practice. A definition of developmentally appropriate was first advanced in a position paper issued by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in 1987, updated, and revised in 1997. Brain research has shown that up to 85 per cent of all the neurological pathways that people acquire develop during the first six years of life (Rutter and Rutter, 1992).

The longitudinal study by Hart and Risley (1995), which found that by the age of 48 months children of parents from a professional background, would have heard their parents use five times as many words as children of parents living on welfare benefits, and almost twice as many words as children of parents from a working-class background. By the age of four children of parents from a professional background would also have received 560,000 more instances of encouraging than of discouraging feedback, children of working-class parents 100,000 more instances of encouraging than discouraging feedback, and children from parents on welfare 125,000 more instances of discouraging feedback than of encouraging feedback. This means that differences between children from different social backgrounds will have already accrued, with respect to both self-esteem and ability. If no intervention happens, these disparities will increase, leading to large differences once students enter primary school.

A survey of over 3500 teachers in the USA found that almost half of all children entering kindergarten had difficulties with transition, problems being reported in such areas as following directions, academic skills, working independently, working in a group and communicating. According to Wylie (1998) there are clearly crucial skills that children will need during the course of their education from primary school onwards, and getting students ready for primary school therefore has to be one of the main goals of pre-school education (Wylie, 1998).

According to NAEYC, developmentally appropriate practice provides children with opportunities to learn and practice newly acquired skills. It offers challenges just beyond the level of their present mastery and it takes place "in the context of a community where children are safe and valued, where their physical needs are met, and where they feel psychologically secure" (Bredekamp & Copple 1997, pp. 14-15). Abraham Maslow described a hierarchy of needs common to all human beings. Maslow's theory demonstrates that basic needs must be met before children are able to focus on learning. Maslow used the terms "physiological", "safety", "belongingness" and "love", "esteem", "self-actualization" and "self-transcendence" to describe the pattern that human motivations generally move through.

Erik Erikson's theory of the "Eight Stages of Man" identifies a sequence of issues that need to be resolved for healthy development to

occur. According to Erikson, each stage builds on the success of earlier stages. The stages children pass through before and during preschool are: trust vs. mistrust (infancy), autonomy vs. shame and doubt (ages 1-3), and initiative vs. guilt (ages 3-5). For each, Erikson describes what adults need to provide in order to help children meet the challenges facing them (Dodge, Colker and Heroman, 2002).

Jean Piaget observed how logical thinking unfolds. Piaget divided development into stages. He showed that young children think differently from older children and those older children think differently from adults. Piaget's theory identifies four stages of cognitive development: sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operations, and formal operations.

Lev Vygotsky uses the term, Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), to describe the range of a child's learning in a given situation. The lower limit of the Zone represents what a child can learn when working independently. The upper limit of the Zone represents what a child can learn by watching and talking to peers and teachers. According to Vygotsky, what children can do with the assistance of others gives a more accurate picture of their abilities than what they can do alone. Working with others gives children the chance to respond to someone else's examples, suggestions, comments, questions, and actions.

Howard Gardner began researching different kinds of intelligences in the early 1970s realizing that the arts, in particular, had been neglected in our traditional concept of

intelligence, he redefined intelligence as "the capacity to solve problems or to fashion products that are valued in one or more cultural settings" (Brualdi, 2000, p. 1. According Dodge, Colker and Heroman, 2002). Gardner suggests that rather than having one fixed intelligence, people can be intelligent in many different ways. He has identified at least eight such ways: Linguistic/Verbal intelligence, Logical/Mathematical intelligence, Musical/Rhythmic intelligence, Spatial/Visual intelligence, Bodily/Kinesthetic intelligence, Interpersonal intelligence, Intrapersonal intelligence, Naturalist/intelligence.

Sara Smilansky's research focuses on how children learn through play and the relationship of play to future academic success. Smilansky distinguishes four types of play: functional, constructive, dramatic or pretend, and games with rules.

### **What Children Learn**

Recent research confirms that the first five years are particularly important for the development of the child's brain, and the first three years are the most critical in shaping the child's brain architecture. This, have direct impact on how children develop learning skills as well as social and emotional abilities.

Children learn more quickly during their early years than at any other time in life. Recent meta-analyses of these find that preschool education has significant lasting effects on – cognitive abilities, school progress, and social behaviour. But, what preschool children learn?

Experts have developed standards defining what children should know and be able to do by certain grade levels.

Today, because of the standards movement, the knowledge base in each content area is more systematic (Dodge, Colker and Heroman, 2002). The emphasis on teaching content is greater than in the recent past. These changes have set a new challenge for the preschool teacher – knowing what to teach and how to present it. The Creative Curriculum explains how to teach content in ways that respect the developmental stages of preschool children. The curriculum included:

**Literacy** – vocabulary and language, phonological awareness, letters, words, print, comprehension, books, and other text

**Mathematics** – numbers, patterns and relationships, geometry and spatial awareness, measurement, and data collection, organization, and representation

**Science** – the physical properties of objects, living things, and the earth and the environment

**Social Studies** – how people live, work, get along with others, shape, and are shaped by their surroundings

**The Arts** – dance, music, dramatic play, visual arts - drawing and painting

**Technology** – tools and their basic operations and uses

**Process Skills** – observing and exploring; problem solving; and connecting, organizing, communicating, and representing information.

### **An Integrative Topic**

The preschool curriculum is rich and varied, constituting the foundation for the child's world of knowledge. Learning is a process of reorganizing existing knowledge and assimilating new knowledge. To enable the child to learn with efficacy, the preschool teacher must plan and organize activities so that they are appropriate for the child's ability, spheres of interest and level of interest at the time the topic is worked on.

Planning an educational experience is based on the principle of focused learning, i.e., on preparing content derived from various disciplines and adapted as an integrative topic that is meaningful for the child.

To plan the integrative topic, the teacher has to select appropriate topics from the content list in the master syllabus for preschoolers. The choice is based on two factors: how well the contents can be adapted to the child's developmental level and the extent of affinity between the content and the planned integrative topic.

Activities should be planned with regard for a range of learning methods: free play, didactic games, conversation and discussion, creativity, physical activity, computer activity, watching television and movies, observing processes and so on. Moreover, the teacher should vary the

organizational patterns of learning and treat the integrative topics in various manners: individually, in groups, and with the whole group, and perhaps also including parental participation.

### **The Teacher's Role**

The essence of quality in early childhood services is embodied in the expertise and skills of the staff and in their capacity to build positive relationships with young children. The striking shortage of well-trained personnel in the field today indicates that substantial investments in training, recruiting, compensating, and retaining a high quality workforce must be a top priority.

Researchers have spent decades evaluating the role of formal education and specialized training of early childhood providers in the quality of care that children experience (Burshinal et al. 2002; Zaslow & Martinez-Beck forthcoming 2005; Howes 1997; Hyson & Biggar 2005; Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips 1990; Whitebook & Sakai 2004; Whitehurst 2000, according to NAYEC, 2006).

The common elements that define what all early childhood professionals must know and be able to do to provide children and families quality service include the following:

- Knowing and understanding child development and applying this knowledge in practice
- Observing and assessing children's behaviour and then using information to

plan as well as to individualize teaching practices and curriculum

- Establishing and maintaining a safe and healthy environment for children
- Planning and implementing curriculum that advances all areas of children's learning and development, including physical, social, emotional, and cognitive competence in multiple disciplines
- Establishing positive relationships with children
- Establishing and maintaining positive and productive relationships with families
- Supporting the development and learning of individual children
- Recognizing that children are best understood in the context of family, culture, and society.

**Example: Integrative Planning and Topic: The Family Approach**



The three magic words for planning – Why, What and How?

**WHAT** - What are the objectives?; What is the main content I want to teach within the chosen topic?; What is most relevant and suitable for the child’s experience, needs and interests?; What are the strategies I should choose?; What are the most significant skills within this topic?

**HOW** - How to plan the time? (For how long will I teach this topic?); How should I build the learning environment in the classroom to support this topic?; How will I evaluate the learning process?

**WHY** – should be asked after every what and how question

Why is this topic relevant to the children?; Why teach it now?

**What are the main relevant concepts?** - Relationships, responsibility, obligations, give and take empathy/compassion for others.

**What are the main relevant values?** – Consideration, loyalty, respect, helping each other, tradition, knowing and keeping the rules in the family, respect for the aged, the ability to forgive.

**What are the main relevant resources will be used?** – family stories, pictures and photographs, interviews, songs, story books, family treasures, documents, letters, family tree etc.



**What are the main relevant strategies for teaching?** – creating a family corner, bringing photographs of the family members, home visits, cooking, baking, inviting parents/grandparents to come and tell about the family, bringing things from home, dramatic play, and role play, making an album about the family, making a recipe book of favourite recipes etc.

relationships, and a deep commitment to young children and to the profession (A Guide to the NAEYC, 2006).

**What are the main relevant skills?** – Thinking skills; Literacy skills; Math skills; Emotional skills; Social skills; Creative skills.

Teaching a topic is a developing sequential process and continues for as long as it holds the children's interest. It should be developed form:

- The known to the unknown
- Concrete to abstract
- Simple to complex
- Near to Far, etc.

### **Conclusion**

The Teachers Standard highlights the importance of teacher education and training as well as the contributions of professional development to high-quality care, effective teaching, and children's development. Clearly, the care and education of young children is complex and demanding. Teachers must have knowledge and skills that prepare them to be successful in their challenging and rewarding work; this foundation is gained through a variety of ways: formal education, ongoing professional development, mentoring

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**PRACTICAL TEACHING AS A MODEL  
FOR DEVELOPING THE PEDAGOGICAL  
COMPETENCES - STATES AND  
PERSPECTIVES**

**Abstract**

*Education that is directed towards the development of the competences can be thought of as a system of education, whose main aim is the development of one's professional competences and qualifications needed in the labour market, thus building a foundation on specific standards and needs.*

*Improving the quality of teaching in higher education has been a recent issue, which can be analysed from several aspects. Even after the introduction of the Credit Transfer System, which implies significant student activity in the realization of the teaching process, it is assumed that the process of realization of the practical teaching still has secondary importance, at least from the aspect of the interest in its advancement.*

*The consistency regarding the research itself, of an action and empirical character, and its complete theoretical grounding, starts from the creation of a new model of practical teaching in higher education, in the function of strengthening the pedagogical competences. The model of practical teaching includes educational support through the organization of seminars, training sessions, and workshops, for the relevant target groups (University professors, primary/secondary schoolteachers, school pedagogues, kindergarten teachers, and students).*

*Through summative evaluation of the realization of the proposed model of practical teaching, it can be concluded that the target research groups highly assess this model of work as being optimal in regards to the realization of its significant elements: student activity, work in small groups, positive communication, constant logistics in the process of the didactic-methodic realization, a high degree of inclusion of practical activities, and inter-institutional cooperation, which according to them positively reflects on their professional empathy and applicability to mentor/do practical work. The proposed concept of realization of the practical teaching consistently leads towards building relevant sets of pedagogical competences of the parties included in the process.*

*This only confirms the thesis that the highly active ways of practical work, through their fragmented use or through their continuous and wholly didactic use, in the form of developed models (this research being such a case), positively influence the pedagogical competences and the quality of the knowledge, especially in a multiplied form.*

**Keywords:** *pedagogical practice, higher education, pedagogical competences, model of practical teaching*

### **Introduction**

For several decades, the initial education of school pedagogues, primary/secondary schoolteachers, and kindergarten teachers has been the subject of numerous discussions

among professionals and practitioners in that field. In these discussions, specific attention is paid to the roles that, on the one hand, the institutions play in higher education, and on the other hand, the schools and kindergartens, in the direction of providing relevant, comprehensive, and efficient teaching practice for students. However, the more contemporary treatment of this issue leaves open a multitude of questions that are of universal character, since the teaching itself is universal. Considering the profession of a kindergarten teacher, a primary/secondary schoolteacher, and a school pedagogue, according to the European Commission (2009b), it is of great priority to have gained practical teaching experience, which plays an important role in the responsibility and preparation for the direct realization of the educational work. The recommendations of the European Commission are directed towards the idea that practical teaching should start from the very beginning of the initial education of the future kindergarten teachers, primary or secondary school teachers, and school pedagogues, especially through observation. Practical teaching would be most effective only when the students have received concrete tasks that they should focus on. The students will have the chance to confirm their theoretical knowledge not only in practice, but also on the basis of their practical experience to independently observe certain rules and properly structure the theory into smaller chunks. Such a conceptual ordering of the practical teaching undoubtedly raises the quality of the initial education of the teachers,

which implies a high degree of cooperation among the universities, schools and kindergartens, in addition to engaging experienced primary/secondary schoolteachers and kindergarten teachers as mentors. It is precisely from these postulates that this work focuses on developing and strengthening the pedagogical competences of all the involved parties.

### **Models for Development of Pedagogical Competences**

In educational practice, different models for development of pedagogical competences for support of the practical teaching are present. The most frequent models in practice are: *the model of teaching, the model of competences, and the reflective model* (Maynard & Furlong, 2004). *The model of teaching* implies that the students learn how to teach by observing experienced teachers, thus acquiring experience in teaching by direct observation. This is how the students who lean towards becoming future teachers form an idea of the process of teaching, and at the same time acquire specific teaching strategies, while the mentor in this process has the role of a model. *The model of competences* entails students learning the model of teaching by systematic practice of the skills and teaching techniques, according to which the mentor observes the student and gives feedback. *The reflective model* recognizes the student learning on the basis of critical thinking, regarding the different ways of thinking. In such a way, the student develops deeper insight into the process of learning and teaching. In this

model, the mentor and student are co-researchers. Different authors state that mentorship represents a dialectic relationship, i.e. it simultaneously represents a process and a relation. In both cases, however, regarding mentorship in the context of the development of the pedagogical competences, it is necessary that both in the traditional and contemporary approach of mentorship in the realm of the education of future kindergarten teachers, primary/secondary school teachers, and school pedagogues, there should be at least two sides – the mentor (experienced practitioners) and “the one who is learning” (younger practitioners, i.e. students who are being taught to become teachers). Although there is existent duality between the processes and relationships, mentorship represents a wholesome concept that includes both aspects. The aspect of process has the aim of introducing the future teachers and school pedagogues to “the community of practice”, i.e. inside the realm of teaching, while the relational aspect aims to achieve that in a very careful and supporting manner (Kwan & Lopez-Real, 2005). There is a distinction as to the natural and planned mentorship. The natural mentorship takes place spontaneously and in a friendly manner, moving from teaching, leading, and advising, whereas the planned mentorship is realized through a structured program, characterized by a formal procedure from the mentors and students. The Model of Practical Teaching is conceptualized according to the second model of mentorship.

### **Practical Teaching as a Model for Development of Pedagogical Competences**

The proposed concept of practical teaching is based on vertical and horizontal inter-institutional cooperation, the mechanisms for development and establishment of standards for practical work, the development of standards for educational programs and training sessions, as well as the establishment of a system of accreditation and certification of programs, institutions and professional qualifications.

The application of the contemporary ways of realization of practical teaching, in which the students are continuously involved, is represented through a high level of activity on their part. Consequently, this positively reflects on the quality of their knowledge, the development of pedagogical competences, their being present in classes, while simultaneously presenting a possible way for overcoming part of the problems that arise when studying according to the European Credit Transfer System, which has been envisioned as quite an effective way of studying.

It is understandable that the importance of the theoretical knowledge is not marginalized, but it asks for more enabling of the requirements of the contemporary concepts in higher education. In the viewpoints of some, the practical teaching classes should take up even 50% of the total number of lessons. Yet it should be noted that there have been movements and changes in this direction regarding the Law for Higher Education, with which the practical teaching

classes are becoming a mandatory element in all the years of studying.

The system interventions of more recent times in the field of education have resulted in conceptualizing a contemporary model for carrying out student practical teaching. Such an analysis has created the need to publish "Guidelines for Student Practical Teaching at the Faculties of Teaching", supported by the Department of Education through the OSCE Mission in Skopje (OSCE Mission in Skopje, 2013, pp. 4-6).

The general aim of practical teaching is to direct the students and make them independent in regards to the active participation in the educational process. The modelling has been differentiated through three phases, concretized through a series of successive tasks. In the first phase, the students are introduced to the educational process, which is followed by the phase of immediate involvement as students are getting prepared for independent realization, so that in the phase of independent realization of activities, it is expected from the students to have developed skills and abilities for independent realization of the profession of a kindergarten teacher, a primary or secondary school teacher, or a school pedagogue, so as to acquire professional self-confidence.

In the structuring of such a set model of practical teaching, the responsibilities and tasks of all the involved persons in the whole process are precisely determined. The entire process of practical teaching is supplemented by formative and summative evaluation by the assigned

mentors (kindergarten teachers, primary or secondary school teachers, or school pedagogues), as well as by the assigned mentors of the institution of higher education, in addition to self-evaluation of the students themselves, through a developed methodological apparatus.

The promotion of the new model of practical teaching (which presents a central theme in this research) and the Proposed Catalogue of the Basic Professional Competences of Teachers represent initiatives for intervening in the Law for Primary and Secondary Education, specifically in the section on professional and career development of the teachers.

This study also tends to give its own contribution and scientific support to the teachers, who take on the role of co-mentors with the students, according to the model of practical teaching, as a prerequisite in setting the standards for attaining higher titles of the teachers.

Employing contemporary methods of cooperation in which the students<sup>71</sup> are included as equal partners requires a high degree of their participation, which positively reflects on the quality of knowledge and abilities, yet at the same time represents a possible way to promote the concept of “learning by doing”.

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<sup>71</sup> The fourth-year students at the Institute of Pedagogy, in the framework of the practical teaching, as well as for this research, were included in the role of field researchers even in the stage of data collection, in order for their research competences to be developed.

### **Methodology of the Research**

The subject of this research is the conceptual ordering of the practical teaching as a Model for Development of Pedagogical Competences in R. Macedonia. The research has the character of an empiric and action research. The realization of the model includes persons from several educational subsystems. Through surveying the views and educational needs of all those affected, the research subsequently gains empirical character. But considering that the received results, treated as “exit points” of the practical process, are incorporated in the improvement of the quality of the Model, the research hence gains action character.

**The goal** of the research is to examine the views and educational needs of the persons that are directly involved in the process of realizing the practical teaching with the students, in the function of improvement of the quality of the suggested Model.

The character, layering, and extensiveness of such a research incorporate the realization of several tasks, which are grouped according to the proposed **action steps** that have been being taken during the research: participation in the formation of a Model of Practical Teaching; preliminary examination of the Model in practice; changes according to the preliminary realization; organization of training sessions and seminars for the persons involved; realization of the Model of Practical Teaching; summative evaluation through analysing the

views and educational needs of the co-mentors-kindergarten teachers/primary or secondary school teachers/school pedagogues and students; and integrating the received results in the direction of improving the quality of the model.

### Research Hypotheses

- **General Hypothesis**

The conceptual and systematic setting of the model of practical teaching positively influences the views and educational needs of the all involved partners in the process of realizing the student practical teaching.

- **Separate Hypotheses**

1. The teachers co-mentors positively assess the effects from applying the model of practical teaching;
2. The kindergarten teachers co-mentors positively assess the effects from applying the model of practical teaching;
3. The school pedagogues co-mentors positively assess the effects from applying the model of practical teaching;
4. The proactive manner of practical teaching, through using an appropriate program and methodological apparatus, positively influence the views and educational needs of the students;
5. There is a need to revise and reconstruct the model of practical teaching.

### Research Methods, Techniques and Instruments

This research employed several methods, which helped to provide quality scientific conclusions, i.e. analysis, synthesis, description, induction, and generalization.

In order to obtain relevant data, the following techniques and instruments were used:

**Research Techniques:** Analysis of pedagogical documentation, and surveying

#### Research Instruments:

1. Questionnaire for examining the views and thoughts of:
  - the teachers (SE/QT)<sup>72</sup>
  - the kindergarten teachers (SE/QKT)<sup>73</sup>
  - the school pedagogues (SE/QSP)<sup>74</sup>
  - the students (SE/QS)<sup>75</sup>

#### Research Sample:

In this research, several samples are covered:<sup>76</sup>

1. A sample of teachers co-mentors from primary schools in the city of Skopje (N=33);

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<sup>72</sup> Summative Evaluation – Questionnaire for Teachers Co-Mentors

<sup>73</sup> Summative Evaluation – Questionnaire for Kindergarten Teachers Co-Mentors

<sup>74</sup> Summative Evaluation – Questionnaire for School Pedagogues Co-Mentors

<sup>75</sup> Summative Evaluation – Questionnaire for Students Co-Mentors

<sup>76</sup> The persons in all the subsamples have participated in training sessions and workshops for the Model of Practical Teaching with the students.



2. A sample of kindergarten teachers co-mentors in the city of Skopje (N=19);
3. A sample of school pedagogues co-mentors in the city of Skopje (N=13);
4. A sample of students from the four study years from the Institute of Pedagogy (Faculty of Philosophy, “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” University – Skopje) (N=97).

### Analysis of the Results

On the basis of the analysis of the data received from the surveyed teachers and kindergarten teachers mentors, it can be stated that for the duration of the practical teaching there was continuous communication in the direction of educational support of the students (58,82%), as illustrated in Table 1

**Table 1: Communication between the participants: kindergarten teacher/primary or secondary school teacher-mentor-students**

<b>QUESTION 1: During the realization of the practical teaching, was there constant communication between the participants: kindergarten teacher/primary or secondary school teacher-mentor-students?</b>		
<b>Statement</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>A) Constantly</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>58.82</b>
<b>B) Rarely</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>37.26</b>
<b>C) Never</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3.92</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100</b>

The results of the qualitative analysis are an advantage point for the positive experiences from sharing the practical experiences in the process of the preparation of activities and classes, for facing different teaching situations with the students, and for searching for different approaches and solutions in teaching. Such an approach enables student preparation for applying contemporary teaching techniques and methods in curricular and extra-curricular activities, for the possibility of linking the theory and practice, in the recognition, and in the planning of individual work with children/pupils who have special educational needs, as well as in the applicative activities of a different type. The effects of such organized practical teaching are visible even through the fact that the students have the opportunity to fulfil direct work meetings with the principal, and to get a close look at the programming and realizing of the other types of teaching as well, especially regarding additional and extra-curricular teaching.

With this suggested model, the practicing co-mentors specifically focus on the possibility of the students to immediately participate in parent meetings, staff meetings, and meetings with representatives of non-governmental organizations and the local community.

There is also a separate part in the research in which the views of the co-mentors, primary/secondary schoolteachers and kindergarten teachers are analysed, especially regarding the degree of their participation in the

practical teaching with the students, as part of their own professional development. Using an evaluation scale (1-5), 35.84% of those surveyed give a grade of 3, 26.41% give a grade of 4, while 28.30% give the highest grade. Such information supports the statement that there exists the need for interventional measures in the legal decisions that concern the professional and career development of the teachers.

For the purpose of more efficient “mentoring”, and as a result of the educational support that they gain through the Model (through workshops and training sessions), there is confirmation from the results illustrated in Table 2, according to which the highest spot is taken by the methodological instruments, which further help the co-mentor teachers to provide a systematic follow-up and evaluation of the work and activities of the students. Aside from this data, regarding the materials that they receive with the program for practical teaching, the school pedagogue’s co-mentors rank their practical work with the students very highly.

Table 2: The purpose of the materials that the teachers receive during the practical teaching

<b>QUESTION 2: What is the purpose of the materials that the teachers receive during the practical teaching?</b>	
<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Statement</b>
1	Preparation for practical teaching with students
2	Your realization of activities with students
3	Your practical work with students
4	Developing professional competences for teacher/mentor
5	Systematic follow-up and evaluation of student activities
<b>N</b>	43

From the received data, it can be stated that the training sessions and workshops (Ibid), which are conceptually set up following this Model, are unique in their character and content, and refer to the strengthening of the professional competences of the co-mentors teachers for practical work with students. It is a notable fact that 90% of those surveyed have stated that they have the need for educational support in the form of additional trainings and materials, all for the purpose of strengthening the pedagogical competences of this field. As regards this question, the results of the surveyed

school pedagogue's mentors are nearly identical (83.30%).

They also emphasize the need for more frequent dynamics of the work meetings with the professors co-mentors from the institutions of higher education, with the goal of revising the program of practical work with students, receiving additional materials (instruments) for work with students, as well as suggestions for decreasing the number of students in the work groups (for the purpose of improving the quality of the practical teaching). The suggestions that the co-mentors teachers give in

addition, as to how the practical teaching should be realized in the future, are affirmative (in regards to their own experiences).

In the conclusions in this part of the research, there is confirmation about the first and second separate hypothesis according to which the teacher's co-mentors positively assess the effects of the application of the model of practical teaching.

Due to the specific nature and character of the professional tasks of the school pedagogues in the educational institutions, the most frequent forms of work with students in the practical teaching are group work (39.13%), i.e. individual work (34.78%), while individualized teaching covers only 8.70% (Table 3).

**Table 3: The most common forms of work of the school pedagogue in the realization of the practical teaching with students**

<b>QUESTION 3: What are the most common forms of work of the school pedagogue in the realization of the practical teaching with students?</b>		
<b>Statement</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>A) Frontal</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>17.39%</b>
<b>B) Work in small groups</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>39.13%</b>
<b>C) Individual work</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>34.78%</b>
<b>D) Individualized</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8.69%</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100%</b>

The inter-institutional cooperation suggested in the Model has also been confirmed through the received results, from the school pedagogues co-mentors in this study as a subsample through which the exceptionally high percentage (92.30%) of continuous communication and professional support in the relation between the school pedagogue-professor-student can be observed. This cooperation is noted in the mutual program conceptualization, as well as in the continual observation of the program documentation by the students, detected in the results with 53.84%, as the category of “always”, as opposed to the category of “never” (with 7.69%).

It should be taken into consideration that the systematic and conceptual setting of the model of practical teaching leads towards several exits, and the final “product” (expressed as a trained student with developed competences, recognizable in the labour market) will have a special place.

The received results yet once again confirm the third separate thesis, in which the school pedagogues’ co-mentors positively assess the effects of the application of the Model of practical teaching.

Examining the views and opinions of the students regarding the realization of the practical teaching, as linked to the views and comments as a sub-research sample, the starting point referred to the general statements that those surveyed in the research are somewhat mutually connected, and that aside from the contemporary approach in the conceptualization

of the program based on the Model, there are still certain specifics in the realization itself.

**Table 4: The degree of participation of the student in practical teaching (outside the Faculty teaching)**

<b>QUESTION 4: What is the degree of participation of the student in practical teaching (outside the Faculty teaching)?</b>		
<b>Grade</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
1	5	5.81
2	4	4.65
3	26	30.23
4	36	41.87
5	15	17.44
<b>N</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100</b>

41.87% of the students, having given their views on the possibility for practical training in the framework of this teaching, with a numerical grade from 1 to 5 (1 being the lowest, and 5 being the highest), have given the grade of 4 or 3 for it (41.87% or 30.23%, respectively) (Table 4 and Graph 2). If this is

supplemented by the percentage of those who gave the grade of 1 (5.81%), it can be concluded that a largest part of the students actively participate in the practical teaching, outside the Faculty teaching).

By examining the views and opinions of the students, after the analysis of the results from questions 10, 12, and 13, from the data that arose it can be concluded that generally, the students positively assessed the practical teaching in the institutions of cooperation. The students suggested that through the with the practical possibilities<sup>77</sup>, they are trained for a holistic approach in teaching, with expressed interaction and communication among all the involved person in the process, and through respecting their suggestions, which contributes to the development of their competences.

The given analysis, which has come from the initial views and thoughts of the surveyed students about the model of realization of practical teaching, leads towards confirming the fourth separate hypothesis, presenting the idea that the proactive way of practical work, through using an appropriate program and methodological apparatus, has a positive influence on the views and educational needs of the students.

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<sup>77</sup> For example: through conversational and work meetings with the school pedagogues and the other members of the administrative staff (the principal and teachers); through the presence at staff meetings and the possibility of direct participation in all the types of teaching; through a direct approach to the complete pedagogical documentation; through an independent setting of the teaching and activities; through participation in staff meetings and parent meetings; through inclusion in project activities and communication with the other members of the local community.

If the attention is turned towards the results received from the empirical part of the research, including the relevant results from those surveyed in the direction of the process of complete evaluation of the conceptual and systematic setting of the Model, it can be stated that there is a need for revising and reconstructing it, as confirmed by the fifth separate research hypothesis.

The final results, being analysed cumulatively, move in the direction of confirming the general hypothesis in the research, which represents the idea that the conceptual and systematic setting of the Model of practical teaching has a positive influence on the views and educational needs of the involved persons in the process of realizing the practical teaching with the students.

#### **Final Remarks**

The final conclusion arises from the nature of the problem itself, and from the comprehensiveness of the conceptualization of the suggested model of practical teaching in higher education. The suggested concept for the realization of the practical teaching consistently leads towards building relevant sets of pedagogical competences, hence leading to the thought that after the implementation of the new model of contemporary teaching, that will result in quality knowledge and a system of developed pedagogical competences of the included persons in the process.

The conclusions from this study guide us towards the idea that in the future, there is a need to revise the conceptual setting of the

practical teaching at every Faculty, in which “practical work” starts even from the first year at University. Consequently, this brings me to confirm to you that the highly-active ways of practical work, through their fragmented use or through their continuous and wholly didactic use, in the form of developed models, such as the case with this research, have a positive influence on the pedagogical competences and the quality of knowledge, especially in a multiplied format.

This study tends to give its own contribution and professional support to the teachers, who have the role of co-mentors with students, according to the model of practical work, as a prerequisite in the setting of the standards for gaining higher teacher titles.

In conclusion, as a significant exit point from this research, and keeping with the data received in the section of this research that is “linked” to the students, there is the need for further research in depth on the quality of the practical teaching in higher education, and the views and opinions about the pedagogical competences, as educational needs of every student.

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***THE ROLE OF PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE  
TO EQUIP STUDENT -TEACHERS WITH  
COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS TO WORK  
IN THE FUTURE***

**Abstract**

*This paper presents a model of pedagogical practice that applies to students who graduate in the first level of “Bachelor of Teaching (Primary/Elementary)” This model is based on a close relationship between the university and the school, as equal partners on a realistic basis and obligation of mutual cooperation.*

*The paper aims to introduce the work coordination of leading teachers, mentor teachers and student- teachers, ensuring the quality of practice, identifying needs, personal and professional development and improving mentoring practice.*

*Mentorship role is very important during the student teaching practice, especially in advising the student-teachers to acquire the practices, teaching skills, communication with the learner, the motivation to learn, how to manage general problems of learners’ behaviour as well as process evaluation. Also, in this paper will be presented phases of expansion of pedagogical practice during the three years of the formation of student - teachers. These stages are:*

- Practice with cognitive and observant character.*
- Practice for a longer period at school combined with the methodology and psychology.*
- The start of teaching experience.*
- Full teaching practice.*

*The relationship between the mentorship system and the university, documentation of this process enables the university to analyse its operation, and improve the quality of student teachers' preparation in line with the changes and school needs.*

**Keywords:** *pedagogical practice, mentorship system, student teachers, elementary school, university, partner*

### **Introduction**

Overall, educational reform is indispensable to teachers' preparation. Nowadays, the university qualifies teachers of all grades, elementary to high school teachers. Practical professional preparation in schools that provides students with the teaching skills called pedagogical practice makes an important part of teacher's professional moulding.

The quality of education and all its components such as, the system of organization, content, methods, etc., is very closely linked to the preparation of teachers. To realize such a thing, a key point is the system of preparation in all directions: scientific, pedagogical and psychological forming of new teachers.

Within the frame of high educational reform, attempts are made to improve the quality of future teachers' professional preparation. These improvements have consisted of: (1) Realizing a close interrelationship between theory-practice promoting the second within the subject curricula and aiming at better integration; (2) Renovation of essential

concepts in professional qualification disciplines, also being based on developed countries experience. (3) Teaching methodology activities as well as improving results and extending the use of time at school. (4) Growing the partnership school-university.

The objectives of the training curriculum for primary education teachers, focus on these basic directions:

1. Formation of a good scientific preparation on subjects that they will teach in the future as teachers.
2. Formation of pedagogical techniques, equipment with modern methods of teaching, and equipping them with the skills, habits and deftness needed to effectively use diverse strategies.
3. Psychological forming, on psychological characteristics and features of students evaluating the difference between them and their affective development.
4. Training them on the ability to communicate and establish human and working relations with others.

### **1. The period of school practice**

According to the definitions set forth in the Law on Higher Education and university operational regulations, the completion of the undergraduate curriculum of first level and graduation as "Bachelor of teaching primary elementary" takes three years. At the completion of this first cycle, students gain 180

credits. After graduation the student continues studies in the second cycle or level "Master of Science, in preparation of primary school teachers" to get in-depth theoretical and practical knowledge and training for scientific research. Upon completion of this degree, students gain 120 credits. Study programs over

the years have improved until reaching a final structure in the academic year 2014-2015. Structuring programs at both levels of education has changed. In this structure it is expressed the extent and quality of pedagogical practice in training teachers in primary education.

**Table 1. Structure of the academic year 2013-2014. Program of studies for primary education teachers.**

**SEMESTER-II-**

No	SUBJECT	GRADE I	W E E K	GRADE II	W E E K	GRADE III	W E E K
1	Teaching	24.02.14- 09.06.14	15	24.02.14- 09.06.14	14	3.02.14 - 11.04.14	10
2	Pedagogical practice	-	-	7.04.14 - 13.04.14	1	14.04.14- 06.06.14	8
3	Exams	12.06.14 - 31.06.14	3	12.06.14 - 31.06.14	3	9.06.14 - 22.06.14	2
4	Diploma Thesis					23.06.1 - 05.07.14	2

**Table 2. Structure of the academic year 2014-2015. Program of studies for primary education teachers.**

**SEMESTER-II**

No	SUBJECT	GRADE I	W E E K	GRADE II	W E E K	GRADE III	W E E K
1	Teaching	09.03.15-20.06.15	15	09.03.15-20.06.15	15	16.02.15-25.04.15	10
2	Pedagogical practice	-	-			27.04.15-05.06.15	6
3	Exams	22.06.15-04.07.15	3	22.06.15-04.07.15	3	08.06.15-19.06.15	2
4	Diploma Thesis					22.06.15-04.07.15	2

**Table 3. Structure of the academic year 2014-2015. Program of studies for the Master of Science in primary education teaching.**

**SEMESTER -II-**

No	SUBJECT	GRADE I	W E E K	GRADE II ( Sem IV)	W E E K

<b>1</b>	<b>Teaching</b>				
<b>2</b>	<b>Pedagogical practice</b>		-	<b>16.02.15 - 10.04.15</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Exams/ Diploma Thesis</b>			<b>13.04.15 - 20.06.15</b>	<b>10</b>

In the tables above (Table 1), you can see the schedule of pedagogical practise in second and third grades in the 2013-2014 academic years.

Table 2 and Table 3 reflect the changes in learning structure and pedagogical practice in the third grade of the first level cycle of study "Bachelor", second semester of six weeks to grow into 8 weeks in the fourth semester of the II grade "Master of Science".

## 2. Teaching practice Program for students of primary education.

Pursuant to the requirements of the curriculum and teaching programs after completion of theoretical and practices classes of Primary Education Branch methodologies, third grade students experience active teaching practice in primary schools.

### 2.1 The goal of teaching practice program

As an important form of organization of teaching and learning process in higher education that prepares teachers, pedagogical practices aim to equip students from a professional standpoint, to teach in accordance with contemporary requirements put forth today

to improve the quality of the school and equip students with practical skills for school and life.

### 2.2 Student teacher Duties

1. Candidates should organize qualitative teaching classes, being responsible and seriously prepared scientifically and methodologically.
- b. They should naturally organize all the necessary features of the teaching process during classes, according to the draft plan detailed synopsis, paying attention to the realization of all pedagogical objectives.
- c. Candidates should use logical questions, argumentation, interpretation, analysis, comparisons, conclusions and draw conclusions about the phenomena, facts and events that analyses. In the whole process they should be guided by contemporary western experience expressed in methodological literature circulating today as "Learning by objectives", "Critical and creative thinking," "Step by Step", "Learning strategies", "Methodologies of teaching", "All Inclusion" etc.
- d. They should create challenging situations in classes, naturally linking teachers work

- with the students in the class, with vibrant and effective activities.
- e. To enable students to solve independent tasks at class or at home in a creative way, avoiding mechanical reproduction/learning.
  - f. Candidates should be prepared on a daily basis with a detailed plan of the syllabus approved one day earlier by the methodist teacher of the school where the students practice.
  - g. Candidates have to attend all activities with cultural and educational character inside and outside the school.
  - h. Attend all meetings and activities of the scientific-pedagogical character, which will be developed through the practice and provide free and independent opinions.
  - i. The candidate will have a separate notebook of notes, analysis of classes, warnings and tasks assigned by the Methodist teacher, lecturer and director after every class observed.
  - j. Candidate during practice is not allowed to leave the school. For deficiencies in certain cases, the lost days of practice will be performed in a period set by the department.

### *2.3 The role of mentor teachers during teaching practice in schools*

#### **a) In the three-day period of observation the teacher:**

To introduce the candidate with class problems, give explanations for student behaviour,

academic progress, clarification and advice for any individual pupils, for writing tasks and differentiated work with special students etc.

To introduce the candidate with school education records, as with the state documentation and those that belong to teachers such as: annual plan, register, registry, of course curriculum, calendar plan, diary plan, the methods used, the ways, the literature consulted and the objectives of the program used on each class etc.

To introduce the candidate to work within and outside the classroom, meetings with parents and teachers and the work they do with parents in the future.

To acquaint candidates with its annual plan and supervisor school teacher's duties.

The methodist teacher, at the end of classes, should make detailed analysis of candidate performance in classes and instruct them how to teach the next day. Require applicants to take evidence as to the positive achievements and negative ones.

#### **b) During candidate teaching, the methodist teacher has the following duties:**

For fully and responsibly check the candidate's preparation from the detailed plan synopsis, to be signed the day before, to the learning tools.

To assist in each class and in the activities of candidates with students, maintain complete records relating to the performance in classes.

To provide daily objective assessment for the candidate, his training and progress from class to class.

To introduce the candidate to work outside the classroom and school and to schedule such activities, where the candidate has to play main role.

To familiarize the candidate with the school rules and regulators by the Ministry of Education and Sports, or internal regulations as well as relevant legislation relating to the problems of the school and teachers.

### **3. Content of practice**

Active pedagogical practice for III grade students of elementary education is held for 7 weeks in the 9-year elementary/primary schools.

It starts in the third week of April (04/27/2015) and ending at the end of May (06/05/2015).

For the first three days the candidate will observe classes at methodist teacher with various structure types.

Candidate to become familiar with the diary and calendar plan of the methodist teacher and subjects he will teach during practice.

The candidate will teach 3-4 classes per day at the presence of mentor teachers or any other observer (director, student or lecturer) and on the load would take no further classes.

Upon completion of the teaching practice candidate to take the evaluation report to his

work, designed by the teacher mentor and signed by the director, with appropriate evaluation and submit it to the lecturer methodist.

At the end of practice, all methodist teachers are entitled to give opinions, comments, suggestions for the work done by the department, the dean's office and the University, in terms of preparing students and its further improvement.

During practice the methodist lecturer, based on departmental tasks, together with other lecturers, closely follows the preparation of students and observing their lessons into practice.

Lecturers who help students and make notes in the candidate notebook (plankonspektit), participate in class analysis by giving opinions and observed hours to be reflected on their notebooks, on behalf of the workload.

#### *3.1. The necessary school documents*

It is necessary for teaching practice in a certain school to have some papers or documents that are going to be used by the teachers' coordinator, class mentor, university coordinator and the student.

##### *3.1.1. Student's file*

The student's file is the file that helps the student to achieve high standards in the teaching process. These achievements are a result of lesson planning, absolute devotion and concentration to the process and considering or

analysing carefully any element emerging during the whole teaching process. The file should be well organized and accessible to anyone interested in reading it.

The file is composed of five sections and is kept in a particular place set by the school and university coordinator.

*1. General information 2. Curricula content 3. The plan of professional practice realization 4. Evaluation 5. Review of the student's weekly teaching activities.*

### *3.1.2. Student's evaluation*

Evaluation of the professional student's skills in the process of teaching is made at the end of the teaching practice. Evaluation includes a detailed report of all the student's activities at school made by the mentor, school and university coordinator. The evaluation report includes evaluation about the student's professional capabilities shown during the teaching practice.

## **Conclusion**

In the mentorship system, the role of the mentor is evaluated as being a good adviser for the student-teacher to acquire the teaching skills and techniques, get learners' communication, in motivating the learners, in the overall management of the learners' behaviour and the evaluation of the learner in the process.

Every successful teacher is faced with a group of methodological and didactic reflexes and models, which seem to be the challenges of his

own success. The purpose of the rational mentorship is to make all these techniques part of the student's teaching process.

The mentor teaches to the student what he knows to do or perform. Mentorship system enlivens the contemporary leading motto: "the teacher guides, leads and the learner learn" and in this sense John Dewey's saying: "Through experience and towards the reconstruction of experience" seems to be the most secure learning track.

Mentorship methodology avoids the mechanical learning and giving ready-made information, but on the contrary, the student is put in a situation where he has to resolve, create and provide with the proper skills concerning lifelong learning.

Although mentorship and learning technology have their separate means, essentially they have the same methodology, having to do with a single concept, that of learning. This phenomenon is very helpful because the didactic findings of both technologies are "injected" with some proper changes in the educational process in schools or universities.

During the process the didactic and methodological objectives are integrated, coordinated in schools, faculty of elementary student-teachers' qualification. Thus, the factors and the actors of this process perform to the advantage of education and school.

Professional teaching practice is equal to 20% of the teaching plan for the qualification of



elementary school teachers. The student gains 21 credits at the end of the professional teaching practice.

*Classic division (sharp division): passive practice (listening), active practice (where the students teach) is faced with a teaching practice consisting of no phases. Symbolically, there are four phases but they extend and combine flexibly.*

*Passivity is always confronted with action. An old saying would be very relevant:*

*“It is a mistake to act without thinking, but it is a grave mistake to think without acting.”*

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***PROMOTING TEACHERS' INTERETHNIC  
INTEGRATION COMPETENCES***

**Abstract**

*This paper presents the experiences of the activities of the USAID Interethnic Integration in Education (IIEP) related to the teacher professional development and acquisition of their competencies that contribute to the promotion of interethnic cooperation and integration among students from different ethnic communities. The focus in this paper is on presenting the teachers' competencies that have been identified as important for successful promotion of interethnic integration in education. Competencies are divided into the following three areas: knowledge, skills and attitudes of multiculturalism; knowledge and skills for applying innovative methods and strategies for interethnic integration; subject knowledge. The paper concludes with a recommendation to develop standards in terms of teachers' competences for interethnic integration that can be developed through the following educational systems: 1) basic education, 2) ongoing teacher professional development and 3) teacher career development. These standards should be an extension and deepening of basic professional skills for teachers and standards for career development that are under development and law regulation in the state.*

**Keywords:** *interethnic cooperation and integration; teacher professional development; standards for interethnic integration competences.*

## Introduction

The USAID project for interethnic integration in the education (IIEP), which started in 2011, is being implemented by the Macedonian Civic Education Centre (MCCE), in cooperation with the local partner organizations, relevant educational institutions – the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), Bureau for Development of Education (BDE), Vocational education and training centre (VET), State Education Inspectorate (SEI), National Examination Centre (NEC) and the municipalities in the Republic of Macedonia. When the project started, the schools had been divided in terms of ethnicity / language. In multilingual schools, in the multiethnic environment, the greater part of the students are divided in separate classes, on the basis of language, and are placed in separate parts of the building or managed in different shifts. This limits the opportunities for the students and the teachers to interact and communicate. Most of the research data show that the students are burdened by stereotypes and prejudice mainly positive for their own ethnic group and negative for the “other” group and a feeling of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity<sup>78</sup>. On the other hand, most of the teachers have not been or have partly been prepared for working in a mixed ethnic environment and the majority of them have not had additional training (pre-service) nor have they participated in projects for interethnic cooperation (Baseline study from

2012)<sup>79</sup>. This is an indicator that the teachers lack competencies for implementation of interethnic integration in the education.

Taking in consideration the multiethnic and multicultural nature of the Macedonian society and its principles to integrate the multiculturalism in the current educational reforms, the basic aim of the project is to help the primary and secondary schools to promote the activities for interethnic integration in the education (IIE). In practical terms, it means that the students have the opportunity to gain knowledge, skills and attitudes that they need in a multicultural and integrated society in the spirit of mutual understanding, respecting the differences, interaction and communication. This paper presents the process of developing the teacher competencies to implement activities for interethnic integration through experiences in different forms of teachers professional development and the practical activities for interethnic integration that are being implemented in schools.

### 1. Activities for teacher professional development in promoting the IIE

The support that the IIEP provides for the primary and secondary schools is directed towards: (1) creating a school culture and ethics of mutual cooperation and responsibility in improving of IIE by the whole school and (2) developing the activities of the continuously professional development on a school level in order to advance the teachers competencies for

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<sup>78</sup>Multiculturalism and interethnic relation in the education, UNICEF, 2009

<sup>79</sup> [http://pmio.mk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/IIEP-BASELINE-STUDY\\_ENG.pdf](http://pmio.mk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/IIEP-BASELINE-STUDY_ENG.pdf)

implementing the IIE activities. The main role in improving these activities on a school level is carried by the school integration team (SIT) that consists of 6 to 8 members (directors, professional service staff and teachers). The members of SIT have the support through designed system for professional development and support, which includes: trainings, activities for continual mentor support and visiting schools for observation of the IIE activities and giving feedback and planning the following activities. The support is given by qualified master trainers/mentors together with representatives from the partner organizations Loja and Sumnal<sup>80</sup> and by the IIEP team. Master trainers/mentors are included in intensive activities for their own professional development (series of trainings, ongoing supervision meetings, simulation activities) during the implementation of the project in order to be able to offer adequate expert support to the SIT.

### *1.1. Training of the SIT*

The basic trainings were attended by approximately 2000 representatives of SITs from all primary and secondary schools in the Republic of Macedonia (433 schools). At these trainings, organized in mixed ethnic groups, the SIT members acquired the competencies to implement the following activities as the basis of the IIE concept: (1) multicultural activities and workshops; (2) joint student activities during the regular classes and extra curriculum

activities in multilingual and partner schools; (3) activities for students democratic participation in the schools. During these trainings, the schools were given directions to form partnership for cooperation with two or more schools where the teaching process is in different languages.

For the members of the SIT from the multilingual schools there are advanced level trainings where the focus is on the teachers competence development in implementing the activities for students' democratic participation in schools and deepening the skills for implementation of joint student activities with problem/project/research tasks that enable better communication and interaction among students from different ethnic background.

### *1.2. Continual support of the SIT*

In order to strengthen the competencies of the SIT members for developing the IIE in their schools, they receive continual support through regular mentoring meetings and individual visits and observations of the IIE activities in the multilingual schools and activities between the partner schools.

Regular mentoring meetings are being organized on a regional level, with groups of schools, which are facilitated by the master trainers/mentors. During these meetings, the members of SIT have the opportunity to exchange their experiences from the conducted multicultural and joint student activities in their schools. Using the approach of critical reflection, they discuss and analyse certain

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<sup>80</sup> Loja from Tetovo and Sumnal from Skopje are experienced non-governmental organizations that partner with MCEC in IIEP's implementation.

aspects/topics that provide successful implementation and sustainability of the IIE activities. Mainly the focal point is towards deepening of the teacher competencies that are the main key in developing the knowledge, skills and opinions for interethnic integration among students.

The individual visits and monitoring of the IIE activities in the multilingual schools, which are implemented by the SIT members, are organized to deliver feedback regarding the teachers' competencies that are related to: (1) setting clear goals for interethnic integration among students; (2) using methods to improve the cooperation, interaction and intergroup contact among students; and (3) the students reflection of their joint activity experiences. In order to achieve this goal the project team prepared an observation instrument, which consists of criteria for successful implementation of the joint student activities and questions to reflect on. The key element of the observation process is the meeting after the observation of the activities, when the team does a reflection on the key competencies of the teacher implementers and they discuss suggestions for improvement of the implementation of the IIE activities.

### *1.3. The teachers' professional development on a school level*

By participating in the trainings and in the activities for continual mentoring support, the members of the SIT develop into a team for mentor support for development of IIE on a school level. After the school level training,

where all teachers in the school gain basic competencies for interethnic integration, the members of the SIT continue to give expert support to the teachers. The support continues by organizing different forms of professional development activities (workshops, meetings, activities, observation of the joint activities and giving feedback, demonstration of activities, action researches).

## **2. Principles and teachers' competencies for promoting the IIE**

The key approach to the work of the IIEP team is the implementation of the project activities, based primarily on the constant exchange between the literature focusing on multicultural and interethnic integration and the observation findings that the project has perceived from the practice during mentoring meetings with the SITs.

The critical questions that the IIEP team asks from the very beginning of the project concerning the teacher professional development are:

1. What qualities/characteristics, attitudes and competencies for IIE should the teachers have?
2. How to provide support for development of these qualities/ characteristics, views and competencies?
3. How to monitor and measure the quality of the activities, competencies of the teachers and the effect it has on the students?

These questions impose the basic frame in the process of the development of the principles of the IIE and the teacher competencies. In order to reach acceptable principles and reachable competencies, the IIEP team used approaches and mechanisms that are based on self-evaluation (formative evaluation) of the project activities and reflection of the relevant aspects in implementing the basic principles of the IIE concept and identifying/defining the teacher competencies from the beginning of the project till the present day. Thus, the IIEP team acquires the lesson learned and evaluates the progress and the effects made by the teachers in implementing the activities.

In accordance with the findings and observation, modifications are being made and new plans and strategies are being developed in order to provide support for the teachers in developing their competencies. During this cycled process of self-evaluation and reflection, a deep and detailed analysis is being used in order to identify the weaker and stronger sides of the project. The main data is obtained through: critical review of the documentation (reports from training, mentoring meetings, plans for joint student activities); notes from observations during trainings, mentoring meetings and joint student activities; conversations and reflections with the key target groups in the project. This approach is very valuable because as the team gets directions in which way to intervene on key questions related to the teacher competencies and the question of sustainability of the achieved changes.

On the basis of continual practical application of the approach of self-evaluation in the previously explained activities for teachers professional development (trainings, mentoring support, observation) the principles of creating positive environment for the IIE improvements in the schools are established and teacher competencies for IIE implementation are developed in this phase of the project.

### *2.1. Principles of creating positive environment for the interethnic integration improvement*

Past experience shows that a key factor for the successful promotion of interethnic integration is the active participation of all members of the school community in creating a positive environment that respects the values of mutual understanding, tolerance, non-discrimination and acceptance of diversity. Based on the experiences, the following principles were created:

- Interethnic integration is incorporated in all segments of school life, in regular classes as in the extra-curricular activities;
- The values of intercultural understanding and human rights are part of the school ethos;
- An environment is provided in which students are active participants in the everyday school activities and it is based on democratic values with the possibility for students to openly state their views;
- The teacher has the role of a facilitator and represents a model that through his own

actions demonstrates the values of the interethnic integration;

- The students are equally treated regardless of their ethnicity and have an equal status;
- The students are being encouraged for cooperation that includes direct interaction, positive interdependency, equal opportunities for success and individual responsibility;
- The students are encourage in developing positive communication, mutual respect and trust and negotiation skills when working with others;
- The students are encouraged to be curious, to be creative and critical thinkers, to impose questions, to open discussions and undertake collaborative actions;
- The teachers provide wide range of learning possibilities for all students to maximize their learning capabilities.

### *2.2. Teacher competencies for interethnic integration*

There is a lot of literature focusing on multicultural and intercultural education that discusses the teachers' professionalism and competence needed for multicultural classrooms (e.g., Banks, 1993, 2002, 2006; Bennett, 1995, 2005; Clayton, 2003; Hayden, Levy, & Thompson, 2007). In this literature, teacher competences are related with different pedagogical approaches, such as teaching methods or strategies, and how it adjusted

depending on the context of multicultural learning<sup>81</sup>.

IIEP has identified competencies that include knowledge, skills and attitudes divided in two spheres: (a) competences for multicultural learning; and (b) competences for implementation of pedagogical approaches for joint student activities and activities for student democratic participation in the schools.

#### 2.2.1. Competences in promoting multicultural learning to the students

This group contains competencies that help teachers successfully implement activities related to multicultural learning, which is integrated into the content of the subject areas or life skills classes, such as:

- Empowering awareness of their own culture and positive cultural identity development and openness to meet the specifics of "other" cultures – values, customs, practices (multiculturalism);
- Respecting the ethnic/cultural differences among students/colleges and restraining from valuating the cultural specifics of others (acceptance and respecting differences);
- Understanding the opinions and feelings of "others" and understanding the perspective

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<sup>81</sup> Teachers' intercultural learning and competence, OULU (2010)

of thinking by the standpoint of the “others” (multi perspectives);

- Recognizing ethnic stereotypes and prejudices, your own and of other people and putting effort of overcoming them as of establishing equality and preventing discrimination; (behaviour with positive intergroup contact, reduce of prejudice and discrimination)

With these newly gained or improved competencies teachers are implementing activities, which are helping students to:

- Learn about their own culture and the culture of other ethnicities;
- Learn about cooperation, toleration, mutual understanding, equality and justice;
- Develop skills to reduce stereotypes and prejudice;
- Develop skills for conflict resolutions;
- Building values for integration in a multicultural society.

#### 2.2.2. Competences for implementation of pedagogical approaches and practices for IIE promotion and students democratic participation in the schools:

The competencies below assist teachers in the implementation of activities, which are related to joint student activities, and activities for democratic participation of students:

- Competency for implementing methods and practices such as collaborative learning, role playing, dialogue and discussion on controversial topics, conflict resolutions, experience learning, activities using different media;
- Skills for creating positive and inclusive environment where students are longer engaged and show grater motivation and interest;
- Competency for implementing techniques and practices to improve the communication among students (on interethnic/intergroup basis);
- Competency for encouragement the students for reflection on their own experience and sharing their opinions, impressions and beliefs);
- Competency in implementing of the self-reflections and action researches for continual improvement of the pedagogical approaches and methodology of improvement of the IIE and securing sustainability;
- Skill for acting as agent of change towards actions for social justice and active democratic practices.

Teachers with these newly gained or improved competencies are implementing joint activities, which are helping students to:

- Learn to communicate, cooperate and built intergroup relation between each other;



- Begin to recognize and accept the similarities among themselves and respect their differences;
- Learn to face the challenges of injustice and to aim towards peaceful life with others;
- Build mutual trust for living together and form the friendship which continue after school life;
- Learn of the democratic processes and develop skills for competent decision making;
- Develop creativity , skills for critical thinking and decision making in practical/manipulative and thinking activities;
- Learn for democratic processes and develop competencies for reinforcing democratic actions and making changes in school context and broader environment.
- Direct contact and social interaction contribute to fewer negative stereotypes and prejudices towards “the others”.

### **Concluding remarks**

The fragile Macedonian multi/interethnic society has an utmost need of highly trained and educated teachers in promoting the values and benefits of integration. Living in parallel worlds with divided (homogeneous) schools, separate shifts and/or floors gives no space for direct contacts among students from different ethnicities. This results with lack of

competencies of teachers to work in this environment. The future of Macedonia is clear, being part of the big European family in which values and benefits of the integration are more than visible. We have to learn and practice the integration in all segments of the public life if we are looking into a better future for all of the people living in Macedonia. The starting point for this positive change is the education system and the students. Based on the many analyses and studies done by IIEP and other organizations, it is evident that we are lacking teachers with competencies to work in an integrated environment. IIEP, in partnership with the MoES and all educational institutions in Macedonia are doing a great deal in building of the teachers’ competencies but still more needs to be done in order to ensure long-term sustainability of the changes and applying these competencies in the daily work with the students. The intensive work with the teachers and students from all primary and secondary schools in Macedonia in the last 3 years is bringing some very important lessons learned for the project in defining existing and future actions:

- Capacity building of SIT through mentoring support has been the most productive investment that can result in giving continual expert support in promoting competences of IIE to colleagues in their schools.
- Including schools in participative approach to self-evaluations, an approach that will enable them to continually evaluate their

progress towards their goals that they have set for themselves and that will bring faster results for the promotion of IIE.

- The given competencies for teachers by the IIEP team can be a starting point for building of competencies and standards, which can develop through basic education, teachers' continual professional and career development.

What we (IIEP) started as a project must continue as a process of continuous up-grade of teacher's ability to work with the students in building and promoting of an integrated society for all!

### **Abbreviations**

BDE	Bureau for Development of Education
IIE	Interethnic Integration in Education
IIEP	Interethnic Integration in Education Project
MCE C	Macedonian Civic Education Centre
MoE S	Ministry of Education and Science
NEC	National Examination Centre
SEI	State Education Inspectorate
SIT	School Integration Team
VET	Vocational education and training

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**TEACHER COMPETENCIES FOR  
MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AND  
TEACHING**

**Abstract**

*Education is a complex social phenomenon, which involves the acquisition of a wide range of knowledge, abilities and skills. Today, education involves studying natural sciences, social sciences and humanities, technical and IT subjects, but it also includes training for acceptance and respect of all members of the wider social community. From their youngest age, children must be trained to be able to communicate well and function in their environment.*

*Multiculturalism implies cultural diversity in society. It refers to the differences in national culture and language, social and economic differences, etc. Multicultural education allows students to learn about other cultures and creates opportunities for them to accept and respect those. Their joint operation in a functional environment is the benefit for humankind.*

*The purpose of educational processes is to reform and integrate. It is a necessity to have teachers who will be able to face the challenges that constant change brings.*

*Teaching is a form of learning and acquisition of current culture. The teacher is the creator of teaching and the educational process. He must have knowledge of the scientific achievements in his field, but he must also have excellent organizational and communication skills. He should know and be able to teach his students*

*to live with one another, make friends and respect the other, based on the principles of multiculturalism. In one word, the teacher must be a person who knows how to deal with the challenges.*

*How much and how the students will learn and understand the multi-culture and how much and how a positive school climate will be developed in a multiethnic environment depends on the competences of the teacher. This article outlines the competences that the teacher who works in a multiethnic school and/or multiethnic class must have.*

*Education is a complex, social phenomenon in the present context means any child the opportunity to acquire a wide range of knowledge, skills and abilities as the scientific and technical information and developments, but also to enable the acceptance and respect for all members of the wider community. From an early age children should be cared for to be able to effectively operate in the area. Multiculturalism means cultural diversity of society. Multiculturalism refers to differences in national culture, language differences, differences of social and economic level and so on. Multicultural education allows students to learn about other cultures and creates opportunities for acceptance or at least tolerance of other cultures. Civilization is working together in a functional environment.*

*Processes in education that aim to reform and to integrate and thereby create the necessity of teachers who would be adopted successfully*

*with the challenges of change occurring in continuity.*

*Teaching is a form of learning and the adoption of the current crop. The teacher must have knowledge of the quantum of scientific achievements and the need for the ability of living together in an environment in which to observe the principles of multiculturalism.*

*The person who raised and educated must have positive features. The teacher is the creator of teaching and learning. He must be professionally trained for the creation and development of education and to respond to the challenges. Successful teaching students about multiculturalism in many dependent on knowledge and skills of the teacher and in this sense the teacher must possess the appropriate competencies.*

**Keywords:** *multiculturalism, multicultural education, teacher competencies*

### **Multiculturalism and interculturalism - determining cognitive**

To be able to explain the concept of multiculturalism, one must already be familiar with the term culture. For this concept there are many explanations in the paper and they will use the definition that culture is understood as the “total set of traits that members of a society and recognizes each other which are different from people who do not belong to that

society<sup>82</sup>”. Also various different authors have defined the term multiculturalism. So, Cashmore believe “multiculturalism is basically an idea or ideal of a harmonious coexistence of different cultures or ethnic groups in a plural society.” In Parekh's multiculturalism ...”belief and practice in the sense that groups of people understand each other world and organize their individual and collective life” Cvjetičanin starts from the view that multiculturalism should mean our isolation we assimilation, but strengthening communication within civil society at him as a citizen. Wunderlich and Warrier believe multiculturalism is a concept that describes the ethnic and cultural diversity and globalization of culture is expressed by multiculturalism. For Harrington, Marshall and Müller, multicultural societies are divided into groups and defined cultural markers, particularly on linguistic, religious and ethnic sources or distinction of lifestyle. In today's views on multiculturalism observed differences and diversity. In any case the term “multicultural” describes the cultural diversity of human society. It applies not only to the elements of ethnic or national culture but includes language, religion, and socioeconomic diversity. Respect for diversity means creating conditions in which people, individually or collectively will be free to experiment with ideas, values and lifestyles and to develop new forms of diversity, but to enrich others with their own unique contribution (Parekh 2008,

192).<sup>83</sup> Multiculturalism suggests that people from different cultures living alongside each other.

“Intercultural” a dynamic concept and refers to the establishment and development of relations between a group of people belonging to different cultures. “Interculturalism”, denotes a group of different cultures living in the interaction. Such interaction implies the presence of mutual interest, acceptance and respect. Assumed interculturalism and multiculturalism points to the dialogue of cultures and different levels: local, regional, national and international. Both terms (intercultural and multicultural) describe a situation in which there is more than one crop in a country or *zaednica*.

The term “multicultural”, commonly used to describe a society in which different cultures living alongside each other without much interaction and expression “interculturalism” expresses the belief that every person is richer if you have contacts and experience other cultures. The notion of “interculturalism” also reflects that confirms the fact that people from different cultures can and should be able to connect and learn from each other.

### **Multiculturalism and intercultural education**

Today when the world is a “global village” as said the author Marshall McLuhan imposes new requirements for each segment of human

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<sup>82</sup> UNESCO: International Conference on Education, 43rd Session, The Contribution of Education to Cultural Development, 1992, page 5

<sup>83</sup> Stanković, Pejnović, V. Sloboda, liberalism, multiculturalism and UDC: 123.1 + 329.12]: 316722, Zagreb Original scientific article DOI: 10.2298 / FID1102191S, page: 206

behaviour, and education. Because of the rapid development of communication technology, migration of people in other countries are often pops crisis of identity of individuals manifested as other national dimension, territorial or religious affiliation, and so comes to discrimination and limiting the freedoms of migrants.

In any democratic society, one of the key goals of education is the advancement of democracy and the education system must take into account the multicultural nature of society and actively strives to contribute to the peaceful coexistence and positive interaction between guppies from different cultures.

Multicultural education through the process of learning about other cultures tends to allow acceptance or at least tolerance of other cultures. International education tends to outperform passive coexistence and to develop and implement a sustainable way of living together in a multicultural society. This is done by: understanding, mutual respect and dialogue between groups with different cultures; providing equal opportunities and anti diskrimincijata. Considering the importance of education in building multicultural society relevant inter-culture education actors brought a number of documents, which are based on intercultural education as:

- Charter on Civil and Political Rights Council (1946)
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights Council (1948)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- Convention and Recommendations Against Discrimination in Education, UNESCO (1960)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)
- Declaration on the Elimination of all forms of Intolerance and Discrimination based on Religious Affiliation (1981)
- Dakar Framework for Action (2000)
- Universal Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Diversity in Cultural Expressions (2005)
- Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, UNESCO (2001)
- Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities; European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992)
- The fight against racism and intolerance towards Roma (1998)
- Millennium Development Goals, UN (2002)
- Holy Child friendly, UN (2002)
- Quality Education for All, UNESCO, Dakar (2002)
- International Convention on Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, ICERD
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1982)



- Convention against Discrimination in Education, UNESCO<sup>84</sup>.

Multiculturalism advocates for increased freedom of members of non-dominant minority culture by a dominant culture by insisting community to be culturally homogeneous. Multiculturalists advocate group recognition because they believe that the individual alone does not have enough features, power and organization to voice their demands<sup>85</sup>.

Multiculturalism in education is gaining more importance though it has its own delays, crises and resistance. The crisis in multicultural education can be a time and in a cause and effect of social conflicts. Regardless of the approach to the relationship of multiculturalism and education, this phenomenon is more interested in the scientific, humanistic, cultural, sociological and pedagogical disciplines. Multicultural education in schools, the mass media and multicultural environment is an imperative of the present and the future and the assumption of real, personal and social progress and integral part of human civilization.

Ouellet believes that intercultural education should promote:

- Better understanding of culture in The modern society
- Ability communication between people belonging to different cultures

- Flexible attitude towards cultural diversity in society
- Greater willingness to actively engage in social interaction with people who come from other cultures and recognize the basic forms of human nature as a common trait<sup>86</sup>.

### **Competencies of teachers in intercultural education**

Competencies are a set of knowledge, skills and values that could be applied to life situations as a necessary for the individual to be able to act as an effective member of the community. The competence of the teacher and complex topic by many studies teachers are key to successful intercultural education. Here we would mention the opinion of A. Roe core competences, which reduces the learned ability to adequately perform a task, duty or role. The teacher should be a person with broad intellectual interests and understands the need for continuous professional development. Quality teacher never allow discrimination against students and respects diversity. Attitudes, skills, knowledge and motivation of teachers to adopt new approaches to education for children from different social, economic, cultural and experiential backgrounds are key in the implementation of modern teaching.

According Berthoin-Atal Friedman and intercultural competence is the ability to recognize and use cultural differences as a

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<sup>84</sup> Guide interkulturalnog Education is advancing, Grupa MOST, Belgrade: Fond of open Society, 2007

<sup>85</sup> Stanković, Pejnović, V. Sloboda, liberalism, multiculturalism and UDC: 123.1 + 329.12]: 316722, Zagreb Original scientific article DOI: 10.2298 / FID1102191S, page: 202

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<sup>86</sup> Ouellet, F. L' Education interculturelle - essays sur contenu de la formation des maitres. Paris: 1991 Editions L'Harmattan

resource for learning. It starts from the position that people can learn more about each other if there is a big difference each other. But of course that such a thing must be mutual respect and curiosity of high degree. Key elements of inter- culture competencies are:

- Awareness of self as a cultural being completely
- Awareness of that culture to which they belong influence our thinking and behaviour
- Ability for joint efforts to discover the unspoken assumptions that affect our behaviour
- Openness to test the different views of the world, ways of thinking and solving problems<sup>87</sup>.

Important features of intercultural competent teacher: successful verbal and nonverbal communication, good knowledge of their own and others' culture, the ability to respect, understanding and acceptance of students belonging to other cultures and interacting with other cultures prpadnicite, continuous upgrading of knowledge for themselves, the ability to increase openness, flexibility, creativity and criticism. It is necessary to know the consequences of cultural discrimination. You should also have the ability to develop

non-stereotyped opinions and views antipredrasudni<sup>88</sup>.

Diversity and reality of multicultural environment requires teachers to be active carriers of changes in educational - educational work. Despite current limitations and shortcomings need to consider gaining wider communication, programming, pedagogical and intercultural competencies and thereby be given the specificity of the socio-cultural environment and surroundings.

The introduction of appropriate changes in programs for the initial training and professional development to improve the capacity of teachers. Teachers will be more motivated and prepare for the implementation of educational goals relating to acceptance and respect for all participants in the multicultural and multiethnic reality of the country. It is necessary to strengthen the already existing mechanism for monitoring and evaluation of implementation of educational goals related to multiculturalism.

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***MENTOR TEACHER - COMPETENCES,  
ROLE, CHALLENGE***

### **Abstract**

*Setting of the practical teaching, her representation, manner of organization and implementation are one of the key aspects incorporated and innovated at the curricula at Faculty of teacher education. When we speak about practical teaching, her implementation at the educational institutions (preschool institutions, schools), inevitably set up the question of choice, competence and the role of a mentor teacher as a part of triad teacher – tutor (teacher from high educational institution) – student – mentor teacher (teacher from preschool institution, school), from whose cooperation, interaction is largely dependent on the successful implementation of the same.*

*Key competences, criteria for selection of mentor teacher, their roles, and the challenges are subject to the elaboration of this paper.*

**Keywords:** *teaching faculties, practical teaching, mentor teacher, tutor*

### **Introduction**

Upbringing and education are the key factors in shaping European society in a dynamic society, a society in which people learn factors of social progress and social cohesion (Buchberger et al., 2001).

This thought directs us to the importance of education and upbringing for the individual and social development, but at the same time

indicates the responsibility of every one of us for drafting and implementation of quality in the educational process.

The educational process is carried out through a variety of institutional and non-institutional forms. Its realization is most often connected with the activity of his key actors: teachers, professor, pupil, and student.

The last thirty years, as a result of rapid social, scientific-technical and technological development which is reflected in the educational sphere, we are witnessing numerous innovative actions that occur in education at all levels, innovation that are reflected in the change of roles and responsibilities which have a teacher (teacher, professor, tutor).

"In the foreground are the major changes in the role of the teacher in all areas of his work. These changes are caused by new understanding of the knowledge roles, the tasks of teaching and the ratio of direct factors of teaching; the impact of a new scientific knowledge about the nature of a process of learning, the impact of psychological knowledge about the nature of the child; the role of educational technology, didactic tools and equipment, the use of various media in the teaching, development of extracurricular activities in school and change the cultural role of the school in the society."(Janković, P., 1994)

All this had influence on the changes in the concept of the new curricula for initial teacher education, in the direction that future teacher

must acquire competences, the abilities - to know, to do, to be able to present it at the end like a conclusion of the educational process, to acquire the values which will lead him further in his profession, which will enable him to successfully start of the job, but also to be incentive for his further career and professional development.

When creating new curricula of faculties that educate teaching staff, especially for the first and the part of the second cycle of the nine-year primary education, are taken into account contemporary knowledge about the design of the curricula for the education of teaching staff, defined eight key competences (communication native tongue, communication in foreign languages, mathematical competence and core competencies in life sciences, digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competences, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, cultural awareness and expression) at EU level, the European framework teacher qualifications, Blooms taxonomy, and numerous international documents, the declaration Bologna, ECT-system since 2003, and a legal solution in the country with whom is regulating teacher profession.

Also, we have in mind knowledge about various models of teacher education, like: the behavioural model, the model of training, the model that focuses on knowledge - academic orientation and cognitive-constructivist model.

In drafting the concept of the programs special attention is paid to the possibility for gaining

more practical experience, i.e. on creating the conditions for intensive professional - pedagogical practice (practical training) through which students can practice their theoretical knowledge and to acquire professional teachers competencies in the course of their studies, to achieve a balance in the combination of academic research knowledge and practical experience, to acquire professional competencies of teachers in the course of their studies.

Professional- pedagogical practice in the innovative teaching programs is an integral part and refers specifically to the practical training of future teachers. "Educational training for students for their future vocation as a teacher, is inseparable whole with the work of the teacher in elementary school. .. In elementary school teachers carry out numerous curricular activities with their students. The teacher has the greatest responsibility for educational achievements, which has life-long implications of the generations who are educated and cared. It is necessary to point out that the professional profile of the teacher is dynamic and needs to monitor and anticipate changes in upbringing and education ... Therefore the teacher education is also conceived to ensure success of the teacher education and student education in the dynamic conditions, today, maybe tomorrow, and can predict changes in schools and education in the future". (Bezić et al., 2002: 110)

Her essence and significance is reflected in her determination as "rationally organized human

activity aimed at changing the objective reality and finding optimal solutions. According to Marxist philosophy, the practice is a specific way of human existence according to which man is different from other people. She is a free creative activity by which man fashioned himself and his world, historical action which are guided with the call of the future (Pedagoška enciklopedija, 1989: 233).

The aim of the practical teaching on faculties of education of teaching staff is to enable to future teachers independent teaching practice, in all forms of educational work. The same is carried out in different ways: by observation, working on practicums, independent practical jobs and internships that can be realized during the studies, but also after graduation.

The practical students work is the subject of numerous studies, concerning to her structure, organization, quality, duration, determining the principles that need to be adhered to in the same realization, research related to determining of the quality standards in the practical pedagogical training of students and sl. In this respect, is interesting the research by Gajić, O. and Budić, S. (2006) who examined the principles of organization of pedagogical practice in Finland. According to these researched with practice students begin at the start, at the first semester and continued with her in second semester when they combined theoretical knowledge and practical activities, and day by day becoming more complex. In the first year, practice has an orientation character, in second year of study students carried out

intensive two-week monitoring of the educational process. During the third year of study, students acquire competencies for teaching, and in the fourth year practice lasts four weeks and involves gaining experience for educational work.

Similar is the situation with the structure and implementation of practical teaching on the Faculties who educated teaching staff and in R. Macedonia. Namely, with the practical teaching, in accordance with legal regulations, students begin in the first year of study and in the coming years, increase the duration of practical teaching. In a different study programs has different names, as: practical teaching, pedagogical practice, methodical practice, pedagogical experience, in the frame of which, enables the student think about the choice of their profession, to acquire various vocational skills, to be familiar with the operation of the school as organization, to introduce with different styles of leadership at the school, etc.

The practical work of the students at faculties for educated teaching staff are held in schools, children institutions which represent pedagogical, practical laboratories ... The same are realized under mentoring, tutoring from professor-mentor from the faculty and under the guidance of a teacher -mentor of child institution, school.

The question of mentoring, mentors, the selection of mentors-teachers, in recent years attracted the attention of experts, people of the scientific public.

### **What is meant by mentoring?**

The term mentor is related with Greek mythology. Mentor was the man in who brave Odysseus has confidence; he was his loyal friend, a counsellor, and supporter.

This term is accepted in the United States and Europe. In the United States, England, mentor is the person who has a key role in the other people development, person who is responsible for their development, while in Europe, the mentor helps in the development of the individual and of his professional development. The individual takes responsibility for their own development.

In pedagogical literature this terms means: a person who gives assistance; advisor who helps in the detections of an obstacles towards achieving the objectives; expert who advises in the area of organizational and behavioural changes; facilitator-person facilitates decision-making; person who possesses sufficient knowledge and skills; person committed to the professional development; person who has a positive approach, which will encourages an atmosphere of trust and cooperation. The term mentoring is defined differently in different areas.

In the economy is defined as "mutual, collaborative relationship between the client and the mentor, in which the mentor uses a range of methods and techniques to help the client in the definition, defining common goals; i.e. a complex, interactive process that spanning between transfer of knowledge and experience

of professionals and experienced people (mentors) to less experienced people (mentored, mentis). The goal of mentoring is to enable continuous improvement of skills and knowledge, to allow career development". (Avramovic, M. et al., 2012:7)

"Mentoring allows learning, improvement and progress not only for the student in practice, but also the progress of the mentor, i.e. more, bear in mind that through the mentoring process develops and progresses also the professionally, the teacher mentor."

Similar identification also has in the pedagogical science as: mutual interactive relationship, a relationship of equals partners in which none of the parties does not represent himself in the position of power over the other, between skillful person, experienced teacher and less experienced, student in the teaching process. "Mentoring means travel, as a continuous process that takes at least two years. The mentor is a guide on the road and in him, we can have confidence, because he knows the route, which he has travelled many times, but not always run the same route, but along with the student may choose new destinations. "(Avramovic, M., et al., 2012:7)

The teacher mentor, teacher from the educational institution in coordination with professor of higher education institution have key role in the practical students training, his future colleagues. Namely, he is the person with whom the student enter into mutual relationship, in which the teacher gradually lead them, teach them, support them, encourage

them and he motivate them in the process of acquiring knowledge, gaining practical experience, skills for the teaching profession. Mentor teacher lead the student in the implementation of the theoretical knowledge in practice, guide him into the concrete educational situations and helps him in communicating and working with children. In this process, the teacher is guided from the previously prepared plan, the result of the interaction, and cooperation with persons of higher education institution, professor mentor, and tutor.

The student, less experienced, is the person to whom is need a support, he is the person who wants to learn something new, the person who requesting, searching for answers to questions, motivated person, a person who has a wish to improve his own development, own career. The student is s person that needs knowledge, practical experience and advice of a mentor teacher. Hence, mentor teacher and the student are partners in the process of practice and training of future teachers. Their mutual relationship is the link between theoretical knowledge and its effective implementation in teaching or effective practice.

"The modern view of mentoring, mentor and student has treated as an equal partners and their relationship as a part of the development process." (Awaya et al., 2003; Eby et al., 2006).

What are the roles which has mentor teacher in the educational institution (school, preschool institution)?



There have been numerous attempts to determine the role that the mentor teacher has at the school, child institution. However, as most acceptable for us, is determination made by Aways and others (2003), in which the mentor has the following roles:

- Role of an equal partner, it means that in the mentoring process cannot exist dominations of the mentor or student, but equal, reciprocal relationship, based on the greater wisdom and experience of the experienced teacher; A guide to the practical knowledge - the journey is not only a journey by one route, but implies that teacher leads the student to new practical knowledge, to search for new ways, new roads for that;

- The role of instigator, to instigate student to take concrete actions; to provide space and opportunity to the students to show their worth – they must to try to prove their abilities with the help, support, guidance of mentor and to take responsibility for their own action;

- A person who is always ready to provide feedback on the success, failure, to provide guidance for improving presented practical activity;

- A person who is always positive example;

- Supporter, a man who constantly gives, offers emotional and professional support based on clearly stated expectations;

- Critical friend, always ready to offer constructive criticism about his teaching,

- Manager - gradually introduces the student with the procedures that are used in the school.

### **What are the tasks of the mentor teacher?**

Analogous to the roles, which has the mentor teacher, may be determined his specific tasks:

- To prepare a plan and program for the practical training in collaboration with professor-mentor of higher educational institutions;
- Introduction with the structure, organization, method of management, code of conduct, cooperation with other stakeholders of the work of the educational institution;
- To brief the student with the forms of security in the school /preschool institution;
- Gradually introduces the student to the various stages of formal, professional and personal education;
- To present good examples of teaching practice, mentoring hours;
- To establish a climate of mutual trust, cooperation, interactive communication with the student;
- To introduce the student into various models of teaching and new approaches and strategies used in the teaching process;
- To introduce students with new trends in education, new models of teaching, education of children with special needs in the regular education system;
- To ensure optimal instruction, suggestions, explanations, instructions, advice for student in the planning process, advices of

preparation and implementation of the teaching / educational process;

- To acquaint the student with the climate in the classroom, the possibilities, the interests of the pupils, their knowledge;
- To acquaint the student with the material technical and technological equipment of the educational institution;
- To carry out the monitoring of the teaching hour/ educational activity and to provide continuous feedback to the student;
- To make an assessment, to give constructive criticism and suggestions for improvement of the practical teaching / educational activities by the student;
- Constantly encourages and stimulates student to search for new approaches and ways that lead to improvement of the teaching / educational process;
- To make evaluation for student practical work, to prepare the final report;
- To give proposal and suggestions for improvement of practical work, in collaboration with students and representatives of the higher education institution

### **Who can be a mentor-teacher from the educational institution?**

Each teacher after completion of initial education, after his employment at the educational institution, should have a series of general, professional, personal, interpersonal competencies that will enable for him successful organization and implementation of

educational activities, which will enable his advancement.

Among them include: fundamental knowledge of scientific disciplines necessary for the efficient performance of educational work, people with knowledge of their own area, develop capacity for critical and self-critical thinking, the ability for analysis and prediction, solving problems, communication skills, the ability for interaction and collaboration with members of the closer and wider social community, the ability for application of innovative methods, procedures and processes of research in teaching, ability for self-evaluation, management ability, ability for teamwork, empathy communication, to have a sense of the needs of the other, to possess tolerance, democracy and respect and recognize diversity, to be flexible, to has professional ethics, to recognize and have a respect for ethical values, people with a positive attitude towards the individual student...

The foregoing indicates that every teacher from the educational institution who possesses enough knowledge, experience, desire, motivation for his own development, interest for his professional advancement, a person who loves his profession, can be a mentor teacher for the students from faculties that educate teaching staff.

Considering the fact that in last few years the number of students at faculties that educated teaching staff is reduced, it raises the issue of selection of mentor- teacher of students, i.e. the

question for the determination of criteria for the selection of the same.

The choice of a mentor teacher look like on a job advertisements in which are seeking educated, experienced, intelligent, communicative person with who can be establish relationship of trust and cooperation, person of trust and credibility, person who is able to design new tasks to looking and offers new creative solution.

This indicates that is necessary to establish criteria for the selection of mentor teachers.

Like possible criteria we highlight:

- Teacher who wants to work with students and who is willing to share acquired experience and to respect the requirements of job in highly - educated institution;
- Teacher with working experience as a teacher, at least five years;
- Teacher who has in his portfolio, has a professional documentation, upon which it can be concluded his progress in teaching profession (part of training, seminars);
- Teacher for whom will make a recommendation at least two professor-mentors, as a result of long-term cooperation with the educational institution;
- Teacher for whom will gave recommendation professional co-workers and the school principal;

The selection of mentor teacher will be carried out with respect to these criteria, and before the implementation of the mentoring process is necessary to establish closer cooperation between mentor-teacher, professor- tutor of the higher education institution and student, for contracting about obligations, responsibilities, benefit of all stakeholders, in order to have successful, long-term cooperation and improvement of the educational activities.

### **Conclusion**

"Theory without practice is dead, practice without theory is blind" will highlight Rubinstein. Namely, their integration is one of the basic criteria for pedagogical and professional advancement of each teacher. Theoretical knowledge, which is acquired in higher education, becomes an integral part of the life of every individual just with checking of his objectivity in practice. Therefore, the main tendency of modern teacher education is to put emphasis on their practical training during their initial education. At the practical students, training tremendous is role of the teacher mentor who will lead the student, who will "travel" with him on the way of his training for quality and efficient organization, implementation, evaluation, innovation, improvement of the educational process. The practical training of future teachers during initial education is only the beginning of their professional advancement, improvement and innovation, their professional growth in teacher's researchers, enthusiasts, fluent and creative individuals.

„The main task of mentors remain to “help students to learn how to teach” by way of helping them to learn from their own experiences through planning, implementing and analysing the instruction (Marentič Požarnik, B., 2006).

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**CORE TEACHER PROFESSIONAL  
COMPETENCIES AND OTHER  
INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE THE  
TEACHER PROFESSIONAL AND CAREER  
DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN THE  
REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**

**Abstract**

*The demands on schools and teachers are becoming more complex. Society now expects schools to deal effectively with different languages and student backgrounds, to be sensitive to culture and gender issues, to promote tolerance and social cohesion, to respond effectively to disadvantaged students and students with learning or behavioural problems, to use new technologies, and to keep pace with rapidly developing fields of knowledge and approaches to student assessment (OECD, 2005). Setting competences that teachers are expected to possess is one of the ways to ensure that teachers are better prepared for the new “enriched” but also more demanding profession of teaching. In addition, teacher competencies will provide a framework to guide initial teacher education, teachers’ ongoing professional development and career advancement, and to assess the extent to which these different elements are being effective. This was the starting point for developing a Catalogue of Core Teacher Professional Competencies within the USAID Teacher Professional and Career Development Project. The overall goal of the project, implemented by the Macedonian Civic Education Centre, is to upgrade and improve the system for professional and career development of teachers, and thus, contribute to a better quality of teacher performance and higher students’ achievement in the Republic of Macedonia. This paper outlines the comprehensive approach*

*towards developing the teacher competencies and standards, and how they are aligned with the other project initiatives to improve the system for teacher professional and career development in the Republic of Macedonia.*

**Keywords:** *teachers, competencies, standards, professional and career development*

### **Background**

The Catalogue of Teacher Core Professional Competencies and Professional Standards in the Republic of Macedonia was developed as part of the Teacher Professional and Career Development (TPCD) project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The project was designed on the initiative of the Bureau for Development of Education<sup>89</sup> (BDE) and is being implemented by the Macedonian Civic Education Centre (MCEC) since December 2012. It is a 30-month initiative which contributes to the design and establishment of a teacher professional and career development system by identifying necessary interventions that support existing national policies and improve the current practices in Macedonia. The project aims to create a comprehensive, transparent, feasible and cost-effective system, contributing in turn to higher quality instruction and higher student achievement.

The necessity of developing a Catalogue of Teacher Core Professional Competencies and Professional Standards resulted from the fact that the teaching profession in Macedonia need to be regulated more systematically and the skill levels of teaching staff need to be improved. As noted in the European Commission's communication 'Rethinking Education' (2012), the reform of education and training systems is essential to achieving higher productivity and the supply of highly skilled workers. In this context, it invited Member States to: "*revise and strengthen the professional profile of all teaching professions [by] reviewing the effectiveness as well as the academic and pedagogical quality of Initial Teacher Education, introducing coherent and adequately resourced systems for recruitment, selection, induction and professional development of teaching staff based on clearly defined competences needed at each stage of a teaching career, and increasing teacher digital competence*". (European Commission 2012a).

### **1. The Process of Defining the Teacher Competencies and Professional Standards**

The first draft of the Catalogue of Teacher Core Professional Competencies was developed by a working group consisting of education experts, teachers, BDE advisors, National Examination Centre<sup>90</sup> (NEC) and Vocational Education and

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<sup>89</sup> Bureau for Development of Education is a body with in the Ministry of Education and Science responsible for curricula development, professional development of teachers and research in education.

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<sup>90</sup> National Examination Center is an independent public education institution responsible for national and international assessments, external testing and training and certification of school directors.

Training Centre<sup>91</sup> (VET Centre) advisors, university professors, and TPCD project staff. In the process of drafting the competencies the group had in mind the Common European Principles for teacher competencies and qualifications, the teacher competencies in other countries, as well as the principles of the Macedonian education system. The first draft of the competencies was used to start the discussion and to motivate stakeholders to get involved in an iterative process of development. A round table discussion was organized with representatives from all teacher training faculties. Following the input by the university professors, the project organized an online public debate on which teachers, student support services and school directors from all 455 primary and secondary schools were invited to participate. Their contribution in the final version of the document was evident. The final version of the document was shared with the directors of BDE, NEC, VET Centre, State Education Inspectorate and the president of the Teacher Union to accept the document before the Minister of Education and Science granted official approval.

Following the completion of the Catalogue for Teacher Core Professional Competencies, the same group commenced the process of developing Professional Standards for Teacher-Mentor and Teacher-Advisor. The development process for the professional standards was the similar to the process for developing the

Catalogue for Teacher Core Professional Competencies and also included a structured approach in gathering the opinion of all relevant stakeholders.

## **2. The Structure of the Catalogue and the Professional Standards**

The teacher professional competencies relate to core (the most important) knowledge, skills and abilities which the teachers should possess for quality performance. The competencies are linked to professional values, so the teacher is expected to deploy them during the initial teacher education, induction period and throughout their educational practice. Thus, the Catalogue of Teacher Core Professional Competencies is organized in three mutually connected parts:

- I. professional values that teachers have to possess and respect;
- II. professional knowledge and skills that teachers have to acquire during the initial teacher education and during the first years of their professional practice;
- III. examples of activities from the professional practice of teachers, which represent a standard for assessing teachers work and that, could be used for self-evaluation or external evaluation of teaching practice.

Although Ministers have not adopted a complete list of the competences teachers require, they have agreed that, as a minimum, teachers should have a specialist knowledge of

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<sup>91</sup> Vocational Education and Training Center is an independent education institution responsible for curricula development, teacher professional development for VET schools, and developing social and strategic partnership.

the subject(s) they teach, plus the necessary pedagogical skills to teach them, including teaching to heterogeneous classes, making effective use of ICT, and helping pupils to acquire cross-cutting competences. The working group has clustered the professional knowledge and skills, and the examples of activities in the following six areas:

1. Subject knowledge and knowledge of the education system
  - Subject knowledge
  - Knowledge of the education system
2. Teaching and Learning
  - Planning and preparing the teaching
  - Teaching process
  - Students' assessment
  - Meeting students' expectations and needs
3. Stimulating, real-world learning environment
  - Creating safe and stimulating, real-world learning environment
  - School ethos
4. Social and educational inclusion
5. Communication and collaboration with families and community

6. Professional development and professional collaboration

- Professional development
- Professional collaboration

In most countries that have developed competencies, inclusion is embedded in other areas of teachers work. In this Catalogue, the working group agreed that this aspect is underdeveloped in our country, and thus the identified competencies were placed in a separate area, under 'Social and educational inclusion'. This will ensure that teachers have a better understanding of the competencies they have to develop to ensure inclusive practices in schools.

Not every aspect of teaching can be fully described or defined; aspects such as the teacher's professional values, dispositions and attitudes are very important too. They are the basis for development of the competencies, and the Macedonian teachers are expected to work in accordance with the following professional values: *Every student can learn and develop; Lifelong learning; Professional integrity and devotion to the teaching profession; Cooperation; and Equity, inclusion and social justice.*

The **Professional Standards** describe the competencies that teachers will need to acquire to advance in career. The Law for Primary Education and the Law for Secondary Education provide teachers the opportunity to be able to advance in the career levels of Teacher-Mentor and Teacher-Advisor.



However, due to the lack of clearly described processes, procedures, instruments and standards, the teachers were not able to benefit from this opportunity until now.

The professional standards for teacher-mentors include advanced competencies of teachers who, throughout their work as teachers, have acquired the core professional competencies and are recognized by their high quality teaching, continuing professional development and introducing innovation into professional practice. Teacher-mentors possess knowledge, skills and abilities to support the professional development of their colleagues and effectively contribute toward increasing the overall performance of the school. In addition, the teacher mentors will be responsible for the practicum of future teachers, and these competencies will be recognized and valued in the process of career development.

The professional standards for teacher-advisors include competencies, which teacher-mentors need to acquire to be able to advance into the career level of teacher-advisor. These teachers are leaders in the school in terms of the quality of their work in the school, but also in the region and contribute towards developing the overall quality of education. Teacher-advisors are dedicated to continuing professional development and support the professional development of colleagues in their school and other schools in the region. They are reflective practitioners who examine their professional practice constantly striving to upgrade and improve their performance and introduce

novelties in education on school, regional and national level. Teacher advisors are recognized by their contribution to improve the education process and affirm the teaching profession.

The professional standards for teacher-mentor and teacher advisor are structured in the same areas as the Catalogue for Teacher Core Professional Competencies. In addition to the values described in the catalogue, teacher-mentor is expected to be: *Devoted to improvements on a school level*, and for the teacher-advisor to be: *Devoted to developing the teaching process on a national level*.

### **3. Professional Competencies and Standards in the Context of the Teacher Professional and Career Development System in Macedonia**

There are many factors that may encourage governments (or others) to define the competencies that they expect teachers to possess at different stages of their career. The factor that encouraged the development of teacher professional competencies and standards in Macedonia was connected to the process of improving the quality of teachers by upgrading the teacher professional development process and establishing a system for career advancement. Continuing professional development is considered a professional duty for Macedonian teachers and is a prerequisite for career advancement and salary increases.

A good system for professional development includes monitoring the work of teachers and engaging in professional dialogue through

which a common understanding about the competencies necessary for ensuring quality teaching and learning is built, as well as planning activities for deploying these competencies, and finally assessing the effects of professional development. Enabling all teachers to develop their competencies means stimulating teacher's engagement in career long learning, assessing the development of teachers' competencies, and providing appropriate and relevant learning opportunities for all teachers (European Commission 2013)

The Guidelines for Professional Development, prepared with the support of the TPCD project, describe in detail how the professional competencies and standards will be used to ensure the continuing professional growth of teachers. To be most effective, teachers' professional learning should be based upon an assessment of their specific learning needs and feedback about their teaching (European Commission 2013). Therefore, the monitoring of teachers work will be conducted based on the competencies that that teachers need to deploy, and the standards of quality set by the school and the state. The development of teachers' individual plans for professional development is closely linked to the competencies that teachers have to acquire. More specifically, teachers are required to conduct self-evaluation using the defined competencies in the Catalogue for Teacher Core Professional Competencies. In this regard, the individual plan for professional development will help the teacher to:

- systematically develop the needed competencies;
- improve his/her performance; and
- reach the standards, and advance in career (to become teacher-mentor or teacher-advisor).

The individual plans are used to develop the school plan for professional development. The school director takes into consideration the competencies that teachers need to acquire and has to ensure resources for organizing training, mentoring, dissemination, seminars and other forms of professional development activities that teachers could attend to acquire the relevant competencies. In this regard, the Bureau for Development of Education plays a crucial role in ensuring there are accredited training programs available to teachers. There is an established procedure for accrediting training providers and programs, through which BDE publishes a catalogue of training programs and providers every two years. In the future, the accreditation of training programs needs to be closely linked to the competencies that teachers need to acquire, in other words, teachers have to have the possibility to choose a training program relevant to those competencies they ought to develop as part of their personal professional development.

When it comes to teachers' career development, the core professional competencies play a major role in selecting the best teachers to advance in their career. According to the established procedure, the teachers who want to advance in

their career need to gather evidence to prove that they have acquired the core professional competencies and met the standards for teacher-mentor or teacher-advisor. Bearing in mind that the Catalogue includes a broad range of competencies, it is not realistic to expect that teachers will possess all of the prescribed competencies, and thus, a minimum percentage of the achieved competencies will be set once this system is piloted in a number of primary and secondary schools. Furthermore, the competencies will be used by the school and external committee for assessing teachers' preparedness for career advancement. Instruments have been developed to enable committees to evaluate teachers based on the competencies and standards and to select the best teachers to advance in teacher-mentor or teacher-advisor positions.

In July 2014, the Minister of Education and Science announced a reform in teacher initial education. As a result, the Ministry of Education and Science started activities to define the legislative framework for the implementation of the reform. In this regard, three new laws were drafted, a Law on higher education institution, a Law for Academia for Teachers and a Law on Teachers. Since, professional learning is a continuum starting in initial teacher education, carrying on through the induction phase and continuing throughout the rest of a teacher's career; in this context it is important that the core professional competencies are also considered in the study programs of the teacher initial education and in the program for training teachers at the

Academia. This will ensure alignment of the phases of teacher development, starting from the initial education, and running through induction, continuing professional development and career advancement.

### **Conclusion**

Effective systems for the education of new teachers and the professional development of serving teachers rely on a shared understanding of the competencies that teachers need to deploy at different levels of schooling, or at different stages in their career. Such a profile or framework of competencies can also be used to improve the effectiveness of the recruitment and selection of candidates for teaching posts and assist teachers in planning their own professional development (European Commission 13). This statement is what initiated the process of development of teacher competencies in Macedonia. Most importantly, the competencies were developed in a highly participatory manner in which the main key stakeholders were engaged. This, in turn, contributed to ownership and commitment to the competencies framework. In addition, the competencies are entrenched in the processes and procedures for professional and career development and will be used for self-evaluation, monitoring and assessing teacher performance. Finally, the competencies were embedded in the new legislation, which to some extent guarantees their implementation and contribution to increasing teachers' skills and raising student outcomes.

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**MENTORING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR EMPLOYEES IN ORGANIZATIONS**

**Abstract**

*Professional development of employees is a crucial element of the nations' effort to improve organizational work. The new transformations in working are reflected in a workers' practice, therefore the workers need a basic knowledge and advanced thinking and problem solving among employees. We live in time when changes are crucial and important factor for all organizations and their work. Organizations work in their own way, way that means existence for them. Employees are the unique mechanism for organizational development. Therefore, its professional development is very important for developing of the organization. The focus of professional development has to be on improving working conditions in organizations. If the employees are critical and crucial ingredient for quality of working in organizations, then their professional development is the key for successful work in the organizations. Every organization have to summarize the need for professional development, identify the core of competences that have to be developed for employees and sets a mentoring program with a several steps that will result with professional development.*

*Employees should not feel the isolation at work because they will leave the profession. They need instructional help for the work. Mentor in those cases is not a friend, but the person that shows the professional components that are necessary for effective working.*

*There are many forms of professional development like training, mentoring programs, inducting programs etc. But in this paper, the mentoring process will be explained as a way for professional development of all employees in the organizations.*

**Keywords:** *professional development, mentoring process, mentor, organizational development, school*

## **Introduction**

Mentoring more and more becomes a significant part and model of professional development in education. New role is in the way that new colleague may easy professional development of new teacher or person that is new in some level of career development.

That means that mentoring is a complex process that is happening between individuals of different levels in expertise and experience. Mentors and new teachers become partners, and that is very important for success in development of the profession of new teacher.

## **Mentoring process at school**

What is the mentoring process? Why is it important for organizations and for professional development of the teachers?

First short explanation about mentoring. Mentoring is relationship between experienced and less experienced persons at organizations. As Jeffrey J. Johl (2002-2003) says mentor as an experienced person provide information,

consultations, support and feedback for his/ her colleague.

Essential elements of each mentoring process should be how mentor is going to help the new teacher in showing the professional way. Mentoring process is not a product or a perfect solution. That is unique process in which new teacher teach how to teach. They are feeling lonely and lost at work at the beginning. The knowledge they have is not enough for their work. They meet with the complex work where they should communicate with students and give them what they need- knowledge. On the other hand they should exchange knowledge and skills with other colleague in schools ant think about their own professional development. That is the reasons that new teacher needs experienced colleague to guide them ant show them how it should complete everything. Mentoring process is structured in mentoring programs. These programs have three components: observation, the work of new employees, analysing his/her documents and reflecting teacher practice in classroom.

Mentoring program should have criteria and policies for work with new teachers. They also must have clearly defined objectives and tasks for every new teacher in school and his mentor, because of dynamics of teaching process and the professional needs of a new teacher. Through mentoring programs new teachers get professional help and they making successful transition in their work through relating knowledge and practice all in one. Mentoring

program contains good selected objectives that are related with schools principles.

As has been determined (Dennis O'Reill, 2001) new teachers that are parts of this mentoring process and program can get:

- Formal mentoring from experience colleague
- Observation of his/her work in the classroom and in school
- Answers from mentor as feedback, suggestions, techniques from every observation
- Contacts with other employees at school
- Developing as a professional.
- If new employees follow the principles of the mentoring programs and they are dedicated in doing his/her job they will have professional development. With other words, mentoring is a bridge with which practice is related with knowledge skills and wisdom.
- Mentoring program has to have other parts like:
  - Learning how to observe and give constructive feedback to all the employees at schools include new employees, including strategies for self- reflections.
  - Instructional practice about classroom management and organization.
  - Handling with the problem.

- Improving communication skills and building professional relationship.

- Clearing or defining the roles of mentor of new employees.

- Practicing time- management.

- Developing relationship with school polices (curriculum planning and students results).

### **Importance of mentoring**

Mentoring is important because there are points when organizations need development and growth. So, teachers need to be trained and ready to except changes. During mentoring process teachers get the knowledge and skills that are important for their working place.

That why mentoring is essential for professional development. Therefore, experts who have knowledge and skills in some areas, gives that knowledge to new teachers. This is important part of human resources development. For many organizations, it is practice to introduce mentoring programs, as an effective way for developing and improving of skills, extensions of choice of human resources in organizations and keeping the employees in the organizations.

This is dynamic process for all employees that are happening all the time. That's why professional developments is so important and object for many researches. In this process new teachers have many learning activities arranged within an organization in order to improve performance and personal development for

purpose of improving the job, new teachers, and organizations as a part of one society.

### **Professional development as a part of organizations**

The essential question is what professional development for new teachers and for organizations means?

As important part of human resources development, professional development is lifelong collaborative learning process that nourishes the growth of new teachers both as individuals and as team members to improve their skills and abilities. As Marcha and Carrol (2000) argued, the focus of professional development has to be to improve working in organizations.

This is not a one day process; it is happening all the time in the successful organizations. With professional development teachers can get:

- New skills,
- New knowledge,
- Competencies important for working,
- New performances,
- Abilities.

Every organization have to summarize the need for professional development, identifies the core of competences that have to be developed for teachers and sets a mentoring program with a several steps that will result with professional development.

The biggest benefits from this process can be seen in the work of teachers. The work for them has to be real challenge. That challenge is determinant that shows the direction to the professionalism. Progress of working in the organization can be seen in their working place. Teachers should not feel the isolation at work because they will leave the profession. They need instructional help for the work. Mentor in this ceases is not a friend, but the person that shows the professional components that are necessary for effective working. Many people thinks that individuals should learn only their formal prepare for work. This is wrong. Teachers and long time staffers should have continuous learning and preparing for new changes and challenges. Every employee in organization has to be a person that is learning all the time. This is very important for the organization because with this they are getting professional and career development. New standard for working seek form teachers to new their work and to work in an appropriate way. To be part of one organization means to be organization. Every skill, knowledge, competencies as a part of the professional development teachers has to use in working.

This assessment can be used as an organizational development tool or as a part of a system- wide professional development strategy. This will help the organization to put all the components that are necessary for effective work. (Lilian and Jackinta, 2006) explain that baseline components of professional development are:



- Understanding the values of organization, coaching and leadership. Professional development opportunities and practice have to provide effective work in organization. Creating professional development for all teachers in organization require commitment, understanding, planning, resources, time, and evaluation. The growth of organizations and its effectiveness in working depend on teachers, especially of their professional development. Therefore, mentoring programs are indicated in many organizations. In these programs, teachers develop their skills, knowledge, performances and competencies. This is long-term process; it is not happening in one day or a week. Every organization has to create a professional development plan, which will give equal opportunities for all teachers.
- Knowledge of key concept and processes in organizations,
- Abilities to recognize and address need for intervention in working place,
- Abilities to motivate other teachers,
- Understanding two- way communication,
- Understanding the organizational culture,
- Understanding of privacy and confidentially rights of working place,
- Understanding knowledge of issues and trends affecting the organization.

Professional development can be seen in the working of teachers when they will be able to develop relationship with other teachers and to provide feedback in organization. The lack of professional development, explains failure of some organizations. New professional development models exist that will help of organizational reform efforts when use systematically over time. The knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviours, and practices of working are only minimally challenges by current practice.

Professional development includes an evaluation of progress as it builds employees/staff and leadership capacity and as it affects effective organizational work. It is sustained and intensive, with opportunities for practice, collaborative application through problem solving and action researches, mastery,

### **Connecting theory and practice**

To link theory and practice, and to enrich the theory with practical evidence, for this paper, research was conducted on the territory of Bitola about mentoring process and the type of programs that are implemented and professional development of teachers in primary schools. In it were involved 12 schools. This research, which was intended for the purposes of this paper, obtained data showing that in most schools has formal mentoring process and mentoring program.

In schools where there is non-formal mentoring program (2% of the total number of schools included), gave the following characteristics of this process:

- Mentor rarely advises the employee

- Mentor didn't provide guidance how to instruction and how to run professional development
- There are no visiting classes between mentor new employees.

In schools with this type of program, respondents think that new employees manage themselves in the work and also much harder thrive professionally in that early career, they don't have an experienced colleague who'd introduced them into the profession and further work

Other schools have a mentoring program that is formal and is performed under a particular mentoring program through which:

- Mentor guides new employees
- Visit classes
- The new employee successfully copes with problems
- Handles work

The opinion of the respondents referred to the fact that through this process, when it is carried through the mentoring program, new employees are properly diversified and professional development work with them is more pronounced. Professional development depends on the further work of the teacher, his personality, and ambitions. However, choosing the teaching profession, everyone should be ready that the teacher should always upgrade, evolve and learn something new.

## Conclusion

A critical goal of mentoring and professional development is to improve a way of working. Recent emphasis on accountability and competency in organizational work has forced mentoring programs, and other programs to evaluate and determine how their professional development systems need this goal. Relation between mentoring and professional development can be seen in working especially in effectiveness of organizations. The role of professional development for employees is to improve and increase abilities, skills, knowledge and performances for the working place.

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**TEACHER COMPETENCES FOR  
INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE**

**Abstract**

*Intercultural education is a progressive approach towards transforming education, the current educational system and it is confronting discriminatory policies and practices in education. It is based on several ideals on social justice, educational equity and critical pedagogy. The concept of multiculturalism and interculturalism in educational process are dedicated in securing educational experiences which will help all the students to rich their full potential as students, to collaborate and develop as social aware and active people, both on local, national and global levels. Intercultural education acknowledges that the schools are from crucial importance for establishing the basis of transformation of the societies and fighting discrimination. Therefore, competences obtained at university level of students who are involved in educational faculties are from crucial importance for developing intercultural dialogue in the country.*

*The methodological focus of this research was oriented towards competences of university students for understanding and practicing intercultural dialogue in education, by assessing their opinions from well-structured questionnaire. The results from the research will show the current situation of university students' competences to work in multicultural educational environments, as well as to develop or nourish intercultural dialogue in education.*

**Key words:** *intercultural dialogue, teachers, education, competences.*

### **Introduction**

In Republic of Macedonia, as in other countries in the region, different ethnicities, which during the years have developed certain relations, coexist. The rights of the ethnic groups in Republic of Macedonia are guaranteed by the highest act of the country – the State Constitution, which comprises the right of education as well. The rights of minorities are guaranteed with the section 7 (subsection 2 and 4), section 8 (subsection 2 and 11) and section 48. The Constitution secures large number of rights related to education and usage of language in municipalities where significant number of people from minorities lives. Especial attention is given to the sections 44 and 48 from the Constitution, which are related to the rights of minorities for expressing and sustaining their culture and cultural identity.<sup>92</sup>

Education of students is practiced in mixed ethnic and clear ethnic schools. As a reflection of the ethnic conflict in the Republic of Macedonia in year 2001, the number of mixed ethnic schools has significantly decreased, which created a solid base for strengthening cultural monism on behalf of weakening multiculturalism and interculturalism.

In the last decade, Republic of Macedonia has undertaken lots of legislative initiatives, which

will strengthen intercultural dialogue in accordance with multicultural context of the country. Educational process is seen as one of the strongest factor in enforcing this intercultural cooperation.

The importance of education for democratic citizenship and human rights for enforcing intercultural dialogue was quoted in “The White paper for intercultural dialogue” published in 2008 by the Council of Europe.<sup>93</sup> In this document it is emphasized that common future of European countries depends on their capability to protect and develop human rights (guaranteed with European convention on human rights), from their democracy practicing and promotion of mutual understanding. Intercultural dialogue has an important role in this process. It provides prevention of ethnic, religious, language and cultural division and gives a solid base for handling with different identities on a constructive and democratic foundation.

In UNESCO Guideline on intercultural education it is quoted that in a world experiencing rapid change, and where cultural, political, economic and social upheaval challenges traditional ways of life, education has a major role to play in promoting social cohesion and peaceful coexistence. Through programs that encourage dialogue between students of different cultures, beliefs and religions, education can make an important and

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<sup>92</sup> Constitution of Republic of Macedonia

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<sup>93</sup> Council of Europe (2008): White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue: Living together as equals in dignity, launched by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the 47 member states of the Council of Europe at their 118th Ministerial Session (Strasbourg, 6-7 May 2008).

meaningful contribution to sustainable and tolerant societies.<sup>94</sup>

Intercultural Education is a response to the challenge of providing quality education for all. It is framed within a Human Rights perspective as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).<sup>95</sup>

In the Ministry of education and science of Republic of Macedonia's analyses from year 2010, it is noted that "besides the significant development of the educational system in the past decade, in the area of education on the mother tongue, there are lots of steps that should be improved and pay attention to, in order to avoid ethnic distance evoked by insufficient knowledge for each other and insufficient interaction caused by serious ignorance of the language"<sup>96</sup>.

In that direction, the Ministry of Education and Science and OSCE HCNM have developed strategic document titled: "*Steps towards integrated education in educational system of Republic of Macedonia*" as an overall Government strategy towards integrated educational system. According to this Strategy, main goal is to "develop clear and significant change in overall approach to educational

system according to the multiethnic reality in the country, as a step towards accomplishing strategic goals of the country for which stability and inner-cohesion are crucial, as well as good interethnic relations".<sup>97</sup>

Measures comprised in this document are divided into five thematic groups.<sup>98</sup>

1. Integration through mutual activities of students, which are involved in educational process in different language, by introducing and strengthening mutual curricular and extracurricular activities on different levels: in the schools and between different schools from the same municipality and/or from all over the country.
2. Integration through increasing the mutual knowledge of different languages of students and adults, which will increase the level of communication among different ethnic communities. One of the group measures is train the teachers for second language methodology, with special attention to the languages of smaller ethnicities.
3. Adjustment of teaching plans and programs, as well of school books, especially the history, geography and language school books.
4. Strengthening qualifications of teachers with competences for integration in education.

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<sup>94</sup> UNESCO (2006): Guidelines on Intercultural Education, Section of Education for Peace and Human Rights, Division for the Promotion of Quality Education, Education Sector. Paris, (ED-2006/WS/59) - CLD 29366

<sup>95</sup> Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Art. 26.2.

<sup>96</sup> Ministry of education and science (2010): Steps towards integrated education in educational system in Republic of Macedonia.

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid

<sup>98</sup> Ibid

5. School management in decentralized context.

This document is emphasizing the necessity for introducing a process of regular consultation of all stakeholders as a participative democratic and corrective measure.

### **Teachers and intercultural education**

Central part in pursuing intercultural dialogue in the country through education have teachers. They have a crucial role in the battle against racism and xenophobia, promotion of intercultural education and cultural diversity through promotion of positive values and standards and creating atmosphere of tolerance and mutual understanding and respect. They should help children and youngsters, no matter of their ethnic belonging, to be responsible and tolerant members of the society.<sup>99</sup>

In that context, teachers should possess not only professional competences in a wider sense of the word, but also competences for reinforcing communication and collaboration in the framework of ethnic heterogeneous groups. Teachers should be aware of the characteristics of their own ethnic group, as well as of the characteristics of other ethnic groups in the school and wider surrounding, including practical experiences of working with different ethnic groups.

Competences needed for intercultural dialogue are not automatically gained, they should be

learned, practiced and sustain throughout the life.<sup>100</sup> In that context, intercultural learning should be the basic principle not only in school education, but also in initial teacher education and their professional improvement.<sup>101</sup> Special attention should be given to the questions like: recruitment of future teachers, character and content of the study programs, insensibleness of competences for intercultural education and the ways of their development, establishing practical experiences for working with ethnic mixed groups of students, etc.

Future teachers have central part in the transformation of educational institutions and learning. They first must go through the process of self-transformation, to be able to be prepared for efficient teaching and to have active role in reconsidering educational practices and their influence on students.

### **Teacher competences for intercultural education**

One of the tasks of initial education of teachers is to develop large number of professional, personal and specific competences. Besides developing professional and personal competences like: cooperation, courteous, friendly and gentle relations with students, dynamic and motivation spirit, etc., it is necessary to develop certain sets of specific

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<sup>99</sup> European Trade Union Committee for Education (1995): Teacher Education in Europe, ETUCE, Brussels

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<sup>100</sup> Council of Europe (2008): White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue: Living together as equals in dignity, launched by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the 47 member states of the Council of Europe at their 118th Ministerial Session (Strasbourg, 6-7 May 2008).

<sup>101</sup> European Trade Union Committee for Education (1995): Teacher Education in Europe, ETUCE, Brussels

competences important for successful realization of intercultural education.

Teachers should represent role models from which students can learn and nourish the principles of interculturalism. Their professional behaviour in relations with students, coworkers, parents and wider community, preferred personal values and beliefs, define teacher as a model from which students learn about the intercultural dialogue. This is the strongest didactical component, which has important influence on intercultural education.

Teachers and other educational workers should possess basic knowledge from intercultural dialogue and peaceful conflict resolution. Surpassing the reasons for possible conflict situations based on ethnic grounds, like: not knowing the “other”, cultural exclusivity, not respecting the rights of the “other”, insufficient tolerance and weak cooperation, are in fact the best ways to resolve conflicts.

Competences for intercultural education are not eternal, they should constantly be developed and improved. Teacher’s awareness of his/hers competences for intercultural education is one of the paths to adapt, reinforce and expand the knowledge through different pedagogical approaches in education suitable for learning in intercultural context.

Practicing project-based learning is one of the important teacher’s competences. Projects should be implemented not only in the framework of the schools, but outside of the

schools, in the area of wider social surrounding. Working on mutual projects is eliminating partiality in the approach and is allowing long-term results. Students will not only acquire research competences, which are extremely important in contemporary society, but also will have a possibility to reinforce their mutual communication and intercultural dialogue. For example, students from different ethnic backgrounds can cooperate (no matter if they come from clean or mixed school classes) in project assignments as a part of their learning process. This is presupposing cooperation among teachers from different ethnic backgrounds, mutual and integrated planning of the projects and their realization, as well as strong support from the school management.

### **Research**

To explore the problem question related to students competences for developing intercultural dialogue, a research was conducted that comprised 200 students from last years of studies from University “Ss Cyril and Methodius” – Skopje, from different ethnic backgrounds: Macedonian, Albanian, Roma, Turkish, Serbian and Bosnian. The main intention was to determine the necessity for establishing or improving teaching competences of students for enforcing intercultural dialogue, to determine the current situation with studies programs intended for producing teacher’s staff in higher educational institutions in Republic of Macedonia and its realizators, as well as determine certain constructive suggestions for changes in higher education institutions from

aspect of strengthening the intercultural competences from students point of view – as consumers of educational offer.

a) Teaching staff

Inquired students fully agree with the conclusion that teachers of all educational degrees should possess competences for enforcing intercultural dialogue. Their opinion derives from the fact that teaching process in Republic of Macedonia from preschool education to higher education is realized in ethnic mixed environments and its quality can much be improved with strengthening the intercultural competences of the teaching staff who works in these institutions.

The necessity for embedding contents that will reinforce the development of intercultural competences in higher educational institutions, according to almost every one of the inquired students is certain one of the priorities of the programs in higher education intended for educators and teachers.

Hence, more than two thirds from the students declare that during their studies they certain developed competences for strengthening intercultural dialogue. But, when asked about the level of development of their competences, the answers are pointing out towards student's incapability to assume the level of development of the competences, which is due to weak or insufficient possibility for direct involvement in practical implementation of these competences in educational process during studying.

Significant values and skills which are supporting the development of intercultural dialogue according to students are: respect for the different, accepting different opinions and different ways of thinking, as well as nourishing the equality, justice and inclusion.

During their studies, students consider that they developed in certain high level the following skills and capabilities, which lead to building and strengthening intercultural competences:

- capability for appreciation and respecting the culture of others and their contribution to the society development;
- capability for behaving towards others with equality, dignity and respect;
- capability for working and living in harmony with people from different cultures.

b) Higher educational institutions

Analyses of the students' opinions are pointing out towards strengths and weaknesses of higher educational institutions in building competences of future teaching staff for intercultural dialogue. In that sense, they consider extremely important to practice impartial and equality policies for acting without discrimination, harassment or hostility because of national background. They also consider that it is vital to have representatives from different cultural/ethnic groups in the management and consultative bodies in higher educational institutions.



Teaching staff involved in the realization of the study programs is crucial to possess practical knowledge for conflict resolution and strategies for mediation, for easier transferability to students. It is also very important, according to the students, teachers in higher educational institutions to know the language of the “others”, as well as to possess and demonstrate skills for intercultural understanding and to represent a model with their behaviour and teaching practice.

Students think that teachers from higher educational institutions should go through formal training in the area of interethnic or intercultural dialogue and peaceful resolution of conflicts, so that they can firmly represent and stand for the ideals of intercultural understanding. These ideals are clearly represented through respectful relations of teacher’s staff in higher education communities.

According to almost every of the inquired students, the curriculum in their higher educational institution has integrated intercultural understanding and skills, paying certain attention to elimination of every kind of discrimination, intolerance, bias and prejudice which can lead to, or deepen the intercultural gap. This is a positive indicator, which derives from the years of intercultural and interethnic cooperation between all actors in educational process in Republic of Macedonia, as well as following European and world trends for intercultural dialogue.

c) Necessity for changes

Students express their opinions regarding the necessity for changes in higher education especially in the part of policy and management, where almost every student considers that there is urgent need for change. Less than half of inquired students consider that there is modest need for intervention in the curriculums in their higher education institution, which is confirming the abovementioned statement that higher education in general is securing competences for strengthening intercultural dialogue among students. Fewer changes are needed in the part of teaching staff involved in realization of the study programs, which is due to action of the non-governmental sector in Republic of Macedonia through realization of different project activities in direction of strengthening intercultural dialogue in the country.

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**THEMATIC STRAND**

**TEACHING AND LEARNING**

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***SOCIOLINGUISTIC AND  
PSYCHOLINGUISTIC ASPECTS IN THE  
MACEDONIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM***

**Abstract**

*The multicultural aspect is closely connected with the sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic educational environment. The environment for children's development is also an educational problem that affects all the involved participants.*

**Keywords:** *language, multiculturalism, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics.*

**Introduction**

This article provides an overview of research on learning non-native languages and teaching, including examples mainly from a Macedonian background. It describes sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic and educational aspects of multilingual teaching and emphasizes current research trends in this fairly young area of language teaching. The challenging ways which have been suggested to achieve multilingualism for all necessarily have to address learners, teachers, educators and other makers. It will be argued that multilingual education can only be successful if language teaching in general is restructured and oriented towards multilingual norms.

One of the first scholars to show interest in the topic of multilingualism was the German

linguist Maximilian Braun, who published the article 'Beobachtungen zur Frage der Mehrsprachigkeit' [Observations on the question of multilingualism] in 1937. He pointed to the problems of finding a definition for multilingualism and suggested defining multilingualism as 'active balanced perfect proficiency in two or more languages' (Braun 1937: 115). He distinguished between natural multilingualism, in the sense of acquired from birth, and learned multilingualism.

The last decade has witnessed a rapid increase in interest in multilingualism. In Europe, this development is certainly linked to the commitment of the European Union to a multilingual Europe. The benefits of multilingualism and multilingual education have been advocated during the last decade. In particular, findings in the area of non-native language acquisition and bi-/trilingualism, which has established itself as a field in its own right, have contributed to a better understanding of multilingual processes and use. Teaching non-native languages in consequence, has been informed by various trends in the research of multilingual acquisition, but is also challenged by these findings. With multicultural we describe cultural the nature of human society. But we also understand that this includes ethnic, national, and religious, linguistic and socio-economic differences.

The aim of this article is to provide an overview of Macedonian and international research on learning non-native languages and teaching. Although both fields are very young, some

trends can be described. However, more fundamental work on multilingual education lies ahead of us and certainly presents challenges for researchers, educators and politicians involved in language planning. But, sometimes bilingualism is treated as a variant of multilingualism (Haarmann 1980: 13).

There are two broad approaches in the literature to studying challenges faced in multicultural areas. One approach is to examine the effects of demographic differences among individual members (e.g., gender, ethnicity, age) on group process. This literature supports the notion that compositional heterogeneity can be both „positive and negative in terms of successful group process<sup>102</sup>“.

This article is written from a Macedonian perspective in the sense that, apart from the international review of literature on language acquisition, it mainly draws on examples stemming from a European context.

Teachers must be educated about children's lives outside of school (it tends to help with the teaching side if you know a bit about what goes on at home!). It will also be made clear that the study of multilingualism has to be placed at the crossroads of socio- and psycholinguistics, in particular with regard to multilingual planning and education.

We also must organize debate about looking at topics around the world - wars/tsunamis/child

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102 Behvar, K., Kern, M., etc., (2006). „Managing challenges in Multicultural teams“, *Research on Managinig Groups and Teams, Natonal Culture and Groups, volume 9*, 234.

labour/respect/tolerance/historical influences on cultures and so on - all relevant to the chosen year group. I think you need to be open about how little you know; be curious; learn some words and customs, and most importantly show an interest in them.

The researchers concluded from their comparative study that the widespread favourable attitudes towards minority languages reflect the changes in linguistic policies promoting protection and recovery of minority languages over the last two decades. Raising awareness of the richness in linguistic and cultural diversity in multilingual contexts should present an important part of new programmes.

The school is non-selective and its pupils, who come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, fall below the national average in terms of both ability and socio-economic circumstance. I wouldn't use the word "manage" - it's great to have such a diverse range of nationalities and cultures as students bring their different backgrounds and experiences to the classroom. As a school we celebrate many different festivals from around the world and there is a real sense of understanding between students, more celebrations = more fun! It's reassuring and heart-warming to see that the prejudices that exist in the adult world are virtually non-existent in the classroom. Sometimes it can be a challenge to teach those students even you have support in the classroom.

As we teach we try to use a lot of visuals (visual resources, props for storytelling and so

on, and try to keep language very simple), a lot of student discussion, translated key words, sentence/writing frames and so on to help those students. But we haven't started with having outside of school hours time for families to come in to understand about how the education system works.

### **Psycholinguistic aspects**

The factors, which control or exert substantial influence on the language learning process are listed. These include:

- a. neurophysiological factors which provide both the basis for and precondition of general language learning, production and reception capability;
- b. learner external factors such as socio-cultural and socio-economic surroundings, including culture-specific learning traditions, and the type and the amount of input the learner is exposed to;
- c. emotional factors such as anxiety, motivation, or acceptance of the new target language;
- d. cognitive factors such as language awareness, linguistic and metalinguistic awareness, learning awareness, knowledge of one's own learner type and the ability to employ learning strategies and techniques;
- e. linguistic factors as included in the learner's L1(s).

Being aware of language acquisition processes is vital. Understanding that someone from another language culture with a south Tetovo accent who communicates confidently with his

peers does not necessarily have access to the same range of formal language devices as someone who comes from a Macedonian-language culture. Research on individual multilingualism is concerned with three main areas of investigation: acquisition of multilingualism, multilingual use and multilingual processing.

It seems to be widely known that under certain circumstances life with two or more languages can lead to advantages, not only with regard to language knowledge but also in terms of cognitive and sociopragmatic development.

In the Meissner model (2004), the focus of attention is on the underlying processes facilitating and enabling the understanding of the new language. It is assumed that in their attempt to make sense of a new text, learners rely systematically on their knowledge of previously learned languages and use them as bases for hypothesis building about the new language. In case of two typologically related languages, the hypotheses are constantly revised by the learner. The result of this process is a so-called spontaneous (or hypothetical) grammar, which at the beginning relies more on the system of the previously learned language(s) than on the target language system. During the language learning process the spontaneous grammar is continuously revised and developed towards the structures and lexicon of the target language. The previously learned foreign language being closest to the new target language takes over the role of a bridge language and functions as a kind of

matrix against which the new structures and lexicon are compared and contrasted. In order to build a spontaneous grammar a number of preconditions must be met:

- a. An etymological relationship between the languages should exist.
- b. The learner has to be proficient in the bridge language(s).
- c. The learner has to be instructed in how to use the knowledge of a previously learned language as a bridge language.

Only when these three conditions are met can a spontaneous grammar develop in the multilingual learner. Metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness play an important role in the development of language learning strategies in multilingual learners and users (Jessner 2006; Moore 2006). Due to their experience in language learning, multilingual learners use different strategies to monolingual students learning their first foreign language (McLaughlin: 1990). According to R. Ellis (1985: 293) strategies are referred to as some form of mental activity which occurs at a specific stage in the language learning process and are not necessarily problem-oriented and conscious (Schmid 1995). As shown in several further studies around 1990, expert language learners show a superior ability to shift strategies and restructure their internal representations of the linguistic system. Psychotypology, the perceived linguistic distance between languages, plays an important role in the activation of languages other than the target language (Kellerman 1979).

### **Sociolinguistic aspects**

In a larger society, such as a country or nation state, communities can be divided according to the type of pattern that multilingualism takes in the larger society. Communities display either horizontal or vertical multilingualism (Mansour 1993). As often mentioned in recent publications on multilingualism, many countries are multilingual and so are many of their citizens. According to this model, which views speakers in terms of their organization in space, speakers who live in horizontal multilingualism live in their own geographic spaces and are often monolingual. This means that multilingualism is present at a higher level of society, but this does not imply that every citizen is multilingual, e.g. Switzerland is multilingual, but its citizens are not necessarily multilingual. The other type, vertical multilingualism, is found when people are in daily contact with other languages because of work, where and how they live, where they go to school, etc.

Learning strategies are defined as “specific actions, behaviours, steps, or techniques - such as seeking out conversation partners, or giving oneself encouragement to tackle a difficult language task - used by students to enhance their own learning. Learning strategies can be classified into six groups: cognitive, metacognitive, memory-related, compensatory, affective, and social. Learning strategies can also enable students to become more independent, autonomous, lifelong learners. Skilled teachers help their students develop an

awareness of learning strategies and enable them to use a wider range of appropriate strategies.

- Strategy use often relates to Style Preferences- When left to their own devices and if not encouraged by the teacher or forced by the lesson to use a certain set of strategies, students typically use learning strategies that reflect their basic learning styles)
- Conscious Movement Toward Goals (Learning strategies are intentionally used and consciously controlled by the learner)
- Positive Outcomes from Strategy Use (In subject areas outside of learning, the use of learning strategies is demonstrably related to student achievement and proficiency. Research has repeatedly shown this relationship in content fields ranging from physics to reading and from social studies to science. In light of this remarkable association between learning strategy use and positive learning outcomes, it is not surprising that students who frequently employ learning strategies enjoy a high level of self-efficacy, i.e., a perception of being effective as learners)
- Strategy Instruction Research (some researchers and teachers have provided instruction that helped students learn how to use more relevant and more powerful learning strategies, like strategy instruction emerged for proficiency in speaking, in other studies, there investigated the effects



of strategy instruction among native-Macedonian-speaking learners of foreign languages and found some positive results mixed with neutral findings. The most effective strategy instruction appears to include demonstrating when a given strategy might be useful, as well as how to use and evaluate it, and how to transfer it to other related tasks and situations).

***Key cultural aspects that might affect to teach in multicultural classrooms include:***

1. **Assertiveness-** Are students of your organization comfortable being honest and direct with each other? If not, how can you still be as authentic as possible and help them to be as authentic as possible, as well?
2. **Body language-** Are there any specific cues that you can notice to sense how others are experiencing you?
3. **Communication styles and direction-** Is communication fairly direct and specific or more indirect and general? Does information flow mostly “upward” to executives or is it widely disseminated?
2. **Conflict-** Is conflict considered to be bad and avoided? Or is conflict accepted as normal and directly addressed when it appears?
3. **Eye contact-** Are members comfortable with sustained eye contact during communication or not?
4. **Gestures-** Are there any specific gestures that can cause members discomfort or confusion?
5. **Humor-** Is use of humor in the organization rather widespread? Is there anything about the use of humor about which you should be aware?
6. **Information collection-** Should you be aware of any potential problems or use any certain precautions when conducting interviews or using assessments?
7. **Physical space-** For example, are members of the school quite conscious of having a minimum amount of space around them when they learn or speak with others?
8. **Power-** Are members attuned to certain people of power when solving problems and making decisions? Is power based on authority and/or respect?
9. **Silence-** Are members uncomfortable with silence during communication? Or is it a common aspect of communicating in their workplace?
10. **Time-** Is time a precious commodity that seems to underlie many activities, or can activities take as long as they need to take to be done effectively?
11. **Wording-** Are there certain words or phrasings that cause discomfort when people from different cultures interact?

Traditionally, sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic aspects have been studied in different fields of research, the above discussion should have made clear that learning and using languages is dependent on both social and psychological factors, (Herdina & Jessner: 2002). If we want to make progress in the study of multilingualism, we must acquire an understanding of its multiple aspects, in

particular if this research basis is to be used for planning multilingual education.

### *Common curriculum and multilingual didactics*

Over the last few years, a trend has been noted towards a common curriculum for all languages accompanied by multilingual didactics. From an international perspective, it is worth noting that elite multilingualism seems to favour teaching language as an isolated subject whereas multilingual countries have a tradition of integrated language teaching. One of the ideas is a common curriculum, which should be governed by a multilingual concept. Furthermore, Hufeisen (2005) suggests joint courses in multilingualism research, didactics and pedagogy together with intercultural education comprising heritage/minority/migrant languages offered to all language students as part of pre- and in-service teacher training.

Multilingual didactics promotes language learning and the contact with other cultures as resources and means to develop multilingual expert knowledge for each pupil, thereby fulfilling an ideological and sociological function (Moore 2006: 243; see also H'elot 2006). Based on work on the crosslinguistic links between the European languages, he pleaded for an introductory course in Latin and Greek for all language students that would provide them with the basics for learning modern European languages (see also Munske & Kirkness 1996 on Eurolatin). Yet, a lot more work needs to be invested in material development, such as textbooks, ideally

equipped with common terminology for all languages.

One of the most difficult aims of future work on language teacher education will be to make sure that all language teachers are experts on multilingualism, even if they teach only one language. Students (and teachers) must learn to demonstrate their language biographies, allow languages in the classroom which they do not know and develop strategies for solving problems resulting from the variety of languages on the one hand and the interest in a speedy learning process of a language on the other.

It is clear that the implementation of all the necessary changes, concerning both learning and teaching, presents a major challenge for future multilingual education. The lesson that multilingualism research can teach multilingual education is that only by leaving traditional concepts and boundaries behind will new perspectives be able to emerge along with a holistic understanding of the phenomena in question.

### **Conclusions**

In the Macedonian educational system, citizenship education is still new and undeveloped. There has been some early success in primary and secondary schools, but in kindergarten much work is required. The educational system is very ethnocentric and the diversity in mainstream classrooms is not respected as a rich part of society. We still

believe that some minorities in Macedonia do have problems.

We don't have a department to support teachers who assess students when they arrive and we are in the process of setting up a series of induction classes for every subject so that the students get an idea of what goes on in school. We then give the students another similar (age/ethnicity/gender and so on) student to shadow for a few days and then the students are placed into classes. We feel that they will learn Macedonian best if they are immersed in the language; however, we are aware of possible issues (such as war trauma) so we are sensitive about how we deal with each student. Teaching students from many cultures is no different to teaching in a school with a single culture - with the exception having to pay additional attention to language/literacy.

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**ASKING QUESTIONS TO ENCOURAGE  
CRITICAL THINKING**

**Abstract**

*In this paper will be elaborated precisely drafting of question techniques and opinions regarding questioning by teachers.*

*For majority of teachers, critical thinking means thinking in high level usually referring to the rise of taxonomy level of Benjamin Bloom. Questions that invite pupils to reflect, to think, to rebuild, to imagine, to create and to wig carefully raise the level of pupil's thinking. So, making of questions is a powerful tool to promote and support the development of critical thinking.*

*One structured questionnaire was used to collect data from teachers of elementary school "S.Hallaci" in Gjilan and teachers of the gymnasium "Z. Hajdini" in Gjilan.*

**Keywords:** *Critical thinking, compilation of questions, high-level questions, answer.*

**Introduction**

The term "critical thinking" is used in educational circles for decades and has different meanings for different groups. For most teachers critical thinking it means thinking "in a high level"- recognition skill (cognitive) "higher", usually referring to raising high in taxonomy scale of Benjamin Bloom.

In essence, critical thinking is a disciplinary way of thinking, which man uses to verify and

evaluate something (sayings, new stories, arguments, researches).

Critical thinking is derived from “cream of thinking”, as wisdom that culminates as the highest quality of knowledge, as well as critical thinking is a higher quality of thinking. It represents “reading between the lines”, sophisticated thinking (refined) which the person is making efforts to protect relying on the arguments and facts; evidence and reason (Garo, 2013, p. 152).

Critical thinking occurs in those cases when thinking something in which can be included not only grown up children, but also younger children. They willingly engage in complex problem solving tasks and display higher levels of thinking in making decisions.

Every society needs people to think in a critical way, to be self-correcting, to discover their weaknesses and act specifically to correct mistakes and to overpass obstacles. One of the tasks of teaching is to create mind that might be critical, that can verify and not accept everything is given.

### **Questions and their importance**

Throughout the history of education, questioning was one of the most common techniques of teaching. Despite the changes in education theory and technology, this technique continues to be so common because it is an efficient tool that encourages thinking (Jaka, 2003, p. 59).

With study questions were involved many scientists, because their organization in the learning process is a very important issue because from the questions it depends itself working performance of learning organization.

*According to Musai,*

The technique of questions is a powerful tool to promote and support the development of critical thinking. Questions, that invite students to reflect, to think, to rebuild, to imagine, to create or to weigh carefully, raise the level of thinking to the pupils and teach pupils that their thinking is valuable (2003, p.137).

*Donald believes that,*

New knowledge is revealed by the questions being involved in the process so the pupils to become researchers and creators. If the teachers are teaching, based mainly on logical principles, they must be masters in the process of drafting the questions in order to direct the thinking processes of pupils with professional skills and clarity of thinking. This means that the teacher should prepare questions in such a way so the pupil can be helped in achieving specific goals of one certain teaching topic (1995).

*As stated by Musai,*

Knowing how to ask questions properly means knowing to teach. More than anything else, the beautiful art of teaching depends on the mastery of the use of questions, because it serves as guidance for vivid and clear ideas,

stimulate with speed imagination and thinking, which pushes for action(2003, p. 135).

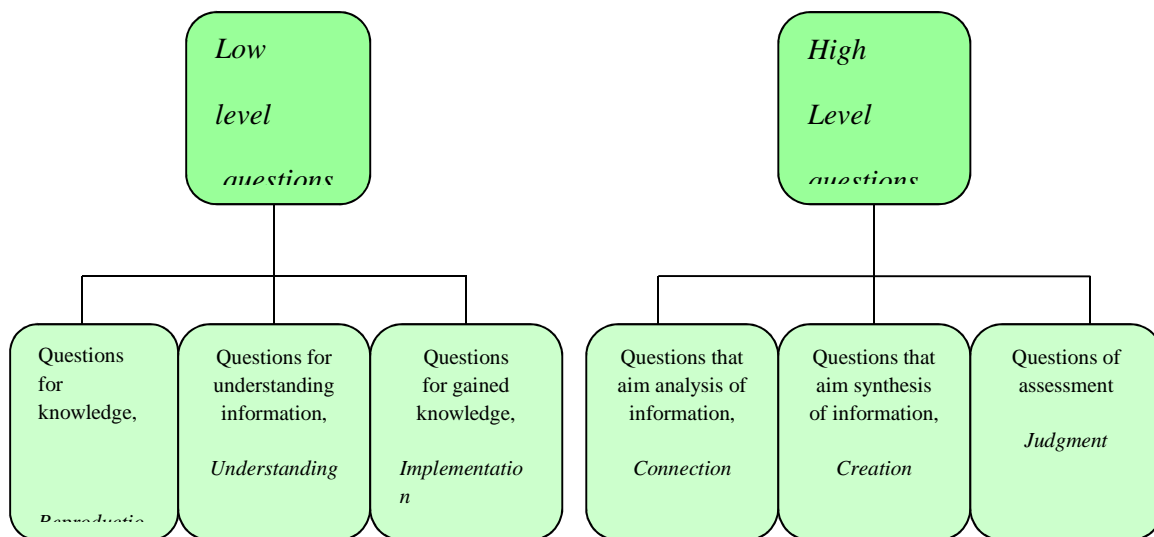
One good question is an invitation to think or to do. It stimulates, because it is an open question with opportunities and problems. One good question is productive, it requires an answer. One good question would bring other questions.

**Levels of using the questions**

There are several types of grading for questions. According to the taxonomy of Benjamin Bloom basic thinking skills are classified into six

levels, hierarchically ranked from the lowest to the highest level. Each of them corresponds to one level of thinking. This system has the advantage of providing a broader space for the construction of questions, starting from those that require simple reproduction up to those that stimulate higher thinking processes. The difference between reproductive questions and those that stimulate thinking is at the compilation of question. Both types of questions are important, studies show that pupils learn more when teachers put questions that provoke thinking and insist on meaningful answer.

This variety of compiling the questions, at all levels of thinking, with varying degrees of difficulty, is part of the art of questioning.



Questions according to the taxonomy of Bloom

**Research Methodology and sample of respondents**

To better clarify the importance of questions for stimulating critical thinking issue done structured questionnaire to collect data from 80 elementary school teachers of “Selami Hallaçi” in Gjilan and 30 high school teachers of “Zenel Hajdini” in Gjilan.

**Analysis of results – The data obtained from teachers.**

In question: Do you think that making of questions stimulates critical thinking?

From 80 primary school teachers, as they were in total, 71 respondents or 89% are holding the

opinion that making of questions stimulates the development and advancement of critical thinking. Whereas 9 or 11% of teachers deny that making of question develops and advances critical thinking. Seethe chart no.1.

According to the analysis of the results and statistical elaboration also high school teachers share the same opinion as elementary school teachers. From 30 gymnasium teachers as respondents, 26 or87% say that making of questions stimulate and advances critical thinking, whereas 4 or 13% of teachers think that making of questions does not stimulate critical thinking.

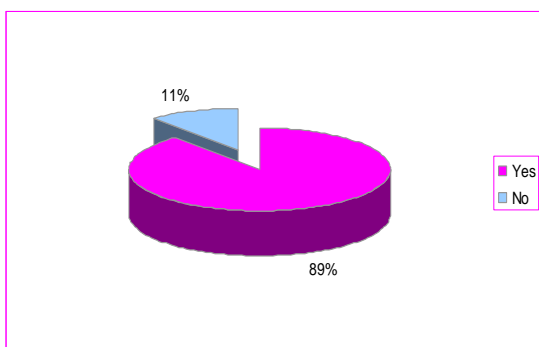


Chart no.1 (primary school teachers)

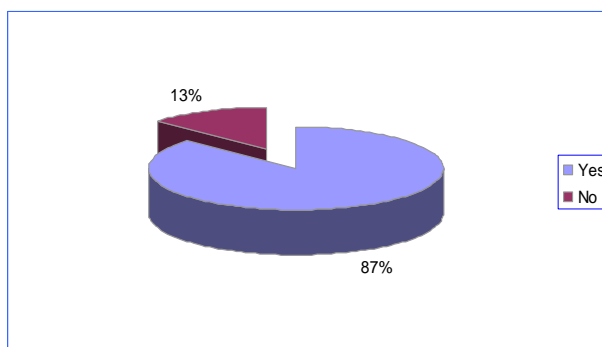


Chart no.2 (gymnasium teachers)

In question: What kind of questions you make when you want to stimulate critical thinking among pupils?

From the data presented through chart no.3 is shown that primary school teachers 53 or 66% compile high-level questions when they want to stimulate pupils whereas 27 or 34% of teachers compile low-level questions.

From 30 gymnasium teachers as respondents 3 or 10% compile low-level questions when they want to stimulate pupils thinking whereas 27 or 90% compile high-level questions.

From the answers we can conclude that primary school teachers and secondary school teachers compile mainly high-level question that stimulate higher processes of thinking that



require analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. See chart no.4.

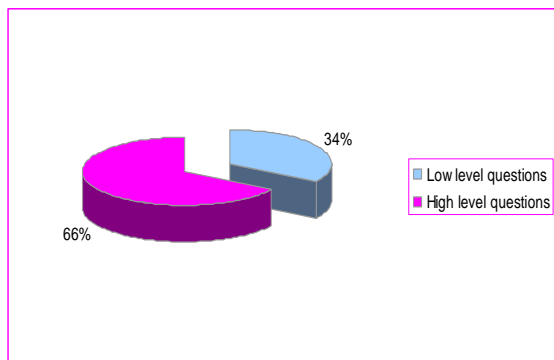


Chart no.3 (primary school teachers)

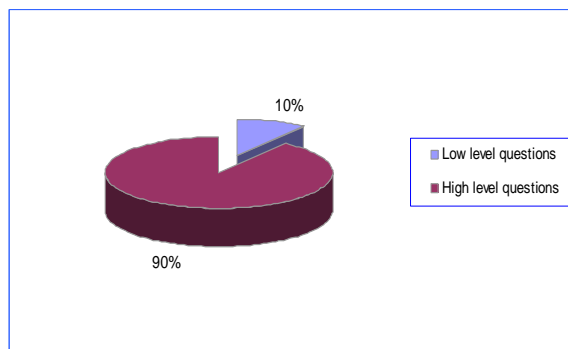


Chart no.4 (gymnasium teachers)

In question: Do you think that the teacher while making question to pupils leads towards discovery of knowledge and new recognitions, facts, laws and regulations?

Primary school teachers as respondents answered as follows: 56 or 70% claim that while making questions to pupils leads them towards the discovery of knowledge and new recognitions, facts, laws and regulations, 24 or 30% from them deny that teacher while making question to pupils leads them towards the

discovery of knowledge and new recognitions, laws and regulations. See chart no.5.

Answers of high school teachers in this questions were: 26 or 87% of teachers claim that while making questions to pupils that leads them towards the discovery of knowledge and new recognitions, facts, laws and regulations whereas 4 or 13% of teachers as respondents deny that while making questions to pupils leads them towards the discovery of knowledge and new recognitions, laws and regulations. See chart no.6.

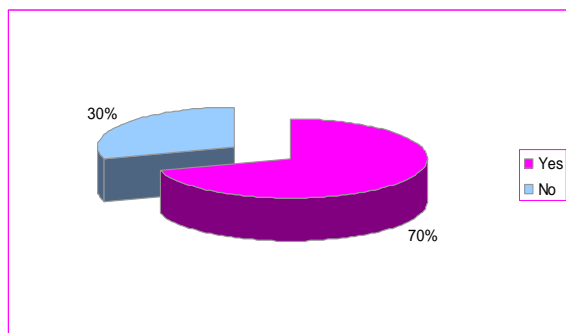


Chart no.5 (primary school teachers)

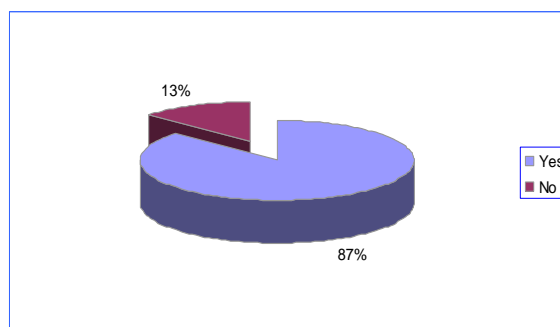


Chart no.6 (high school teachers)

## Conclusion

In this modest theoretical and empirical research were discussed compiling techniques of questions and opinions of teachers about the importance of drafting questions for stimulating critical thinking.

From the answers of teachers it comes out that teachers compile mainly high-level questions that stimulate higher processes of thinking that require analysis, synthesis and evaluation. So, questions of teacher are not occasional cases in learning, they must be prepared towards learning content acquisition and development of critical thinking.

Based on the answers of teachers, we can conclude that making of questions develops critical thinking, because pupils build their knowledge through interpretation, analysing and while organizing information about a particular issue or question that requires more than a direct answer.

Therefore, teachers should teach based mainly on logical principles, they should be masters in the process of drafting the questions in order to lead the thinking processes of pupils with professional skills.

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**TEACHING RELIGION IN THE  
BULGARIAN SCHOOL**

**Abstract**

*In this article are presented different concepts about teaching and educating religion in the Bulgarian school in its previous historical development as long as the necessity of teaching religion today within the compulsory or optional school subjects. It is presented a concept for non-confessional teaching in religion and the possibility to teach the various religions and values embodied in them within the various subjects (history, philosophy, ethics, psychology, etc.).*

**Keywords:** *Confessional education, non-confessional education, religion, education, training*

**Introduction**

*But in order to educate the young carefully it is necessary to take timely precautions that their characters be guarded from the corruptions of the world, that the seed of honour sown in them be brought to a happy growth by pure and continuous teaching and examples, and, lastly, that their minds be given over to the true knowledge of God, of man, and of nature, that they may grow accustomed to see in this light the light of God, and to love and to honour the Father of Light above all things.*

***John Amos Comenius***

The greatest wealth of any society are the children. It is undeniable fact that each of us is responsible to one degree or another for the education and upbringing of young adolescents and a very significant role in this process has the school. The school does not only provide academic knowledge, it educates and raises moral human virtues and forms personalities. The historical experience of the humanity proves that the value system of each person and of society as a whole is raised on the ground of moral norms and obligations, which have their origin in the religion.

Even John Amos Comenius in the “Great didactics” stresses that the link between education, upbringing and religion is “as old, as the humanity itself”.

### **Historical overview of teaching religion**

The history of the Bulgarian school and education is inherently bound to the teaching of religion. The emergence and the development of the education in the Middle Ages lays the foundations of tradition, associated with educating not only illiterate Bulgarians, but of good Christians as well. For centuries the school and the Church in Bulgaria have worked jointly for achieving this goal. This is clearly visible in the period of Ottoman rule, when the monastery schools preserved the language and faith of our nation. In these monastery schools are being studied Psalms, Book of Hours, Epistle and Church singing.

With the secularization of the education during the Renaissance, Orthodox teaching content

were selected, corresponding to the age of the students. It is included as a separate section within its spelling-books and textbooks. It is significantly reduced in volume, but is permanently present in training, because the teaching in good Christian values remains one of the main tasks of the Bulgarian schools. Within this development, religious education was gradually carried out only within the framework of a single learning subject. Before the liberation the title of the subject and its specific content depended on the School Board and the preparation of the teachers, appointed by it.

Until the liberation of Bulgaria approximately 281 textbooks were issued for the purposes of Bulgarian education. 41 of the textbooks are about teaching Orthodox Christianity in public schools. These are 20 Sacred stories, 4 Catechism, 4 Short Sacred Stories and a short Catechism, 2 Laws of God, 1 History of the Bulgarian Church. Some of the textbooks are translated from German, Greek and Russian, but those translated from Russian prevail.

The Bulgarian liberation in 1878 changes the socio-economic conditions for the development of education. This reflects directly on the image of the school.

In the period 1878-1944 educational legislation establish Religion or Creed as a school subject not only in public, but in private schools too.

Orthodox education in schools is carried out in direct and indirect ways. The direct way is considered to be teaching the school subject

Religion itself and the indirect way is carried out in school subjects as Reading, Singing, Moral education and History. Although it's been constantly changed, the content, the volume and the importance of creeds or Law of God is present in all school curricula from 1878 to 1945-1946. It is studied from elementary school to the high school within weekly hours varying between one and two hours.

In 1934 religion became essential for the education of pupils at school. In this period in Bulgaria religion was taught by priests. Children and Pupils Orthodox Christian societies were established. In order to increase the qualification of teachers in this area, bishops organize courses explaining the methods of religious education.<sup>103</sup>

The textbooks and handbooks issued in this period follow the requirements of the Holy Synod in Bulgaria. The one, which are for students in primary school should contain only biblical pictures, and those for higher school grades should have biblical pictures, as well as religious texts, appropriate for the age of the students.

The political events of 09.09.1944 directly impact on the religious education in school. By the end of 1944 and the beginning of 1945, the Ministry of education removes Religion as a

school subject in the curriculum of the compulsory and pedagogical schools.<sup>104</sup>

In 1945-1946 religious study is only optional, one hour a week in elementary and junior high schools. The removal of the representatives of the Church from the School Board and the different perception of The Ministry of education about the school subject Religion, forces the Holy Synod to take decision to establish special parish schools for the training of adolescents in Orthodox truths.

In January 1946 the Minister of education Dr. Racho Angelov recommended that the school should be neutral by the Church.<sup>105</sup> The Holy Synod and particularly Exarch Stefan do everything possible to return Religion as a school subject but the Government opposes this. After the adoption of the new Constitution, called Dimitrovska Constitution on 04.12.1947 the only way of preserving the religious lectures is the form of private ecclesiastical work. This is discontinued permanently with the Law of Religious Denominations in 24.02.1949. The Government puts pressure on priests who continue to teach children.

In the beginning of 1948 Exarch Stefan resigns, which puts an end to the efforts of the Church to return Religion as a school subject.<sup>106</sup>

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<http://www.symvol.org/rm/biblioteka/sachinenia/obrazovanie/religia.html>

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<http://www.symvol.org/rm/biblioteka/sachinenia/obrazovanie/religia.html>

<sup>105</sup> Иванова, Т. (2009) Обучението по религия и светският характер на образованието. В: Управление и образование. Том 5

<sup>106</sup> Калканджиева, Д., (1997) Българската православна църква и държавата 1944-1953, изд: Албатрос

### **Current state and the debate about teaching religion**

The valuable spiritual experience of the past decades and the modern problems raise again the socially significant problem for the religious education of the young Bulgarian generation.

In the modern society are present preconditions and attitudes for the revival of traditions and cultural and moral values of Christianity.<sup>107</sup>

The Bulgarian theological institutions, in particular the theological faculties, seminaries and many experts insist on urgent implementation of the school subject Religion.

In 1991 the new democratic society begins restoration and creates the ground for religious education in Bulgarian school with the direct participation of the Educational Commission in the Holy Synod.

Local communities and schools across the country take the initiative to introduce religious education, as existed in the mid-1940s, but this initiative does not gain popularity due to lack of experience, teaching handbooks and qualified teachers, as well as the absence of State regulation by the Ministry of education.

In 1997 begins the process of recovering the status of confessional education in the Bulgarian school through the introduction of new school subject - Religion. At this period Minister of education and science is prof. Ivan Lalov in the cabinet of Prime Minister Stefan

Sofiyanski. Prof. Lalov initiates a Commission, whose presidency is entrusted to prof. Georgy Bakalov. The purpose of this Commission is to design a curriculum and a textbook for the school subject Religion with the condition that this new subject will be included in the school curriculum as optional.

In this period there are serious objections from representatives of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church regarding the name, content and ways of introducing the subject, thereby offering the creeds as a compulsory subject, respectively with different educational content and confessional teaching. The Commission rejects these proposals and validates concept for experimental introduction of a unified (the same for all students) subject, called Religion.

This new subject can be taught only there where is consent of the parents, enough students for forming a school class and where appropriate teachers can be assigned. Curriculum for the subject is assigned for all school grades of comprehensive schools, three text- and handbooks are prepared for students from 3<sup>rd</sup> till 8<sup>th</sup> grade and is prescribed the type of specialist, who can teach Religion, namely specialists graduated in theology, philosophy, Bulgarian philology or history. In the Theological Faculty of Sofia University starts courses in postgraduate studies in theology for primary school teachers.

In 2000 the commission for Religion in the Ministry of education and science develops norms and methodological guidelines and approves two forms of teaching the subject

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<sup>107</sup>[www.pravoslavie.bg/Образование/религиозното-познание-и-нравственот/#.VEzWdhbGA6o](http://www.pravoslavie.bg/Образование/религиозното-познание-и-нравственот/#.VEzWdhbGA6o)

religion - Christian Religion and Islamic Religion.<sup>108</sup>

However, practice has shown that optional form of training is not appropriate. A number of factors contribute for the unsatisfactory number of classes, studying Religion:

- Problems in forming groups and classes, difficulties in providing training in religion;
- Many teachers and parents perceive the subject as incompatible with the secular nature of the Bulgarian school;
- Teachers of Religion do not have any guaranteed long term teaching job, etc.

In order some of the mentioned problems to be solved are made correction in the regulations. In 1997-1998 the subject Religion is introduced as optional, but in 2002-2003 it is introduced as compulsory optional school subject.<sup>109</sup>

Even those correction do not affect significantly the situation. Of the nearly one million students, classes in religion (Orthodox Christianity and Islam) visit not more than 16 000 students, and currently the number has dropped to 14 000 students, which makes about 1.4%.<sup>110</sup> Because of these numbers after 2006 more and more people are discussing whether the subject should be optional or compulsory.

In February 2007, at a joint meeting of the Parliamentary Committee on human rights and religious affairs and the Parliamentary Committee on education and science, is decided to be established a public Council with the participation of the Minister of education and science for the issues of teaching religion in school.<sup>111</sup>

In 2008 at a round table, in which take part the Minister of education and science Danel Valchev, MPs, sociologists, academics and NGOs, is presented a concept for introducing the subject Religion in school. The concept is prepared by the Public Council for the study of religion in school, which chairman is prof. Georgi Bakalov and with the participation of three professors from the Theological Faculty of the Sofia and Veliko Tarnovo University, two practicing teachers in Religion in metropolitan schools, a linguist, a philosopher, a historian and an expert on Arab culture and Islam.

The opinion of the Ministry is that the subject should give knowledge about these religions, not to teach religion, according to the secular nature of the Bulgarian school and Education Act. The choice of religion and belief is defined by the legislator as an inviolable personal act in which secular school has no right to intervene. Thus, the subject should be non-confessional and giving general knowledge, acquainting with the moral messages of those religions in order to form in students a spirit of tolerance and

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<sup>108</sup> <http://bg-patriarshia.bg/reflections.php?id=93>

<sup>109</sup> <http://dveri.bg/wqk>

<sup>110</sup> Избираем предмет *Религия*, разговор с проф. Георги Бакалов, Култура - Брой 9 (2492), 07 март 2008г.

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<sup>111</sup> [http://old.mon.bg/top\\_menu/news/archiv2008/08-01-28\\_religia.html](http://old.mon.bg/top_menu/news/archiv2008/08-01-28_religia.html)

mutual understanding between people with different religious views.

The public Council shall comply with those recommendations and draws up a concept after it has reviewed the practice of all Member States of the European Union. In some of the States religious teaching is organized in confessional way, in other it is more about general education, in third is in mixed principle, but this is done explicitly in the regulations and the Constitution of the State concerned.

Religious education should build citizens who:

- are familiar with Christianity, as well as other global and historical religions;
- respect the religious views and beliefs of the other;
- are able to carry interfaith dialogue;
- are able to carry out socially useful activities and various civil and national initiatives together with representatives of other religions and beliefs;
- respect the secular nature of the state.

According to its composers, the concept of religious education in Bulgarian schools complies with the international conventions ratified by Bulgaria, its constitutional and statutory principles, which are as follows:

- Religious tolerance (the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, art. 26, § 2).

- Freedom of religion and conscience (the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, art. 18).
- The right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Convention on the Rights of the Child, art. 14, para. 1).
- Freedom of conscience and choice of religion (Constitution, art. 37, Law on Religion, Art. 4).
- Equality of religion (Constitution, art. 37, Law on Religion, Art. 4).
- The secular nature of the State and the education (Constitution, Art. 13; Public Education Act, Art. 5; Law on Religion, Art.4)
- Respect for the religion of the other (Public Education Act, Art. 15).
- Non-ideological or religious indoctrination of students (Rules for the implementation of the Education Act, Art. 4).

The subject should be compulsory from 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> grade (1 hour per week) and optional (or compulsory optional) from 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade (2 hours per week).

From 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> grade the main concept is to form the curriculum of proverbs, stories and tales teaching about moral from the standpoint of the religion.



From 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> grade the primary content should aim learning the historical and cultural knowledge of religions:

- 5<sup>th</sup> grade - Religion (history of religions – Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism);
- 6<sup>th</sup> grade – Religion (Temple culture – architecture, aesthetics, symbolism in religious and moral sense, rituals)
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade – Religion (sacred places and personalities – national and local religious culture).

From 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade, where the subject is already optional, the main curricula consists of systematical and historical presentation of religions as a core in the history of ideas and cultural history of mankind. It also includes acquaintance with dogmatically teaching of Christianity and the doctrines of other religions.<sup>112</sup>

Prof. Bakalov states that taking into account the traditions of our country is attributed mainly account of Orthodox Christianity, which is a traditional religion with the historical roots of our people. In separate blocks are included Islam and Judaism, in order for pupils to get to know various religious communities and to instill tolerance towards the other.<sup>113</sup>

Aptitude for teaching the subject Religion (in descending order) are:

- Theologians (bachelors and masters) with pedagogical aptitude;
- Teachers with specialization in the Theological faculty;
- Masters and Bachelors from other humanity sciences with pedagogical aptitude and further specialization;
- Historians, philosophers and philologists with pedagogical aptitude<sup>114</sup>

The Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church completely disagrees with the concept of introducing the subject of religion in the Bulgarian school, issuing a formal letter to the Ministry of education and science, published in the Church newspaper.<sup>115</sup>

The main criticism against the concept is that it is the fruit of a compromise between the representatives of various confessions included in the Commission. In this way, the subject Religion will be built on the basis of religious eclectism, which is unprincipled and won't instill in students tolerance for all religions, and will make them vulnerable to sectarian influence. In addition, it does not pay tribute to the place of the traditional Bulgarian creed, which is Orthodoxy. According to the prelates of the Holy Synod "The proposed to the attention of St. Synod concept for religious education in Bulgarian is incompatible, alien and even counter to the teachings of the

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<sup>112</sup> Концепция за въвеждане на уч. предмет Религия в българското общообразователно училище. (2009) Съвет по въпросите на обучението по религия в училище.

<sup>113</sup> Избираем предмет *Религия*, разговор с проф. Георги Бакалов, Култура - Брой 9 (2492), 07 март 2008г.

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<sup>114</sup> Концепция за въвеждане на учебен предмет Религия в българското общообразователно училище. Съвет по въпросите на обучението по религия в училище (2009).

<sup>115</sup> Избираем предмет *Религия*, разговор с проф. Георги Бакалов, Култура - Брой 9 (2492), 07 март 2008г.

Orthodox Church. This concept is based on the ideas that essentially negate the fundamental dogmatic and credence truths and principles of Orthodox Christianity.”<sup>116</sup>

The Holy Synod came out with its concept, consistent with the Constitution of the Republic, with the Bulgarian legislation and practice, adopted with the consent and approval of the Minority traditional faiths.

According to the Holy Synod the primary purpose of teaching Religion is to offer students’ knowledge, skills, attitudes and experiences on the basis of which they can build up their personality, to develop their worldview, to touch and explore the religious and moral aspects of their own life and the life of society as a whole.

The purpose of teaching students Orthodox Religion is to reinforce and maintain their Orthodox identity. The purpose of teaching students Islam Religion is to solidify and support their Islamic identity.

The training in religion helps students to understand its importance for themselves as individuals, and also to realize the importance and influence of religion on the formation of the society and culture.

The purpose of teaching Religion is students to obtain general cultural-historical and religious-moral education and spiritual values, to be able to grow up as worthy citizens of modern society.

According to the concept of the Holy Synod about the curriculum of the Orthodox Religion subject should be the following:

- For the elementary school degree (1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> grade) religious education should be entirely religious-cultural , which continues the Orthodox tradition of the Bulgarian family;
- For junior high school classes (5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade) the content of the subject should reflect the historical, cultural and moral facts from the life of the Bulgarians, transmitted through the eyes of the religious worldview in direct connection with the compulsory interdisciplinary subjects;
- For high school classes (8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade) the subject curriculum should include moral principles and norms of Christian doctrine (Orthodox Religion), the Christian understanding of man and his personal and public purpose, historical literary heritage, cultural and historical achievements of Christian civilization and the historical path of the Christian Church from its establishment until today, as well as the history of world religions.

According to this concept all school documentation – textbooks, handbooks and methodological guides for teachers can be written by individuals with a university education, theological or pedagogical who have received the blessing of the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church.

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<sup>116</sup> <http://dveri.bg/33698>

The professional preparation of teachers for Religion can be carried out at the universities (faculties of: theology, pedagogy, elementary and preschool education, philosophy, history, philology, etc.) and the specialized higher spiritual schools that have received accreditation from National Evaluation And Accreditation Agency.<sup>117</sup>

Teachers of preschool and primary school age are required to possess specialized degree – Bachelor of Theology and master of pre-school pedagogics. They may also have degree in preschool or primary school pedagogy and to have completed educational qualification degree "master" in theology. Exceptionally, this subject can be taught from preschool or primary school teachers with retraining in degree in theology obtained in the theological faculties and departments.

Teachers in Junior High School and High School should have bachelor or higher degree in theology.

The appointed teachers for Orthodox Religion in schools should be reconciled with the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, represented by the Bulgarian Patriarch, at the suggestion of the diocesan bishop.

The Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church considers useful and necessary the introduction of mandatory training on Orthodox Religion in all levels of the educational system,

and also in higher education institutions in the country.<sup>118</sup>

The both concepts for teaching Religion – the one of the authorized by the Ministry of education and science public Council on the issues of teaching religion (chaired by Prof. Bakalov from Sofia University) and the other of the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church do not question at all the necessity of teaching religion in the Bulgarian school nowadays, where moral categories become more relative and the boundaries between good and evil, right and wrong – increasingly blurred, the need to return to traditional Christian values which for centuries under the most severe circumstances have preserved us as a nation. That are values that give the kids the basics of morals, improve them spiritually, support them in pursuit of knowledge and self-knowledge, pursuing them to be patient and restrained, to forgive, to realize their mistakes, to erect high social virtues such as fairness, love of people, etc.

What distinguishes the two concepts and the main source of disagreements between their authors is the approach to teaching religion – how, in what way to teach religion – confessional or non-confessional.

### **What do we mean by confessional, non-confessional (above confessional) teaching in Religion?**

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<sup>117</sup> Концепция на Светия Синод на Българската Православна Църква относно статута на учебния предмет "Религия" в българското общообразователно училище (2009).

<sup>118</sup> [http://mitropolia-varna.org//index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=869&Itemid=29](http://mitropolia-varna.org//index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=869&Itemid=29)

The confessional religion training is instruction in creeds. There are three types of confessional teaching in religion, namely:

1. Sunday schools, spiritual church seminaries, spiritual academies and theological faculties.
2. Church schools (Malta – Roman-Catholic schools, England – Anglican schools) financed by the State.
3. Secular schools with teaching in Religion – with an emphasis on traditional religion/faiths for the country concerned (Denmark, Greece, Malta, Romania, etc.).

In Bulgaria currently exists confessional education from the first and the third type. Exactly the third option is adequate to the Bulgarian educational system, since it combines the approaches of learning about religion, studying from religion and learning through religion.<sup>119</sup>

Non-confessional (above confessional) teaching aims for students to be introduced to the history of religions and creeds.

Most of the representatives of academics (theologians, philosophers, educators and historians) support the idea of introducing Religion education as general school subject. The recommendations of the proponents of this viewpoint in the debate are to follow the existing in Europe model for non-confessional teaching in religion, mainly associated with

knowledge about religion and its socio-historical and cultural parameters and influences.

The proponents of the other point of view and their key agents – the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and The Sufi Muslim Council's generally advocate opinion on confessional teaching of Religion in two forms – Orthodox Christian Religion and Islam Religion.<sup>120</sup>

In conclusion, we could say that teaching Religion in Bulgarian school should become a priority of the Government policy and it must be clearly and precisely regulated in the legal framework. Systematically and purposefully teaching religion in school will contribute to the promotion of Bulgarian traditions, it will reduce children's risky behaviour as moral values will be formed which have withstood for centuries and which bear our identity as a nation and a people, existing since antiquity on the continent of Europe. In this way will also be reduced the movements of questionable character in Bulgarian school. In recent years in a number of Bulgarian schools was allowed the "White Brotherhood" with the opportunity for children to practice the dance Paneurhythmy. In a number of schools are taught various Yoga practices using transcendental meditation, through which children actually touch the ideas covered in these teachings. It turns out that the parents are much more willing to include their children in learning various occult practices, but refer rather reserved to the study of the

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<http://www.pravoslavie.bg/възпитание/конфесионалното-обучение-по-религия/>

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<sup>120</sup> Сапунджиева, К. „Политики на духовността: за религията, ценностите и възпитанието. В: Публични политики. Година 2 / Брой 1 / Март 2011

traditional to our nation religion – orthodoxy. Of course, this finding would provoke the Bulgarian Orthodox Church to be more proactive in their activities among the laity, as a possible way of explaining the Holy Scriptures, the Bible, introducing the laity in the Holy sacraments and people to feel free to profess the Orthodox religion as not simply performing certain rituals (whose meaning is usually absolutely unclear), but will be provoked to read more the Bible and follow the fundamental values embodied in it. All the research done during different periods among people who have studied Religion suggests that they change in a positive direction, become calmer, wiser and more responsible for their actions.

That is why we consider that the Bulgarian school and Bulgarian society could only win if Religion is introduced in school curriculum. For this purpose is necessary to prepare pedagogical specialists who can deliver religious truths in the proper manner and show in action love for neighbour, the fundamental truths and warrants underlying the religion. Bringing the Bulgarian Orthodox Church closer to the people would contribute to a change in the attitudes and values of our society and maybe one of those steps is the introduction of the offices in which people could be able to touch the deep truths of the faith in modern and understandable language. Nowadays to a number of denominational boards are created Sunday schools in which children learn about orthodoxy, but still they are too small and need better promotion among the community in order more children to attend them.

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**ERASMUS PLUS PROGRAMME 2014-2020,  
ENHANCING TEACHER'S  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT -  
PERSPECTIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

**Abstract**

*This paper will provide an in-depth view of the Erasmus plus programme, its significance, available possibilities and support in the fields of School education and Vocational education and training. The focus will be put on effects and benefits from the previous Lifelong learning programme 2007-2013, with an overview of the implementation process in Republic of Macedonia, as well the introduction of Erasmus plus programme 2014-2020, whereby the Republic of Macedonia gained a status of programme country. In our opinion, the implementation process will contribute towards reinforcement of the Macedonian educational system, particularly in view of professional development of the teachers, introduction of new curricula and innovative teaching approaches.*

*It is necessary to stress the importance of networking that is offered through the programme activities, opportunities to work together with partners in Europe, sharing experiences and good practices, to face challenges in the field of education and training on European level. The motivation of the teachers will increase their knowledge in modern languages, contemporary methodologies in education, as well skills for work in multicultural environments. Hence this will influence the overall quality of the educative process at national level.*

*Main accent of the Erasmus plus programme is relating the programme activities with policy reforms on national level. We will briefly describe the structure of the programme, expected outcomes and effects from the projects supported under the Key actions, as well the additional added value for the Macedonian participants and our educational system. Moreover, each institution involved in the projects supported by Erasmus plus programme, namely the schools, will have a more modern, dynamic and professional environment, furthermore institutions will be active on international n the European educational area that will broaden its positions at local, national and international level.*

*In this sense, our paper will provide additional prospect towards raising awareness for the Erasmus plus programme in Macedonia, opportunities for teachers and schools, as well guidance toward key documents in regards to the process of application, criteria, funding rules and relevant institutions.*

**Keywords:** erasmus plus; teachers, schools; european

### **Erasmus plus at glance**

Erasmus plus is the new leading programme of the European Union that covers the fields of education, training, youth and sport. The programme itself aims to boost mobility, cooperation, modernization, internationalization and employability in the participating countries.

It has an overall budget of 14.7 million euros for its seven year programme cycle 2014-2020.

Erasmus plus started this year, as of 1 January 2014 and replaces current funding programmes run by the European Commission in the area of education, training, youth and sport, including the Lifelong Learning Programme and its sub programmes Erasmus, Comenius, Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtvig and Transversal, Youth in Action programme as well as other international programmes including Jean Monnet and Erasmus Mundus.

### **Erasmus plus general objective**

The Erasmus+ Programme shall contribute to the achievement of:

- the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, including the headline education target (The headline education target is to reduce early school leaving to less than 10% and increase attainment in tertiary education to at least 40% by 2020);
- the objectives of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), including the corresponding benchmarks;
- the sustainable development of Partner Countries in the field of higher education;
- the overall objectives of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018);
- the objective of developing the European dimension in sport, in particular grassroots



sport, in line with the EU work plan for sport;

- the promotion of European values in accordance with Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail).

#### *Erasmus plus structure and aims*

The structure of the Erasmus plus programme was created towards streamlining and simplification of procedures in line for easier access to opportunities offered to the potential beneficiaries. The intention of the European Commission was to create more efficient and more reachable [funding opportunities](#).

Erasmus plus is an integrated programme based on three Key Actions, [Jean Monnet activities](#) and [Sport](#).

- [Key Action 1 - Mobility of individuals](#)

Mobility of Individuals is all about providing opportunities for individuals to improve their skills, enhance their employability and gain cultural awareness.

Erasmus plus supports a variety of mobility opportunities for learners and staff in education,

training and youth institutions and organisations.

For learners, the aims of these opportunities include improving learning performance, enhancing their employability and improving career prospects, as well as enhancing their personal development and participation in society.

For staff, the aims include improving competences, increasing their capacity to trigger modernisation in their educational or youth organisations, and broadening their understanding of practices, policies and systems.

- [Key Action 2 - Co-operation for innovation and the exchange of good practices](#)

Co-operation for Innovation and Exchange of Good Practices is all about enabling organisations to work together in order to improve their provision for learners and share innovative practices.

Erasmus plus supports partnership projects for organisations, institutions, companies and research organisations in the fields of education, training or youth.

These projects encourage collaboration across borders and sectors, within and across the fields of education, training, youth and with the world of work. Their aims include innovating and modernising practices, strengthening cooperation and transferring knowledge at organisational, local, regional, national and

European levels. In the area of higher education, they also cover capacity-building projects that bring together higher education institutions from programme and partner countries.

By becoming involved in partnership projects, participating organisations are expected to develop more modern, dynamic and professional environments, an increased capacity to work at EU/international level and more innovative approaches to addressing their target groups.

- [Key Action 3 - Support for policy reform](#)

Support for Policy Reform covers any type of activity aimed at supporting and facilitating the modernisation of education and training systems.

Erasmus plus supports policy actions aimed at achieving the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy, of the Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) and of the European Youth Strategy.

Activities in support of such actions include initiatives for developing, implementing and assessing policies, networks and tools to encourage dialogue and promote European higher education among policy-makers, stakeholders and partner countries, and meetings between young people and decision-makers in the field of youth (Structured Dialogue).

The intended outcomes of this action include improving the quality and efficiency of

education, training and youth systems, promoting mutual learning and transnational cooperation, developing knowledge and encouraging the active participation of young people in democratic life.

### **Erasmus plus objectives in school education**

Mobility projects in the field of education, training, particularly projects for vet staff:

- Teaching / training assignments, this activity allows staff of VET schools to teach at a partner VET school abroad. It also allows staff of enterprises to provide training at a VET organisation abroad;
- Staff training, this activity supports the professional development of VET staff in the form of a work placement or a job shadowing/observation period abroad in an enterprise or any other VET organisation.

Erasmus plus supports learning mobility of staff that:

- is framed into a strategic approach of the participating organisations (aimed at modernising and internationalising their mission);
- responds to clearly identified staff development needs and is accompanied by appropriate selection, preparation and follow-up measures;
- ensures that the learning outcomes of participating staff are properly recognised and ensures that the learning outcomes are

disseminated and widely used within the organisation.

Mobility projects for school education staff:

This mobility project can comprise one or more of the following activities for Staff mobility:

- Teaching assignments, this activity allows teachers or other school education staff to teach at a partner school abroad.
- Staff training, this activity supports the professional development of teachers, school leaders or other school education staff in the form of: a) participation in structured courses or training events abroad; b) a job shadowing/observation period abroad in a partner school or another relevant organisation active in the field of school education

Erasmus plus supports learning mobility of staff that:

- is framed within a European Development Plan for the sending organization (aimed at modernising and internationalising their mission);
- responds to clearly identified staff development needs;
- is accompanied by appropriate selection, preparation and follow-up measures;
- ensures that the learning outcomes of participating staff are properly recognised;

- ensures that the learning outcomes are disseminated and widely used within the organisation.

Objectives of the strategic partnerships in the field of education and training

*In vocational education and training:*

- supporting the development of high quality VET with a strong work-based learning component (including apprenticeships and dual learning models), involving strong partnerships between education and employment (in particular companies and social partners);
- increasing the labour market relevance of VET provision and reducing skills mismatches and shortages in economic sectors through timely adaptation of curricula and qualifications profiles and establishment of stable partnerships between VET providers and economic actors, including social partners, development agencies, bodies in innovation systems, chamber of commerce. These should be based on data stemming from monitoring systems of VET outcomes (employability rates, placement rates) and systems of forecasting skills needs and a close alignment of VET provision to economic development strategies at regional and local levels. This also may imply development of VET at higher than upper secondary level /higher EQF levels;

- increasing transparency and mutual trust between VET systems through streamlined and coherent implementation at national level of ECVET and EQAVET recommendations;
- fostering the promotion of easily accessible and career oriented continuing VET, including for the least likely to take part in such learning opportunities;
- promoting the development of skills and competences of teachers and trainers, with a particular focus on work - based teaching, partnerships between school teachers and in - company trainers, and training of in-company trainers.
- addressing low achievement in basic skills through more effective teaching methods. In particular, through projects that: foster multidisciplinary and inter -disciplinary approaches;
- integrate the teaching of basic skills (maths, science and literacy);
- promote problem - based learning or foster innovative approaches to teaching technology-rich environment with particular focus on mathematics in technology-rich environment;

*In school education:*

- strengthening the profile of the teaching professions through attracting the best candidates to the profession and by supporting teachers and leaders to deliver high quality teaching, deal with complex classroom realities and adopt new methods and tools. In particular, improving initial teacher education and supporting new teachers so that they have all necessary competences right from the start including in dealing with diversified groups of learners (such as migrants); to adopt collaborative and innovative practices to strengthen leadership roles in education, including distributed leadership, for designing necessary changes and improvements at institutional level;
- supporting schools to tackle early school leaving (ESL) and disadvantage as well as to address all students from the lowest to highest end of academic spectrum, in particular by supporting projects that aims to: improve collaboration internally as well as with parents and other external stakeholders;
- promote networking of schools and holistic collaborative approaches to teaching;
- develop methods and create conditions for personalised teaching and learning for pupils;
- enhancing the quality of early childhood education and care (ECEC) in order to improve the quality of services for better learning outcomes and ensure a good start in education for all, in particular through projects that aim to: develop a holistic and age appropriate pedagogical framework for ECEC;

- ensure that the benefits of early childhood education are carried through to other school education levels and projects that develop new models of implementation, governance and funding for ECEC.

#### *Closing remarks and recommendations*

The Erasmus plus programme is focused on the enhancement of the mobility of teachers and educational staff that improve and strengthen professional and institutional cooperation that results with positive practices and partnership in the frames of pre-school, school and high school education. Expected results and follow-up activities are towards improvement and development of modern pedagogical approaches, new strategies and methods in the realization of the curricula and learning processes. The contemporary research studies in the field of education include innovative ICT tools with introduction of digital content and services. The effectiveness of the Erasmus plus programme structure is viewed through enhancement of education as an attractive field, support of entrepreneurship, support of creativity and innovation, strengthening the language competencies, reduction of early school leavers, as well as social inclusion and integration.

Erasmus plus programme has influence on the enhancement of personal and professional capacities and knowledge of the participants. The involved teachers, without doubt, gain intercultural and international experiences, that result in increased motivation and ambition in

their professional development. Improvement and modernisation of the pedagogical models in the teaching process, as well as enhancement of professional conscience for implementation of new techniques and methods in the work processes are extremely important components that are gained with the support of the programme. Bearing in mind that all teachers involved in Erasmus plus programme act in institutions of the Macedonian educational system, we can conclude that their experience gained in the frames of the implementation of the projects supported by the programme, will reflect and multiplied in their schools. Hence, we can conclude that the Erasmus plus programme will have significant impact on institutional capacity-building as well.

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**Yllza Ristemi**

***VIDEO COLLECTION OF CHILDREN'S  
MUSIC GAMES OF THE ALBANIAN  
POPULATION OF POLOG***

**Abstract**

*The paper catalogued, and analysed 73 melology Children Music Games of digital video collection of children's music games in Albanian population from the cities of Tetovo and Gostivar 9 flat upland and mountain village Polog the area in the western part of Macedonia.*

*The main variable on which is built the whole kind of research is music played with categories melodic and rhythmic game play.*

*The research and shoot of the collection is done based on exploratory method of data collection.*

*Collected music play entered into IRAM links catalogues music folklore.*

*The analysis is based on quantitative methods of data processing and is included basic children's music and games in the Albanian population of Kosovo.*

**Formulation of the problem**

The decision to create a video collection of children's music games from the region of Polog is a result of the absence of papers which would treat this matter in the Macedonian musicology, i.e. ethnomusicology. Thus, we may conclude that the opening of this question is the first attempt to research the children's music games of the children of Albanian ethnic background from the region of Polog in our

country. It is possible that this attempt is a first attempt to archive children's music games in this region. We are referring to a slightly forgotten segment of cultural heritage not only in our scientific area, but also worldwide. In a more persistent search for papers dedicated to the children's music games, i.e. the children's music folklore, one might really come across a dozen of titles, however this quantity is extremely incomparable to the papers dedicated to the music folklore of adults. Also, these papers lack consistency regarding the discipline which researched them. Thus, these papers are based on most various approaches: ethnographic approach (Harwood 1994, 1998; Tucker 2008), ethnomusicological approach (Brăiloiu 1984), quantitative approach characteristic for researches from the area of the musical education and musical psychology (Marsh 1995; Tarnowski 1999; Dzansi 2004; Campbell 2007; Brodsky & Sulkin 2010), and there are also projects made by amateurs – collectors of children's music folklore (Newell [1883] 1911; Gomme 1894/1898; <http://www.edu-cyberpg.com/NCFRD/>). The latter especially refer to the beginnings of the documenting of the children's music game in the 19th century as well as the present internet projects which are the result of collaborative actions of users from all around the world.

From all this it turns out that the matter of children's music game is the object of interest of a number of humanitarian disciplines taking into consideration its educational, aesthetic, psychological and social value. The need to research children's music game results from the

transformation of the children's world of game and the electronic media. Namely, as shown by the researches (see Jordanoska 2010), nowadays, children do everything by using the electronic media: the computer, television, smart phones, i.e. the internet with all the types of communication and creativeness it enables. The children's game is not immune to this process and we are noticing that children express their world, imagination and creativeness through the children's folklore less and less. Therefore, this paper perhaps will represent a final opportunity to preserve the life and music in a child's way, i.e. a final opportunity to preserve what remains as a musical – cultural heritage of this sort in our country.

Taking into consideration that the children's music game does not include only the voice, yet it is a syncretic form of text, music and movement, the filming in video format is of crucial importance in the process of its archiving. The present technological development enables digital video technology which has great quality, in a smaller size and financially more accessible, and the adjective digital is inseparable from the present notion about archiving. From here, the research of the children's music folklore, generally, implies the use of digital technology, from filming the material through cataloguing and making a melograph in a note processor, all the way to the methods of analysis. The suggested topic of our master's paper complements the research in the paper about the first year, in which we filmed and catalogued a video collection of



female wedding songs from the village of Simnica, Gostivar (Iljazi 2011). Namely, this subject also has the digital archiving of the music folklore at its base. We gained our first experience with digital video archiving in the mentioned paper, which covered a less populated area. This paper will cover a larger region in our country with differently populated areas.

Our suggested topic also directs to the paper “Video collection of children’s music games in Kosovo in 2010” by Arnisa Rexhepi (2011). With this research in IRAM for the first time, the topic of children’s music games was opened and a methodology was established for digital archiving and analysis of filmed material of this sort. With all this being said, it is a fact that we will use the established methodology in this paper in our research. The gathered results of the archiving of the children’s music games in the paper of Rexhepi are in fact an encouragement to realize a larger project about the children’s music games in our country as well. An additional motivation is also the compatibility with Rexhepi’s paper, especially regarding the language, i.e. the ethnic background of the researched subjects, which would enable comparison of our results with the results of her paper.

All this leads to the suggested topic for the master’s paper:

Video collection of children’s music games of the Albanian population from Polog in 2011

### **Definition of the subject**

The subject of our paper will consist of the following segments:

- a) creating a video collection of children’s music games by filming in a standard definition in video format with audio of 48 kilohertz and cataloguing the filmed material according to the standards for cataloguing of the IRAM digital catalogues of collections from the musical cultural heritage.
- b) children’s music games, where we exclusively refer to games which contain musical elements – rhythm and melody which the children sing or pronounce rhythmically; covering games which the children play:
  - in live
  - individually or as a group
  - in interaction with peers, i.e. children of different age, but close to the age of their generation; covering games played among friends and relatives (brothers, sisters, cousins, etc.)
  - with or without the use of props (elastic, ball, scarf, etc.) and toys
  - in home conditions (in the homes, yards) and in the neighbourhoods (in the parks, playgrounds, on the streets).

The age structure of the subjects will refer to children at the age 2 to 14.

- c) Albanian population from the cities and villages of Polog in the Republic of Macedonia where the dominant population

is of Albanian ethnicity, followed by population of Macedonian, Turkish and Roma ethnicity.

- d) 2011, i.e. the time period to which the research refers, also taking into consideration the social – economic, technological and musical – cultural accomplishments. The indicators used for the analysis of the children’s music games will be organized according to the secondary and tertiary data which are standard for the digital archiving. The secondary data will refer to general information about the game, collected during field work, and the tertiary data will result from our analysis. The key variable in the base of our research is a variable of a type of a music game with the categories melodic game and rhythmic game depending on the plan of the music work which is predominant. This variable will be treated as a dependent variable.

### **Definition of the method**

In accordance with the research in IRAM conducted thus far, which include digital archiving of musical cultural heritage, this paper will contain a separate unit regarding the methodology of filming, storing and annotation of video material, and another unit regarding the methodology of analysis of the filmed material, in this case an analysis of the children’s music games. Considering that the research will also include a melograph of the game by registering the way of playing, a separate unit will be dedicated to the

methodology of this type of digital archiving of the filmed material. In the research we will use a quantitative method with the basic statistical methods of analysis of the catalogued material: techniques of descriptive statistics and frequency distributions. In order to determine the relations among the specific variables we will use contingency tables for calculating the chi-square coefficient. Taking into consideration the researches conducted thus far in IRAM related to digital archiving (Mitevaska 2005; Krueziu 2006, 2008; Ilievski 2007; Rexhepi 2010; Iljazi 2011) and especially the paper of Rexhepi (2011) which also treats the same matter, we expect dominance of the nominal variables.

For the needs of our research a sample of 80 children’s music games will be made, half of which will be melody games, and the rest rhythmic games. We are making this division in order to meet the criterion of representation and proportionality of our sample. Apart from this basic criterion, while choosing the sample, we will also follow the criteria of representing different populated areas, rendering the division according to the type of populated areas which are characteristic of the region of Polog, and the categories are: city, plane village, upland village and mountain village. The sample will cover respondents exclusively from Albanian ethnicity, of different age and gender. Apart from this, a criterion for forming the sample will be that the games may not repeat, i.e. there will be 80 different games which may not overlap in all of the characteristics, i.e. secondary and tertiary data.

The choice of the games based on the mentioned criteria, according to the basic rule of sampling will be random.

The basic instrument of our research will be a questionnaire filled out by the researcher. The secondary data will be registered in fieldwork during the conversation with the respondents, and the tertiary data will be inserted while making the melograph of the recorded material.

Two catalogues will be created from the recorded material: one for the children's music games and another for the respondents.

The researching method will consist the following phases:

- informing the families and the educational staff about the purpose of the research and the ethnic principles which the researcher will respect during the research
- acquiring permission for filming from the families and the educational staff
- filming the video collection
- storing the video collection
- cataloguing
- making a melograph.

### **Expected results**

Our paper aim primarily aims towards the digital archiving of the children's music games, i.e. the work during the filming of the collection, storing, annotation, making a

melograph and cataloguing. However, the digital catalogues offer simplified ways for analysis of the material and with the cataloguing of the material there will be an opportunity to establish the basic characteristics of the children's music games from the region of Polog in 2011.

With this research, we expect to get scientific findings about the children's music games in the region in question, which will shed light on the children's music culture and which will be applicable to all the humanitarian disciplines which come in contact with the phenomenon of the children's music game.

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**ACTIVITIES FOR MUTUAL  
COLLABORATION AMONG STUDENTS  
WITH DIFFERENT ETHNICITIES**

**Abstract**

*Being a multicultural society, Macedonia has a large number of ethnically mixed schools. An in-depth analysis shows that, while these*

*schools are multicultural in nature, in fact they function in a state of parallelism. Most children from different ethnicities get very limited opportunities to interact, leading towards strengthening of stereotypes and prejudice, mainly of ethnocentric nature. Introducing joint student activities in the education system is a potential starting point for nurturing a culture of cooperation among citizens with different cultural backgrounds towards creating an integrated society. The USAID Interethnic Integration in Education Project, implemented by the Macedonian Civic Education Centre, has been working in partnership with the Macedonian education institutions, on institutionalizing such interventions in the education system. Reflecting the experience and lessons learned of the project, this paper will elaborate on the methodology for implementation of joint student activities, whose primary focus is to affirm cultural pluralism, reduce stereotypes and prejudice, and lead to collaboration and interpersonal communication. The end goal is to nurture future citizens that are able to live in a multicultural society and rely on each other. The joint student activities, whether short or long-term, are based on interdependence among different ethnicities achieved through a cooperative process, with the support of the parents, school community and local government.*

*Additionally, the paper will outline the holistic approach necessary for introduction of sustainable changes within the education system, which includes interventions in the*

*pre-service and in-service training of teachers, and active involvement of both state education institutions and local stakeholders in the design and implementation of the school activities.*

**Keywords:** *students, joint activities, integration, education, collaboration.*

### **1. Background – Current situation and needs**

Being a multicultural society, with four languages of instruction (Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish and Serbian),<sup>121</sup> Macedonia has a large number of ethnically mixed schools. An electronic research in all primary and secondary schools in the Republic of Macedonia, together with a field research on a sample of selected schools, regarding interethnic integration in the education, was conducted for the needs of the USAID Interethnic Integration in Education Project (IIEP)<sup>122</sup>. Around 115 primary and secondary schools out of total number of 440 schools in Macedonia have more than one language of instruction. An in-depth analysis shows that, while these schools are multilingual/multicultural, due to the multiple languages of instruction, in fact they function in

a state of parallelism, and students in these schools do not attend ethnically mixed classes or activities.

The findings<sup>123</sup> state that around 170,000 out of total 255,000 students within the primary and secondary education attend monolingual schools, which do not offer opportunity for interaction between students that study in a different language of instruction. Additionally, the opportunity for direct contact among students with different languages of instruction who study even in multilingual schools, has often not been guaranteed. They are divided into separate buildings according to the languages of instruction that are located in different settlements or neighbourhoods. Even when the students study under the same roof they are divided in different parts of the building or in different shifts. Multilingual schools are perceived as a space where conflicts occur more often due to the apparent mutual stereotypes and prejudices. Teachers, parents, and even students, have an ambivalent attitude towards the direct contact among students with different languages of instruction. On one hand, as they perceive it as a source of interethnic tensions and conflicts, many would gladly avoid it. On the other hand, they are aware that the students from different ethnic/linguistic communities can get to know each other and

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<sup>121</sup> Practising the instruction with more languages has been based on the “Universal Declaration for Human Rights” embedded in the Constitution and all legal acts regulating the sphere of education

<sup>122</sup> Petroska, V. B. (2012). *Baseline research regarding the interethnic integration in the education*. Skopje: USAID Interethnic Integration in Education Project. [http://pmio.mk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/IIEP-BASELINE-STUDY\\_ENG.pdf](http://pmio.mk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/IIEP-BASELINE-STUDY_ENG.pdf)

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<sup>123</sup> Petroska, V.B., Kenig, N. (2014). *Evaluation Report for the implemented activities throughout Phase/Year 2 schools*. Skopje: USAID Interethnic Integration in Education Project.



learn to work together only through direct interaction in the educational process. However, direct contacts among students from various linguistic/ethnic communities is difficult since they are overwhelmed with stereotypes and prejudices regarding “others”, which are manifested explicitly, when they openly attribute certain characteristics/behaviours of students from other ethnic groups, or implicitly, when they express their feelings and worries that may arise from such contacts. Therefore, it can be concluded that diversity is appreciated only on a declarative level, while in practice it is used to increase the distance and transfer the responsibility to the “others”<sup>124</sup>.

This situation can be improved by increasing the opportunity for direct contacts among students of different ethnicities that study in different languages of instruction, through joint activities, not only in the multilingual schools, but also between the monolingual schools with different languages of instruction (by forming partnerships between monolingual schools with different languages of instruction).

## **2. Goal of the Interethnic Integration in Education Project**

USAID IIEP is a four year initiative, ending in 2015, implemented by the Macedonian Civic Education Centre (MCEC), which has been

working on building a broad public understanding of the benefits to all citizens that will arise from integrating Macedonia’s education system. IIEP is working with all primary and secondary schools on creating the political, social and economic environment needed for Macedonia to achieve sustained interethnic integration in schools, in other educational institutions and eventually all of society. MCEC, in partnership with the key education institutions and seven experienced local partner non-governmental organizations, has been striving to achieve these goals through an integrated mix of strategies and activities utilizing bottom-top and top-bottom approach.

## **3. Holistic approach of the IIEP**

IIEP uses a whole school approach to enable continuous development of interethnic integrated activities in the schools through applying a mix of structured professional development workshops, students’ joint curricular and extra-curricular activities and a follow-up mentoring program. Students, parents, teachers, school principals, professional school staffs and school boards in all primary and secondary schools across Macedonia are the focus of the capacity building activities with an aim to become skilled and equipped with the methodology to implement joint activities of students with different ethnical backgrounds. The methodology contains approaches for reducing stereotypes and prejudices, empowering mutual relying on each other among them through a

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<sup>124</sup> Diversity is a reality in the Macedonian society in which different cultural groups appreciate their cultural traits and distinguish the difference between “us” and “them”, “ours” and “theirs”. The perception is that in *our* schools students are instructed in *our* language from *our* teachers, with school-mates that are *ours*, learning about *our* history, culture and literature doing extracurricular activities with school-mates and teachers that are *ours*.

frequent direct and interpersonal communication.

Holistic approach is applied in order to establish mechanisms at all levels within the public education system, which encourages direct contacts, active communication and cooperation among students from different ethnicities/languages. The key educational institutions are the most important in providing the mechanisms for interethnic integration in education within the education system. Nevertheless, the municipalities and local communities are also actively involved in the process of designing and implementation of the IIE activities in Republic of Macedonia.

#### **4. Involvement of institutions in planning and implementation of interethnic integration in education**

Empowering key educational institutions to coordinate stakeholders to build capacity and work together to reach the common goal of achieving sustainable interethnic integration in education has been an imperative in the IIEP from its start. Representatives from Ministry of MoES, BDE, VETC, SEI, including national experts and experienced educators in interethnic education provide technical support with an advisory role, guidance in IIEP implementation, as well as adopt IIE strategies and plans. BDE and VETC staffs were also involved in planning, designing modules for IIE through delivering quality trainings in a phased approach to the SITs school support staffs, School boards and municipality educational officials. As the follow-up and mentoring

system has been established among beneficiaries to create a system to sustain achievements beyond the end of the project they have been also involved in the mentoring, follow-up and monitoring activities of the joint students' activities within the schools. IIEP team and SEI completed the amendments to the existing school performance quality indicators (SPQI) in the second year of the IIEP. Also, the previous SEI's Manual for School Integrated Evaluation that contained a number of relevant instruments (i.e. questionnaires and instruments for class observation) was revised in this (third) year of the IIEP. Presently the Manual includes new instruments enabling SEI inspectors to better monitor and evaluate the interethnic integration within all schools. In collaboration with NEC leadership, key elements of the IIE concept will be included into the training's content and State exam for directors of primary and secondary schools.

On municipal government level, the educational officials have been provided with capacity to provide resources, effectively coordinate and evaluate efforts in the municipality and the schools to implement IIE.

#### **5. In-service and pre-service trainings on interethnic integration in education**

On school level, the SITs were trained on improving the capacity of teachers to skilfully apply IIE approaches with the students in their classes and extra-curricular activities. They have been instructed how to effectively organize and perform joint activities among students from different ethnic/cultural

background both in multilingual and monolingual schools. Building capacity of school management has been provided for the leadership to create and sustain integrated education and to construct supportive relationships with the school community. School support staffs have been skilled for enhancing the parental involvement in joint students' activities at school to improve interethnic communication and to bridge ethnic and social gaps. School boards have been trained on planning, decision making and managing effort at the schools to integrated education.

With aim to initiate the process of integrating the concept of interethnic integration in higher education that contributes in providing a sustainability of the interethnic integration within the education system, the collaboration with five teacher training faculties has been established in the second year of IIEP (2013). Incorporating the segments of intercultural education within the subject contents will extend the intercultural sensitiveness and competency for new generations of teachers. The manual, which is in a stage of preparation by the representatives from the teacher training faculties, will provide further utilization of the existing IIE concept within the pre-service.

## 6. Joint Student Activities

The main focus of IIEP is establishing mechanisms within the public education system that allow for direct contact, active communication and cooperation among students from different ethnicities/languages.

Besides having implemented joint student activities in more than 77 multilingual schools, by 2014, more than 236 partnerships have been established between schools with different languages of instruction in the country, making it possible for students that live far across the country to get to meet and get to know their peers from another ethnicity.<sup>125</sup>

It is necessary for this direct contact to be systematically structured (opposite to unorganized or spontaneous), through organized and well planned joint curricular and extracurricular activities, in order to enable constructive and effective interaction between students, and decrease stereotypes and prejudice towards the "other" culture. These activities, called joint student activities, allow students with different languages of instruction to get to know each other and learn about each other, strengthening their capacities to collaborate and live in a multicultural society. Moreover, they are aimed at establishing deeper bonds and interpersonal relations, based on a feeling of trust and ability to rely on each other.

On a school level, the joint student activities are implemented both within the curricular and extracurricular program. Curricular activities, such as joint student classes in different subjects, projects and outdoor learning, are primarily implemented in multilingual schools, but are also possible between partner schools.

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<sup>125</sup> Petroska, V.B., Kenig, N. (2014). *Evaluation Report for the implemented activities throughout Phase/Year 2 schools*. Skopje: USAID Interethnic Integration in Education Project.

The extracurricular activities offer a large range of possibilities for implementation, in both types of schools, such as clubs, excursions, picnics, school events and celebrations, workshops, environmental, sports, community service activities and democratic participation.<sup>126</sup>

Although both extracurricular and curricular activities are being implemented, schools often prefer extracurricular activities as they find them easier to organize. Regardless whether they are being implemented in a curricular or extracurricular form, short or long-term, there are several criteria<sup>127</sup> underlying all joint student activities, and those are:

- working on a mutually desired/designed goal that leads towards a specific final product;
- direct communication through which students get to know each other and form interpersonal, rather than ethnical intergroup relations;
- active collaboration, opposed to parallel work within the same group;
- conditions in which all students can express themselves in their own language.

### 6.1. Planning process

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<sup>126</sup> Dedova, R., Petroska, V.B., Balazhi, S. (2012). *Manual for democratic participation of students*. Skopje: USAID Interethnic Integration in Education Project.

<sup>127</sup> Negrievska, F., Petroska, V. B., Balazhi, S. (2012). *Manual for joint student activities*. Skopje: USAID Interethnic Integration in Education Project.

Project experience has shown that, when it comes to successful organization of activities that meet the criteria for interethnic integration in education (IIE), the planning process plays a crucial role. Observations of in-school activities show that the planning is very often primarily focused on the content of the activities, instead of on the process of implementation. However significant the content, for the goal of establishing interethnic integration, the **process of execution of the specific task** by the students is the primary focus and main factor in providing lasting results, which lead towards changed attitudes and reduced prejudice and stereotypes within children. The design of the group tasks should be well contemplated in order to avoid prevalence of individual work, where students work in parallel and merely join the individual segments into one final product. This occurrence often happens in school performances, where each group is preparing a

***Practices to avoid:***

- ✓ Planning focuses mainly on content.
- ✓ Planning does not take into consideration opportunity for interaction.
- ✓ Facilitators do not plan to jointly deliver the instructions in different languages, in advance.
- ✓ Selected group of students has a distinctive misbalance in terms of ethnicity.
- ✓ Method of division of students into smaller mixed groups is not planned in advance.
- ✓ Planned activities emphasize the characteristics of one ethnical group that leads toward ethnocentrism

part of the performance in their own language of instruction, and then they come to meet together for the final performance. Even more, this also happens when working in smaller groups, where students are given a specific task, such as creating a poster or comic, and each student draws a section of the poster/comic, without coordination or collaboration with the other group members. Given that communication and collaboration are a fundamental part of the joint student activities, the planning process should primarily focus on designing and organizing activities and group tasks that enable **maximum level of direct interaction**. The project experience has shown that the activities, which produce best results, in regards to more active interaction and establishing deeper relationships between students, are activities designed to offer greater space for **creativity and independence** when bringing decisions while working in a group, whilst at the same time providing effective facilitation by the teachers. This mostly refers to activities such as video production<sup>128</sup> and theatre performances<sup>129</sup>, which result with high levels of motivation, interest and involvement on behalf of the students. Sports activities<sup>130</sup> have also proven to be exceptionally successful, as students demonstrate great enthusiasm and willingness to participate, inevitably resulting

with a strong sense of team spirit and positive atmosphere. The effect is further reinforced when the sports activities are carried out on a long-term, with several activities organized for

***Positive practices:***

- ✓ Main focus is on the process.
- ✓ Chosen task provides maximum interaction.
- ✓ Task requires high level of creativity.
- ✓ Facilitators prepare well to give alternate instructions, in both languages.
- ✓ Good balance of students in group.

the same group of students.

When planning, the teachers must also take into consideration the **multilingual nature of the activity**, meaning that, for each language of instruction within the given group, there must be a teacher/facilitator able to speak that language. It is significant for the use of the different languages by the teachers/facilitators to not be seen as mere translation of the dominant language, as this puts greater importance to this language and marginalizes the others. A good planning process would require for the facilitators to be well acquainted with the instructions which will be given to the students, so that they may give the instructions alternately and paraphrase each other, rather than translating each other literally. In this manner the facilitators demonstrate a model of equality and collaboration that should be replicated by the students.

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<sup>128</sup> <http://pmio.mk/videos/%D0%BD%D0%B5-%D0%BC%D0%B5-%D1%81%D1%84%D0%B0%D1%9C%D0%B0%D1%98%D1%82%D0%B5-%D0%BE%D0%BE%D0%B3%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%88%D0%BD%D0%BE-mos-lejoni-te-keqkuptohem/>

<sup>129</sup> <http://pmio.mk/news/western-balkans-love-story-shakespeare-at-the-door/>

<sup>130</sup> <http://pmio.mk/archive-capacity-building/a-smile-is-a-smile-in-any-language/>

Another aspect that needs to be taken in consideration, in the planning process, is **the selection of students for the specific activity**. It is preferable to achieve a relative balance of students in regards of ethnicity and gender. Having a distinctively smaller number of representatives of a certain ethnicity is undesirable, as it creates a sense of inferiority within the group for those students, which hinders them from actively engaging in the activity. Additionally, the division of the selected students into **smaller groups**, for work on individual tasks, needs to also be considered in the planning process. Facilitators need to make sure that the allocation to smaller groups provides good balance and diversity, but, at the same time, is not perceived as artificial by the students.

**Parents** also play a critical role in this stage. Involvement of the parents in the planning of the activities ensures greater interest and support throughout the entire implementation process. Parental involvement and support can involve having parents to facilitate certain activities, share knowledge from their professional field of work that could be relevant for the specific task, providing financial support, or working with the students on creation of final products.

### 6.2 Implementation of joint student activities

When speaking about the process of implementation of the joint student activities, as emphasized above, the primary focus is on creation of a **joint product** through collaborative learning. Project experience has

shown that it is always preferable for the product to be of high interest to the specific group of students (compatible with their interests and age). When working on a **product which is considered interesting** and exciting by the students (usually involving new

#### *Practices to avoid:*

- ✓ Students do not participate in introductory activities before they start working jointly on the product;
- ✓ Students work individually within the group.
- ✓ Students find the final product unappealing.
- ✓ Each group of students of different language of instruction prepares its part of the product; only the presentation is a joint activity.
- ✓ There are students that are passive and marginalized.
- ✓ Teachers do not monitor the communication in the groups and do not encourage active collaboration within the groups.
- ✓ Teachers communicate only with “their” students.
- ✓ Teachers communicate very little between themselves during the activity.
- ✓ Students are required to speak in a language they are not comfortable with.

technologies and creative processes), the group tends to invest more energy, collaborate on a higher level and be more enthusiastic regarding the whole process, which most often results with students developing strong positive emotions towards the experience. The effects

are strongest when this type of activity is being implemented on a longer term, with the same group of students. In this case, the relationships within the group develop into genuine friendships that positively transform students' attitudes towards the "other" ethnicity. However, regardless of the type of final product, the **process through which the result is attained** remains the primary focus of the joint student activity. This, in large, depends on the teachers' ability to facilitate the process. Even when divided into smaller groups, as might be expected, students tend to communicate mostly with peers they already know, which are usually students that speak their own language. In practice, this means that the students sometimes create divisions within the small groups, and work in a parallel manner. It is the teachers' responsibility **to facilitate this process in order to encourage interaction** within the group and create dynamics that allow for active discussion and cooperation between all members in the group. Additionally, it should be taken into consideration that the students are very perceptive of the manner in which their teachers communicate between each other. The **facilitators of the activity need to be aware that their behaviour represents a model for collaboration to be copied by their students**. Even more, the way in which the teachers work with the students that study in a different language of instruction, from the one they teach in, also influences the process. The project has had experience with activities where teachers only communicate and help "their" students, or the students with the

*Positive practices:*

- ✓ All students actively collaborate and communicate while completing the task in a joyful and lively atmosphere.
- ✓ Students find the final product interesting and are excited to work on it.
- ✓ Students actively listen and respect each other during the whole process.
- ✓ The whole group of students enthusiastically prepares the presentation of the product.
- ✓ The presentation is performed in all languages of instruction with involvement of larger number of students.
- ✓ Teachers observe the communication within the groups closely, and, when needed, encourage interaction.
- ✓ Teachers actively communicate both during the activity and outside the classroom, demonstrating a model for collaboration.
- ✓ Teachers approach the individual groups together and help all students, regardless of the language of instruction.

same ethnicity. This creates a greater sense of division and deepens the gap between the different groups of students. Therefore it is important for the facilitators to engage with all students in the group, regardless of the language of instruction and the ethnical background.

When it comes to the use of language by the students themselves, the activities need to provide the **opportunity for each student to express his/herself in their mother tongue/language of instruction.** The experience in the field has shown that requiring students to express themselves in a language that they do not feel comfortable with often influences their ability to actively engage in the activity and collaborate with their peers. As a result, these students either remain passive throughout the activity or only establish contact with the peers that speak the same language. On the other hand, having teachers that encourage the students to help their peers when they express themselves in discussions and decision making, and building an atmosphere of trust and support creates a positive sense of interdependence within the group that transforms into a group based on common set goal/product. Additionally, it is especially effective to include students who speak two or more of the local languages in the activity, as they represent a positive model to their peers.

### 6.2. *Promotion of the activities*

There is another important aspect in the implementation of the joint student activities that has proven to reinforce the effects of these activities, and that is promotion of the attained results and products. Experience has shown that taking actions for promotion of the IIE activities, not only creates a sense of ownership and pride for the students who participated in the activity, but also has a strong impact on the overall school community. This has shown to

increase the interest and enthusiasm of the students, who did not take part in the activity, to participate in similar activities in the future. The promotion includes organizing school and community events, publishing materials on the school's and municipality's website and providing media coverage. Experience has shown that the organization of theatre plays, sports activities, and forum theatres<sup>131</sup> are the forms of promotion that generate the strongest response and interest on behalf of the other students in the school, who did not participate in the activities.

The dissemination of information on this subject, on a local and national level, strongly encourages the participation of other schools in such activities but also raises the general public's interest and awareness regarding integrated education.

### 6.3. *Continuous implementation of IIE in the schools*

One of the aims of the promotion of the joint student activities is to stimulate and increase the participation of other students and teachers in the school in IIE initiatives. The process of interethnic integration in the school entails continuous implementation of activities, in all aspects of the school life. Consequently, the implementation and promotion of joint student activities is a circular and continuing process. The project continues to deliver support to schools, in form of mentoring meetings, observations and feedback sessions, in order to

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<sup>131</sup> <http://pmio.mk/archive-community-outreach/forum-theatre-debate-and-workshop-in-stip/>



further strengthen teachers' competencies for implementation of IIE activities. In order to provide additional incentive to the schools, the project provides small grants for implementation of joint student activities, which are very significant to the process, as the lack of finances is one of the greatest challenges faced by the schools in terms of IIE. This especially refers to the monolingual schools, which have least opportunities for contact among students with different ethnicities, and have the greatest expenses in organizing the contact (mostly in terms of transportation). Establishing a permanent fund for joint student activities is of crucial importance for the sustainability of IIE in the education system. This idea was communicated with the MoES, who have recognized this need and have already expressed their interest in investing in such a fund. Establishing such a fund would bring a new perspective for the joint student activities in the country. The schools already express great interest in this aspect and demonstrate readiness to continue organizing IIE activities in the future. Additionally the project also encourages and works with municipalities' officials on providing financial support to schools for these activities

The joint student activities that successfully reached their established goals and targets proved that children can work together and socialize, become mutually/jointly positively interdependent, without considering that they belong to one ethnic community or the other, and regardless of the language they speak in. Creativity, art and joint research always present

a challenge for young person who, through the joint student activities, opens up, expresses his/her needs, interest, knowledge and skills. These activities create an opportunity to recognize/identify what is good and what isn't, to understand that differences do not pose a barrier but are an advantage, and to establish long-term and sincere friendships.

## Abbreviations

BDE	Bureau for Development of Education
IIE	Interethnic Integration in Education
IIEP	Interethnic Integration in Education Project
MCEC	Macedonian Civic Education Centre
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science
NEC	National Examination Centre
SEI	State Education Inspectorate
SIT	School Integration Team
VET	Vocational education and training

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