CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Promoting the Social Emotional Aspects of Education; A Multi-faceted Priority

Spodbujanje socialno-čustvenih vidikov vzgoje in izobraževanja; raznotere naloge

Edited by:
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Helena Korošec
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PEDAGOŠKA FAKULTETA

University of Ljubljana
Faculty of Education

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TEACHING SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH SHADOW PUPPETRY – A PRACTICAL EXAMPLE OF A PROJECT TO ENCOURAGE 7 – 11 YEAR-OLDS TO DESIGN FOR THEIR FUTURE, IN SCHOOL IN NORFOLK, UK.

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ABSTRACT

The topic of the paper is the being carbon neutral project, carried out by meg amsden and her colleague nicky rowbottom in the broads national park in the uk in 2009. the project was supported by the sustainable development fund of the broads authority, funded by defra (note 1)

We believe that children are naturally inventive and optimistic. They are good at working in groups
and co-operating to solve what can appear to be insuperable problems to individuals. We also believe that theatrical performance, and the use of innate practical skill to make things, have an unique way of engaging children's attention. The memory of these activities is long-lasting. The objective of the project was to encourage children to think dynamically and positively about living sustainably in a future dominated by climate change. As this is a big subject, we chose to concentrate on sustainable building. The paper shows how we used functioning examples of innovative practice in sustainable building in the East of England to inspire the pupils, and a live shadow-puppet show that told the story of a family whose house had blown away in a storm. The story is full of visual clues but it is left open-ended. The school-children were divided into small groups, and asked to work out how the story could end, and create their own shadow shows to show it. We also showed the children how to run practical technology experiments. The workshop was filmed in two schools and parts of the 20 minute DVD were shown to illustrate the paper. We provided a pack of teaching materials to support the workshop that included an evaluation sheet.

Key words: Sustainability, practical skill, co-operating, shadow-puppetry, technology, experiments.

BEING CARBON NEUTRAL

I run a puppet company – **Nutmeg** – which I founded in 1979 to produce and tour original puppet theatre shows and practical workshops for outdoor events, schools and small theatres. My work has always had an environmental bias. I believe strongly that loss of contact with the natural world affects most contemporary children detrimentally ("Nature Deficit Disorder" *(note 2)*), and that most education with its emphasis on literacy and numeracy, fact finding and research, ignores the vital development of practical skills and emotional growth. We believe that children are naturally inventive and optimistic. They are good at working in groups and co-operating to solve what can appear insuperable problems to individuals. We also believe that theatrical performance, and the use of innate practical skill to make things, have an unique way of engaging children's attention. The memory of these activities is long-lasting

BACKGROUND

Neither Nicky nor I have received formal training for teaching children. However, I have been working in schools since the mid-seventies, touring puppet shows and practical workshops, and Nicky trained and worked for many years in adult education and worked with all ages as Education Officer for Suffolk Wildlife Trust. We have both worked collaboratively with education advisors and teachers, and were both much inspired by the visionary writing of Prof Steve Van Matre *(note 3).* Other sources of inspiration for me were involvement with the Woodcraft movement, and voluntary work with the progressive education charity Forest School Camps *(note 4).*

For 25 years from 1985 Nutmeg was privileged to work in the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads, a wetland National Park in the East of England. We produced and toured shows about the ecology and social history of the region to families on holiday and to local schools. The then Chief Executive of the Broads Authority, Aitken Clark, was a far-sighted internationalist who believed in the power of the arts to inspire children, and indeed adults, to develop an emotional understanding and response to the natural environment. In his own words;

" The medium of puppetry, so artfully crafted, bridges language barriers and engages children and adults alike in plots and dramas vibrant with meaning, illustrating ideas, and giving messages of exhortation to care for and cherish the lovely fragile wetland environment...."(note 5)

At his instigation we ran the **Ecopuppets project** from 1995 – 99, linking the Danube Delta, Romania, and the Broads, and working with teachers and children in schools, environmental artists, education advisers and environmental education officers. Though the main art-form of the project was shadow puppetry, several teachers used our methods with different art-forms to great effect. We published a booklet about the project with practical advice, the Ecopuppets Handbook, in English and Romanian *(note 5).*

In the UK, my colleague Nicky Rowbottom and I devised several workshops for schools to accompany shows I produced for the Broads. For **"Windy Old Weather"** the children did simple technology experiments relating to wind power. For **"Heatwave"**, we encouraged them to describe their own experiences of the weather, and to design

clothes, houses and vehicles that could cope with climate change. We found the experience so stimulating and exciting that we decided to produce a further stand-alone workshop.

THE PROJECT

We developed the **Being Carbon Neutral** workshop for 7 – 11 year olds in 2008/9. We applied for, and were awarded, funding by The Broads Authority Sustainable Development Fund which in turn was funded by Defra *(note 1)*. The objective of the project was to encourage children to think dynamically and positively about living sustainably in a future dominated by climate change. As this is a big subject, we chose to concentrate on sustainable building, using functioning examples of innovative practice in the East of England to inspire the pupils. In designing the workshop, Nicky Rowbottom and I consulted Norfolk and Suffolk environmental education advisory teachers, Sue Falch-Lovesey and Alison Wood, and teacher Jane Wells, who had headed a project involving the children, to build a wind turbine at their school. We also visited sustainable building projects – a new distribution centre built for Adnams Brewery, and Crossways gigantic tomato nursery run on the power and waste products supplied by the nearby sugar-beet refinery – We researched other similar projects via the Internet.
We aimed to unlock children's imagination through the practical/theatrical medium of puppetry, creating and performing a live shadow-puppet show that presents a dilemma about sustainable living. It tells the story of a family whose house has blown away in a storm. The adults despair but the child, ever optimistic, suggests ways the family could make a new home. The story is full of visual clues but it is left open-ended. In the workshop sessions the children were asked to work out how the story could end, and create their own shadow shows to demonstrate it. We also encouraged them to think about sustainable energy through practical technology experiments.
The workshop lasted a day. The programme began with the shadow puppet play/demonstration by us, followed by a practical shadow puppet-making demonstration; a power-point presentation about sustainable buildings in the East of England; and two concurrent practical workshops; one (led by me) to make shadow shows, the other (led by Nicky) to carry out simple technology experiments. In the afternoon, we swapped the groups and repeated the workshops, so that all the children were able to experience both.

In the puppet workshop the children worked in small groups, inventing between themselves the story lines and the characters, and negotiating who should make what. I asked them to keep words to a minimum and commit them to memory to keep performances short and spontaneous. Some children found this very challenging. They made puppets and scenery, rehearsed and then performed their shows to their classmates.
In the technology workshop, the children learnt the difference between sustainable and non-sustainable energy, used a quiz to find out how sustainable their own lives were, tested different types of light-bulbs, and in small groups made windmills that were able to raise weights.
We made a DVD about the project with two of the schools we visited. (At the EAEN Conference a short clip from the puppet workshop was shown, in which children work together in small groups brainstorming ideas, working out a storyline and list of characters, then cut out puppets and rehearse their shows. A second clip from the

technology workshop shows two girls trying to make a windmill together, and disagreeing about how to make it. One girl insists on trying her method, as the other quietly tries to show her she is wrong. The windmill fails, the quiet girl prevails and they agree on the best method. The clip ends with the girls trying out their windmill in the playground.)
After a pilot workshop in a local school, we ran 15 workshop days and worked with 822 children in 30 classes from 16 schools (two tiny schools linking up together for one workshop day). 6 of the schools were in urban deprived areas, and 10 in isolated rural communities.

CONCLUSION

We produced a teachers' pack, which included follow-up ideas, further reading, and notes on the research basis of the project. It also included an evaluation form for staff. The response was almost unanimously positive and we felt that we had produced a workshop that really filled a need, and that acted as a stimulus to further work on the subject. The only negative response we received was that they wanted more time for the workshop, or for us to be in the school for longer. We noticed that the older the children were, the longer they wanted or needed for the shadow puppet workshop, as they had more elaborate ideas and a higher expectation of themselves than the younger children had. Here are some of the comments:
"We all had a wonderful day. The children were fully engaged in what they did and loved creating their own play. The way information was presented inspired the children and will have a lasting impact. It gives us a great platform to work from.
"All the children enjoyed themselves and experienced a feeling of achievement.
"The workshops linked in to preliminary discussion about global warming. It will link to on-going work within the school (led by school council) to raise awareness of how much energy we use/waste and how we can reduce this.
"We will be continuing shadow puppets after half term to help develop stories with a dilemma as a focus, in their literacy.
"It developed their thinking skills, generated lots of group discussion and collaboration. They also learnt about different ways of addressing global issues and what can be done to help.
"They gained a much better understanding of what carbon footprint means and of how we create it. "I think they gained a sense of what they can do to make a difference. They loved creating and performing their own stories.
"I think it was a really good balance between creativity and factual information – activities kept their interest.

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A SAFE AND STIMULATING CLIMATE AND THE PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AS THE CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING IN PRESCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

First we will stress the meaning of safe and stimulative climate as one the crucial (pre)conditions for child's development and learning in preschool. Contemporary preschool curriculums emphasize that learning is most effective when the child is intrinsically motivated if learning is connected with his or her everyday life and meaningful and when he or she actively seeks problems and theirs solutions – co-constructs his or her knowledge together with others. In our near past the educational program and practice stressed planned activities directed by preschool teacher, while social interactions and experiences including daily routine and unplanned behaviour and events (hidden curriculum) were ignored. Curriculum for Kindergartens (1999) is founded on entirely different background, if we stress only some: active learning, intrinsic motivation, the principle of choice, creating conditions for social interactions between children and between children and adults.

Therefore we are interested how much we managed to exceed the old and inveterate practice of Slovenian preschool teachers. For this purpose we will present some selected results of the research, conducted in the first phase of the project titled *"Professional training for practitioners for the purpose of implementing elements of special pedagogical principles of the Reggio Emilia concept in the field of preschool education".* The results gathered by questionnaire on the sample of 331 preschool teachers and teacher's assistants show that the children still don't participate enough in co-constructing their life in preschool institution (equipment of playroom, daily routine). For planned themes it is prevailing practice that the teacher chooses the theme and children only add some of their ideas. Our results are consistent with others national (e.g. Turnšek, 2008) and foreign (e.g. Sheridan in Pramling Samuelsson, 2001) findings that children in preschool (co)decide mainly about play, materials and means for them, but not so much about other activities and aspects of work in the class and the institution. We noticed discrepancy between the standpoints of the preschool teachers and their actual practical work. In conclusion we will discuss some possibilities for changes in preschool practice towards more active participation of children in

construction of life in preschool institution, including some critical doubts towards this concept (e.g. Kjørholt, 2005).

Key words: safe and stimulative climate, active learning, Reggio Emilia approach, participation of children.

INTRODUCTION

In Slovenia's recent past the Educational Program for Preschool Children (hereafter referred to as Educational Program, 1979) and educational practice tended to stress planned activities directed by preschool teachers, while the importance of the emotional climate, social interactions and experiences, including daily routine, unplanned behaviour and events (the hidden curriculum), remained largely ignored. The Curriculum for Preschool (1999) is founded on entirely different assumptions – to stress but a few: active learning, intrinsic motivation, the principle of choice, creating conditions for social interactions between children and between children and adults.

In this article we will attempt to answer the question about how far we have managed to go beyond certain old and inveterate practices of Slovenian preschool teachers. We will emphasize the importance of a safe and stimulating climate, which encourages children's active learning in preschool. We will also present some selected research results regarding children's participation from the project titled *Professional training for practitioners for the purpose of implementing the elements of the special pedagogical principles of the Reggio Emilia concept in the field of preschool education* (hereafter referred to as Reggio Emilia Project).

We start from the assumption that a pleasant emotional atmosphere in preschool classes and effective (active) learning necessarily incorporate the participation of children in the educational process. Modern preschool curriculums emphasize that learning is the most effective when children actively address problems and look for theirs solutions – that is, when they co-construct their own knowledge together with others.

A SAFE AND STIMULATING CLIMATE IN PRESCHOOL CLASSES

Didactically and schoolization oriented preschool programs, such as the Slovene Educational Program of 1979,[1] used to focus all their attention on the preschool teacher planning educational work (directed activities), whereas the importance of an emotional climate guaranteeing the child a sense of safety and trust was not even mentioned. We cannot, however, argue that it did not exist in practice, but this significant aspect of the

[1] Although the program was formally introduced in 1979, socialist early childhood education and care can be said to have had a unified concept of educational work (for more on that, see Batistič Zorec, 2003). The Educational Program was officially in force until the adoption of the Preschool Curriculum (1999), but it was already in the mid-1980s that many preschool teachers began to modify educational practice towards a more 'child-oriented' education.

child's life in preschool was left entirely to the knowledge and sensitivity of each individual teacher.

Nowadays, hardly any expert or preschool curriculum opposes the notion that a safe and trustworthy climate in the class is one of the necessary (pre)conditions for the child's development and learning. The High/Scope program, for instance, advocates a supporting and developmentally encouraging atmosphere where positive social interactions prevail. The teacher's task is to listen to children, to be a partner in children's play and to develop mutual trust with them (Hohmann and Weikart, 1995). The authors of developmentally appropriate practice (Bredekamp, 1996, p. 9) claim that adults should respond to children's needs, wishes and messages quickly and directly. What is really important is friendly and relaxed communication and adults' positive responses, such as a smile, verbal encouragement, interest in and attentiveness to the child.

The aim of Reggio Emilia preschools is to create a friendly environment, where children, their families and preschool teachers would all feel good. Malaguzzi (1993, p. 56) describes preschool as an integral live organism, the space of living and forming relationships among children and adults which is in close connection with parents and the place where it is run. Children, with whom teachers develop personal relationships, become active co-creators of their own socialization together with their peers (Rinaldi, 1993, p. 105). Malaguzzi (1993) writes that a preschool group consists of independent individuals and subgroups with different inclinations and abilities who also form an interrelated community.

As opposed to education in the socialist period, when the teacher was responsible for "the moulding of relationships within the children's community" (Bergant, Kokalj and Levičnik, 1982: 15), the present Curriculum for Preschool (1999, p. 10) lists "the improvement of the quality of interpersonal relationships among children as well as between children and adults in preschool" among the aims of early childhood education and care. In their interactions with children, adults should be indirect leaders, providing a model of pleasant and friendly communication.

In addition to the similarities among the curriculums regarding the creation of a friendly, safe and trustworthy climate, it is relevant to point out some of the differences among them as well. Dýrfjörð (2006) maintains that the seemingly similar systems – developmentally appropriate curriculums and the Reggio Emilia approach – differ substantially: the Reggio Emilia approach promotes interdependence, whereas developmentally appropriate practice foregrounds the child's independence. New (1993) asserts that the developmentally appropriate curriculum tends to protect the child from negative emotions, while the Reggio Emilia approach primarily teaches the child to face his/her emotions (including negative ones) in a safe group environment.

ACTIVE LEARNING AND THE COMPETENT CHILD

In the 1980s increasing criticism began to be levelled at didactically oriented programs. It was particularly directed at the high structuredness of the programs, which were required to be replaced by more 'open' programs (e.g. Špoljar, 1993) giving more

possibilities to take into account children's individual characteristics, interests and wishes. Authors write about 'child-centered' (e.g. Bruce 1997) and 'developmentally appropriate' (e.g. Bredekamp, 1997) approaches as the opposition to and criticism of 'teachers-directed approaches' (e.g. Tzuo, 2007).

Modern preschool curriculums emphasize the principle of active learning either implicitly (by recommending certain approaches, forms and methods of educational work) or explicitly (e.g. High/Scope, Slovene Curriculum for Preschool). Marentič Požarnik (2000, p. 12) defines active learning as the learning which activates the student wholly, mentally and emotionally, and which the student sees as personally relevant and rooted in real-life circumstances. She counterpoints the transmission of certain knowledge with learning as transaction, that is, as a great number of interactions between the teacher and students and among students. Active learning, moreover, is also transformation – changing the notions of the world and changing one's own personality.

The principle of active learning is founded on the findings of cognitive psychological theories (Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner, Gardner and others), claiming that the child is active during the process of knowledge acquisition and construction. Cognitive theories share the emphasis they lay on the child's internal motivation for learning (the reasonableness of problems). Since the 1960s, when Piaget's theory was adopted in the area of early childhood education and care, developmental psychology theories have had an important influence on education in preschools. In the 1980s Vygotsky's sociocultural theory gained prominence, which was partly due to the criticism expressed at Piaget's theory. Both accounts are based on the assumption that receiving information from the environment is not a transmission of knowledge; the child, they claim, transforms information from the environment and adapts it to his/her way of thinking, while at the same time his/her way of thinking develops under its influence. While Piaget's theory calls attention to the dangers of ignoring the child's developmental characteristics, Vygotsky's theory emphasizes the role of culture and language in the process of the development of thinking (Batistič Zorec, 2003). But the authors adopt different perspectives on the relationship between development and learning. Piaget stresses the supremacy of development over learning (which follows development). In Vygotsky's view, however, learning plays a central role in development, which is, learning leads development. When children are assisted by a highly developed partner, they may attain a higher level within their »zone of proximal development« (Tzuo, 2007, p. 35).

Like many other modern curriculums, the Slovene Curriculum for Preschool (1999, p. 16) is based on the development-process approach and the principle of active learning: "The aim of learning in the preschool period is the process of learning itself ..., encouraging the child's own strategies of understanding, expressing, thinking ..." Preschools should ensure a learning-stimulating environment which develops the child's sensitivity and awareness of problems and accustoms him/her to the use of various strategies and tools when looking for answers.

The Reggio Emilia approach takes "a powerful image of the child" as one of its basic foundations – "it views children as strong, confident and competent" (Thornton and Brunton, 2007, p. 3). Malaguzzi (1993) asserts that children have numerous potentials, they are inquisitive, they want to progress, to communicate with others ... Instead of

children's weaknesses and limitations, we should primarily be aware of their incredible power and abilities to express themselves and to be active. What children learn is not an automatic consequence of teaching; rather, it is to a high degree the consequence of the child's own activities and the stimuli that the environment provides. If we encourage them to enjoy exploring, children's motivation can be boundless.

The view of the child as a competent being, predominantly established by the Reggio Emilia approach, is in accordance with the principles of active learning described above, while at the same it moves away from 'developmental appropriateness'. In her critical analysis of the differences between developmentally appropriate programs and the Reggio Emilia approach, Dýrfjörð (2006) writes that developmentally appropriate practice reveals a strong belief in psychological sciences, a universalistic view of humans and a certainty about what appropriate educational actions are. The Reggio Emilia approach advocates an emerging and open system, characterized by uncertainty and changeability, whereas developmentally appropriate practice is structured and rooted in the existing values and the belief in scientific 'truths'.

THE PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

The idea of the necessity of children's participation started in opposition to the dominant practice of the past decades, when the concern for children and their optimal development was in the forefront. It comprises the discourses on children's rights to participate, to be listened to by adults and to be taken into account (Moss, Clark and Kjørholt, 2005).

The participation of children is predominantly emphasized by the Reggio Emilia approach. Malaguzzi (1993, p. 60) writes that in their preschools children have an active role in the acquisition and construction of learning and understanding, and that they favour learning as opposed to teaching. Reggio Emilia educationalists (Rinaldi, 2006) stress that participation does not only refer to children's cooperation, it first and foremost signifies the way they are integrated in the educational process, which strives for the development of identity and the creation of the sense of belonging to the community.

In addition to participation, Reggio Emilia educationalists have recently been drawing attention to listening. It is very important for teachers to listen to the questions, answers and ideas of children without any preconceived ideas of what is correct or incorrect (Dahlberg, Moss and Pence, 2000: 60). Moss, Clark and Kjørholt (2005) explain that participation in the liberal rights discourse is habitually related to influencing and decision making, whereas listening is less individualistic and more relational. The authors demonstrate the difference between the two as the difference between 'I know my rights' (participation) and 'I want to be part of this' (listening). Listening, therefore, is more about an ethic of relating to others, which is more than just decision making and extends deep into everyday life itself.

The same three authors (ibid.) reckon that participation in the majority of preschools is more rhetoric than actual practice. From the interviews conducted with five-year-olds, Sheridan in Pramling Samuelson (2001) found out not only that preschool teachers

decide on what is allowed and what is forbidden, but more or less on everything else that takes place in preschool, ranging from the organization of work and routine to the choice of the types and contents of activities. Children think they can only decide on playing – what and with whom they will play, but not when. Turnšek (2009) reached comparable conclusions with the help of a similar interview carried out with children by Slovene preschool teachers. Children said that it was adult who took the majority of decisions in preschool, whereas they could only choose among the already given alternatives (e.g. where to go for a walk). They would like to play more, which the author believes shows that children still perceive the real curriculum as divided into obligatory work and free play.

THE PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN IN SLOVENE PRESCHOOLS

At the start of the Reggio Emilia project, whose aim was to implement certain elements of the approach in Slovene preschools, we wanted to establish the existing practice in Slovene preschools. The research we did for that purpose was to identify the situation as perceived by the preschool teachers and teachers' assistants who started participating in the project in 2009. As the instrument we prepared a questionnaire for preschool workers. There were 331 respondents taking part in the empirical research, most of them (96.4%) were women. A good three quarters (76.1%) were preschool teachers and slightly less than a quarter (23.9%) were teachers' assistants. Some results of the research, relevant to the issue of children's participation in the educational process, are presented below.

Table 1: Children's participation in furnishing and arranging play corners and selecting toys

The children participate in:	*Percentage*
furnishing playrooms	7.9 %
arrangement of the furniture in the playroom	45.9 %
choosing the types of play corners	83.7 %
arrangement of play corners	83.4 %
the choice (purchase) of the toys and materials	17.2 %
other	7.9 %

We were interested in whether children participate in furnishing playrooms, arranging play corners and choosing toys. Most frequently (83.7%) children participate in choosing the types of play corners for playing and their arrangement (83.4%). It's obvious that children can rarely participate in furnishing the playroom (7.9%) because it happens only once in few years, but they could participate more often than in less than a half of cases (45.9%) in arrangement of the furniture in the playroom. Only a small share of professional workers (17.2%) gives children the opportunity to choose the toys and materials that will be purchased for educational work.

Table 2: The method of including children in planning educational work

How children are included in planning educational work?	*Percentage*
The children are not included, because they are too young.	15.2 %
The children are not included, since that is the task of professional workers.	1.1 %
The preschool teacher plans herself, but takes children's wishes and interest into account.	39.0 %
The teacher prepares the theme and a basic plan, which she later discusses with children and takes account of their wishes and suggestions.	52.3 %
The teacher plans theme, content and activities together with children.	29.6 %
Other.	12.4 %

When professional workers were asked if and how children are included in planning educational work, only an insignificant share of respondents (1.1%) said that children are not included, since that is the task of professional workers. A somewhat bigger share said they do not include children in planning, because they are too young (15.2%). We suppose that this answer was mostly given by professional workers who work with the youngest children (from 1 to 3 years of age). As it was possible to choose more than one answer, supposing that professional workers can change their style of planning, we can only say that the rest (83.7%) of professional workers somehow include children's wishes and suggestions in their planning. We think that children are not really participating in planning with a further good third of professional workers (39.0%) who replied that the preschool teacher plans herself, but takes children's wishes and interest into account. The most common way of children's participation is that the teacher prepares a theme and a basic plan, which she later discusses with children and takes account of their wishes and suggestions (52.3%). Only in less than a third cases (29.6%) the teacher plans theme, content and activities together with children.

Table 3: Activities following children's wishes

How the activities following children's wishes are done?	*Percentage*
Children can only choose among the activities that the teacher prepares for them.	13.3%
The teacher proposes a couple of activities for children to choose from, but they can also choose activities following their own wishes.	65.6%
The decision is left entirely to children.	32.3%
Other.	6.3%

When answering the question about how the activities following children's wishes are done, preschool teachers were asked to choose only one answer; if they do them differently, the answer should reflect their actions on the day of completing the questionnaire. A good many respondents did not follow the instruction and chose more than one answer, which is why the total sum of shares exceeds 100%. The answers reveal that the most frequent manner of organizing free play is the preschool teacher proposing a couple of activities for children to choose from, but they can also choose activities following their own wishes (65.6%). In a third of cases (32.2%) the decision is left entirely to children. We believe that both answers are in line with the Curriculum for Preschool (1999). A good tenth of professional workers (13.3%) act as it was required before the introduction of the new national curriculum: children can only choose among the activities that the teacher prepares for them.

CONCLUSION

One of the key findings – and also criticisms of the instruments used in the research – is the discrepancy between the answers to the (too) broadly asked questions[2] and the answers to the more concrete questions, which reveals the inconsistency between the standpoints and actual practices of professional workers. We have presented the answers to the questions with a higher dispersion of answers, where the choices which the respondents deemed most appropriate were more limited.

The results gathered by the questionnaire show that children still do not participate enough in co-constructing their life in preschool institutions. As for planned topics, the prevailing practice is the teacher choosing the topic and children only adding some of their ideas. Our results are consistent with other national (e.g. Turnšek, 2009) and foreign (e.g. Sheridan and Pramling Samuelsson, 2001) findings, showing that children in preschool (co-)decide mainly about play, the materials and means for it, but not much about other activities and aspects of the work in class and institution.

Although we believe the Curriculum for Preschools (1999) to be modern and comparable with the current professional trends in the area of early childhood education and care abroad, it, nevertheless, makes no explicit mention of the participation of children. A potential reform of the national curriculum should, therefore, establish the participation of children as one of its key principles, since it is closely related both to a safe and stimulating climate in the class as well as active learning. We do realize, however, that a change in the curriculum will not suffice and that considerable effort will be required to change the practice of professional workers, particularly the dominant view that adults should lead and direct children. The results from some preschool projects within the Reggio Emilia project show that the two-year training of professional workers was a fairly successful step in this direction.

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SPIRITUALITY, FAITH AND EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The concept of 'affective education' is important for anyone who takes the education of the whole person seriously. If education is thought of as cognitive operations divorced from emotional states, moral awareness, aesthetic sensibilities and the embodiment of individual identity in the physicality of the person, there is not much to it but ideas. At worst, these ideas are 'transmitted' from teacher to pupil, and from pupil to examiner, without much concern for the personal, social, emotional, moral and spiritual aspects of the child. That, in turn, means scant regard for the *feelings* which are bound up in all such human experience. I take *affective education*, therefore, to be an essential part of the work of educators who refuse to accept the stunted concept of education as no more than the facilitation of cognitive development.

Fortunately, there is nowadays more general agreement than hitherto as to the importance of personal, social and health education (PSHE), and if not moral education, at least citizenship. More recently, the need to promote 'emotional literacy' and 'emotional intelligence' has come to be recognised, as in the UK framework for social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL). There is, however, less attention paid to the idea of *spiritual* education, even though spiritual experiences may be highly emotionally charged and connected to belief systems about which the individual feels passionate. The relationship between the emotions, the spiritual and faith, and their implications for affective education, require much deeper consideration.

Against the background of the philosophy of the emotions, and the ideas of the Scottish philosopher John Macmurray, this paper focuses on two vivid and highly personal experiences to examine a certain kind of spirituality and what this might tell us about the distinctions and connections between emotion, faith and spirituality. It argues that the development of the capacity to have such experiences should be the most fundamental purpose of education.

Key words: spirituality; faith; spiritual development; emotional education

I

I have chosen to approach my topic by way of two highly personal experiences, packed with feeling and emotion. To build a lecture around such experiences is dangerous, I know, for personal anecdotes can become tedious for the audience, and self-disclosure (especially where the emotions are concerned), is always risky. But I do not think I can even begin to do justice to this topic unless I root what I say in first-hand experience.

Here is the first of those experiences:

> On the 30th June, 2007, when I was in Turkey attending the 9th Biennial Conference of this Network, my step-daughter (whom I love dearly) was giving birth in the maternity unit of our local hospital in England. The previous day, my wife sent me a text telling me that her daughter was in labour and that the birth was imminent. I then heard nothing for the next 24 hours. For those 24 hours I was more anxious than I have been at any other time in my life. Other Network members could see how worried I was and sought to comfort me in my distress. I would like to think that they shared also in my relief and joy when, in the early hours of the morning, I received a text to say that I had a new grand-daughter, and that both mother and baby were fine.

That was a time of intense and very mixed emotions for me. First anxiety. Then fear and a feeling of helplessness. Then anger: why couldn't my wife text again to let me know what was happening? (I learned later, that she could not leave her daughter's side and that the use of mobile phones in the labour room is forbidden). Then a kind of terror in which I imagined the worst of possible outcomes. Then relief and joy. And finally, impatience to be home to see them all. And there was also a feeling of gratitude to Network members for their empathy and support, and (let it be said), shame and embarrassment at having unnecessarily burdened them with *my* anxieties.

I tell this anecdote, not in order to boast about my grand-daughter (although she is quite the most beautiful and talented child in the world!), but because it illustrates a number of things which are important in thinking about feelings, emotions and affective education:

First, that the feelings of any person are uniquely theirs; no-one else can have *my* feelings and no-one else can have *yours*.

Second, that emotions are always experienced *in relation to* someone or something. In this regard (the philosophers tell us[3]), they are different from *moods* or *states of mind*. I may have been in a pessimistic state of mind, or just feeling low on June 30th, 2007, but the specific emotions I experienced make no sense outside of the context of my relationship with my stepdaughter.

Third, although each person's emotional experience is uniquely theirs, it *does* impact on the experiences - and the feelings and emotions - of others. To realise this is essential not only to how we manage our interactions with others, but also to how we go about living a moral life.

Fourth, although unique to the individual, others can reach an approximation of one's emotional experience by close observation, receptiveness to the outer signs of inner feelings, and a little imagination, in the process we know as *empathy*. The capacity to empathise is essential for all effective interpersonal encounters, and absolutely crucial for teachers, therapists and others in the caring professions.

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[3] For example, Oakley, J. (1992): *Morality and the Emotions*, London: Routledge.

Fifth, being educated in the conventional sense - and I think of myself as reasonably educated - is no guarantee that one can handle one's emotions successfully - I didn't on that occasion.

II

While emotional development is often overlooked by those who make educational policy and is poorly understood by many teachers, it is encouraging that there is nowadays more general agreement about the importance of personal, social and health education - PSHE - and that the promotion of emotional 'intelligence' or emotional 'literacy' is seen as an important aim in PSHE. In England and Wales, a framework for what is called 'SEAL' - Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning - has been introduced over the last six or seven years, and that is to be welcomed[4]. While many people will immediately think of Howard Gardner[5] and Daniel Goleman[6] when they hear a plea for the education of the emotions, the idea is hardly new. To take just one example, here is the Scottish philosopher John Macmurray, (on whose ideas I draw heavily in this presentation), in a lecture in the 1930s. He asks:

> "How can we develop an emotional life that is reasonable in itself, so that it moves us to forms of behaviour which are appropriate to reality? Or to put the same point from a different angle, how can we be trained in our emotional life to recognise the real values in the world around us? The first condition of any attempt to answer this question [he continues], is that we should really recognise that our emotional life does need educating".[7]

Our emotions do, indeed, need educating, and not only so that we can "recognise the real values in the world around us", but because they lie at the heart of everything we do. To quote Macmurray again:

> "...[E]very activity must have an adequate motive, and *all our motives are emotional*. They belong to our feelings, not to our thoughts. At the most our thoughts may restrict and restrain, or direct and guide, our actions. They can determine their *form*, but *not* their substance".[8]

Moreover, for our own mental health, we need to be able to recognise, analyse, acknowledge, 'own' and express our emotions in authentic yet morally acceptable ways. Denial and repression lead only to depression and illness.[9]

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[4] For an outline of the SEAL initiative, see http://www.nationalstrategies.standards.dscf.gov.uk/primary/publications/banda/seal accessed 1/12/2010.

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[8] Ibid, p. 23, my emphases.

[9] For example, from the literature about deliberate self-harm, it is clear that repressed feelings may contribute to an unendurable emotional build-up For some, the only release they are able to find is through self-harm of one sort or another, and in extreme cases, through suicide. For some findings about self-harm by students and how the staff of schools and universities respond to and support them, see Best, R (2005): 'Self Harm: a Challenge for Pastoral Care', *Pastoral Care in Education*, 23(3), 3-11; Best, R (2006): 'Deliberate Self-Harm in Adolescence: an Educational Response'. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 34(2), 161-175; Best, R (2009): 'Students who self-harm: A case-study of prevalence, awareness and response in an English university'. *Pastoral Care in Education*, 27(3), 165-203.

III

So: it is good that the education of the emotions is at last beginning to be acknowledged as important in the personal and social development of children and young people. However, rather less thought has been given to *spiritual* development, even though heightened feelings and emotions are said to accompany spiritual experiences such as those associated with religious conversion or revelation.

In the UK, state schools are required by law to teach religious education and also to promote the 'spiritual, moral, social and cultural development' (usually shortened to 'SMSC') of children.[10] Although in the minds of many people, the spiritual and religion are synonymous (or at least, intimately connected), to assume that they are more or less the same is simplistic. To equate spiritual education with religious education is no longer tenable. This is partly because society has become increasingly secular over the years, organized religion has been in decline or crisis, and less people participate in the life of religious institutions. But it is also a reaction to the massive increase in labour mobility between states which has resulted in more multi-cultural, ethnically diverse societies. Societies now experience influxes of people of many religions so that, paradoxically, as the state becomes more secular it has to accommodate diverse religious beliefs and practices - and the tensions between them - to an unprecedented degree.

A commitment to promoting spiritual development in a form which is acceptable to those of every religion and none is the challenge, and this requires answers to three fundamental questions:

- What is meant by '*the spiritual*' or '*spiritual experience*'?
- What is involved in spiritual *development*?
- How can spiritual development be *promoted through education*?

No answer to the second and third is possible unless we can answer the first.

Attempts to answer the first question have most often resulted in a multitude of definitions and a near-endless inventory of 'characteristics' of spirituality or spiritual experience which look like a check-list against which experiences can be compared and classified[11]. But classifying an experience as 'spiritual' because it ticks enough boxes

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[10] For an insight into SMSC in the curriculum, see Bigger, S. and Brown, E. (Eds): *Spiritual, Social, Moral and Cultural Education*, London: David Fulton. Best, R. (Ed) (2000): *Education for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development*, London: Continuum.

[11] For example: "Elkins et al. (1988) identified nine non-religious components that constitute what they define as humanistic spirituality which are distinct from religious forms of spirituality: transcendence; meaning in life; mission in life; sacredness of life; ultimate satisfaction in spiritual rather than material things; commitment to altruism; idealism; awareness of the tragic; and fruits of spirituality". Gross, Z. (2010): 'The chicken grows as the egg decays: war and spirituality as contradictory and complementary forces', *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 15(3), p.200. In similar vein, Braun-Lewenson and Sagy report: "In a review of 73 articles, Chiu et al. (2004) concluded that the term ['spirituality'] is a multi-dimensional concept which is comprised of several elements. They offer several themes which are incorporated in the term, including seeking meaning and purpose in life... as well as hope, search for hope and feelings about the future ....". Braun-Lewenson, O. and Sagy, S. (2010): 'Sense of coherence, hope and values among adolescents under missile attacks: a longitudinal study', *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 15(3), p. 247. I have critically discussed the proliferation of definitions and characteristics of 'spirituality' in the publications of the UK quasi-governmental bodies responsible for the curriculum (The Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority – SCAA) and inspection of schools (the Office for Standards in Education – OFSTED) in the 1990s. See Best, R. (2005): 'Spiritual Development and Affective Education: an English perspective', in Karppinen, S., Katz, J. and

gives a poor idea of what it is like to experience spirituality 'from the inside' and tells us even less about how we might promote it. Moreover, it leads to a concept of the spiritual as including just about everything, and when that is true of a concept, the concept itself loses all meaning.

Another way of tackling the question is to look at and reflect upon personal experiences which *might* be called 'spiritual', and *feel* what they are like.

IV

And so, to the second of my experiences:

My granddaughter, who is now almost four and has a 15-month old sister, spends a day a week with us. A few months ago the following event occurred:

> It is 6.00pm. We are sitting at the dining-room table and have just finished our tea. Her favourite CD - 'ABBA Gold' - has been playing in the background and is just coming to an end. I tell her it is time to help me tidy away all the toys we have been playing with and which are strewn all over the floor in the next room (which we call 'the lounge'), before we take her home to her parents. This *must* be done: that's the rule. She does not want to, and continues to sit at the table. I coax her to leave the table and help me, but she stays put. "Are you tired?", I ask. "Would you like me to carry you in there like a baby?" She nods and I pick her up in my arms and head for the lounge. At this moment, a new disk begins, a traditional jazz band playing an old hymn in ¾ time. For no reason, I begin to waltz with her lying in my arms like a baby. We glide and swirl around the lounge, to all corners of the room, and even out to the kitchen and back. Her eyes are closed and she is still. She does not stir, and she does not feel heavy in my arms. Even though the track lasts for almost seven minutes, *I do not want it to stop*. As the tune comes to an end, I swing around and around and around, gradually coming to rest as I lay her gently on the sofa. After a moment, she opens her eyes, as though she has been in a trance, and gives me the most sparkling, piercing look. Then she leaps off the sofa and, with some reluctance, picks up a single toy as a token gesture towards tidying up.

I tell this story in an attempt to communicate something of what it is like to be 'on the inside' of a certain kind of experience. There are many things to be said about it:

First: Some people[12] might say that this is nothing more than an *emotional* experience. I do not agree. As the philosophers tell us, emotions have three components: *cognition*; *affect*; and *desire* (or want)[13]. This is sometimes illustrated by the example of

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Neill, S. (Eds): *Theory and Practice of Affective Education. Essays in honour of Arja Puurula*, Helsinki: University of Helsinki, pp. 65-84.

[12] Including my friend and colleague, the philosopher Roger Marples. See Marples, R. (2006): 'Against the use (of the term) "spiritual education"', *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 11(2), 293-306. For my reply, see Best, R. (2008): 'In defence of the concept of "spiritual education": a reply to Roger Marples', *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 13(4), 321-329.

[13] For a comprehensive analysis, see Goldie, P. (2002): *The Emotions. A Philosophical Exploration*, Oxford: Clarendon/Oxford University Press. John White takes a specifically educational perspective on this matter and emphasises *action* as integral to emotion. See White, J (2001): *The Child's Mind*, London, RoutledgeFalmer. A matter of dispute is the relationship between emotions and *rationality*, addressed (amongst others) by R. S. Peters and David Best. See Peters, R. S. (1972): 'The education of the emotions', in Dearden, R. F., Hirst, P. H. and Peters, R. S. (Eds): *Education and Reason*, London: Routledge and Kegan-Paul., and Best, D. (1988): 'Education of the Emotions', *Oxford Review of Education*, 14(2), pp. 239-249.

fear when we encounter a snake or a fierce animal[14]. We recognise it and know that it is dangerous (cognition); we experience affect (sick or sinking feeling in the stomach, breathlessness, panic etc); and we want to get away from it as fast as possible (desire). What I experience in the dance is not like that. The sensations I have are not a matter of cognition (what is it that I recognise or understand?); nor is there a desire comparable to what I feel when I see a snake or the emotions surrounding the birth of my granddaughter, or when I feel admiration, gratitude or envy in other situatuions. There is, however, *affect* - pure feeling of some kind not classifiable as an emotion: this is *not* 'just an emotional experience'.

Second: Once the dance has begun, the experience is without motive, it is not goal-directed in any way (I am no longer the slightest bit interested in tidying the toys away), but is something which just 'happens' - I am the recipient or object of an unexpected, unpredictable affect which happens *to*, and *in*, me[15].

Third: The experience was possible only in relation to another person - my granddaughter - and the nature of this relationship is of a special kind. It is characterised by an unspoken but profound level of *trust*, evidenced in her willingness to lie, passively, in my arms while I dance. This is, I believe, the product of the basic trust which Erik Erikson[16] sees as the primary developmental task of early infancy. It develops only where there are warm, nurturing attachments between babies and their primary carers, which build what Bowlby and his followers[17] call a 'secure base' from which the world can be explored and new experiences managed. I am reminded here also of the distinction made by Martin Buber between two kinds of relationship: the 'I-it' or subject-object relationship in which I relate to an object in the world as separate from me, and perhaps of use *to* me as I seek to live my life, and the 'I-Thou' relationship which (as the Israeli philosopher, Hanan Alexander puts it)

> "is achieved by letting go, at least in part, in order to receive another subject.... [It is] a subject-subject encounter [in which] we set aside interest in order to receive the other with no end in view other than the meeting itself".[18]

In letting go of self, we allow the other to fill our world and (in a sense) allow ourselves to be completed by them. This seems to describe our experience in the dance, and was communicated in the look we shared at the end.

Fourth: The experience is *total*. As I have argued, although there is a great deal of feeling in the experience, it cannot be reduced to a list of emotions. It is both more pure than emotion and transcends mere emotion. Moreover, it is also a *physical or bodily*

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[14] For example, see Oakley, J (1992) op.cit..

[15] For other examples of 'unexpected' experiences that may be construed as 'spiritual', see Cupitt, D. (1998): *The Revelation of Being*, London: SCM Press, p.8, and quoted in Best, R. (2005) op cit.. See also Hull, J. (1997): *On Sight and Insight. A Journey into the World of Blindness*. Oxford: One World Publications, pp.195-196. But note that their experiences are triggered by *indirect* (rather than) direct relations with others.

[16] Erikson, E. H. (1975): *Childhood and Society*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

[17] The psychology of John Bowlby and followers (such as Mary Ainsworth) was highly influential in establishing, first, the idea of 'maternal deprivation', and later, the whole area of patterns of functional and dysfunctional attachments between children and their primary carers. See Bowlby, J. (1951): *Child Care and the Growth of Love*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, and the three volume *Attachment and Loss*, published between 1971 and 1980 by the Hogarth Press, and later, by Penguin Books. See also Bretherton, I. (1992): 'The origins of attachment theory: John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth', *Developmental Psychology*, 28, 759-775. For an account of the significance of attachment in educational settings, see Geddes, H. 2006): *Attachment in the Classroom*, London: Worth Publishing.

[18] Alexander, A. H. (2009): 'Autonomy, faith and reason. McLaughlin and Callan on religious initiation', in Haydon, G. (Ed): *Faith in Education. A tribute to Terence McLaughlin*, London: Institute of Education, University of London, p.39.

experience: the sensations of holding and being held, of hearing and moving to the music, and seeing the child in my arms, are all in the realm of the senses. While the spiritual is often distinguished from the physical and the sensory - indeed, some people seek trance-like states which are supposed to leave the experience of 'mere' physical existence behind - I think it needs to be thought of holistically, with the physical and the sensory as essential components of the spiritual. To quote Macmurray yet again:

> "If we are to be full of life and fully alive, it is the increase in our capacity to be aware of the world through our senses which has first to be achieved".[19]

Fifth, there is something *playful* about this experience.

V

So: Spiritual experience - at least the kind of spiritual experience I am talking about here - is rich in affect or feeling, but is not reducible to emotion. It is holistic, involving our bodies and our senses as much as our emotions, and it occurs within personal relationships characterised by trust and the 'I-Thou' or subject-subject relationship in which the experience of two persons is not a means to an end but infinitely valued in itself. Note the centrality of the *person* in all this. Writing about Science, Art and Religion as the three generic ways in which humankind relates to the world, Macmurray (and this is the last time I will quote him), says:

> "Science grows out of our rationality in relation to *material things*. Art grows out of our relation to *living beings*. Religion grows out of our relation to *persons*".[20]

Sadly, religion loses this fundamental quality when it becomes stuck in the past (as in the dry teaching of dead or primitive doctrines), because it is no longer in touch with persons living out their relationships in the here and now. The same may be said of religion pre-occupied with the future - what it will be like in Heaven or Paradise, and how to get there - and of the kind of mysticism which takes leave of the physical world. Neither are more relevant to the kind of spirituality I am talking about than promoting a blind belief in the propositions of religious dogma.

Now: part of the paradox of a society which is both more secular and more religiously diverse and aware, is the UK Government's encouragement to religious or faith communities to set up their own schools with financial support from the secular state. For some people, such 'faith schools' (as they are called), might be expected to promote spirituality. Whether faith schools are better placed to do this than secular schools depends on what we *mean* by 'faith' and what actually goes on in those schools.[21] If by 'faith' we mean the promotion of religious beliefs - beliefs *that* some doctrine such as the Virgin Birth is true - then faith schools may do little or nothing to promote the kind of spirituality I am talking about. Being 'educated' in a faith school is nether a necessary nor a sufficient condition for spiritual development. However, a faith which is characterised, not by beliefs *that*, but by belief *in* the life and the soul of the community (with its living values, hopes, sentiments and mutual concerns) may be well-placed to

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[19] Macmurray, J. op.cit., p.40

[20] ibid, p.196, my emphasis.

[21] For the debate about faith schools, see Haydon, D. (Ed) (2008): op.cit., especially the chapters by Halstead, Pring and Brighouse. See also Marples, R. (2005): 'Against faith schools: a philosophical argument for children's rights', *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 10(2), 133-147, and Parker-Jenkins, M., Hartas, D. and Irving, B. A. (2005): *In Good Faith. Schools, religion and public funding*, Aldershot (K): Ashgate.

promote spiritual development[22]. But again, communities do not, it seems to me, have to subscribe to a specific religion for this to be the case.

That said, the capacity to enter an I-Thou relationship with other persons *does* seem to be necessary pre-condition for building such communities. That is one reason why schools need to find ways to promote the kind of experience I describe as 'the dance'.

But there is another, more fundamental reason: This experience is the epitome of what it is to be fully human, fully alive, and wholly at-one with another. It is what it is to love and be loved. To facilitate the development of a capacity for such experiences should be a fundamental purpose of education.

Space does not permit me to examine in depth what schools must do to achieve this purpose, but, again, the example of the dance may be instructive. This kind of experience cannot be planned; the most we can do is provide the conditions in which such experiences *might* occur. That experience involved an unexpected departure from the normal routine, shared experience in a relationship of mutual trust, the engagement of whole persons (emotions, body, senses etc), and an element of spontaneous play. It has about it something of the experiential, child-centred classrooms of the 'sixties and 'seventies, and the eccentricities of progressive schools such as Summerhill[23]. Formal classrooms in which children's lives are restricted to instruction in the concepts and facts of a traditional academic curriculum would seem positively to preclude such experiences. It is in contexts which take us out of the routines and rules of institutional life and lift us to new heights of joy and new depths of feeling, that our lives are enriched and made worth living[24]. The promotion of such experiences, and the opportunities to share, discuss, analyse and reflect upon them, is what I mean by spiritual education.

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[4] Bowlby, J. (1951): Child Care and the Growth of Love, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

[22] For an argument along these lines, see Alexander, A. H. (2008) op. cit..

[23] Summerhill School in Suffolk (England) is known throughout the world as a residential progressive school in which attendance at classes is optional and school policy is determined at weekly meetings of a council of teachers and students. The school was founded in 1921 by A. S. Neill. For more details visit www.summerhillschool.co.uk

[24] It is no accident that the experiences of 'outward-bound' type courses, educational visits abroad and residential field-trips are often remembered by participants as up-lifting and unusually rewarding. It is also in such contexts that the 'normal' subject-object relationship between teacher and student is likely to give way to deeper relationships characterised by greater mutual understanding and appreciation.

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RED SHOES ...WHEN MOVEMENT AND BREATH UNITE...

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ABSTRACT

The art-therapeutic process, from dance therapy to stage performance, occurs in regular weekly meetings, international creative workshops and different stage performances. Adolescents and children in wheelchairs open their stories already when they enter the stage; to the viewer they represent a great riddle which they are set into.

Years of systematic work and observations made me establish that a stage performance is a huge step on the path to independence, dance-movement expression and experiencing success and satisfaction. The progress can be seen in the group dynamics as well as in the initiative of an individual to actively participate in co-creating the art process. The most conspicuous is the progress in the field of gross motor skills, expansion and development of kinesphere and greater spatial orientation and the most important of all, collaboration in mutual communication between all dancers in a group.

Red Shoes dance performance arose as a reflection of creative 10-year period of the Vrtiljak dance group from CIRIUS Vipava. A joint dance project with a group of young dancers of the Terpsihora Dance Centre and established dancers of the M&N Dance Company represents exploring, testing and searching for new forms of creative dance movement; it is an expression of uniqueness of movement of a specific group of individuals as well as its universality. It is much more than just a well rehearsed choreography; a pair of dancers or all dancers speak to each other. Every small movement tries to blend with the already learnt movement pattern. These movements occur in a synchronized manner; a movement of one dancer is a response to a movement of another dancer and this continues in an uninterrupted chain of coordinated responses.

The red shoes are a metaphor for vitality which each of us has and which enables us to start creative work and search for new paths. They are given as a possibility which individuals can take advantage of by themselves or they need someone or something to help them dare a peek in a dance chest ... and find their red shoes. They represent patience, curiosity and trust, which we need to realize new ideas. A performance ends but the creative energy remains and it is eternal.

Key words: dance movement therapy, dance, communication, stage performance, children with special needs

Dance is for everybody a pleasant and necessary way of movement. It is mostly connected with amusement and relaxation, for some it even means a kind of a recreation or sport.

When we put together the pleasure produced by movement of different qualities and dimensions, when the rhythm brings up the need to intervene in the space around us, modelling that space by our body we can talk about dancing .... Dancing for everyone! Dance movement therapy (DMT) comes from this vision, the elements of which I include in my work.

DMT is the psychotherapeutic use of movement and dance which furthers the emotional, cognitive, social, physical and communication integration of individual. DMT is founded on the principle that movement reflects an individual's patterns of thinking and feeling. The language of dance is movement and the instrument is the human body. Through moving activities, a child becomes conscious of his body, perceptive functions, speech, higher mental functions, creativity, ability for school work, communication and interaction. The development of speech and development of movement are interconnected, as the speech is a motoric activity depending on muscular tonus co-ordination. Mastering the poise and mobility of body and head influences the breathing and speech organs mobility. Fine motor and complex movement activity of organs of speech is difficult to develop without the gross motor of the whole body being already developed or developing it at the same time. Speech requires compelled movement activity, which enables normal development. Movement is a capability of receiving different external stimulation and co-ordinating them with internal motoric stimulation. In the course of movement a sound is formed, which produces a voice and a word. Every sound has its own movement of gross motor, motor of the whole body. Rhythm, space, quality of movement, time, dynamics of movement - all these elements transform dance movement into a holistic communication.

Dance is divided into five elements already known to the child. Whenever a person moves, the body uses space, force and time, makes different shapes of movement, which is the fifth element of dance.

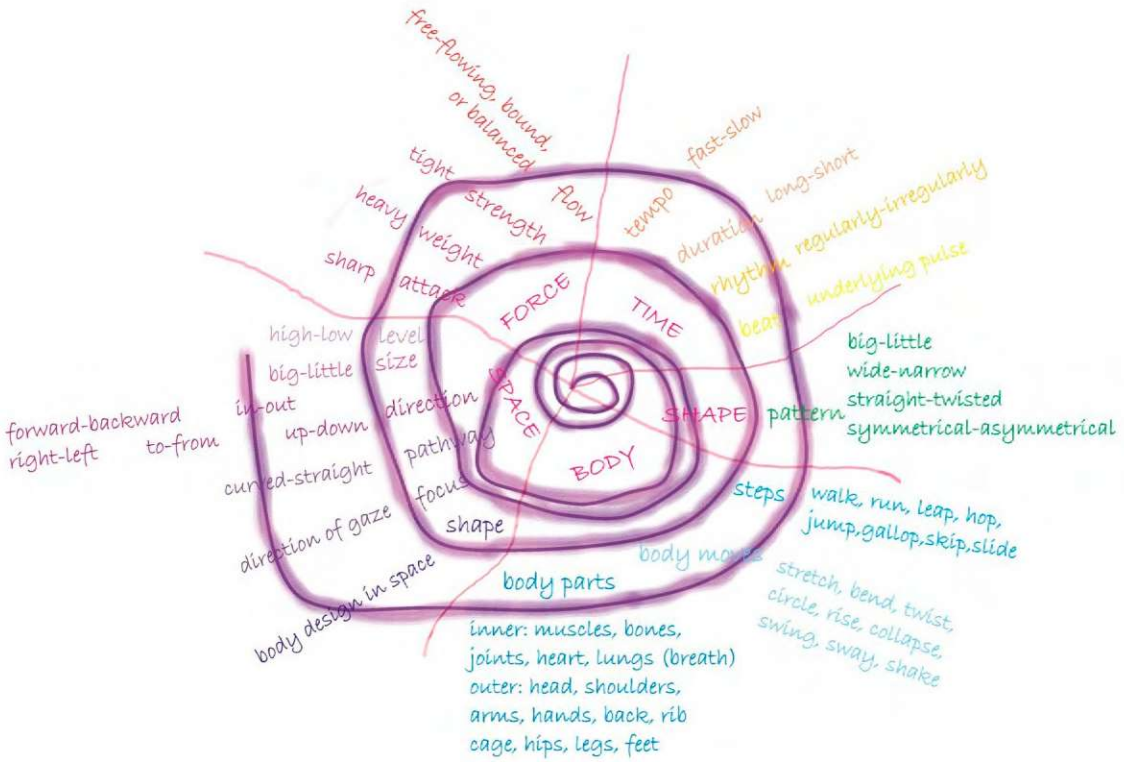

Table 1: Elements of dance, M. Joyce; First steps in teaching creative dance to children

In CIRIUS DMT is practiced as both individual and group therapy involving a direct expression and experience of oneself through the body:

- individual speech and language therapy,
- group speech and language therapy /orientation of body and orientation in space/,
- dance workshop /dance group "Vrtiljak"/ and
- playing therapeutic hours.

In the dance group "Vrtiljak", I have brought together young persons with combined disorders and their dance partners in the dynamics of an art therapy process. Every youth on a wheelchair had a co-dancer, who helped them and danced with them. All co-dancer are professional staff of CIRIUS Vipava and as permanent members of dance group we are co-creators of dynamics of art therapeutic process:

- regular weekly program of DMT workshops in three different working groups,
- process from therapy to dance performance - preparation and realization /different international congresses, conferences home and abroad/,
- International Creative Workshops Projects and
- Project RED SHOES cooperation with different institutions.

After many years of working with special needs children and adolescents I have found out that the field of improvisation or in other words creative movement that an individual is developing is indispensable rich means of communication. Margaret Mead (McCanslin, 1989, p 21) writes that 'we need to preserve imagination, trust the curiosity of children; adults should take care of the space, time and situations in which can children experiment with 'if it were', even before they fall to the grounds of the real

world.' The use of imagination is when discovering the movement of children and adolescents with combined disorders of utmost importance, on the condition that goals and work methods are adjusted to their age, abilities and interests.

THE ART OF CREATING AND STAGE PERFORMANCE

RED SHOES dance performance arose at the 10th anniversary of the Vrtiljak dance group with a wish to include children and adolescents with special needs into a joint dance project with a group of young dancers of the Terpsihora Dance Centre and established dancers of the M&N Dance Company and in this way emphasise the connective dimension of a dance.

There are moments when a movement and breath blend together...
Art is a powerful social communications tool, which offers us a safe expressive medium and free enough means of communicating our thoughts, experiences and emotions. Adolescents and children in wheelchairs open their stories already by entering the stage; to the viewer they represent a great riddle, which they are set into.
It is worth to try and dare.

"Each dance movement must be considered a special poem, performed by a great orchestra of the human body for springs from all this co-ordination." (Neubauer, 2006)

The expressive tool of a dancer is their body, which is much more sensitive than words, notes or colours. It has a certain shape and very complex muscle and nerve systems, together with the personality of each individual stresses Neubauer (2006). A human body must inspire a choreographer with curiosity. They have to be aware of the fact that each individual, each personality is unique; they have to understand it from physical, spiritual as well as emotional side. A choreographer must be able to imagine and feel different movements, steps, gestures and positions of different people and take all this into account when creating a dance composition.

Organisation is very important in creative work. It demands a good organisation of artistic process from a choreographer. Neubauer (2006) divided a process into five stages:

IDEA
↓
Music selection
↓
Music analysis
↓
Choreography
↓
Work with dancers
↓
PREMIERE

Table 2: The dance composition creation process

Music which is made of different motifs encourages dancers to concentrate on music and the way of movement they are performing. The use of different musical styles and compositions which have pauses or changes in tempo, volume and style can be of great help when developing the ability to listen. During the pause dancers remain in a certain pose, hold the position of the body or the wheelchair, which is important for understanding static movement, which is important part of movement vocabulary. For children and adolescents with combined disorders it represent a long term process, which demands a great body control and a good awareness of their own body and spatial orientation. A pause can be used to quickly give directions for further movement. A pause stops the flow of the movement and allows a change of direction, manner and tempo of subsequent movement. Adolescents and dance partners for better understanding of dance character and a more coordinated movement need a distinct rhythm which can be heard by all in a group. Only in this way can a group be co-ordinated in movement and commonly creative. We consider movement to be rhythmical when it is fluid, correct and balanced. Rhythmical flow depends on good a co-ordination. A further level in development is dance ability, which can be seen in creation of movement, rhythmical, spatial and dynamical components of dance. And this is where a disability with children I work with exists and this disability is quite considerable therefore the acquisition of these skills needs precisely determined dance-movement activities.

When creating a dance composition for a group we must look at a group as a whole, taking into account abilities and personality of each dancer individually:

- A dance group can move all over the dance floor, however you have to consider the number of dancers in a group, who divide the space among themselves. Dancers in a group can be divided in a way that they dance in given space with each other or against each other.
- Regarding the time line of a composition a group can move evenly, consecutively or/and, in opposition.
- The movement of a group in space can be performed in different formations: in lines, face turned forward, with backs to the audience, in profile, diagonally, in letter V shape / line, in letter A line / shape, zigzag, in circle or semi-circle, in square, in the shape of a rhomb, a cross... These formations can be changed during the composition or we can make various combinations to make use of the stage space.

A choreographer should know what the stage will be like, square or round, with the viewers on one or all sides. They should know what the surface for the performance is like – wood block flooring, parquet, a carpet or sheet covered stage, concrete, sand, grass – and whether dancer will slip on this surface. At the same time a choreographer should have an idea rest of the stage image will be like and how the dancer will integrate in the stage occurrence during the performance. A costume should complete choreography and not divert a viewer and dancer's attention from their movement. It's important how clothes behave during the dance. It's the same with any props – they should be used on rehearsals too. The important part of the performance is the lighting of the stage and the performers. With the lights we can emphasise certain dance moments.

A choreographer must take into account that every movement, not just dance movement, is happening in a space, takes a certain amount of time, is driven by the input of energy and it reflects the diversity of performing dancers. Dancers are the ones who enrich the dance composition with their personality and distinct movement, first each individually and then with the joint energy.

A dance performance "Red Shoes" is exploration of, experimenting with and searching for new forms of creative dance movement; it is an expression of the movement particularity of a specific group of individuals and at the same time its universality. Two seemingly incompatible concepts are intertwined. Each child from the Vrtiljak dance group has unique movement vocabulary, marked by physical impairment on one side and a great desire for movement expression on the other. The interaction between them and dancers who can control their bodies and movement aesthetics is a bond of mutual co-experiencing and co-understanding and it opens a new world of communicating. It is much more than just a well rehearsed choreography; a pair of dancers or all dancers speak to each other. Every small movement tries to blend with the already learnt movement pattern. These movements occur in a synchronized manner; a movement of one dancer is a response to a movement of another dancer and this continues in an uninterrupted chain of coordinated responses.

Red shoes in the dance performance are a metaphor for vitality which each of us has and which enables us to start creative work and search for new paths. They are given as a possibility which an individual can take advantage of by themselves or they need someone or something to help them dare a peek in a dance chest ... and find their red shoes. They represent patience, curiosity and trust, which we need to realize new ideas. A performance ends but the creative energy remains and it is eternal.

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CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION POLICIES: THE CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN MASKS OF DEMOCRACY

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to reach a wider understanding about the impact of democratic transitions across Europe, considering the experience of three EU member countries with diverse political histories: England, sometimes characterized as the oldest democracy in the world; Portugal that experienced a dictatorship until 1974; and Slovenia that restored democracy in 1991, after being a constituent state of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Our goal is to understand whether educational policies emphasise a political culture that values citizens' active participation, but simultaneously acknowledges the country's political history in terms of citizenship rights and duties.

Results will be discussed assuming that CE should give pupils the opportunity to critically engage with the past and that it should help students to find in their current opportunities for civic and political participation the context to exert their rights as citizens.

Key words: citizenship education, educational policies, transition to democracy, active citizenship

1. INTRODUCTION

In the last 30 years, formerly authoritarian countries across Europe have witnessed a transition to democracy with a deep transformation of their political institutions, which, particularly since the mid-nineties, was accompanied by a strong emphasis on the role of education in the promotion of (democratic and European) citizenship.

Since then, we have witnessed a renewed interest in citizenship both in terms of theory and research (Arnot, 2009), particularly related to the intensification of the signs

of political disengagement and apathy of young people and adults, both in emerging and consolidated democracies (Amadeo et al., 2002). Not surprisingly, there is a widespread emphasis on the role education should play to counteract these tendencies, and particularly on Citizenship Education (CE) which became the motto for educational reforms across Europe (Menezes, 2003).

Schools have historically played a central role in the promotion of the "ideal" citizen, particularly during the institution of the Nation State when the school was the vehicle for the "creation" of national identities (Habermas, 1992). European educational reforms, from the mid-nineties onwards, have assumed that both curriculum and school environment should promote social cohesion, mutual understanding, solidarity and the active and democratic participation of citizens.

However, there is an intense diversity in European history in terms of democracy and citizenship; some countries belong to the European Union, and some other do not; some countries have stable democracies since the World War II, while other experienced democratic transitions during the seventies (Portugal, Spain and Greece) or the nineties; in some European countries we find a vibrant civil society while in other countries the authoritarian structures appear to be still dominant.

Given this diversity, the aim of this project - *Participatory Citizenship Education in Transitional Societies* - is to understand whether educational policies emphasise a political culture that values citizens' active participation, while simultaneously acknowledging and taking into consideration the country's political history in terms of rights and powers of citizens, the struggles of different social groups, and the relevant historical transformations achieved.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted between November 2010 and April 2011 and it involves data from 3 selected European countries. It should be noted that these countries have different cultural and political traditions and have experienced a transition to democracy in different historical periods. Our data includes **Portugal** that, until 1974, has experienced a dictatorship that lasted 48 years; **Slovenia**, that restored democracy in 1991 and **England**, a Constitutional Monarchy, the so-called as the oldest democracy in the world.

Figure 1: Analysed Countries

Mainly, our study entails a comprehensive analysis of principles, intentions and key-concepts of Citizenship Education (CE) presented in each national legislative and policy documents (e.g., constitutions, laws, regulations, curricular guidelines, programmes and textbooks). Besides, we complemented this information using a multi-level approach with other range of resources (e.g., articles; existing databases; European surveys; web-sites).

Our study combines both direct and secondary sources and translations. In order to answer our research questions - Which approaches to Citizenship Education (CE) educational policies advocate for? How do these policy texts define and operationalize citizenship, specifically in terms of the role of participation and of a critical consciousness of the past? –, we have established 6 categories that will be discussed below.

3. RESULTS

3.1. CURRENT EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM (structures of compulsory education in each country)

Compulsory education in Portugal, Slovenia and England is based on a *comprehensive system*, which means that schools don´t practice a selected admittance of students (obviously, after compulsory education, higher education institutions have their admittance criteria). Compulsory education is 9 years Slovenia and England, while in Portugal, since the beginning of 2009/2010, it was increased from 9 to 12 years.

3.2. VISION OF CE IN EDUCATIONAL POLICY DOCUMENTS

On table 1 we transcribe concepts and aims of educational policy present in several laws and legal documents; policies and legal documents of these 3 countries reveal a central commitment to Citizenship Education. We can also state that, similarly to Taylor's (1994) point of view, they experience and share an "emphasis on the promotion of citizenship and participation in the democratic life, personal and individual development and on environmental issues, both at local and global scale." Concepts like critical thinking, engagement, participation, decision-making, pluralism and democracy are integrated in educational policies and curricula, which shows each country concern regarding citizenship and illustrates their particularities and definition.

Table 1: Vision of CE in Educational Policy Documents

Country	Definition
Portugal	"Education promotes the development of democratic and pluralistic spirit, respect for others and their ideas, open dialogue and free exchange of opinions in order to develop citizens capable of judge, with critical and creative thinking, the social context in which they are involved and engage in its progressive transformation." Basic Law on Education System [LBSE], 1986
Slovenia	Education should "foster the feeling of citizenship and national identity as well as the knowledge of Slovene history and culture."

	Law on Elementary School, 1996 "(...) the essential premise for the participation in the democratic processes is the development of a critical spirit, personal decision-making and autonomous judgment. School plays an important role in forming a democratic public and in the development of the capacity to participate in the democratic processes. The contents of curricula (variations of the so called civic education) as well as their forms are important for such a process." White Paper on Education, 1996
England	"Education for citizenship equips young people with the knowledge, skills and understanding to play an effective role in public life (...). Pupils learn about their rights, responsibilities, duties and freedoms and about laws, justice and democracy. They learn to take part in decision-making and different forms of action. They play an active role in the life of their schools, neighbourhoods, communities and wider society as active and global citizens." *in* National Curriculum Online

3.3. TERMINOLOGY, CURRICULA STRATEGY AND NUMBER OF HOURS OF CE IN CURRICULA

The analysis of how CE is defined in each country reveals diverse definitions and approaches. For instance, in Portugal, CE is a cross-curricular theme that permeates the whole curricula but also the focus on a non-disciplinary curricular space designated Civic Formation; in Slovenia, besides the cross-curricular approach, CE is the object of a compulsory subject Civic and Patriotic (7th grade) and an optional subject Civic Culture or Peace Education (7th to 9th grade); in England, CE is integrated in "Personal, Social and Health Education" (Key Stage 1 and 2), a non-compulsory subject, but it is compulsory at Key Stage 3 and 4 under Personal, Social, Health and Economic Wellbeing), as shown in Table 2:

Table 2: Terminology and Curricula Strategy of CE

Country	Definition
Portugal	"**Civic Formation**, the privileged space for citizenship education, aims to **develop students' civic conscience** as a fundamental element in the process of forming **responsible, critical, active and intervening citizens,** appealing, namely, to the interchange of class, school and community." Law Decree 6/2001
Slovenia	The curricula strategy for CE differs across the educational level: - 7th and 8th grade: **"Civic and Patriotic"** is a **compulsory subject** which occupies 1 hour per week. Additionally, through all Curriculum, Citizenship is a **cross-curricular** theme integrated in: - **Compulsory subjects** (e.g., Mother Tongue, Psychology, Philosophy, Sociology, Social Sciences, History and Geography); - **Optional subjects** (e.g., "Civic Culture" and "Peace Education") – 7th to 9th grade, 1 hour per week. (Krek & Sebart, 2008)
England	Key Stage 1/Key Stage 2: **"Citizenship" is integrated** into the non-statutory programme of the **non-statutory subject PSHE** (Personal, Social and Health Education):

- "This programme is non-statutory and schools are not required to follow it."
PSHE is linked to other compulsory subjects, such as: English, History, Geography, Sciences, Physical Education, etc.

Key Stage 3/Key Stage 4:
Citizenship is a **statutory component** of school curriculum. It is **linked to non-statutory subject Personal, Social, Health and Economic Wellbeing (KS3 and KS4).**
in http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages-1-and-2/subjects/citizenship/keystage1/index.aspx

As far as *Curricular Strategies*, data show that each country adopts, at least, two different approaches to CE, combining cross-curricular with curricular spaces or subjects:

- In **Portugal**, Law Decree 6/2001 stresses the "integration, with cross-curricular nature, of citizenship education, in all the curricula areas." Besides this, "Civic Formation" is also integrated in Personal and Social Education as a non-disciplinary area from 1st to 9th grade;
- In **Slovenia**, the Ministry of Education and Sports[25] establishes "Civic and Patriotic" as a compulsory subject in the 7th and 8th grade an it is also a cross-curricular theme through all curricula;
- In **England**, "Citizenship" is integrated into non-statutory subjects Personal, Social and Health Education (KS1 and KS2) and into Personal, Social, Health and Economic Wellbeing (KS3 and KS4). Additionally, "Citizenship" is also linked to compulsory subjects such as English, History, Geography, etc. This reform was provided by the Education Act in 2002.

Regarding the *Number of Hours of CE* in Curricula, Portugal and Slovenia prescribe 1 hour per week of CE in curricula while in England the National Curriculum doesn't establish a curricular schedule.

3.3. TOPICS AND FRAMEWORK OF CE IN CURRICULA

Comparing the three countries in terms of CE concepts and themes there are interesting variations. Portugal stands out for its lack of legal definitions around CE: contrary to other curricular domains, there are no specific programmes and textbooks are not recommended and seldom used; very recently, a group of experts was invited by the Ministry to define the official guidelines for basic and secondary education – but, as the government changed, the dissemination of these guidelines is very poor. However, the 1986 Education Act refers several topics such as "ecological education, consumer education, family education, sex education, accident's prevention, health education, education for participation in institutions, civic services and others"

Slovenia, as England, has a structured curricula concerning CE, even if the topics vary in each national context and school level. In Slovenia, CE starts with a local vision of citizenship (e.g. 7th grade - Life in the community, Family) to develop, in the 8th grade,

[25] *in* http://www.mss.gov.si

concepts related to Culture, Democracy and the European Union. The focus on political system and institutions only occurs in the 9th grade. Regarding CE framework, Krek & Sebart's (2008) highlights that schools can offer 150 hours of civic education but "they usually offer only the required minimum of 15 hours."

England embraces a perspective that focus on wider civic participation, critical thinking, the decision-making process and engagement with civil and state institutions. The National Curriculum relates CE to "social justice, human rights, community cohesion and global interdependence", critical skills, "Democracy and Justice", "Rights and Responsibilities" and an "active role as citizens". But, according to Best (2003:19), the "citizenship curriculum is conceived within a knowledge-centred (rather than a person-centred) tradition of education; that it seems to emphasize integration into the society and the development of attitudes and dispositions that are about responding to the world rather than changing it".

4. CONCLUSION

Our findings show that CE has a diffuse concept that entails curricula strategy (e.g. specific subject, integrated into another one and cross-curricular theme) and its contents; however, there appears to be a focus on knowledge (e.g. about the nation, the state and political institutions) and competences, such as "critical thinking, participation and active involvement" of pupils. However, researchers have criticized these CE policies stating that, contrary to the explicit and official discourse, they are promoting a conception of citizenship based on conventional actions (e.g., voting), reinforcing the pupil's passive role (Best, 2003:19).

In this sense, it is time to question if CE should be focused on the transmission of values, rules and knowledge about society, playing a function of mere social control where citizens are considered to be "spectators who vote" (Walzer, 1995:165) *or* if it should remove the contemporary masks of democracy in order to conceive citizens as authors, with conditions and opportunities to make choices and decisions, and "begin to consider the opportunities that students actually have for experience democracy in the schools." (Campos, Costa, Menezes, 1993:15)

The breath of the data collected and the richness of the topic justifies that we affirm this study as a continuing effort that will hopefully produce still further fruit.

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ADULTS RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING AND CITIZENSHIP DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

The main goal of this paper is to understand the extent to which adult civic awareness is fostered by New Oportunity Centres (NOC) – i.e., prior learning recognition, validation and certification Portuguese centers - and whether it can promote, among these adults, an active participation in civic and political issues.

Despite living in a globalised and democratic society, Portugal still has a rather low level of literacy and qualification, which is still a reminiscence of its historical, educational and political past. In order to solve this qualification gap and the increase of unequal social opportunities, the so-called NOC's have as their main aim to recognise, validate, and certificate key-competencies acquired by means of informal and non-formal learning.

Departing from this non-formal education, our research aims to understand the transformations of the field of AET, as well as if there is a *décalage* of explicit social-political project of NOC and its personal impact on adult citizens.

Results will focus two different conceptions about citizenship in EAT - experts and adults visions – so that we can analyse if NOC's emphasize an interaction and participation of these adults into their local communities and in the wider society.

Keywords: participation, adult education and training, recognition of prior learning devices, citizenship education, educational policies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Portugal, as well as other European countries experienced, in a recent past, an intensive dictatorship regime, considered one of the longest across Western Europe in XX century, which had profound impact on very different social fields, as well as on Portuguese's identity as full-rights citizens in a democracy (Azevedo & Menezes, 2008).

This regime, so-called "Salazarismo", lasted for 48 years – from 1926 until 1974 - and relied on the absence of speech, opinion and association freedom. Back here, the formal educational system entailed a directive and passive relationship to knowledge, considering pupils as blank sheets that needed to be fulfilled with the knowledge of the "Master". Besides this elitist and socially stratified pedagogy, Salazar's development

policy had profound consequences to economic, political and social development of Portugal.

In the 70's, following the World Crisis (Oil Crisis of 1973), the unemployment raised and lead several families to precarious situations. To overcome the economical instability of 60's and 70's, children left school to go to work in their early childhood and to contribute to the maintenance of their families. At this time, Portugal had a compulsory education of 6 years and the literacy reached 26%[26], as a consequence of economical and political instability.

The political regime also-called "Estado Novo" (1933-1974), was overthrown on the 25th of April, 1974 and, consequently, was established a Democratic State, based on political liberalism. Portugal's democratic transition and entrance in EEC (European Economic Community) had also profound implications on educational policies. This period was characterized by some political stability that allowed the development of educational Reforms, as well as the increase of compulsory education to 9 years. (LBSE, 1986, Article 6)

Considering the guiding lines of LBSE (1986), the educational system should "contribute to the achievement of the student through the **full development of personality, character formation and citizenship"** (LBSE, 1986, Article 3). In this way, highlighting the structural and conceptual transformation of AET, the aim of this research is to understand if there is a *décalage* in the conception and perception of citizenship and participation between experts that design RVCC framework and adults that attend this process.

2. METHODOLOGY

To achieve our aim, this research entails a **study case** analysis, based on the **Ecological Model of Human Development** (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986) which emphasizes an analysis of several life contexts, for instance: individual, family, NOC, community. It emerged from results shown in other studies such as in Azevedo & Menezes (2008) which states that "(...) parental influence in adolescents' political development is exerted through other channels, for instance family discussions about politics and parents role as models of participatory citizens."

Considering parents as role models, our target group embraces a group of adults that belongs to a Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences process of the Lower Secondary level (9th grade) in a NOC from Porto.

In order to answer some of our research questions – *Is there a décalage in the conception and perception of both citizenship and participation between experts that design RVCC framework and adults enrolled in RVCC? Does the shadow of the authoritarian past still accounts in an actual conception and practice of citizenship in the sense that citizens can think and behave autonomously, for themselves as actors in a democratic society?* –, our study regards the transformation of AET, as well as the comprehension of function, role, impact and importance attached to issues related to citizenship in the context of AET. At the moment, our data relies on 2 semi-structured interviews to experts of AET and 1 focus group with 6 adults that attend the RVCC process that we will start to expose.

[26] *in* http://www.novasoportunidades.gov.pt/np4/7.html#a0

3. RESULTS

3.1. REDEFINITION OF ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Article 2 of LBSE (1986:3068) indicates that the "**education system** should respond to the **needs that social reality arises**, (...) **encouraging the formation of free, responsible, autonomous and supportive citizens and promoting the human dimension of work**."

This Law promoted a strong focus on equal opportunities policy, as well as an awareness of the social needs. LBSE also reflects the strong focus on Continuing Education that had been promoted by UNESCO and developed since the 70's. However, ANEFA (Education and Adult Training National Agency) was only created in 1999 (13 years later LBSE) and the system of Recognition of Prior Learning has implemented, in 2001, the process of Recognition, Validation and Certification of Skills (RVCC).

In 2005, the OCDE (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development) study "Education at a Glance"[27] reveals that the average of education consists of **12** years. By comparing Portugal to other European Union Countries, we can verify that it has one of the lowest average concerning education (8, 2%) while Norway shows the highest (13, 8%).[28]

In order to reduce this gap, policies starts to focus the raise of qualifications level, emphasizing Lifelong Learning and creating the **"New Opportunities Centres"**, which promotes recognition of prior learning through a scholar certificate. Denying the learning associated with the transmission of knowledge, limited to a formal education system at a given stage of life, learning becomes crucial for the individual and for society, since education and training recognized as a "passport for life" (Castro, 2010). Table 2 shows education levels between 1998 and 2009:

Table 2: **Educational Level of Portuguese Population between 1998 and 2009**

Date	Without Educational Level	Basic Education			Upper Secondary Education
		1st Cycle	2nd Cycle	3rd Cycle	
1998	**18,9**	**34,2**	**16,2**	**14,1**	**10,4**
2001	17,3	33,0	16,4	14,8	11,7
2005	13,4	30,9	15,8	16,8	13,6
2006	12,8	30,3	15,9	17,0	14,0
2008	11,7	29,6	15,3	18,7	13,9
2009	**10,8**	**29,1**	**14,6**	**19,6**	**14,7**

Source: INE (National Institute of Statistics) *in* http://www.pordata.pt/azap_runtime/?n=4

Although illiteracy rates remain high, we found that it decreased 8, 1% between these years. Regarding Basic Education, data shows a **decrease** of population with lower levels of education, mainly in the 1st and 2nd cycle of basic education. At the 3rd cycle there is a significant difference: the percentage of people who hold this level **increases.** In this way, results demonstrate the impact of AET on educational level.

[27] *in* http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/education-at-a-glance-2005_eag-2005-en

[28] http://www.novasoportunidades.gov.pt/np4/%7B$clientServletPath%7D/?newsId=39&fileName=Iniciativa_Novas_Oportunidades.pdf

However, AET's framework has changed through time. Firstly, it had an individual and militant approach that emerged from popular context (e.g., NGOs). In the mid XX century, boosted by the 70's World Crisis, AET is oriented by economic interests that promoted its *operationalization* and, in this way, discourses about AET reveal the political concerns onwards development, employment, social cohesion and economic competitiveness. Consequently, adults where guided to training processes in order to solve the economic and social problems of Portugal, creating a link between educational policies and employment policies.

Later on XXth century, AET adopts a *functional* approach. Since then, RVCC is seen as an agency of socialization that should adapt adults to new changes. In this sense, based on a lifelong learning structure, adults are expected to be in continuous adaptation to new circumstances in order to follow the technological, economical and social advance.

CRVCC (Centers of Recognition, Validation and Certification of Skills) also changed its definition to NOC (New Opportunity Centers) and later on, between 2008 and 2010, we verify its progressive expansion due to external consequences (e.g. employability, professionalism, education levels) and an individual level approach (by the discourse of individual's life experience and its recognition of acquired skills). Between 2006 and 2010, NOC almost doubled its structures (270 in 2006; 454 in 2010). (http://www.novasoportunidades.gov.pt/np4/estatistica)

3.2. EXPERTS PERCEPTION

Currently, NOC are a naturalized subject present in the daily public discourse and they are strongly emphasized by media. Additionally, they have become a key issue both in casual and non-formal conversations. On one hand, its positive aspects are enhanced and translated in its progressive amount of institutions, which also promotes more job offers. But, contrary to this scenario, there are negative aspects that are constantly being reinforced, such as the facilitator label of this process that allows getting quick scholar certificates in an easy way.

Departing from this national framework, we questioned experts about AET framework, its explicit social-political project and conception of citizenship. We could verify that their visions differ.

Considering the Evaluation of RVCC System, expert 2 reveals a wider and consistent point of view, stating that *"I believe it became with too many cognitive demands, too much encyclopedic, perhaps"*, while expert 1 shows a tenuous opinion towards this category: *"what we can expect is to have a plausible evaluation"*.

As far as the role and function of NOC is concerned, expert 1 highlights the function of exert a *"personal, civic and cultural"* influence, as well as the feeling of *"citizenship"*. Though, expert 2 clarifies that RVCC as "(...) *an effect that is undeniable and which may have repercussions after the process and not so much during the process."*

Analysing the impact of NOC in adults, experts consider that this one is positive due to *"the social capital that will have good returns"* (expert 1). Besides it, there is an engagement in lifelong learning once that adults *"leave with the willing to continue to learn wherever and however it may be, such as those who leave the 9th grade and start asking «where do I sign to the upper secondary?»"*

On experts view, the conception of citizenship which is present in NOC reveals the *"marriage between two tradition of education: to enable citizens to be more active, more*

creative; and to see a different conception in education, to prepare people for the needs of the economy, for the world of work." (Expert 2)

3.3. ADULTS POINT OF VIEW

To these adults, Citizenship has a diffuse conception. They refer that *"citizenship is all of the things"*. They also stress that there are *"acts that may change the future of our future, like recycling and don't throw away garbage into the floor"* and associate it to concepts like respect, freedom of speech, duties and rights. Though, some opinions highlights that *"we have more duties than rights... Rights are a little bit limited."*

Regarding participation issues, these adults reveal that *"we have a lack of people who manifest themselves when they disagree with something"*. Similarly, adults indicate that there is a lack of critical conscience as well as an informed decision-making once they realize that *"people had to vote for a political party or an ideal that they felt it was right and not null."*

Considering participation experiences, we verify that there is still an oppression going on once that they *"have afraid to on strike"*. On the other hand, we have also found adults that enhance characteristics of the dictatorial regime and its control: *"today we have no respect towards all institutions, by the police, by older people... Considering my father's story and thinking, we now have too much freedom"*.

Their discourse also clarifies that this oppression influences their expressions and ways of dealing with problems. Regarding these conclusions, they say that *"when I have problems, I try to ignore it and go around it"*.

When we focus on their participation and involvement in their community, they reveal some apathy once that *"(...) what is certain is that neither he does nor the other"*. When they actually participate, they usually do it in *"scouts group"*.

4. CONCLUSION

Our findings show that through time, NCO and lifelong learning policies have became extremely politicized. In this sense, RVCC process has been a constant target of both media discourses and politicians from opposition parties, which, combined to a generalized social lack of information about this process, promotes its non-recognition. Adult's point of view about citizenship issues reveal that even 37 years after our establishment of democracy, Portuguese still demonstrates signs of oppression in their jobs and in their daily live.

In order to transform citizens as authors of their lives in his country it should be promoted a critical and reflexive conscience that could enable adults to think and express themselves freely as well as assuming themselves an important role and contribution to local and global society. In this sense, NOC could be a vehicle to promote citizenship, adult participation and democratic experiences in a wider level.

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THE NEO-LIBERAL AGENDA: WHO CARES?

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ABSTRACT

There is widespread concern in the UK at the shift in responsibility for care and wellbeing from the state to the individual and community. The so-called 'Big Society' and the accelerated dismantling of the welfare state ask many questions about the ability of many of our more vulnerable members to receive the care, support and protection that they need.
The main focus of the paper will be on education and the impact that this situation might have on the emotional and social wellbeing of children in schools against a background of financial stringency, growing disparities between rich and poor, considerable uncertainty about the direction of travel of the present coalition government re policy and a school system that is wedded to 'high stakes' testing and measurement by results.
In the context of social and emotional wellbeing it is also appropriate to ask wider questions as to who will or can provide it and to what extent can we, in the UK, leave care largely to market forces and a neo-liberal rationale for localism and devolution of responsibility.

Key words: care, wellbeing, neo-liberalism, Big Society

INTRODUCTION

The role of the state, the individual and the community in relation to care and wellbeing is highly contested. Under a welfare state, universal services, the public good, concerns for equality and social justice and 'big government' to service these are the order of the day. The history of the Welfare State in the UK goes back to the mid 1940s at the end of the Second World War with its centre piece the establishment of the Health Service in 1948. We are now living in a post-welfare society which, it will be argued, is in the process of being systematically dismantled with consequences for all those who work in, or depend on, the public sector. We are currently witnessing an assault by strong neo-liberal forces with some resistance from those who adopt a more communitarian position.
Arguably care is one of the most significant social issues for our society to face as family patterns have changed, medical advances and demographic changes shift the burden (and cost) of caring and more people are more individualistic in behaviour and outlook. A society might well judge itself partly on the quality of care that it provides especially to the most vulnerable. What and who we care about and who we care for are significant markers of a civilised society. It will be argued that neo-liberalism fails to recognise society's responsibilities.

NEO-LIBERALISM

How then would we define neo-liberalism? Neo-liberalism describes a set of principles which are anti-socialist, anti-welfare and anti-statist in nature (Clarke, 2004) and embrace the following: a shift of responsibility from the centre to the community (localism); the primacy of the individual with a responsibility for maximising their potential; the state being small on 'bureaucracy' and big on 'control'; the primacy of the market and competition to bring about choice, economic efficiency and prosperity (Olssen et al., 2004). The neo-liberal tenet of 'more market' (Larner, 2000) means deregulation and privatisation in the move to restructure the welfare state.

NEO-LIBERALISM AND THE UK

Neo-liberalism is a global force but manifests itself differently in different countries. In the UK it dates back to the 1980s and is closely associated with the conservative Thatcher government of 1979-1997. During a period that is described as 'high Thatcherism', we saw the privatisation of public services and transport, the emasculation of the unions, most famously the miners, and attempts were made to change the National Health Service and Education along neo-liberal lines but the attempts were not entirely successful. A more recent manifestation of neo-liberalism and one what preoccupies us in the UK is the coalition government's Big Society which, at a time of financial stringency, is having a particularly devastating effect on public services. In the UK, the economic cuts that are affecting most if not all countries of the EU are particularly harsh in the UK since they have been 'front-loaded' and it is estimated (by the Government) that half a million public sector jobs could be lost over the next 4 years (Winnett and Porter, 2010).

4 BIG SOCIETY

What then is the Big Society? The Big Society is a policy initiative that was launched prior to the 2010 election and it presents an alternative to 'Labour's failed government approach' (Conservative Party, 2010). The Cabinet Office states that there are three key aspects to the Big Society: community empowerment, opening up public services and social action:

- giving local councils and neighbourhoods more power to take decisions and shape their area ...replac(ing) the old top-down planning system with real power for neighbourhoods to decide the future of their area.
- our public service reforms will enable charities, social enterprises, private companies and employee-owned co-operatives to compete to offer people high quality services ... help(ing) get Britain off welfare and into work.
- encouraging and enabling people to play a more active part in society (and) encourag(ing) people to get involved in their communities.

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Whilst it would be fair to say that the British public has not understood what the Big Society is, one could argue that there would appear to be little to find offensive in the above and that the neo-liberal claims above are overstated. The above statements appear to bring together a collection of democratic, enabling, localist and

communitarian aspirations infused with notions of citizenship and social justice. Who would not be in favour of choice, accountability, greater efficiency and effectiveness, more enterprise, local decision-making, a relaxation of State control, power in the hands of the people, decisions taken by users? For many it is a logical response to a recognition that 'late capitalism' and the State cannot deal with all of society's ills and universal services are beyond the capability of economies at this time.

Behind the desirable headlines, however, the discourse is of the consumer, commissioning, procurement directives and compulsory tendering, unring-fenced budgets, 'muscular conservatism', Vanguard Communities. The Big Society can be seen as a technocratic, rationalist, arrogant and ideologically driven movement which is breath-taking in scale and frightening in reach. There are fears that the private sector will come in to fill the vacuum left by the State at the expense of the poor.

5 POST 'EVERY CHILD MATTERS'

Let us turn our attention towards children and young people. Many of you will be aware that, in the UK, a dramatic shift in the way in which provision for young people was introduced in 2003 with the ambitious ten-year agenda called Every Child Matters (ECM) (2003). Integrated services, multi-agency teams, information-sharing practices and integrated resources were put in place to provide for 'joined up' provision for children in response to Laming's report (2009) that followed a high profile child abuse case. The success of this ambitious project rested and rests on deep-rooted cultural change as well as sophisticated protocols for inter-agency working and adequate resources. Evidence would suggest that success to date has been variable across the country and sectors (Harris and Allen, 2011). This is understandable when one considers the size of the public sector that relates to children and young people and the complexity of 'joined up' provision and the relatively limited life of the initiative.

In terms of schools, that were to be 'at the epicentre of this reform' (Harris and Allen, 2011: 405), the pace of change is breathtaking as the government seeks to raise standards and increase the threats to underperforming schools (which can be taken over by neighbouring schools or companies). The Government is committed to turning schools into academies and encouraging private and community interests to take over schools and let market forces have their way. In the first tranche of new academies (as opposed to Labour's academies that were based on narrowing the gap of achievement and transforming underperforming schools), the Government encouraged all those with an 'outstanding' inspection rating to apply to become academies. Predictably, this favoured prosperous schools and localities and penalised the rest. A recent shift in policy invites every school to become an academy and includes 700 underachieving schools. This means that schools cease to be under local authority (LA) control and the land and the funding that the local authority had becomes effectively 'privatised'.

Let us turn our attention to look at how children might well be affected more widely and the care and attention that they need put in jeopardy. First of all, at a general level, the society that they are growing up in is becoming increasingly divided which, if one follows the 'Spirit Level' argument (Wilkinson and Pickett (2009), can have a profound impact on the lives of all UK citizens. According to Save the Children Research (2011), 1.6 million children are in 'severe poverty' (half the median family income (minus housing costs) and lack a basic necessity) and 29 LAs have over 20% of children in that category. Public sector job cuts, reductions in benefits risk increasing this number

especially in areas of deprivation. Worklessness is a significant risk factor as is family status, housing and disability.
A particularly vulnerable group are young carers. A recent documentary on UK TV entitled 'Too Young To Care' revealed that there might be over a million children who care for a sick or disabled relative in the UK. In other words, according to these statistics, more than one child in twelve, some as young as five, has a caring role. The 2001 Census (Office of National Statistics) puts the figure at 175, 000 but it is recognised that this figure might well seriously underestimate the position.
Children with Special Needs (SEN) are a particular concern in an atmosphere of high stakes testing and shifting patterns of school admissions. The unattractiveness of a special needs child with learning difficulties in a high performing school is clear. A particular problem is unring-fenced budgets. Money can be allocated to schools but used elsewhere to meet other pressing budgetary needs. The services are often very specialised (brailling, behaviour interventions) and costly and cuts can result in loss of staff and expertise. The local authorities, for example, held 10% of the schools budget for special needs and other things. Now the money will go directly to schools who may or may not have the resources to meet the needs and will no longer have the Local Authority to fall back on as their services dwindle. A LA in our region is losing all three SEN advisors this summer.
Cared for children are another group who might well suffer. A colleague of mine is a counsellor for a London borough that has over 300,000 people. The LA are 'corporate parents' for over 400 children. There are several prosperous areas but a great deal of social economic challenge. Waves of immigration have produced a rich ethnic mix. 75% of the primary children have EAL and 65% of the secondary children. Coping with the needs of such a diverse community as the funding is being rapidly taken from the authority is extremely stressful. We refer to a 'postcode lottery' meaning that some LAs might well wish to and be able to pay for particular resources and services and others not.
The ECM agenda as much as it still exists is 'extremely sensitive to high-profile interruptions and is vulnerable to contextual pressures' (Harris and Allen, 2011: 416). The savage cuts and the resulting tranches of redundancy have left many LAs with few remaining staff who are overworked and with low morale and faced with a huge agenda. The emasculation of the LAs is almost complete and their role often largely reduced to commissioners of services. One LA Suffolk reduced its staff from 20,000 to several hundred. Such change at such a pace cannot guarantee the continuity of provision that is required and ensures that expertise and continuity of care is frequently lost at a stroke.

6 SO WHO CARES?

The neo-liberal agenda is clear where the responsibility lies, not with government but with the individual and the community. The government is unwavering in its radical agenda anxious to bring about the most radical changes in the early years of office. As our society faces increasing pressures in terms of its care needs and the UK society is becoming increasingly divided, there are serious issues to address. Whilst it must be right that families assume their responsibilities and communities be encouraged to undertake local initiatives to provide care and support, there must be structures in place to provide a co-ordinated response. Harris and Allen (2011:415-6) in their research on young people's views of multi-agency working see a need for the work to be integrated into school, community and locality. They go on to say:

This requires alignment and clarity of vision, centrality of purpose and coordination of delivery. As a consequence, the influence of the LA has a very significant role to play in terms of establishing infrastructure and momentum for multi-agency working.

Without the LAs to care and play a central role, it is left to the market to decide. The result may well be a more fractured society which cares less.

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POSSIBILITIES AND WAYS OF PROMOTING AFFECTIVE EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the possibilities and ways of promoting affective education in primary school curriculum. The guidelines of the *National Curriculum Framework* (Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, 2010) were therefore first analyzed in the context of promoting affective education in the *Social Sciences and Humanities Area* during the first educational cycle. Secondly, empirical research identified education students' attitudes concerning the importance and possibilities of promoting affective values during the teaching process, and their awareness about the affective aspect of the educational process.

The results of the research are directed towards better understanding of both the affective education among students that are training to be teachers and the affective aspect of education as a process which develops and co-exists simultaneously with cognitive aspect. Based on the results we emphasize the inclusion of affective values in all educational documents as well as the promotion of all affective values during the teaching process. Also, we take that is very important to develop students' attitudes about the importance of all social factors in promoting affective values and to include the themes about affective education in pre-service and in-service teacher training and to prepare them for promoting affective values in the teaching process.

Key words: curriculum, teaching process, education, values, citizen.

INTRODUCTION

Most educational reforms have paid more attention to cognitive initiatives that purport to increase the learning outcomes of students with less attention given to affective reforms. "The persistent focus on policies and programs that emphasize thinking ignores the role of emotions or relationships in the educational process" (Friend, Caruthers, 2009:30). The expansion of scientific facts and therefore teaching content at the primary school level often leads to a decline in affective education. However, besides its educational and functional aspects (the acquisition of knowledge and skills), school also

has a significant formative role in the development of pupil's personality (the acquisition of values and attitudes). In that view, every teaching process should enable the realization of not only cognitive, but affective educational goals as well. That kind of directed education and teaching enables the actualization and activation of the school's affective aspect, which is often marginalized and neglected in the educational system.
De Souza (2005 in Buchanan, Hyde, 2008:310) has argued that "effective learning takes place when the cognitive, affective and spiritual dimensions function in complementary roles" and some other authors emphasize that the affective dimension of learning is concerned with the reactions, feelings and emotions of learner (Hyde, 2006 in Buchanan, Hyde, 2008).
This paper discusses affective educational goals which aim to develop individual self-esteem, respect and tolerance towards others, acceptance of mutual differences, gender equality, ecologic awareness and responsibility towards the environment, and sense of personal and social responsibility. Achievement of these goals through the implementation of different contents is directly linked to the achievement of moral, civic, ecologic and esthetic education. A complex network of affective educational values is therefore indispensable for the formation of a comprehensive and wholesome young individual with all his/her qualities and positive characteristics, an individual that develops as an informed, active and responsible citizen of a democratic society.

AFFECTIVE VALUES

"Attitudes and values are the basis of the affective domain, so teaching and learning in the affective domain means the development of attitudes and values" (Savickiene, 2010:42). The affective domain consists of four factors: self-identity, self-value, self-directedness and self accountability (Kang et al., 2010). Modern education has increasingly involved some new educational programmes which are based on research which promotes the emotional and cognitive factors in educational communications (Bidarra, Martins, 2010).
Some authors take that affective learning involves changes in feelings, attitudes and values that shape thinking and behavior (Neuman Allen, Friedman, 2010). Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom, 1956, 1964 in Neuman Allen, Friedman, 2010) comprises a hierarchy of learning outcomes, and Krathwohl's taxonomy is credited with a model that includes five levels: receiving, responding, valuing, organizing and characterization (Krathwohl, 1964 in Neuman Allen, Friedman, 2010)[29].
A key concept of the *affective values* is a permanent orientation of the individual regarding socially desirable traits, that are also socially determined and reflected in the central social institutions, and the individual acquires them during the process of socialization. They can be modified in time and in society, and should be considered interdisciplinary (Piršl, Vican, 2004). The educational values can be taught within specific subjects such as Moral Education (Jie, Desheng, 2004), Education for Human Rights, Intercultural/Multicultural Education etc. Brubaker et al. (2010) offer a case example of how social justice paradigm provides a framework using values exploration that can effectively support students as they consider the consequences of choosing a particular theory. They emphasize that, rooted in constructivism and multiculturalism,

[29] Levels of teaching and learning in affective domain according to Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia (1964 in Savickiene, 2010:43) are receiving/attending, responding, valuing, organisation, internalisation.

this social justice perspective gives a fresh way for students to understand values alignment, with a particular emphasis on community responsibility.
Based on the opinion of these authors and resources (European Commission, 2005) we have made a questionnaire in which we included the values which determine the best set of moral values, and are required for a democratic society. They are: *self-esteem, respect and tolerance towards others, acceptance of mutual differences, gender equality, responsibility towards the environment, ecologic awareness, personal responsibility, social responsibility,.*

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL ENTITIES IN EDUCATION

People and relationship, and the social interactions this invokes, are comprised in the primary schools. "Each social encounter evokes an emotional response, sometimes immediately visible physically in the participants" (Crawford, 2007:87). The core of a school lies in relations such as teacher-student, parent-teacher, teacher-teacher, learner-colearner. These relations may be different but they are at the heart of education. Many experts of education discuss the question *Has a school an affective or only an educational role?* Concerning the current crisis of affective education in schools, some people blame the families (mothers and fathers), peers, teachers or other pedagogical staff in schools; and some have an opinion that local communities are responsible of promoting the affective values of pupils. We think that all of them are responsible for promoting affective values of pupils.

METHODOLOGY

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

The qualitative research identified the possibilities and ways of promoting affective education in primary school curriculum through *National Curriculum Framework* (Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, 2010). This document has been analyzed in the context of promoting affective education in the *Social Sciences and Humanities Area* during the first educational cycle.
The empirical research has identified education students' attitudes concerning the importance and possibilities of promoting affective values during the teaching process and their awareness of the affective aspect of the educational process.

HYPOTHESES

Hypotheses of empirical research were:

1. *National Curriculum Framework* includes affective values and all students (Pula's and Zagreb's) consider that all expected student achievements are important.
2. The students, future teachers, are highly aware of the implementation of affective values in the normative educational documents and of the importance of promoting all affective values during the teaching process.
3. The students take that all social entities in education are important for the development of affective values in pupils.

PROCESS OF RESEARCH

First, we have analyzed the *National Curriculum Framework* in the context of promoting affective education in the *Social Sciences and Humanities Area* during the first educational cycle.
Secondly, we have conducted a questionnaire on the Pula's and Zagreb's students – future classroom teachers.

SAMPLE

A total of 106 students from the University of Pula & Zagreb (Republic of Croatia) includes 51 students (48,1%) of the University of Pula and 55 students (51,9%) of the University of Zagreb. 41% of students were from the 4th year of study and 59% of students were from the 5th year of study, even 97% of students were female.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS AND DATA PROCESSING

The instrument for empirical research was created specifically for this research and consisted of a number of questions. Most of the items of our instrument were close-ended statements (Likert's – scales). Cronbach's alpha is 0.92.
The results are processing on descriptive (M, SD) and correlation (t-test) statistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of Croatian *National Curriculum Framework* shows that it includes affective values (educational values) such as human dignity, freedom, justice, social equality, peace, conservation of natural and human environment, responsibility, solidarity, democratic values, dialogue and tolerance. These values are mostly included in the Social Sciences and Humanities Area (2010:131-135). The fundamental educational values of this document arise from the commitment of Croatian education policy to a complete personal development of the students and they are mandatory for all teachers and associates, in all educational cycles, all areas and subjects, and all schools and extracurricular activities. In order for schools to be able to contribute in attaining such values and objectives, they must collaborate with families and local communities.
The students recognize offered values as very important. Students of both Universities responded equally to the issue of assessment of realization of student achievements:

a) from M=4.07; SD=0.68 – *"identify and agree on the ways in which they can contribute to the well-being and reputation of their family, school and the community"*
b) to M=4.66; SD=0.53 – *"demonstrate understanding of values such as care, solidarity, justice, equality, love..."*

The 5th year students also find that, in teaching, it is more possible to *identify and agree on the ways in which they can contribute to the well-being and reputation of their family, school and the community*. On the contrary, the 4th year students find that, in teaching, it is more possible to *participate in the process of making joint decisions and rules vital for life in a class and school* (Table 1).

Table 1: Differences in the attitudes of students about achievements among students of the 4th and the 5th years of study

Student achievement	Year of study	N	M	SD	t
Identify and agree on the ways in which they can contribute to the well-being and reputation of their family, school and the community	4th year	44	3.91	0.64	t_{104}=2.06; p= .042
	5th year	62	4.18	0.69	
Participate in the process of making joint decisions and rules vital for life in a class and school	4th year	44	4.11	0.69	t_{104}=3.35; p= .001
	5th year	62	4.53	0.59	

As opposed to their colleagues from Zagreb, Pula's students find that, during teaching, it is more possible to *explain, adopt and follow the code of conduct and show respect in relations with peers and with adults.* On the contrary, students from Zagreb find that, during teaching, it is more possible to *participate in activities that promote a responsible relationship with the environment* (Table 2).

Table 2: Differences in the attitudes of students about achievements among students from Pula and Zagreb

Student achievement	City	N	M	SD	t
Explain, adopt and follow the code of conduct and show respect in relationships with peers and with adults	Pula	51	4.35	0.69	t_{104}=2.50; p= .014
	Zagreb	55	4.65	0.55	
Participate in activities that promote a responsible relationship with the environment	Pula	51	4.12	0.62	t_{104}=2.47; p= .015
	Zagreb	55	4.42	0.63	

With regard to students of the University of Zagreb, students of the University of Pula take that it is more important that the affective values are included in the *Law on education* and in *schools curriculums* (Table 3).

Table 3: Differences in the attitudes of students about importance of inclusion of affective values in the educational documents among students from Pula and Zagreb

Educational documents	City	N	M	SD	t
Law on education in the primary and secondary education	Pula	51	4.29	0.61	t_{104}=2.76; p= .007
	Zagreb	55	4.60	0.53	
Schools curriculums	Pula	51	4.31	0.58	t_{104}=2.65; p= .009
	Zagreb	55	4.60	0.53	

The students, future teachers, are highly aware of the importance of promoting all affective values during the teaching process. The descriptive statistic and results show that all educational values are equally important – from *personal responsibility* (M=4.88; SD=0.33) to *tolerance* (M=4.41; SD=0.67).
Students think that parents and teachers are the most responsible for encouraging the affective values in learners (Table 4).

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Social entities

Social entities	M	SD
Peers	4.15	0.67
Teachers	**4.76**	**0.51**
Pedagogues	3.94	0.88
Parents	**4.83**	**0.42**
Local communities	3.75	0.82

CONCLUSION

Based on the empirical research we can conclude that:

1. *National Framework Curriculum* includes affective values – especially in the *Social Sciences and Humanities Area* and all educational goals included are *'a lot'* or *'very much'* important for both Pula's and Zagreb's students, with some statistically significant difference.
2. The students are aware of the importance of including affective values in educational documents as well as of the importance of promoting affective values and conducting a research from this area.
3. The students' opinion is that *parents* and *teachers* are the most responsible for encouraging the affective values of learners.

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EMOTIONAL-SOCIAL CURRICULUM OF THE TRNOVO MODEL OF BASIC LEARNING STIMULATED BY A PUPPET

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ABSTRACT

In the Trnovo Primary School we are developing our own educational model – the Trnovo model of basic learning (TMBL) with a specific **concept of basic learning** with the model of **basic human activities** (science, art, technique, ecology, media...) and with the approach Education through Art according to a unique methodology of project work with a puppet. **The three-layered model of project work with a puppet** has three levels: the narrative level – the puppet and its story, the child's research topic level – basic human activities and the educational level of children's activities.
The educational puppet – the character and its story are the motivators of a child's learning. It shows up in the kindergarten and asks the children to help her solve hers problem. The children grow fond of it and are willing to do important actions for her – the areas of emotional and social curriculum are included. The puppet contributes to personalisation, socialisation and emotional development. It reveals to the child his/her own place in the world and the sense of his/her being.

Key words: holistic educational model, the Trnovo model of fundamental learning, model of basic human activities, education through art, methodology of project work with a puppet.

THE TRNOVO MODEL OF BASIC LEARNING – HOLISTIC CONCEPT, MODEL AND CURRICULUM

To educate for the challenges of the times of globalisation and "liqiuid modern" (Luckmann 1999) means to create a planetary consciousness to save the world in crisis by crossing from the age of reason into the age of empatic civilization. (Ruskin 2010). Such goals demand a basic learning of all components of a child's personality as a whole. **Beside the cognitive curriculum we also need an equally installed emotional-social curriculum.** We are trying to fulfil this with the Trnovo model of basic learning (TMBL) in the Trnovo Primary School.

The educational model TMBL is being developed for the seventh year now following the methodology of innovative and action research. As the head of research I am developing a theoretical model and the whole team of the kindergarten under the guidance of their principle mag. Suzana Antič are cooperating in the development of the creative realization. Our creative collaborator is the Italian puppet artist Walter Broggini.

The concept and methodology of forming and realizing TMBL is based on a development -process oriented curriculum. Its main characteristics are: holistic approach, education through art, concept of basic learning of a child, model of basic human activities (Gobec 1994, BHA) and methodology of project work with a puppet (Broggini 1984).

The basic holistic approaches are social- constructivist approaches (Bruner, Vigotski), practical, research oriented, experiential learning, learning by doing (Dewey), learning by discovering and problem solving in connection to approaches of **education through art** (Read, l937). The most important characteristics are holistic conception of a child, the integrality and equality of the curriculum of cognitive, affective, social and sensomotoric child's development and basic learning with complete interdisciplinary and transcurricular cluster of project planning and realization of the curriculum - in all areas of a child's development, all educational areas and activities of the kindergarten and in all areas of BHA. The particularity is the puppet and its story as the integrators of the educational process.

BASIC LEARNING IN TMFL

It **develops all the basic areas of the child's development**, all of a child's minds, potentials, abilities and competences and the integrity of his/her personality. It also individualises and integrates him/her, sensually and emotionally stabilises, activates and creativates, humanises, socialises and cultivates into a wholesome bio-psycho-social and spiritual being of a meaning and implants him/her into society and culture.

It **introduces a child into the basic areas of the human creative practice** on the field of the civilisation and culture: science, art, technique, communication, media... into a direct experience of processes and achievements of the present, past, cultural tradition and into thinking about further humanisation.

It **introduces a child into the fundamental relations**, meaning, value, ethics and the sense of being and co-existing – co-experiencing, cooperating, co-creating and communicating in the relationship with himself/herself, with others, nature and his/her own material and spiritual creations, goods and values and the harmonisation and mutuality of relations.

EDUCATION THROUGH ART IN TMBL

The most complex but probably the most functional way of realizing the emotional-social curriculum is education through art. In TMBL we realize education through art as an educational, substantial and methodological principle in all its functions: as an education for art, means of encouragement, as art education and education through art. We realize it with emphasis on the one that is closest to children – education with a puppet. The puppet has a new role and educational function in TMBL, therefore I will name it an **educational puppet.** We use it in all possible educational, theatrical and therapeutic functions.

THREE-LAYERED MODEL OF PROJECT WORK WITH A PUPPET

The authentic three-layered artistic-pedagogical model in the involvement of a puppet and its story into the pedagogical process is the invention of the renowned Italian puppeteer Walter Broggini, (1995) In the 13 years of collaborating with him and approximatly 30 Milanese kindergartens I have enriched it with the model of the so-called basic human activities (BHA). With the creative contribution of all the professionals in Trnovo Primary School, under the guidance of their principal mag. Suzana Antič, and collaboration with Walter Broggini I have further deepened and enriched it with the concept and curriculum of basic learning into the educational model TMBL.

In the methodology of the project work with a puppet, the puppet and its story lead the whole-year project and connect the three layers of the project:

- the narrative level – the puppet and its story as a representation of art
- the topic level of the themes of a child's research from the basic fields of human activities (BHA) – science, art, culture, technique, media, communication and ecology,...
- the level of children's activities – empirical and implemental level of basic learning.

The basis of the project according to Broggini is a puppet and its story that continues throughout the year and motivates a child to be playful, motivating and creative and takes part in the educational activities in, for him/her, deeply meaningful manner. They are created by the expert team of the whole kindergarten in accordance with the goals and the chosen topic of a child's research and his/her own artistic-pedagogical imagination. The story is built according to the classical canons of myths, fairy tales and stories (Propp 2005, Levy- Strauss 1966, Huisinga 2003, Caillois 2003, Bettelheim1999, Rodari1983).

The hero of the story comes to the kindergarten (the puppet, animated by the kindergarten teacher) befriends the children, takes part in their activities and one day it shares one of its problems with the children (for example, "fairy- gnom" lost her magic wand, a new one has to be made of the same wood and other materials.). The highly motivated children – it is difficult to describe with words their enthusiasm for their new friend, emotions and attachment that are awakened in them by the puppet – express their wish to help. The children grow fond of their new friend and are prepared to make important things for them (empathy, altruism, expressing emotions): saving Alenčica for King Matjaž from the dragon, training to become the knights that will defend the homeland (social sciences, civic education, Gothic), helping little alien Traja finding swampy grass and dragonflies which will save her planet by pollination (ecology),

helping sailor Karl collecting the beauties of different countries to get the beautiful island chief's daughter for a wife (multiculturalism, beauty of countries, art, love), helping fairy-gnom" to find a special kind of wood and tools to make a magic wand (beauty of nature, technique)... They are searching for answers and solutions in exploring their own real environment – in natural and social contexts, are active in all areas of BHA ... discover, search in resources, test, set hypotheses, solve problems and conflicts, experiment with materials (Gobec 2008), for example wood, clay, paper,... – they learn about **the fundamental learning, life, their own being and searching for the meaning.**

The puppet in TMBL is an original person that does not duplicate the role of the kindergarten teacher. Instead it is a child's friend. It is a companion in play and communication, it shares with him/her imaginary adventures and live reality, arouses his/her imagination, creativity, openness to the world and trust in people.

The puppet has a theatrical function and it pulls a child into a new reality (verisimilitude Bruner (1991,1992). It is a place of imagination, art, play, a sinking of children into a virtual reality of the new media and preparation of children to think about the unknown future. A child intertwines the experience of the real world with the world of inner experience. This subjective experience is then transferred into expressing and creating and it opens way to art and other spiritual dimensions. **It legitimises a child's right to create his/her own inner world as the starting point, standpoint and criteria for the relationships with the outside world.** By doing this it develops the **consciousness and power of his/her subjectivity, independence and self-respect. A child becomes the protagonist of his/her development** and the puppet ensures that his/her **active interference in the world has the central role in the educational process.**

With the story it manages to integrate curriculums from all areas of a child's development and activities, multiply intentionality and **overgrow the causal paradigm of thinking with a narrative** (Bruner 1991, 1992) , which is much closer to humanities, art and psychotherapy, in a life-like way that is understandable to a child. But most of all, a child's comprehension of the world takes place in its frame.

The puppet has a motivational function: it encourages a child's personal growth and it is a mirror of his/her inner world and experience; it develops his/her inner dialogue with himself/herself and openness to the outside world. It is the accelerator in forming a child's relationships with nature, environment and other people and also functions as the multiplier of communication.

It stimulates a **more wholesome personal growth of a child and the development of basic mental processes and abilities**: a special inclusion of the puppet in this model enables a child's mind (Gardner 1995) and a whole spectre of a child's competences are actualised daily. It emotionally awakens a child, teaches him/her to express and control emotions, develops emotional, social, ecological (Golman 2009, 2010)), ethical and spiritual intelligence.

From a salutogenetic point of view the puppet is a perfect diagnostic and therapeutic means, a helper with solving emotional and intellectual problems. It is a mediator in solving conflicts and a confidant comforting in the time of need. It strengthens a child's self-confidence and the trust in his/her abilities. It strengthens a child's mental health and positive attitude.

The character of the puppet is a metaphor and a transitional object (Winnicott 1971, Bastašić 1990) . It works projectional, introjective and as an identificatory role model – it is a "minimized" adult and a child's alter ego at the same time. A child ascribes it

magical powers and that is why its educational, socializational and therapeutic powers are magical. Through a playful communication it gives a child the **freedom of authentic expressing,** the feeling of accepting himself/herself as he/she is. In an imaginative way a child gains experience and the sense of himself/herself and develops a positive self-image in a quickened way – a foundation of a healthy personality. The puppet is an accelerator of the process of **integration, individualisation and personalisation of a child's personality** – the process which has not been sufficiently dealt with in the curricular sense yet.

It legitimises a child's right to creating his/her own inner world as the starting point, standpoint and criteria for the relationships with the outside world. With this he/she develops the awareness of freedom (Rogers 22), autonomy **and power of his/her subjectivity,** integrity, **independence and self-respect. A child becomes the protagonist of his/her development** and the puppet ensures that his/her **active interference in the world has the central role in the educational process.** In this sense it supports the pedagogy of listening to a competent child (Malaguzzi, Rinaldi, Kroflič, Juul 2009)) and the inductive approach (Kroflič 2010), which successfully substitutes the transmissional and educational paradigm.

The puppet **is the initiator of cheerfulness, easiness and enthusiasm, the generator of love and deep interpersonal relations of everybody** in the kindergarten and among the parents and the kindergarten. Besides the character being the "important other" and an appropriate identificational role model to a child, it also awakens all instances of self and also alive and repressed emotions. It teaches a child to express and control emotions and it develops emotional intelligence (Golman 2009, 2010). It claims discovery, definition, decision and action in the area of ethically-moral education on the part of a child and it also arouses imagination and reinforces aesthetic effect.

AESTHETISATION AND SENSIBILISATION OF FEELING

In the puppet's pedagogical-artistic performance children are the audience or the explorers and co-creators. Awakening, experiencing, rainbows of feelings, moods, among them aesthetic, artistic and social feelings and experience, are included in the foundation.

Participation is full of playfulness. It is sensually, emotionally and experientially rich, engaging, deeply meaningful and brings the feeling of fulfilment. Specific aesthetic feelings awake: watchfulness, rapture, contemplation, feelings of comfort, enjoyment, astonishment, admiration, ravishment... A feeling of intense experiential flow (Csikszentmihaly 1991) is irreversibly imprinted in a child and it becomes an efficient driver and, at the same time, an aspiration for a repeated experience, especially if the experiential flow leads to peak experience (Maslow 1950) Basic learning becomes meaningful learning and gains a positive attitude and also a character of meaning and fulfilment of being (Frankl).

The puppet is the most powerful means of socialisation (Gobec 2008, Koelner, 2008). When the puppet enters into the two-way relationship kindergarten teacher-child as a third person, the relationship becomes a triangular relationship, yet a multi-way relationship with numerous valences. When the puppet visits a group of children, countless social situations arise that demonstrate behaviour patterns, social roles and opportunities for a child to train skills of communication and acting, strategies of solving conflicts etc. The puppet supports a child to **look at the same situation from different**

perspectives, to get accustomed to using different positions and criteria in a social situation and **to take sides.**

The puppet overtakes the role of a non-authoritative defender, examiner, sceptic, denier, one to give arguments and **draw a pattern of a democratic dialogue**. As the "third person" it broadens communication and multiplies a **dialogue into a polilogue.** With acting roles it mediates to a child the experience about quality communication, expressing emotions and inner experience and putting them into words, about praising, criticism, negotiating and convincing and also about the boundaries and sensitivity of the dialogue in the context of planned and systematic social learning. A child is enthusiastically solving the puppet's problem throughout the year, which evokes in him/her a long-term motivation, empathy and responsibility to act in the best interest of others. The processes of socialisation in a group, which are ascribed to the hidden curriculum by our experts, become visible, lead and planned with the entrance of the puppet into a group. A social curriculum is born.

With its story the puppet defines, systemises and deepens a whole spectrum of emotional and social curriculum. We include areas such as pro-sociality, nonviolence, civic education and the most exposed goals of coexistence and existence of humanity: peace education, sustainable development, global education and acting and also ethicall-moral topics and dilemmas. Especially because the topics of pro-social and "probiotic" acting at pre-school level are rarely offered to children to actively and empirically test with the goal to, some day, form a better world and further development of humanity with self-engagement and belief in their abilities.

The puppet is a child's alter ego and at the same time a bridge to another, which helps a child to establish and tackle relationship with the others and the different without the emotional wounds of reality, which is the foundation of raising tolerance and respect, altruism, solidarity... This is where the foundations of raising for peace, mutuality, interculturality and a new emphatic civilisation are growing.

Learning about relationships is one of the most important components of basic learning. Among them the most basic one is the relationship of love. Alongside the character, which lives in the kindergarten for the whole year, a child learns how to establish rich and deep relationships, express the whole scale of affection, give and acept the acts of friendship and love. I believe that should be one of the indispensable tasks of an emotional curriculum.

Through the everyday pedagogical-theatrical performance, a product of their own artistic imagination, also the kindergarten teachers grow fond of their "child" and close a circle of loving mutuality. The kindergarten teacher's inner child (transactional analysis, E. Berne) plays an important part here since it raises the educational interaction into an authentic meeting (Buber 1999), Levinas 1983) to a higher quality of mutuality. At the end of the year, when the story ends happily and the character is saying his goodbyes, children are not the only ones with tears in their eyes but also teachers and parents as well.

The surplus value of project work with a puppet is in the humanist dimension of the model. Without the puppet, the activities offered to a child would remain only a limited didactic action and connection of a child with fragments of the world. But through the puppet a child's life in the kindergarten as well as the curriculum get new dimensions, qualities and meaning. The entrance of the third person into the educational relationship means multiplication, enrichment, intensification and "nobleness" (Kroflič) of the whole educational process and its effect, meaning a rise of the quality of life in the kindergarten in the emotional, social, cultural and cognitive sense.

NOTE: Theory cannot, unfortunately, be demonstrate practicaly here. Nina Zorko is, however, presenting one of the projects in TMBL at this conference.

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EVALUATION OF ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL HELP FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

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ABSTRACT

Slovenian children with special educational needs (SEN), pupils and students included in regular schools are entitled to additional lessons of professional help. These lessons are intended to overcome the barriers, deficiencies and disorders and can take the form of learning support with the aim of facilitating the learning in a specific subject. We carried out an evaluation of additional professional help (APH) provided to students in previous school year at one of the high school centres in Slovenia. 23 students participated in evaluation, a few more than a half of all students with SEN at this high school centre. The majority of students had 2 weekly hours of APH assigned, mostly at Mathematics, English or tehnical subjects. Most of the students attended APH regularly, every week. Usually, additional hours took place after of before school, during lessons, sometimes also during the main break, physical education or practical work. Students expressed preference for additional hours after school, some of them also before school or during class meetings. For most of the students, APH was performed by their regular teacher what students found better than having another special education teacher. Students perceived their teachers as kind, understanding, willing to listen and explain. The student-teacher relationship at APH is of great significance; competent and successful teachers are those who are empathic and are able to create a safe and accepting climate for a student with SEN. According to students' statements APH helped them improve the understanding of the learning material and made learning at home easier. It is of great importantce that all students from our sample achieved a positive grade at the end of the school year what they found as a notable success. They did not perceive APH as very tiring and they attended additional hours with relative pleasure which indicates students' motivation. Students valued APH as important, needed and useful, which proves the high quality of APH realization and achievement of its aims.

Key words: Students with special educational needs, additional professional help, evaluation

INTRODUCTION

In 2000 the Slovenian parliament introduced a new law on special education in Slovenia (the latest version is from 2007: Uradni list RS, št. 3/2007, shortly ZOUPP-UP1).

It outlines the rules for placing children with special needs in the most appropriate school programs. Special committees assist in this process. Children receive individualized education plans which facilitate the transferring of children between programs. The goal is to ensure the best placements possible by increasing the monitoring of student placements and progress.

Students can be placed into different educational programs – from special development classes for children with severe mental disorders to modified curricula in elementary schools and mainstreamed classes for special needs students. Students with learning difficulties may attend regular school programs and receive additional individual and group assistance; for the purpose of this paper I call this *additional professional help* (APH). It can be of various types and is integrated with their mainstreamed programming.

There are two main functions of additional professional help, first it helps students to overcome the barriers, deficits or disorders, and second, it facilitates learning in a specific subject.

During the APH lessons, teachers explain to students the topics that they don't understand, encourage them to do additional exercises, offer help with students' homework, talk about students' learning, introduce new learning strategies to students and follow their progress. Additional professional help can take place individually or in a group setting. When in a group, the type and level of deficits must be taken into account so the group is homogenous. Additional lessons are carried out by the experts – teachers, external teachers or other experts, for example school counselors. It can take place in the class during lessons or outside class, separate from students' classmates.

Under the regulations, a student with special educational needs can receive maximum of 5 weekly hours of additional professional help. The number of hours is defined by a special committee; however, students are allowed to choose school subjects for their additional hours by themselves.

In December 2010 an evaluation of additional professional help was carried out for the school years 2009/2010. The aim of the evaluation was to find out the quality and success of additional hours, as well as students' satisfaction with APH.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

22 students with special educational needs (average age 17.7 years) took part in an evaluation study. All were students of a high school centre in Slovenia. In 2009/2010 there were 40 students with special needs altogether at the school centre. Students were enrolled in different educational programs: carpenter, wood technician, mechanical engineering technician and general education program. There were only 2 girls in the sample.

INSTRUMENTS

Students completed a questionnaire, designed specifically for the purpose of this evaluation. They were asked about the frequency and time of APH, about their satisfaction with the APH teacher and APH lessons and the degree they perceived these lessons useful and helpful.

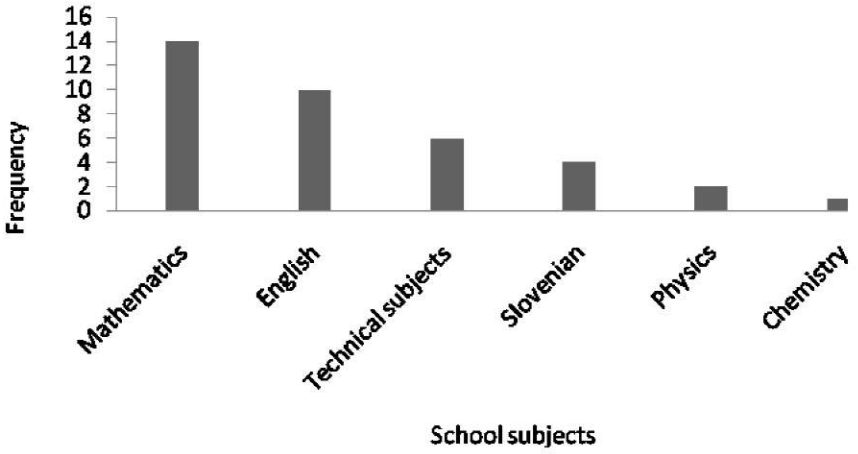
PROCEDURE

The list of all students with special educational needs that took part at APH hours was obtained from the school counselors. Students were asked to complete the questionnaire.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students from our sample had the following special educational needs: specific learning deficits (difficulties with concentration, cognition, memory, reading, writing, calculating etc.), speech and language disorder, minor mental disorder, long-lasting illnesses or combination of disorders.

Figure 1: School subjects chosen by the students for APH



Students can choose the subjects for APH by themselves, provided that they discuss their choice with the school counselor. Figure 1 shows which school subjects were chosen by the students. The majority chose Mathematics and English. Mathematics is considered to be one of the most difficult school subjects; therefore it is not surprising that they decided to receive additional assistance from a teacher in this subject. Some of the students in our sample have speech and language disorders which may be connected to their choice of English or Slovenian language. Technical subjects are of great importance in high schools and some of them may be completely new topics for students when they start their high school education; therefore students may need some additional help with them as well.

Figure 2: Attendance of APH lessons.

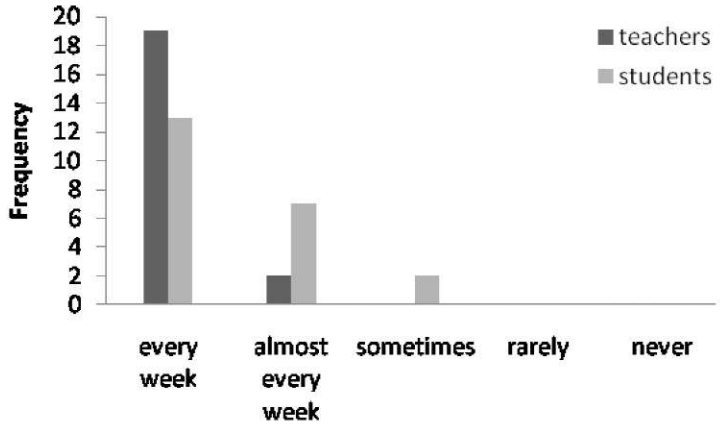
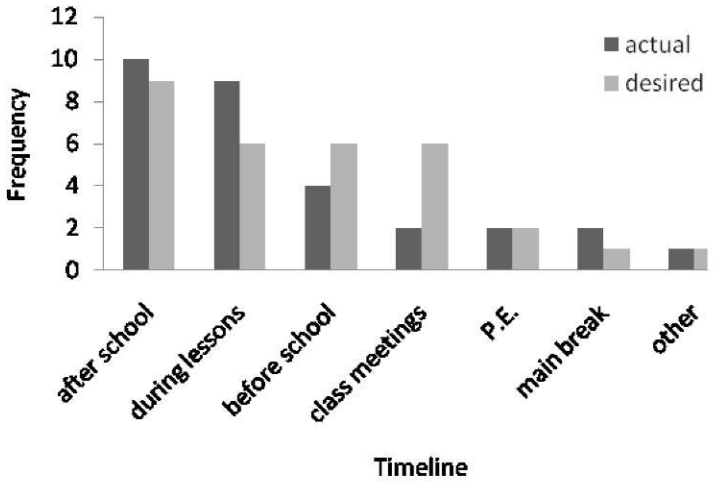


Figure 2 presents the attendance of APH. Students attended APH lessons regularly; most of the students did so every week. As reasons for their absence they mentioned: transport home (as the bus frequency was not suitable to go home after school) or practical work outside school (every school years students spend 2 months on placement). Some students had an agreement with their teacher to meet occasionally, especially before the exams or when extra explanation was needed. Some of the students wrote that sometimes they "just didn't feel like attending the lessons". The fact that the students attended APH lessons regularly may suggest that they perceived APH as important and useful. Students reported that their teachers attended the APH lessons every week -unless they had a different agreement with the student.

Figure 3: Actual and desired timeline of APH lessons.



APH lessons took place at different times. Figure 3 shows the actual and desired timeline of APH lessons. The majority of the students attended them after school or during lessons (of another or of the same subject). When asked when they would prefer to attend the APH lessons, their preferences were: after or before school, during other lessons or during class meetings. It is not easy to determine when the most optimal time for APH lessons is. After average of 8 hours of regular lessons students are tired and therefore cannot concentrate so effectively. On the other hand, it is hard for them to wake up earlier in order to arrive to school before the beginning of regular classes – this seems especially problematic for commuters. And, when they attend APH during other lessons, they may miss some important explanations and they have to catch up on the

new topics on their own – at this point it is essential to keep in mind that these students already have some learning difficulties. This might be the decisive factor as to why their teachers usually do not approve of students' absence during regular lessons due to the APH.

Students were asked about their APH teachers. 12 students received APH from their regular teachers, when APH in English was taught by a student's English teacher. Some students had experiences with external teachers (2) or a combination of both (7). They reported that if they could choose their APH teacher by themselves, they would have preferred to have APH lessons with their own teacher. Namely, their teacher knows exactly what a student has to master and is aware of a student's weaknesses, deficits, demands, as well as his or her strengths. On the other hand, they might feel safer with an external teacher because he or she is not the one who grades them at the end of the school year.

Table 1: Items asking about the quality and perceived usefulness of APH lessons

Items	*M*	*SD*
My APH teacher was kind.	4.73	0.55
When I didn't understand, I could always ask my teacher.	4.50	0.74
Teacher helped me to a better understanding of learning material.	4.32	1.09
APH lessons were very useful.	4.09	0.97
Teacher allowed me to choose the topics of learning.	4.05	1.40
Teacher showed me useful learning strategies.	3.95	1.17
APH facilitated my home-learning.	3.77	1.31
I liked APH lessons.	3.59	1.10
I wouldn't have received positive final grade without APH.	3.23	1.23
APH lessons were very tiring.	2.09	1.11

Students were asked about the quality and perceived usefulness of APH lessons; they were answering on a 5-point Likert scale. Results (Table 1) show that they perceived APH as very useful. Teachers were kind and demonstrated useful learning strategies, which made home-learning easier. Teachers allowed the students to choose the topics of learning by themselves. When students did not understand the topics, they knew they could ask their teachers, and consequently they felt safe. Students did not perceive APH lessons as very tiring despite the fact that the majority of lessons took place after school.

It is very encouraging that all the students received a positive grade at the end of the year at the subjects where they received APH: 23 school subjects were graded as satisfactory, 9 as good and 4 even as very good.

CONCLUSION

Students with special educational needs included in regular schools are entitled to additional lessons of professional help. These lessons are intended for overcoming the barriers, deficiencies and disorders. They usually take the form of learning support with the aim of facilitating the learning in a specific subject. The evaluation of the results proves that students perceived APH lessons as useful, they liked taking part in the lessons and they did not perceive them as too tiring although they were carried out after school. At the end of the year all students received positive grades at the subjects in

which they attended APH lessons. APH helped students to master new learning strategies and to facilitate their home-learning. We can conclude that the APH lessons were successful and their aim was achieved.

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AFFECTIVE EDUCATION THROUGH THE ART OF ANIMATION THEATRE

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ABSTRACT

The domain of animation theatre is a scenic universe of images. The performing figures, puppets or objects are, in themselves, scenographic materials, which are brought to life by a player. The term animation theatre stresses the process, as opposed to the animated objects.
In many countries this art form is so far relatively marginal and not fairely appreciated in educational context.

However, research in the field shows that one might assess that the artform has particular qualities which can contribute to aesthetic education. That means contribute to develope aesthetic appreciation, crafts and communication, creative imagination and critical thinking as well. Because of the characteristic features in the way in which the animation theatre communicates I consider that learning processes which are provoked by involvement in this theatre might represent a rich potential as part of schools curriculum.
In addition, it is obvious that working with this theatreform is an excellent introduction to other art forms - and to drama and theatre in a whole.

The starting point for this paper is my Ph.D. dissertation "Animation Theatre as an Art and as an Element of Aesthetic Development and Education". (Animation Theatre is a wider conception of Puppet Theatre).
My starting point is also my later practical-pedagogical project called "The Learning Potential and Figurative Language of Animation Theatre - a Survey of Basic Aesthetic Learning Processes, Content Areas and Teacher Qualifications".

These projects have shown that animation theatre holds great potential in terms of making way for the pupil's aesthetic, emotional, and ethical learning and "Bildung" (German concept for the general cultural and social development of the individual)
In the following, I focus on some of the potential for this form of theatre.

In my book "Marionet og menneske, animationsteater – billedteater", ("Marionette and Man, Animation Theatre – Visual Theatre) I have summarised the following typical communicative features, allowing myself to be inspired by other researchers, and furthermore referring to domestic and international performances that I have studied and experienced.

Typical features in the communication of animation theatre:

- Ambiguity and "opalisation" (two-sided appearance).
- Metaphor and transitional phenomena.
- Permanent alienation.
- Synergy.
- Abstraction and stylisation.
- Special theatre conventions.
- Protection of the player's integrity.
- Dialogic work process.
- Pantomimic.
- Humour and utopia.
- Theatre of paradox, live figures, although...
- Cross-aesthetic expression.

In the following I want to focus on some aspects that have a close relationship to affective learning.

Animation theatre has its own clear and complex profile and affords a richness of different crafts, design processes, stories, working methods and subjects.
The synergistic dimension is strongly manifested in this theatre art. Many kinds of knowledge and functions work together and constantly change. The different elements work together in fostering innovation, so that the sum of the various expressions, apart from being linked, also creates synergy
(Konstanza Kavrakova Lorenz: Das Puppenspiel als synergetische Kunstform. 1986).
Demands for synergy may be put on a great variety of art forms; still, synergy is prominent in animation theatre, where it exists latently.
The perspective is the development of what I might call "synergistic competence".
This potential for learning appears to be in demand, particularly in relation to the multi-media boom in our present culture.
Perhaps, learning through stylised and complex animation theatre can help develop an

important synergistic ability to act. The vision could be that the child, and we ourselves through the aesthetic learning processes, becomes equipped to transform some of the complex, contradictory and fragmentary impressions of contemporary culture into dynamic forces.
However, that may be: As play, area for learning with educational content, this theatre form seems to be underestimated today. It could be a cross-aesthetic/cross-professional juncture.

"CONFIDENTIAL KNOWLEDGE"

The actor acts by using his/her body and voice. When the animation figure "acts" it requires a person, a player/animator, as it can neither move nor speak on its own. Its movement and language are controlled from the outside. Perhaps the figure is handled by more than one person, perhaps it is mechanical, or both, in alternation. Maybe there is a voice-over from a third person, or a tape recorder. The players can be invisible or hidden, and sometimes they may function as actors or narrators. Thus, the formal language of animation theatre is quite complex. Henryk Jurkowski notes that a characteristic feature in many modern animation theatre shows is change and interchange – a gliding – between the numerous elements and forces involved; a relationship he terms "pulsation". (Jurkowski, Henryk i Thomas Seebeok (red.): SEMIOTICA. Vol. 47, p. 144. Amsterdam 1983. Mouton Publishers).

On stage, the animated figure seems to be alive, although we realize at the same time that it is inanimate material. The special ability of an animated figure to communicate rests in this ambiguity.
Therefore the animation process is extremely important. It is in itself a knowledge of familiarity and confidentiality with a strong appeal to the visual and tactile senses. It demands attention and quietness. This state of mind seems to be a need and, at the same time, it promotes concentration.

Animating is a state of mind, and reaching it presupposes time. Perhaps children and adults need such intense contemplation. Perhaps this is why most people become captivated by it and allow themselves to be drawn into it. For a moment, animation and touch suspend the boundaries of identity - we touch, and are touched, and become part of the world. In this presence something magical and ritual comes about that is shared by players, others artisans and artists. This often silent knowledge is decidedly a knowledge of confidentiality- a category of knowledge set up by Tore Nordenstams and described by Mogens Nielsen in "Tavs viden og den praktiske dimension i dannelsesprocessen" (Silent Knowledge and the Practical Dimension in the Educational Process), DANSK nr. 1. 1996.

Animation is pantomimic in itself, with a strong appeal to the visual and tactile senses. Animation demands attention, quietness and concentration on the shape, material and surface of the animation object. The auditory sense is summoned when "an object's own sounds" are investigated and subsequently used in a small play. In order to allow this familiar knowledge the space to consolidate itself as the basis of an actual show, a plan can be suggested in which object experiments are succeeded by non-verbal training and playing. Later the non-verbal working processes may be combined with simple

improvisations with verse, rhymes, and singing, and followed up by improvisations with short lines that have been learnt well enough not to make demands on the memory.
Another form well suited for novices is to have the players perform their show while a narrator, who has memorised the part, narrates. The advantage being that the narrator can let her/his story follow the stage action, while the actors are fully concentrated on the animation, the plot and the interplay.

Whether or not a narrative/story is practiced in a miming or verbal fashion, the dramaturgy is crucial. According to level and context, various dramaturgical models and terms may be presented or detected, after which they can be used as tools for practical work, depending also on training and a sense of timing, tempo, and pulse.
Dramaturgical learning comes into effect both in connection with the development of improvisations, interpretation of existing texts, and analysis of finished performances.

Animation theatre relies strongly on the sense of touch and the tactile experience of the hand, but it also involves the whole body, and therefore its language must be integrated with dramaturgy, drama, and theatre pedagogy in general. Many drama exercises could be combined with animation work and even underpin it.

EMOTIONAL LEARNING AND WORKING TOGETHER

Rituals and games with animated figures are a primeval form of expression, which in recent years has garnered new interest – perhaps, because they challenge a culture of reification characterised by a technology boom and hyper-consumption – and instead represent a material culture that also seeks spiritual and religious dimensions.

In our part of the world, children grow up in a culture epitomised by things and the mass consumption of things. Moreover, the things and idioms of contemporary culture may be characterized as contradictory and fragmented.
Does this situation stimulate the development of an aesthetic and ethical sense? Do we become more self-absorbed as a result? Or do we attain a better chance to "go beyond" mere consumerism?
In animation theatre, work with scenographic materials is especially provocative, because the material objects, so to speak, perform. This theatrical idiom, which is based on making objects and inanimate figurines come alive and take on corporeal form, is suited for communicating fundamental scenographic knowledge – a knowledge that can be used aesthetically, ethically and didactically.
It might be a provocation for emotional learning and for working together.

According to art researcher David Best, the artistic experience is characterised as an emotional and cognitive shock. (Rationality of Feeling, 1992).
So we are not dealing with a dichotomy of opposites, but with a complementary relationship. Best uses the term "emotional learning".
"Performing for somebody" is always experienced as a very important "emotional and cognitive shock," regardless of the institutional teaching context. Here is a cathartic effect that seems to strengthen both social and subject-specific elements and augment a special "frustration sturdiness".
The point of departure for the stories of animation theatre may be found in both fact and fiction. Both the formal-linguistic and the image-creating dimensions are essential and

take place through cooperation and through the characteristic metaphors and metamorphoses of the animation figure. The researcher Anni Gilles calls this a "dual mirror". ("Le jeu de la marionette – L'object intermédiare et son métathéâtre"). She claims that the figure is the bearer of both identification and projection on the part of the player as well as the spectator. This renders the theatre form generous, but also demanding.
But the performer's integrity is still protected in a special way as responsibility can be attributed to the performing figures or objects.
The animated figure communicates through a permanent alienation and, in principle, this places performers and spectators on equal footing, both in terms of the figure and the story.
The figure functions as raw material for communication and, as such, become an appropriate medium of dialogical pedagogy.

Recent research into the functioning of the brain shows important results for communication through an animation figure. (Raab, Thomas: "Når bevægelse bevæger", Rapport om projektet OutCasts, 2008).
We communicate through our language, through the mime of our face and through our body language. But these expressions are often contradictory.
Here actors' theatre is especially complicated because the actor has his own mime and history with him, so to speak. The puppet or animation object is empty and free from prejudices and therefore this communication can be much clearer.
Researchers find a mirror neuron system of great interest for the understanding of how our brains function. This shows that a movement and an action is reflected in a sort of mirror in our brain when we are watching, for example, a performance.
So, we are directly affected in our brains by the mime and body language - and feelings - of the other. But this mime has to be rather simple and animated - that means in a rhythm and not like the movements of a robot. This very clear communication can be highlighted in animation theatre.
To cultivate this knowledge might be an important way to understand the emotions of other people and - maybe - for our development of empathy.

HUMOUR AND UTOPIA

The figures of animation theatre have a powerful ability to fascinate. This is true of all basic figures, regardless of their shapes and sizes.
Humour seems to be one of the driving forces in the work. All participants – teachers and students - talk about humour in connection with the study of animation , regardless of whether it involves children or adults.
Humour breaks with habitual thinking and paves the way for positive "breaches of pattern". Humour is related to the joy of life and it touches upon the basis of all learning.

There seems to be a close connection between humour, imagination and the fantastic. The metaphors and metamorphoses of animation theatre are by nature surprising, and they amuse both children and adults because they turn the things that we thought we had under control topsy-turvy. The figures are surreal, but - in contrast to the animated film - they move about in a real space in an interplay with the human body.
The stories and movements make use of their own kind of fiction. I call them utopian, in the etymological sense of the word: i.e. that which has no place and, in addition to this, in

accordance with Ernst Bloch's notion of utopia, which assumes a dimension of yearning and hope ("Geist der Utopie", 1964).
The figures of animation theatre are challenging because they are omni-competent. Thus they become powerful signs of human action, possible as well as impossible. In the animation figure we witness the natural sizes and proportions of the body being altered completely and the laws of gravity suspended. The utopian element also relates to the movements of the players when they move the figures during play. So the utopian element also covers the set and the often unusual visual angles the plays are seen from. Certainly, performances of animation theatre may be generally characterised by this utopian feature.
The characteristic features of figurative language in the aesthetics of animation theatre and communication contribute to the development of an imagination, which I shall term "the utopian imagination".
It is essential to stimulate the "utopian imagination" in education, because it points towards the development of divergent thinking and supplements constructive, reconstructive, and compensatory types of imagination. The typical formal language of animation theatre rests in these utopian features.
Along with the theatre-form's practical-aesthetic fields of work, theories, and methods of communication, these subject-specific features constitute a great potential for children's learning and social life in the 21st century.

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ACADEMIC SELF-CONCEPT: DOES GIFTEDNESS MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

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ABSTRACT

The paper discusses the role of giftedness in the process of academic self-concept formation of students from grades 4 to 7 in Slovenian elementary school, where the provision for gifted students is predominantly provided in mainstream classes. Research evidence shows that the academic self-concept (i.e., the self-perception of the student's competence in academic activities), as a valued educational outcome, is gradually developed throughout schooling and based on the interplay among many personal and social factors. Among the latter there is one of key importance, the big-fish-little-pond effect (BFLP), which has a specific impact on students in concrete socio-cultural contexts (i.e., when students compare their academic competency with their peers). The main research question of the paper is, therefore, how BFLP operates in classes with a diversity of student abilities, as is the case in Slovenia, where gifted education is implemented through an integrative approach. The purpose of the empirical part of the paper was to examine the extent to which academic self-concept, measured by an Academic Self-Concept Questionnaire, differed among gifted students (n = 68) and their peers (n = 81) regarding grade, gender and academic achievement. Giftedness of students was identified through a measure of students' intelligence (RPM), creativity (TTCT) and teachers' assessment (OLNAD07). The results obtained from statistical analysis indicate that gifted students' scores in the academic self-concept domain are higher than those of their non-gifted peers, implying that mixed-ability classes could facilitate the academic self-concept of gifted students through BFLP effects.

Key words: academic self-concept, gifted students, elementary school, Big-fish-little-pond-effect

INTRODUCTION

In Slovenia, on the level of elementary education, gifted students are provided for on the basis of *Koncept: Odkrivanje in delo z nadarjenimi učenci v devetletni osnovni šoli* (Concept: Identification and G/T Education in Nine-Year Elementary School) (Juriševič, 2009, 2011). According to this concept, giftedness is more broadly defined (not strictly in a psychometric sense), and can extend to various areas of the student's activities, in

the form of exceptional achievements or potential for which it is necessary to ensure methods and forms of work that are optimally adapted. The procedure for discovering gifted students is graduated and takes place in three sequential steps: recording, identification and notifying parents and obtaining their opinion (Žagar, 2006). All of the steps are carefully planned, and the procedure for recording and identification is complex, foreseeing numerous types of information in order to obtain an evaluation of the student's giftedness that is as reliable as possible. Thus in the process of recording, the presence of at least one of the following measures is taken into account: the student's high level of academic achievement, exceptionality of achievements, the high opinion of the teacher with regard to behavioural signs of the student's above average abilities, the highest results in regional and state competitions, exceptionality in the area of selected interest activities (hobbies) and the positive opinion or suggestion of the school counselling service. Recorded students are then included in the procedure for identification, a deeper treatment that includes three kinds of measurement (Boben, 2006): the teacher's assessment of the student's giftedness or gifted behaviour on the basis of the evaluation instrument OLNAD07, a test of abilities (WISC – Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children or RPM – Raven's Progressive Matrices) and a test of creativity (TTCT – Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking). Students who achieve the required above average results in at least one of these measurements are identified as gifted students. In the third step, the opinion of parents about the child's giftedness is obtained and the parents are familiarised with the results of the identification phase. The final assessment of the student's giftedness is confirmed by the class teachers' assembly in cooperation with the school counselling service and the school's coordinator for work with gifted students. On the basis of identification, an individualised educational programme is then prepared for each gifted student.

The fundamental purpose of the identification of gifted students is for schools to be able to adapt the academic programme to them on the basis of identified giftedness, thus enabling the students, within their own environment and not in special schools or classes of elementary education (on the basis of so-called external differentiation), to function in accordance with academic demands adapted to their level of ability; the adaption ranges from various forms of internal differentiation to flexible differentiation, and, in the last three-year period of elementary schooling, to partial external differentiation. In other words, the principle of holistic development is emphasised in education, which means that the approach of inclusion is important for encouraging the most harmonised possible personal development of gifted students in school – respecting the rights of gifted students to instruction adapted to them, while at the same time encouraging them to take responsibility for their own learning and knowledge, not only for their own personal benefit but also for the benefit of society at large (Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou, 2010; Smith, 2006), as "... today's gifted students are tomorrow's social, intellectual, economic and cultural leaders; therefore, their development cannot be left to chance" (Campbell et al., 2004, cited in Robinson and Campbell, 2010, p. 8).

Various research shows that in special programmes for the gifted (acceleration, enriched programmes, special interest centres or groups, special classes or schools), the greatest emphasis is frequently placed on the cognitive area, while social and other personal factors, which are actually just as important for the student's development, are largely neglected; according to the theory of social comparison and Marshall's big-fish-little-pond effect, these programmes, particularly external differentiation, can therefore even have a negative influence on the academic self-concept of gifted students, which

undoubtedly hinders them in learning, research and the creation of new knowledge (Hoge and Renzulli, 1991; Ireson and Hallam, 2009; Loeb and Jay, 1987; Marsh, Chessor, Craven and Roche, 1995; Marsh and Hau, 2003).
The research presented in the continuation is part of a more extensive study within the framework of the project "Analysis of Key Factors in Ensuring the Quality of Knowledge in the Education System 2010-2012" (Ministry of Education and Sport, European Social Fund). For the purposes of the present article, only one part of this research is presented, focusing on the relationship between giftedness and academic self-concept. Two research questions were set: (1) What is the nature of the academic self-concept of identified gifted students in comparison with their peers who have not been identified as gifted? and (2) What is the nature of the academic self-concept of identified gifted students with regard to their gender, grade and academic success?

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

149 students from a selected elementary school, representing an independent case study, participated in the research ($N_{4th\ grade}$=41, $N_{5th\ grade}$=39, $N_{6th\ grade}$=36 and $N_{7th\ grade}$=33). The sample comprised 72 girls and 77 boys. Amongst all of the participants, 66 students (32 girls and 34 boys) had been identified as gifted according to the procedure defined in *Koncept: Odkrivanje in delo z nadarjenimi učenci v devetletni osnovni šoli* (Concept: Identification and G/T Education in Nine-Year Elementary School).

INSTRUMENTS

The Academic Self-Concept Questionnaire constructed for the purposes of the research contains 28 statements related to the assessment of the student's academic self-concept, e.g., "I am doing well in all school subjects", "I know how to learn well" or "I like solving problem tasks". The students registered their responses on a five-level assessment scale, ranging from 5 – always to 1 – never (Cronbach $alpha_{4th\ grade}$=.84; Cronbach $alpha_{5th\ grade}$=.89; Cronbach $alpha_{6th\ grade}$=.84; Cronbach $alpha_{7th\ grade}$=.86).
Instruments for the identification of gifted students. Three instruments with appropriate measuring characteristics were used: (1) test for the evaluation of intellectual abilities: Raven's Progressive Matrices (RPM), (2) test for the evaluation of creativity: Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking / verbal form (TTCT), and (3) evaluation scale for the gifted – OLNAD07, with which teachers assessed the student's giftedness in various areas.

PROCEDURE

The identification of gifted students took place with instruments described above, according to the standard procedure as prescribed in *Koncept: Odkrivanje in delo z nadarjenimi učenci v devetletni osnovni šoli* (Concept: Identification and G/T Education in Nine-Year Elementary School). The questionnaire for the assessment of the students' academic self-concept was applied in a group format during the time of regular instruction.

In accordance with the Personal Data Protection Act, all of the students gained the prior consent of their parents before participating in the research (84% of the entire student sample).
The data were processed with the procedures of descriptive and inferential statistics in the SPSS programme.

RESULTS

Statistical analysis of the students' responses showed that identified gifted students have a higher academic self-concept than their peers who have not been identified as a gifted ($t=-3.40$, $df\ (143)$, $p\leq.001$) (Table 1). Gifted students do not differ to a statistically significant degree in their self-concept with regard to their gender ($t=0.12$, $df\ (61)$, $p=0.908$), grade ($F=1.564$, $df\ (3, 60)$ $p=0.207$) and academic achievement ($t=-1.844$, $df(61)$, $p=0.070$).

Insert Figure 1 here.

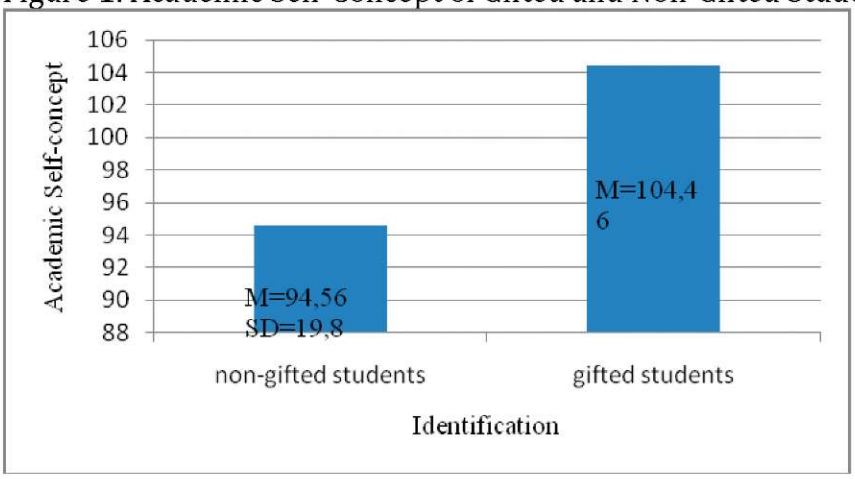
CONCLUSION

Students develop their academic self-concept, which represents their knowledge and perceptions of their own academic competency (Bong and Skaalvik, 2003), while learning, particularly in their first years of school; as schooling progresses, academic self-concept becomes an increasingly important factor in learning and academic success (Juriševič, 1999a, 1999b). Social comparisons are important for the development of the student's academic self-concept, as students compare their academic ability and achievements with their fellow students, their peers, and on this basis build their own self-concept. In this context, the big-fish-little-pond effect connects academic self-concept with the average academic success of the student's class, as the student's self-concept is linked both with the student's perception of his or her own academic competency and with the academic competency of his or her classmates. In a highly selective academic environment, the student can, in spite of his or her high academic potential, form a low academic self-concept, as the academic average in such an environment is high ("a little fish in a big pond"); on the other hand, a student with average academic ability can form an unrealistically high self-concept if, for instance, his or her ability is nonetheless higher than the average in the class ("a big fish in a little pond") (Marsh and Craven, 2002; Seaton and Craven, in press).
The results of the statistical analysis presented above support the conclusion that the gifted students who participated in the research are included in regular elementary school classes in a quality way from the perspective of their personal development and their self-concept in the academic area. In comparison with their peers, gifted students have a higher academic self-concept, which is to be expected in view of their academic success, but not with regard to the fact that they are identified as gifted and are therefore party to provision that students who have not been identified as such do not have. The results further confirm findings of research on the area of self-concept and academic success, in the sense that academic success is normally linked with academic self-concept, irrespective of gender and grade. It therefore seems appropriate that in the future an inclusive model of education of gifted students should continue to be encouraged on the level of elementary schooling rather than a selective model, which,

according to empirical findings, has a negative influence on the personal development of gifted students and leads to perfectionism and other forms of disturbed behaviour. It is also important that in adapting schoolwork to gifted students the principle of "adding equivalent learning tasks" replaces the principle of "different learning tasks" as soon as possible.

Not least, it is necessary to highlight the lack of research in the area of emotional-social and other personality factors on the overall development of the potential of gifted students. Such research would make an important contribution to the effectiveness of the education of gifted students in an inclusive context. If we want to develop this aspect of education it will be necessary to engage in further thorough research in this area.

Figure 1: Academic Self-Concept of Gifted and Non-Gifted Students



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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND SPIRITUALITY:

COMPLEMENTARY OR CONTRADICTORY CONCEPTS?

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ABSTRACT

Religious education in educational systems in the western world is widespread and in many countries is regarded as mandatory for all students. There are two clear-cut philosophies underlying religious education: a) knowledge-based religious education; and b) faith-based religious education

In knowledge-based religious education students are taught about religion, the history of religion, religion as a part of culture and religious tradition and folklore. Students are encouraged to understand how religion developed, its place in the moulding of national identity and its connection to the values consensually accepted within western society. In faith-based religious education students are not only provided with religious knowledge regarding the history of religion and religion as a culture but are also encouraged to perform the precepts and commandments of the religion.

Research in Israel has indicated that knowledge-based religious education has little connection to the enhancement of spirituality and psychological well-being among students. Students do not identify formal religious education with a feeling of spiritual or psychological well-being and view religious education as a subject divorced from spirituality and affect. On the other hand, faith-based religious education enhances both feelings of spirituality and psychological well-being within the student body.

It is the aim of this presentation to highlight the congruence found between religion and spirituality in faith-based religious education in Israel and how religion and spirituality are perceived as separate and divorced concepts in knowledge based religious education.

Keywords: faith-based religious education; knowledge-based religious education; spirituality.

RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

Gollnick (2005) defined religion as belief in god which includes profound experience of the holy or the sacred. Spirituality can be defined as an awareness and concern for the human spirit and a feeling of oneness or wholeness. Zinnbauer & Pargament (2005) proposed that religion concerns involvement in practices and commitment to beliefs or ideologies, whereas spirituality is more about the individual's quest for meaning and

well-being. According to Jackson & Bergeman (2011) religion has more organizational and behavioral connotations, whereas spirituality is oriented toward personal experiences. Indices of religion and spirituality are robustly associated and interrelated with positive outcomes concerning happiness and well-being. Patrick & Kinney (2003) and Ellison & Fan (2008) intimated that individuals who are more committed to their religious faith and spiritual convictions are happier, healthier, and have more coping resources at their disposal than those for whom religion and spirituality are less important. Religious and spiritual persons tend to have better mental and physical health (Rosmarin, Pirutinsky, Pargament, & Krumrei, 2009; Lawler-Row, 2010), enjoy greater life satisfaction (Steger & Frazier, 2005), and engage in more pro-social behaviors (Gibson, 2008; Hardy & Carlo, 2005). Thus there is much empirical evidence that religion and spirituality lead to a sense of well-being, to feelings of wholeness and congruence as well as to a feeling of commitment to community and to society (Dillon, Wink & Fay, 2003).

EDUCATION IN ISRAEL

Israel is characterized as being both a traditional and modern society at one and the same time (Eisenstadt, 1996). The first Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion adopted a national policy whereby the state educational system, served as a social agent for the promotion of integration of the different religious, cultural and ethnic groupings in Israeli society. This policy over the years led to the understanding that all sectors in Israeli society are legitimately encouraged to foster their sectorial needs, including particular sectorial needs in the domain of religious education (Katz, 2007).
Katz (2004) described how the Israeli state education system is divided into two major sectors: state religious and state secular. The Ministry of Education is responsible for the curriculum and coordinates the educational processes that characterize the state religious and state secular sectors. The two sectors exist side by side and enjoy autonomy with inspectors responsible for supervising the educational process in their particular sector. In addition to the usual range of mandatory core subjects such as native language, mathematics, science, history, geography etc., the national curriculum stipulates that religious education be studied as a mandatory subject in both religious and secular educational sectors, with the religious needs of each sector emphasized in the religious education curriculum.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE ISRAELI STATE RELIGIOUS SECTOR

Katz, (2010) indicated that in this sector the emphasis is placed on achievement in the different core subjects offered to the students in addition to a range of religious subjects that are taught from an orthodox point of view. Values that are congruent with orthodox Judaism are imparted to the students, Thus teachers are intent on inculcating an orthodox way of life in their students and view Western civilization and citizenship through the Jewish orthodox prism. Religious education in the state religious sector is faith-based and students are not only provided with religious knowledge regarding the history of religion and religion as a culture but are also encouraged to perform religious precepts and commandments. In faith-based education ideology only the Jewish religion is taught without emphasis being placed on the pluralistic study of religions. Parents choose this sector mainly because of their orthodox religious persuasion and their belief

that religious education should be faith-based and should develop the religiosity and religious observance of students.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE ISRAELI STATE SECULAR SECTOR

According to Katz (2010) different core curricular subjects are taught in this sector from a pluralistic values point of view that does not have any aim to impart to the students any particular ideology apart from humanistic and democratic values that characterize Western civilization. Religious education (described as heritage education in the state secular curriculum) is a mandatory subject and is characterized by its knowledge-based ideological roots. Students are taught about religion, the history of religion, religion as a part of culture and religious tradition and folklore. Students are encouraged to understand how religion developed, its place in the moulding of national identity and its connection to the values consensually accepted within Western society. In knowledge-based religious education, the Jewish religion of the country is perceived as centre-stage but other religions may also be studied from a pluralistic point of view. Parents choose this sector mainly because they have a secular life style with no particular religious commitment and wish their children to experience an all round secular education that emphasizes knowledge of Jewish heritage as well as humanistic values and citizenship. Parents do not perceive the goal of religious education as taught in the state secular sector as one of enhancing religiosity or religious observance but solely as one of enhancing historical, cultural, and traditional knowledge.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The main aim of this research study was to establish whether students at state religious schools in Israel indicate feelings of increased spirituality as a result of their exposure to faith-based religious education when compared to their peers at secular schools who receive knowledge-based religious education.

RESEARCH SAMPLE

The research sample consisted of 230 10th grade high school students (109 boys and 121 girls) who were enrolled in two state religious and two state secular schools. 112 students were enrolled in the state religious sector and 118 studied in the state secular sector and all studied in regular mainstream classes.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Spirituality was assessed using a Likert Scale type 15-item questionnaire based on the Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale (Underwood & Teresi, 2002). One item from the original scale and certain items were rephrased so as to eliminate a direct relationship between the items and religion where possible. The questionnaire response scale of 1-5 (never = 1, many times a day = 5) was reduced from the original response scale of 1-6. Each item was worded in positive terms and the scale loaded on one major factor entitled "spirituality". Underwood & Teresi reported that in many studies the Cronbach

α reliability coefficient for the scale has been shown to be consistently above the .90 level.

PROCEDURE

The research questionnaire was administered to the 230 participating students during one of their 50 minute long religious education lessons during spring of the 2010 school year. The main aim of the study was explained to the students in general terms. The students were informed that participation in the research was voluntary. They were told that there were no correct or incorrect responses to the questionnaire items and were asked to provide accurate responses to the questionnaire items that best reflected their true feelings. The researcher undertook to maintain complete anonymity regarding all data collected during the research. Students were assured that only general results that would not divulge any sensitive details would appear in the research report.

RESULTS

The main aim of the study was to examine whether students undergoing faith-based religious education in state religious schools in Israel scored higher on the adapted Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale than students who studied religious education at state secular schools. Mean scores and standard deviations of students' scores on the research questionnaire are presented in Table 1.

Table 2: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Spirituality

Sector	N	Mean	S.D.
State Religious	112	38.20	6.49
State Secular	118	35.71	7.66

A one-way ANOVA analysis was performed in order to investigate differences between the two groups of students on the adapted Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale. Results of the ANOVA indicate significant main effects [$F(1,228) = 7.04$; $P<.01$] which confirm that the students who studied in state religious schools achieved significantly higher scores on the "spirituality" factor than students enrolled in state secular schools.

DISCUSSION

The research findings clearly indicate that students enrolled in state religious schools in Israel exhibit significantly higher levels of spirituality than students studying at state secular schools. This is apparently because state religious schools accept students who stem from religious homes and emphasize faith-based religious education that is congruent with the enhancement of spirituality. On the other hand, state secular schools that cater to students who come from secular homes offer knowledge-based religious education that is less conducive to the promotion of spirituality among students. The results of the research confirm the interrelatedness of religion and spirituality (following, among others, Dillon, Wink & Fay, 2003; Ellison & Fan, 2008; and Jackson & Bergeman, 2011) with those students who received faced-based religious education

exhibiting higher levels of spirituality than students who received knowledge-based religious education.

It may well be that the population attracted to state religious schools are in fact those who come from religious backgrounds where religion and spirituality are interrelated in the family culture and childrearing practices, with the state religious schools offering faith-based religious education and enhancement of spirituality as an extension of family values. Similarly, students studying in state secular schools do so because of the congruence between secular family background, where religion is not perceived as important in family culture, and school where knowledge-based religious education promotes knowledge, culture and tradition without making demands that students perform religious precepts. This conceivably limits the potential development of spirituality in the secular schools. Thus the results of this study confirm that in state religious schools religious education and spirituality are complementary whereas in state secular schools they may be perceived as contradictory.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion one can say that the results of this study, namely that faith-based religious education in Israeli state religious schools is significantly more related to the enhancement of spirituality among students than knowledge-based education at state secular schools, confirm what is already widely known in the literature, i.e. the existence of a robust association between religion and spirituality. It is suggested that further research addresses the possibility of offering education for the enhancement of spirituality among students in state secular schools without necessarily linking spirituality to religion.

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"WHEN WE GO OUT, WE GET IN" – OUTDOOR LEARNING ABOUT NATURE THROUGH CREATIVE MOVEMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

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ABSTRACT

Moving and sensory consciousness are the main ways children learn about their world and themselves. Learning is facilitated when a child's entire body is involved (Boyd et al., 2003). The outdoor environment is an ideal place for children to play and learn, since it offers an incredible wealth of sensory experiences (Wilson, 2008).
In our project, preschool children (aged 4-5) were offered a direct early science experience and the chance to express it through creative movement. We selected a few science topics (spiders, beetles, a toad, a caterpillar, grasses, trees, rotating maple, linden and ash tree fruits, rain and wind) and conceived outdoor activities that included: an experience and the act of experiencing, learning from the experience and re-living the experience through creative movement. We video recorded the activities. We evaluated the elements of creative movement (the use of different body parts, space, direction, levels, ranges, pathways, speed, force, and rhythm). Before each activity, we asked the children to depict a certain science topic by movement, which was based on their own previous ideas and knowledge about the topic. We used those results in the comparison with the movements after the direct experiences.
Our results show that nature and direct contact with living beings motivated children to discover new ways of movement and new kinaesthetic senses, develop body orientation and learn the meaning of movement expressions. Children used body language to express their experience, emotions, thoughts, and attitude toward topics dealt with, and thus reinforced the early science knowledge they had gained. The children's movements were original, non-stereotypical, and we noticed significant progress in their use of creative movement elements. Group activities promoted children's social development and positive emotions toward nature.

Key words: creative movement, outdoor learning, preschool children, early science, experiential learning

INTRODUCTION

Creative movement stimulates cognitive learning. Moving and sensory consciousness are the main ways children learn about their world and themselves. Learning is facilitated when a child's entire body is involved (Boyd et al., 2003). Intellectual, physical and emotional growth is stimulated through movement experiences (Davies, 2003; Gallahue et al., 1975, Gilbert, 2004; Joyce, 1994). Experiences in movement exploration allow the children to express themselves in non-verbal terms. This can be very important for the inarticulate child (Gilbert, 2002).

Young children are fascinated by the natural world. They know and experience the natural world differently to adults (White, 2008; Wilson, 2008). According to Rachel Carson (1956), the child knows the world as being "fresh and new and beautiful, full of wonder and excitement". As for adults, Carson says:"It is our misfortune that for most of us that clear-eyed vision, that true instinct for what is beautiful and awe-inspiring, is dimmed and even lost before we reach adulthood".

The natural outdoors are ideal places for children to play and learn. They offer an incredible wealth of sensory experiences. Outdoor play and learning in natural environment promote the holistic development of children as they stimulate growth in all of the developmental domains, including adaptive, cognitive, aesthetic, communication, sensorimotor and socioemotional (Wilson, 2008). Activities in nature also foster the development of an environmental ethics, which must start at the early childhood level, as this is the period of life when basic attitudes and values are established (Wilson 1994). The most effective way to instill a lifelong sense of caring and responsibility for the natural world is to give young children frequent positive experiences with the world of nature. Unless children have frequent positive interactions with the natural world, they are likely to develop unfounded fears and prejudices about nature that impede the development of an environmental ethic (Wilson, 2008).

Preschoolers' learning consists mainly of direct experience (Bredekamp and Copple, 1997). Their experience of nature and natural phenomena facilitates learning that ultimately leads to permanent, useful knowledge and an accomplished attitude toward all living beings (Wilson, 2008). At the preschool level, the interdisciplinary approach to curricular areas is a prerequisite, and there are no limitations to the way the teacher intertwines different topics. Children can re-live their early science experiences in various ways, thus verbally, by drawing or painting, through music or through creative movement.

METHODS

Our project combined science and creative movement. We conducted a single-group experiment having one treatment. The activities were conducted with a group of 15 preschool children aged 4–5. There were 6 boys and 9 girls.

We selected a few science topics and conceived activities that included:

- an experience and the act of experiencing,
- learning from the experience,
- re-living experience through creative movement.

We video recorded the activities. When analyzing the recordings, we focused our attention on the children's genuine and credible movement responses and on stereotypical movements.

We evaluated the elements of creative movement (the use of different body parts, body movement, steps, level, direction, range, space, pathways, rhythm and force) using a 3-score scale (Table 1).
Before each activity, we asked the children to depict a certain science topic by movement, which was based on their own previous ideas and knowledge about the topic. We used those results in the comparison with the movements after the direct experiences.
Using the statistical analysis software PASW (SPSS) we computed means and standard deviations for numbers of elements of creative movement before and after the activities.
We examined the differences in the numbers of elements of creative movement by applying the related one-tailed t-test and effect size. We also examined the differences in means for the boys and girls by applying the two-tailed t-test for unrelated data and effect size (Coolican, 2009).

Table 1: Scale used for the evaluation of creative movement elements

ELEMENT OF CREATIVE MOVEMENT	VALUE	SCORE
BODY PARTS	only legs or only arms	1
	almost entire body	2
	entire body	3
BODY MOVEMENT	one kind	1
	two kinds	2
	more kinds	3
STEPS	one kind	1
	two kinds	2
	more kinds	3
LEVEL	one	1
	two	2
	more	3
DIRECTION	one	1
	two	2
	more	3
RANGE	one	1
	two	2
	more	3
SPACE	one	1
	two	2
	more	3
PATHWAY	one kind	1
	two kinds	2
	more kinds	3
RHYTHM	one	1
	two	2
	more	3
FORCE	one kind	1
	two kinds	2
	more kinds	3

ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

ANIMALS

Children in the kindergarten tend to mimic animals (fly like birds, hop like rabbits, lumber like bears, etc). The majority of these movements is stereotypical and has little resemblance to the actual animals' movements. Children often make artificial moves, blindly mimicking their peers or teacher. Up to the age of three, stereotypes are acceptable. However, many children hold on to stereotypical movement even in later stages of development.

Our activities focused on the children's immediate experience with live animals. The children got to know and experienced: a caterpillar, a toad, a slow worm, spiders and bugs. We even bred some animals in the playroom, so that the children were in contact with the animals for a longer period and got to know them better.

We paid special attention to children who showed fear or any other negative emotion when in contact with an animal. With a great deal of sensitivity we applied the so-called

model for the elimination of prejudice toward animals (Ocepek, 2005) and remedied this.

We created situations in which the animal moved, and encouraged the children to watch it closely. We observed how the animal: walked, ran, hopped, crawled, swam, how it moved when it ate, how it moved when it was frightened, etc.
Immediately after their experience with an animal, all children were motivated to re-live their new knowledge through movement. If their moves were stereotypical, we encouraged them to recall the experience. If they felt the need to get in touch with the animal again, the children could do so at this stage too.

PLANTS

Many preschoolers think plants do not move at all. For this reason they often satisfy themselves that plants are not alive (Zozga and Papamichael, 2000). It is true that plant movements are far less conspicuous then the movements of animals, but we can nevertheless create conditions to help children sense them and re-live them through their own motion.
The children experienced both active plant movements (by watching beans sprout) as well as passive plant movements (the rotating of maple, linden and ash tree fruits and movements of grass in wind).

EXAMPLE ACTIVITY – TOAD

The kindergarten teacher found a toad in the kindergarten playground. It was an excellent object to include in the project.

The children got to know the toad. They opened their palms and if they wanted to hold it, we placed the animal into their hands. They had sufficient time for their first contact with the animal. At this initial stage, we used almost no verbal communication, since the powerful emotion of the children's experience made it redundant (Fig.1).

Figure 1: Experiencing a toad

Gradually the children began asking questions about the toad. They were motivated to learn something new.

They wanted to know how far it can leap. We put the animal on the ground and it went on a slow crawl. As it moved, it stretched its hind legs, leaving them far behind.

When stroking it, the children realized the toad's skin is soft and warty. They looked at its nostrils and noticed the constant lifting and lowering of its mouth floor. We showed them how its eye contracts into the skull if we touch it. When the eye reappeared, the children noticed the nictiating membrane – the clear inner eyelid that covers their eyes when underwater. The children called it »the toad's swimming glasses«.

Some children were curious about what the toad ate. To answer them, we produced an insect larva. When the toad sensed it, it turned its gaze toward it. Its body turned rigid, its head protruding far ahead of its front legs and its moves jerky. Its tongue extruded in one rapid move and brought the larva back into its mouth. Immediately afterwards its eyeballs went down into its head and it devoured the larva. The children wanted to see this again, so we placed the larva into their open palms and had the toad eat from their hands. For an instant, they could sense the feel of its soft, moist tongue on their palms.

We then put the animal into a puddle. The toad took to swimming and the children saw that with each stroke the animal stretched its hind legs in the same way they do when they swim froggy style.

Even as they were still experiencing the animal, some children began to spontaneously re-live the experience. We encouraged others to follow suit.

The children used all parts of their bodies to imitate the toad, moved inside the lower and mid levels, changing the speed of their movements, muscle tension, gaze direction – and thus put on display for us to watch a myriad of creative movement elements (Fig. 2).

Figure 2: Imitating movements of a toad

We set up an aqua-terrarium in the playroom and had the children take care of the toad. The fear that some children had felt upon their first contact with the animal had completely disappeared.

Results – Toad

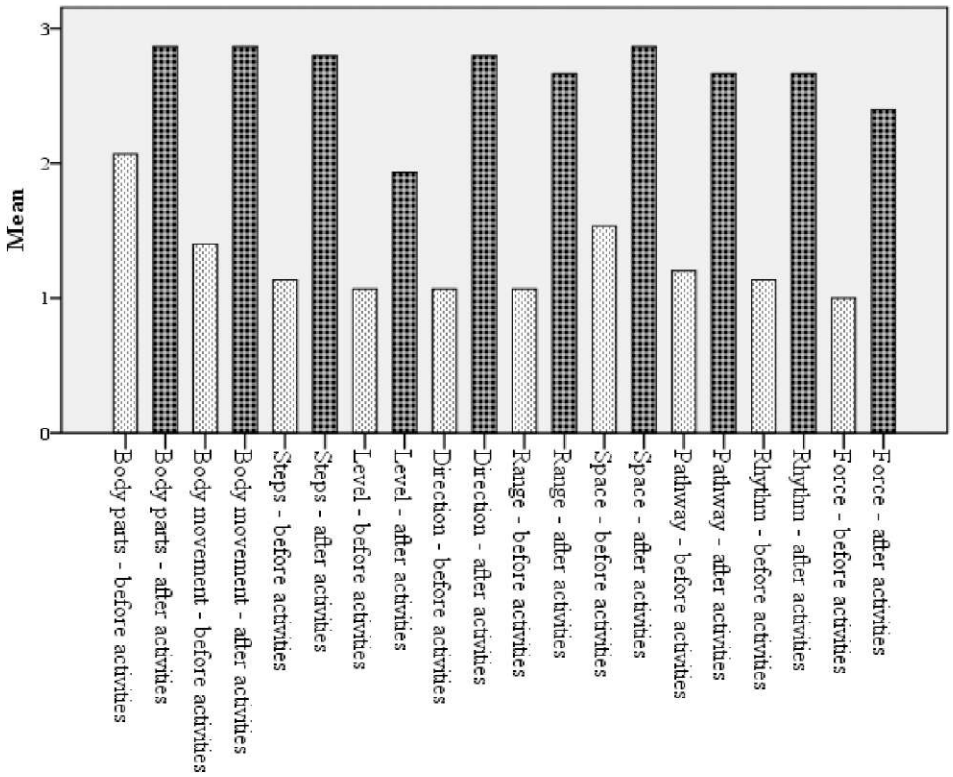

Figure 3: Means for elements of creative movement before and after the activities

Table 2: t-test and effect size for elements of creative movement

ELEMENT OF CREATIVE MOVEMENT	t	df	p (one-tailed)	effect size η^2
body parts	-5,527	14	0,000	0,686
body movement	-11,000	14	0,000	0,896
steps	-13,229	14	0,000	0,926
level	-9,539	14	0,000	0,867
direction	-14,666	14	0,000	0,939
range	-12,220	14	0,000	0,914
space	-8,367	14	0,000	0,833
pathway	-11,000	14	0,000	0,896
rhythm	-11,500	14	0,000	0,904
force	-10,693	14	0,000	0,891

The mean numbers for all elements of creative movement after the activities are higher than the mean numbers before the activities. These increases are highly statistically significant ($p < 0,050$).The mean differences (effect sizes) are very large, too ($\eta^2 > 0,140$).
The differences between means for boys and girls are not significant ($p > 0,050$), effect sizes are very small ($\eta^2 < 0,010$).

CONCLUSIONS

Nature and direct contact with living beings motivated children to discover new ways of movement and new kinaesthetic senses, develop body orientation and learn the meaning of movement expressions.
Children used body language to express their experience, emotions, thoughts, and attitude toward topics dealt with, and thus reinforced the early science knowledge they had gained.
The children's movements were original, non-stereotypical, and we noticed significant progress in their use of creative movement elements.
The experience made them realize how each of them placed special emphasis on certain specifics, and this only encouraged them to keep an even closer watch. Looking at each other move, they borrowed each other's motifs and so the object of observation evolved into new and richer content. They learned from nature and from their peers. They commented on each other's moves and supplemented each other.
The activities promoted children's social development and positive emotions toward nature.
The natural outdoor places offered new discoveries and a lot of space to express through creative movement.
We conclude that an early science experience changes the child's way of observing nature. The child, and later the adult, becomes more sensitive to his surroundings and more responsible in his actions. And this is precisely what we would like to achieve.

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THE EFFECTS OF EXPERIENTIAL PEDAGOGICAL PROJECTS ON YOUNG PEOPLE IN INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Over the past twenty years, we have carried out a series of experiential pedagogical projects. These projects enable children and adolescents an experience of success and recognition by the group as well as the sense of being truly accepted as a person and an essential part of a team. They offer social competence: an individual experiences himself in a new way, sees that there is more to him than he thought or knew, that it is possible to support others in gaining courage in order to recognize their capabilities and helps him to take initiative and be able to submit at the same time, help others and let others help him and also take responsibility and learn to trust simultaneously.

The most noticeable changes among the participants are especially in improving communication, the ability to adapt to a small space within an intensive group where the possibility of withdrawing is relatively small, in improving the monitoring of excesses and resolving conflicts as well as in the progress of resourcefulness and practical skills which they will be able to use in their everyday life (gathering and cooking food). The adolescents acquire very much in the field of social competence.

Key words: experiential pedagogy, institutional education, interpersonal relations, self-image

SOME BASICS FOR THE INTRODUCTION

The experiential pedagogy method is making a name for itself in the educational assistance system, standing on the shoulders of pedagogical giants, who with their personal approach have outlined this concept of education on integrated didactic methods. It presents an addition to educational forms and methods, as well as an alternative to educational assistance. Experiential pedagogy is based on an integrated approach and on a wide range of everyday activities –those educational fields where adolescents can confront themselves, realize their ability to achieve something, find their strong points, and together with suitable

self-reflection and supportive relationships over a longer period of time develop their own relatively stable behavioural model. This is also why we consider it to be first and foremost an educational method. Many children and adolescents labelled as neglected, presenting behavioural or educational difficulties, are transferred from one educational institution to another because no one can get to the bottom of things with them. Some such careers conclude in closed institutions.

The experiences these young people have with adults, such as uninterested or problematic parents, guardians, police officers, etcetera, and the rest of the world (represented by norms and rules) can precipitate very negative views of the adult world. Most develop an untrusting distance or a significantly negative attitude towards everyone, from social pedagogues and psychologists to social workers; in short, towards everyone around them trying to instil norms or rules in them. In their classic study, Redl and Winemann (1984) write along similar lines: the biggest problem with these children is their tough and tenacious rebellion against any form of intervention – any approach or interference from adults. Until we overcome this resistance or until it works itself out naturally, pedagogical work is not possible.

From a sociological point of view, adolescence is the transitional period between childhood and adulthood, connected with extreme insecurity regarding one's status and role. The adolescent attempts to fight this insecurity through independent achievements. Various activities, a love of adventure, curiosity, and experiments in physical and social areas are necessary for this phase of life; they are an expression of looking for one's own self and an expression of searching for one's own identity. Based as it is on experiences and activities, the approach is very well suited to the needs of adolescents. A clear and structured framework offers many an opportunity to experience one's own self, to build up a social form of behaviour and to regulate one's system of values. (Ziegenspeck, 1992)

EXPERIENTIAL PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES

Experiential pedagogical principles implicitly indicate the idea of experiential pedagogy, its connection to nature and the specific logic of the activity in question:

COMPREHENSIVENESS

As opposed to the predominating conditions and structures of learning and living, comprehensiveness is the most important principle of experiential pedagogy. It seeks to present an alternative to the one-sided transference of knowledge, aimed solely at rationality and intellect, and to the fragmentation of life into separate spheres. Comprehensiveness in experiential pedagogy encompasses a number of areas. In terms of the individual, it strives to achieve the joint participation of body, mind and spirit on each occasion. (Ziegenspeck, 2005) In experiential pedagogy, the emotional, artistic, skill-oriented, social and cognitive educational elements are considered equal (Priest and Gass, 1997).

ACTIVITY ORIENTED

Contemporary culture, particularly in big cities and densely populated areas, severely restricts the possibility of movement in the natural world. (Ziegenspeck, 1992) Personal, direct experience has unavoidably been replaced by second hand experience: consumerism

and over-stimulation instead of personal activity. We waste time with passive endeavours, such as the media. Second hand experiences such as those mediated by television, for example, passively watching sports, cannot replace those that are acquired, conquered and intensely experienced by the self, and leave behind an 'unsatisfied dramatic need'. For this reason, experiential pedagogy is aimed at essential personal activity, creating the conditions that prevent involvement that is solely passive. It must become clear to the participants that they can change the circumstances of their lives or learn something only through their own activity, so that they understand, on the basis of a simple, obvious and clearly defined field of activity, 'the here and now', the connection between effort and result. Physical strength can be meaningfully used for the everyday activities of life. (Krajnčan, 2007).

GROUP ORIENTED

When it comes to methods, experiential pedagogy is directly linked to the group work form. Group processes are also stimulated by the general circumstances of the project or activity. An experiential group often depends only upon itself and has barely any contact with the outside environment. In this way, a sort of 'everyday' situation is formulated, where various deviations from the otherwise familiar environment are absent. Because of the closed social space, it becomes apparent that the possibility of retreat from or avoidance of the actual flow of group dynamics is close to impossible. Activities are designed in such a way that adolescents are unconditionally dependent on one other. Cooperation is crucial because otherwise the group does not move in the right direction; communication is crucial because group assignments need to be distributed and daily plans discussed (Ziegenspeck, 1992).

JOINT DECISION-MAKING AND FORMATION

With the term 'joint decision-making' we wish to direct attention to the modality of the relationships between the youths and the adults (such as educators and teachers). A positive step can be made by giving young people the feeling that everything centres around them, 'their thing', starting out in the preparation stages, and then motivating them to actively participate and create a positive atmosphere. In a standardised and orderly environment, characterised by obscurely reached decisions which are impossible to influence in any way, young people acquire barely any experience, making it impossible to evaluate their participation at all (Ziegenspeck, 1992).

THE POSSIBILITY OF NEW RELATIONSHIPS

The experiential group offers its organisers the opportunity to change the existing relationships and role patterns, to establish new relationships between the adolescents as well as between them and the pedagogues. The external conditions surrounding the experiential pedagogical process present new challenges for everyone involved, both in terms of their readiness and their abilities. New and unexpected assignments and situations can change relationships more significantly than is possible in a regulated institution (Ziegenspeck, 1992).

ORIENTATED TOWARDS THE NEEDS OF THE YOUNG

During puberty and adolescence, a young person undergoes radical physical and psychical changes. The biological aspect includes sudden and significant physical changes caused by increased hormone levels. Growth spurts call for more movement and activity. When they approach their limits, young people can then start to their bodies and become more skilled at self-evaluation (Ziegenspeck, 1992, Fischer, 1999).

NATURE ORIENTED

To use an analogy, often the world of adolescents is made up only of concrete and asphalt. Many natural processes are no longer experienced directly, but only through the media; as a result, a healthy attitude towards nature can only barely be formulated. Experiential pedagogy aims at leaving residential areas behind and by living in nature enables the adolescents to experience this contrast. 'Direct' sensory experience is facilitated both by the group and by nature. The power and authority of nature add to the educational purposes of the project (Fischer, 2003, Attarian/Priest, 1994).

AWAY FROM THE ORDINARY

In contrast with the consumerism and monotony of everyday life, experiential pedagogy offers variety, encouraging thoughts and enabling experiences: away from the flood of stimulants, a life without the media, without traffic, without hustle and bustle. Transparency, a life without fixed impulses or stimuli, offers new dimensions to social learning and working on yourself. (Ziegenspeck, 1992; Krajnčan, 2006)

CONCLUSION – THE EFFECTS OF PROJECTS

We have carried out a series of experiential pedagogical projects over the past twenty years. From Native American camps, hikes lasting several days, to wilderness survival and sailing to life in the lighthouse on a lone island. This project has been carried out in recent years for children and adolescents with emotional and behavioural problems who otherwise reside in institutions. We believe that the specificity of the project (an attractive and socially enclosed space) serves to further enable the development of positive effects in adolescents.

These projects enable children and adolescents to experience success and recognition from the group as well as the sense of being truly accepted as a person and an essential part of a team. They offer social competence: an individual experiences himself in a new way, sees that there is more to him than he thought or knew, and that it is possible to support others in gaining the courage needed to realise their capabilities; this helps him to take the initiative and be able to submit at the same time, to help others and let others help him and also to take responsibility and to learn to trust simultaneously.

All of these are categories which are especially exercised in a small enclosed social system (such as a lighthouse on a lone island). Here we can observe in particular proximity and distance in interactions or the social situation (with their cognitive assessments of the conditions in which they are required for cohabitation to work, voluntary participation is extremely important here); insight affects its energies and moods on the whole group, the

specificity and the intensity of an individual's problems, the degree of trust, taking responsibility for themselves and others. Adolescents are exposed to competition among themselves and interactive work, which may generate social conflict, resolved with the help of educators. Due to the specificity of the project (specifically the limited space) there is no room for retreat, so they are exposed to confrontation. Such action projects with small groups in a specific area during a short period of time can have a significant influence on the social integration of an individual.

The most noticeable changes among the participants are especially the improvement in communication, the ability to adapt to a small space within an intensive group where the possibility of withdrawing is relatively small, in improving the monitoring of excesses and the resolution of conflicts as well as in the progress of the resourcefulness and the practical skills which they will be able to use in their everyday life, such as gathering and cooking food. The adolescents acquire a great deal in the field of social competence.

A big gap can undoubtedly materialise when returning to the institution, where the intensive institutional culture can be a dominant influence and have a negative effect on the experiences acquired, resources discovered, and newfound social competence. (Brünger, 1993)

The successful development of different types of competence has shown that including intensive, socially isolated projects with appealing content or locations and skilled expert attendants in the educational assistance programme would be a useful strategy in future. We would also recommend such methods of assistance as a way of establishing a new group; for example, at the beginning of the school year, or as individual projects for people in critical situations.

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THE ROLE OF THE PUPPET IN TEACHING A SECOND OR FOREIGN LANGUAGE

AT WORKSHOPS FOR CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the inclusion of the puppet in teaching a second or foreign language – particularly Croatian as a second or foreign language – under the specific conditions of short workshops for children of various ages, various pre-knowledge of the language and diverse motivations.

Based on my own experience, my initial hypothesis is that the puppet, particularly when connected with the content of fairy-tales (either classic or modern), is a powerful device in establishing deep emotional connection with the subject being taught, along with higher motivation and greater efficacy in adoption of the material in question. Little Schools of Croatian Language and Culture, organised by the Croatian Heritage Foundation since 1993, are aimed at the children improving their knowledge of Croatian at the daily workshops, and their becoming familiar with the historical, cultural and natural heritage of Croatia. The core question is how to stimulate the interest of children of Croatian emigrants and minorities from other countries in getting to know the language and culture of the country of their forebears and/or how to maintain or increase that interest. I see the puppet's importance in the role of motivator, eliminator of inhibitions and an integrating element for a group of children who barely know each other.

I refer as a theoretical framework to papers on creativity in teaching, especially emphasising utilising the puppet in the education process (I. Hamre, H. Korošec, M. Brėdikytė, E. Majaron and others), together with articles on the fairy-tale's purpose and function (e.g. Bettelheim and the like) and conceptions about Croatian as a second or foreign language (Z. Jelaska *et al*).

The paper's objective is to contribute to the expansion of knowledge on use of the puppet in the educational process, to stress the importance of the art of puppetry with its unique ability to communicate, and to encourage creative ways of using puppets from earliest childhood and throughout life, also the aims of the UNIMA "Puppets in Education, Therapy, and Development" Commission.

Key words: puppet, education, child, foreign language, second language

THE ROLE OF THE PUPPET IN TEACHING A SECOND OR FOREIGN LANGUAGE AT WORKSHOPS FOR CHILDREN

The need for and importance of using the puppet in the educational process is being confirmed by increasingly widespread practice and the growing number of professional papers on the subject. This paper deals with the inclusion of the puppet in teaching a second or foreign language – particularly Croatian as a second or foreign language – under the specific conditions of a brief workshop for children of various ages, various pre-knowledge of the language and diverse motivations.

My paper's objective is to contribute to the expansion of knowledge on use of the puppet in the educational process, to stress the importance of the art of puppetry with its unique ability to communicate, and to encourage creative ways of using puppets from earliest childhood and throughout life, these also being the aims of the UNIMA "Puppets in Education, Therapy, and Development" Commission.

Croatia is an exceptionally emigrational country. It has 4.5 million inhabitants but probably the largest Diaspora in proportion to its population today of all the European countries. No exact information is available to establish the total number of Croatian emigrants, although it is estimated that almost as many Croatians live outside of Croatia as there are in the original homeland. Autochthonic Croatian minority communities or enclaves exist on the territories of neighbouring countries (Montenegro, Serbia, Italy, Austria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia), and there is also a significant economic and/or political Diaspora of Croatians whose forebears emigrated to various countries on all continents (as well as Europe, largely to the United States and South America, and to Australia) looking for a livelihood or fleeing from political persecution.

A large part of them maintain emotional, family and culturological links with Croatia. One of the organisation that devote attention to Croatians outside of Croatia is the Croatian Heritage Foundation founded in 1951, "whose mission is the nurture and development of Croatian as the inherited language and of the customs of Croatians living outside the mother country" (Kanajet-Šimić 2010).

The teaching of Croatian as a second or foreign language[30] is being given increasing attention and better methods are being sought. Creative teaching concepts are being applied with particular focus on the use of the puppet in the educational process, since "puppets and puppet theatre are an excellent teaching tool in infant, primary and secondary school education (2 to 18 years)" (Debouny 2002: 69).

The puppet offers numerous advantages and diverse potentials that can be used in the educational process. One of its most significant advantages is its potential for humour. Ida Hamre underscores the importance of humour in the teaching process and considers that it is just that "animation theatre always appeals to our sense of humour, mainly

[30] "The prototypical foreign language is the language of another country that is not spoken in the country in which it is being learnt, neither as the official language nor as the language of education. In other words, it is being learnt outside of the country in which it is spoken. The prototypical second language – is the language that is learnt by inhabitants in the same country who are born in that country and who have adopted that language from birth as their mother tonguage (and) a language differing from the main environmental language, that is, the state and official language" (Jelaska 2005: 29).

because of the irony of the animated figure which always refers to man" (Hamre 2002: 8).

The puppet can be utilised in the complete educational process, while it has an important role in the very process of learning a language, since: "In games with a puppet, speech develops and is enriched naturally. Because of its vitalising components, the puppet leads the child naturally into speech communication" (Ivon 2010: 59).

That which relates to a small child just learning to adopt its mother tongue or first language, can also be applied to later teaching of a second or foreign language:

> With the fledging speech skills, children are still unable to express many things with words, whereas drama with puppets considerably broadens the arsenal of expressive means available to them (facial expressions, body movements, puppets, and different sounds), thus helping the child express his thoughts with non-verbal mediums (Brėdikytė 2002: 45-46).

The puppet stimulates spontaneity in linguistic expression:

> When a child identifies with a stage puppet and speaks in its name, his speech becomes spontaneously natural and expressive and the child is inspired by the puppet to change its sound according to the character and the mood of the personages (Pokrivka 1980: 48).

The puppet is a perfect aid in freeing a child from inhibition. Since it does not "live", that is, does not exist until it is animated, until it is in a mutual relationship with its animator, the stage puppet necessarily demands communication. By animating the puppet (by voice and movement), the child identifies with it, while remaining separate from it. The puppet challenges the child, entices it, stimulates the child to play, but remains "something else". Hence, a child who is not sure of his knowledge of a language, or who knows that he speaks it poorly, will prefer to use the language in play with the puppet, because "that is the puppet talking", and the puppet is at liberty to make mistakes, to be funny and to be awkward. In fact, a child who has complete control of the puppet will feel superior and thus gain self-confidence.

> The puppet provides the child a kind of cover, behind which he/she can hide. So a timid child can also find motivation to speak (...). Hence, the puppet helps the child to communicate much more spontaneously (...). The puppet is an authority, selected by the child himself. (...) Since a child is not able exactly to express directly all his feelings in words, puppet heroes help him in finding the words and even more: another point of view. Additionally, children who are accustomed to use puppets in their everyday conversations, have richer vocabulary (...) (Majaron 2002: 61).
>
> Activities associated with puppets and drama are very helpful for development of the child's individual capacities and new, authentic, personal ways of communication. (...) The puppet is an exceptional means of motivation and enriches the child's emotional and social potential (...) (Korošec 2002: 29).

One of the Croatian Heritage Foundation programmes is the Small School of Croatian Language and Culture intended for school-age children who are living and being educated outside of the Republic of Croatia, the basic objective being to advance their knowledge of the Croatian language and to familiarise them with the cultural and natural heritage of Croatia and the region in which they are staying. In order to familiarise them with the components of Croatian identity in the most interesting, creative and stimulating way, work unfolds in workshop form, and one of those is the puppet workshop.

The workshop form of activity has shown itself to possess numerous advantages: the possibility of correlation between all content important to the subject, in this case the preservation of Croatian identity (language, culture and natural heritage, history, geography, music, tradition...), the interactive approach to teaching, freedom of expression, improvisation, elimination of fear of mistakes, the equal importance and equality of all the participants, the suitability for all ages, all levels of language knowledge and all socio-cultural frameworks, with improved motivation (Kanajet-Šimić 2010).

It frequently happens that the children taking part in the workshop do not know each other and differ from each other to a considerable extent: they come from diverse language environments, are of different ages, have different pre-knowledge (some growing up in environments in which Croatian has been spoken as a second language since their early childhood, while, if it is similar to the language of the country in which they live, they have no trouble whatsoever with understanding, while others know only a few Croatian words and Croatian is a completely foreign language to them), different social and economic status, and are of different character and different motivation.

In all that diversity, the puppet has shown itself to be a powerful integrating factor. It has been near to the child from early on in its life. Even when the child no longer plays with it, or at least does not admit to playing with it, its power of attraction does not fade. A small child approaches it with no reservations, as a well-known friend and ally, while older children play with it in the manner of detachment, irony, caricaturing people the child knows, shifting around the parts and personages of familiar stories, and the like.

The Small School of Croatian Language and Culture has been held in Novi Vinodolski in July each year since 1993. It lasts for 12 days. The workshop programmes takes place for an hour and a half each day over eight days, while the last day ends with a closing show and presentation of work done. Expectation of the final show could be a burden if it were to be regarded as an objective that belittles the process but, if understood correctly, it is a powerful means of motivation.

Participation in the puppetry workshop engaged the children universally through making the puppets, the décor and the props, creating the texts, seeking out the acting and puppetry expression, through selecting and/or performance of the music and various sound effects, joining together in that way various artistic expressions. Thus, the diverse interests and capabilities among the children come to the fore on an equal footing: some are more engaged in drawing and painting, making the puppets, finding technological stage solutions, while others prefer to devise the text, or even act, play an instrument, sing, produce various sounds, and the like.

The puppet-making process is also used for unobtrusive teaching of the language. In the process of work, the children use words that denote the accessories they use (scissors, glue, paper, sponges...), various paints, objects, props or parts of the scenography (a house, flower, sun, moon...), personages (boy, grandmother, dog, friend...), and that in sentences in which they also learn the declinations of the nouns and conjugation of the verbs.

All the basic forms of creating puppetry plays are used in the workshops: memorising the puppet play, adaptation and dramatisation of a known text, puppetry improvisation (which can start our either from set situations that have to be played with the puppet or from verbal invention of the story). The texts used have been contemporary and classical. Work on the basis of classic fairytales proved to be particularly successful, which could have been expected among the smallest children, but was surprising among those who were older.

The attractiveness of the fairytale for small children is well known to parents, teachers, educators and psychologists. Bruno Bettelheim claims indeed that "of the entire 'children's literature' – with rare exceptions – nothing can be so enriching and satisfying to child and adult alike as the folk fairy tale" (Bettelheim 2010: 5). However, it is obvious that the firm structure of the fairytale has shown itself to be attractive to older children, too, especially those who have not initially shown very much imagination or inclination towards improvisation and invention of their own content, and who have been uncertain in their knowledge of the language. A familiar story that they knew or could easily recall with help, offered them the pleasure of recognition. For its part, the possibility of inverting a story and its characters offered them a feeling of superiority, so that they were prepared to speak out in what was to them a foreign language.
Apart from firm stories, the fairytale also provides a good foundation by its characters, which are very clearly drawn, archetypical, and characterised merely by main but very distinctive features. They are unmistakeably divided into good and evil, beautiful and ugly, wise and senseless. The unambiguous and unchanging personages, the simplicity of the motivation, the utilisation of symbols and the stylisation are common to both the fairytale and the puppet theatre. Apart from that, the fairytale can also have the emotional value of remembrance of childhood, the homeland from which the child originally came, and his parents or his grandmother, who perhaps told him that very fairytale.

CONCLUSION

In teaching a second or foreign language – particularly Croatian as a second or foreign language – under the specific conditions of a brief workshop for children of various ages, various pre-knowledge of the language and diverse motivations, the puppet has shown its importance in the role of motivator, eliminator of inhibitions and an integrating element for a group of children who barely know each other. It has stimulated or increased the interest of children in getting to know the language and culture of the country of their forebears. The use of the puppet, particularly when connected with the content of fairytales, has shown itself to be a powerful device in establishing deep emotional connection with the subject being taught, along with higher motivation and greater efficacy in adoption of the material in question.

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BEING IN BODY:

CREATIVE MOVEMENT AS LEARNING EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Children have a natural love of physical activity. By translating selected parts of the academic curriculum from words and concepts into dance and movement this natural energy can be utilised very effectively. The teacher and pupils choose which parts of their courses are suitable and these become themes to be explored through physical exercise and dance. In this way children are given the opportunity to discover themselves. They comprehend and evaluate issues in a more vivid way because this is an all-embracing way of learning which opens up a new range of possibilities. All this activity is fun and inspires the children to listen and observe more intensively.

Key words: dance, curiculum, creative movement, education

Creative movement starts when a child knows where he wants to go. At that moment he can decide which way he will take and how he will go there, walking or running, by his small car or bicycle, or on papa's shoulder, etc... So there are plenty of ways how and what way he might go. It is crucial to have a goal, which motivates his movement, for example, to reach children's playground or to find different things (ball, car, toy) or to show different movement. To have a goal means to have a motive for motion and to move more or less in a conscious way; with our help a child might decide (and experiment) how to get there and which way to take. When he is too young to decide, we are doing the same thing for him and he observes us or copies us. It depends on how creative we are with those decisions, so that he gets more and more different experiences.

This model usually applies in an open place, but we can use it also in a gym or in our living rooms. In a room a child can move in several different ways: by crawling, voluting, sliding in different directions like an animal, or a thing with motor, does. Between two spots he might be circling (whipping) with his hands up (like humming top) , or hands down and experiment with different movements (image's of animal) or use some of the experiences of

his own (walking against the strong wind etc.). So, his movement vocabulary comes partly from his natural ability (genes, movement disposition) and self motivation to experiment with image's (themes) that we offer him or demonstrate to him by using our body, and he then might copy us. Later on, he might use this learned movement in different combinations or in a phrase. From that moment he is a creative dancer. Sometimes he experiments with movement half consciously, spontaneously, but with our help this movement becomes more conscious, by naming it and showing it (verbal and non verbal moving ideas). In this process he develops his creative potential and movement ability in a structured way. In this process it is crucial that we know what are we doing with him (what is our goal from the aspect of dancing elements) and the most important thing is to appreciate his contribution and to recognize what he or she is really doing at that specific movement. There are a lot of things going on in front of us: a child might enjoy in it and experiment different movements or discover something new or reuse the movement he experienced before. In that process he is not just dancing but also learning about our surroundings, our nature and it's laws, social phenomena, etc.

Thus, creative movement is also a way to better understand the world inside/around us and experience certain things about our body. It has a potential to provide a child with fundamental experience about his feelings and his understanding of natural and social processes. Creative movement helps develop his total locomotion ability and gives a platform for every kind of sport activity or dance. Its ability to cover different aspects of preschool curriculum gives teacher and child a certain kind of total or holistic knowledge. In creative dancing he use math, language, natural sciences, social skills, movement possibilities and to learn the use of rules. So, it is a precious learning experience which covers many aspects of our being. If practising regularly, it might become a way of grasping a new concept of our self, where body and mind are inseparable, the feeling of unity with the world.

Our body and mind are not coordinated. When (children's) body is sitting, the mind is filled constantly by thoughts, feelings, inner conversations, daydreams, fantasies etc. Maybe that is the reason why young children constantly move around; it might be their desperate unconscious wish to stay connected with his body. In this abstract attitude (not being in the body) one habitually distances him/herself from one's experience. But creative movement and dancing help not being trapped forever in abstract attitude.[31] The dissociation of mind and body, of awareness from experience, is the result of habits, and those habits can be broken. As the dancer again and again interrupts the flow of discursive thought and returns to be present with his creative (conscious) movement, there is a gradual taming of mind's restlessness. Children can by creative movement (or children do yoga) develop habits in which body and mind can be brought together, and body and mind are found to be naturally coordinated and *embodied.* In our culture reflection has been severed from bodily life, at least from Cartesian dualism on. The second problem in our Christian culture was bodily expression, which was through history successfully diminished and quarried.

As the latest scientific discoveries on **brain development** found out, learning through movement connects different parts of the brain and is fundamental in connecting crucial neurons which make experience real and long lasting, not only in brain but especially in the body which means that what is written in the body is there forever.[32] In creative movement the process is not working only in one part of the brain, cognitive- left one, which usually is dominant in schools, but in the right one too, because children use imagination, emotion, etc., in developing his movement. Metaphorically speaking, our school system, which prefers logic, math and language (left side of the brain) seems as if we were using only right hand,

[31] Francesco J. Varela, Evan Thompson and Eleanor Rosch, *The Embodied Mind*, Cognitive Science and Human Experience, The MIT Press, Cambridge, London, 2000, pp. 23 – pp. 31.
[32] ibid.1

which would be muscular and strong, and the left one, which is never used would remain thin and weak.

But when we think of embodied action (learning with movement) we believe that »cognition depends upon that kind of experiences which come from having a body with various sensor motor capacities, which are themselves embedded in a more encompassing biological, psychological, and cultural context«. [33] The sensory and motor processes, perception and action are fundamentally inseparable in live cognition, they have evolved together. Cognition is not simply a theoretical speculation but originally a practical, live spent experience, involving mastering of one's whole, mind and body. It has to be live spent experience. Thus, our knowledge depends on being in a world that is inseparable from our bodies, our language, and our social background, from our embodiment.[34] When we dance we are with ourselves, when subject, object and action become inseparable.

In kindergarten children use much more movement to learn as in schools where they are **mostly sitting** (and listen). In the first three years of schooling sport is children's' favourite subject, which proves to us that there is too much sitting. Movement prepares brain for learning and helps blood circulation. In creative movement there is balanced movement for both sides of the body and this helps to develop both sides of brain, which is crucial for rising effective learning capability. [35] After first three years of schooling children adapt the natural kinaesthetic ability, body is trained to sit, but mind is somewhere else; computer industry finds a shortcut to brain and body, by offering children virtual pleasure in computer games, watching cartoons, movies or being connected to internet; some children are still reading books and do exercise regularly, thanks to parents and relatives. The younger the children are the less they are aware of the body, and more easily and more affectionately they feel of the virtual. Besides that, teachers are facing problems with more and more discipline, which is partly because they don't know how child's brain is working and partly because they do not know how to change teaching methods. So if they knew how to solve the problem of »discipline« in a way to use children's natural ability to learn through movement, they would use it. The mind and body function together and it is necessary to combine exercise and leering.[36] Creative movement provides beside other exercises also the benefit in the usage of imagination, so children train also the right side of the brain. It is fundamental to combine movement and sitting lecture in intervals which are using brain »schedule«. It is natural, like our need to use toilet: once a journalist asked why Hitchcock's films last not more than ninety minutes. He explained the journalist that this is the approximate time people can sit still not using the toilet. This is natural timing. The same is with brains; they switch off every 50 minutes for some time.[37] It depends on the time of the day and on pervious tasks.

Creative movement can be rich educational resource. Teachers and kindergarten workers could be trained to use that resource, even if they themselves are not quite comfortable with movement. We can teach all subjects through creative movement, and we can also see how they understand our previous lesson, when they had to sit still end listen. »The Art form of dancing is the way of forming and sharing the way we respond to the world in which we live by paying particular attention to experiences and giving them significance,

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[33] ibid. 1, p. 173.
[34] inid. 1 , p. 149
[35] Timothy Burns, *Brain Basics and Beyond:* Integrating Brain, A Framework for Integrated Development, Engaged Learning, and Enhanced Well-Being, Chapter six, »The Brain and Eviromental Enrichement«: Body and Heart, Intelligence, from Timoty Burns latest book - in – progress
http://www.timburnseducare.com/bookscdcurriculum.html
[36] John J. Ratey, MD, *Spark*: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain, New York, 2008.
[37] ibid. 5.

particularly those experineces that can be organized and ordered in bodily movement«.[38] Most of the preschool and primary school curriculum can be organised in reference to bodily movement. What is the concept of teaching curriculum through movement? Susan **Griss explains,** that it is the teachers' ability to find in subject lesson a higher concept which is crucial for learning (after that they can learn details or train to find more information and again experiment with it in creative movement).[39] We have to structure the form of dancing lessons to reflect the content of whatever lesson we did before. In order to learn about the main idea we can do thematic dances, to focus on details we perform mirror dances, carefully observing our partners. And to understand the importance of sequence we can create ritual dances and pattern dances in which the order of the dance is significant. Thus, the main concept is that we interpret concepts through dances.

Using creative movement in kindergarten and in elementary school as a learning und imaginative resource is a step forward, because for children kinaesthetic perceptions and responses are far more natural than for senior people, who have lost much in reference to using the language of movement. Teaching children by applying this language ensures children's development in the affective, artistic, physical and cognitive areas.

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PRESCHOOL CHILDS' RESEARCHING INTERESTS AND ROLE OF VISUAL ARTS' EXPRESSING MEDIA

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Pre-school Children's Research Interests and the Role of Visual Arts as a Medium for Expression

ABSTRACT

Children's visual art originates from the need to explore (Matthews 2003: 4), it structurally brings meaning to the value of perceptive and practical stimuli (Muhovič 1986: 54) and at the same time it is one of the most accessible expression media for the child (Edward, Gandini, Forman 1998). And since visual art activities present accessible and useful means for pre-school children, through which children discover, explore and interpret the world around them (Vrlič 2001: 13), it also represented a link among all activities that were conducted in the research whose results we are presenting in the paper. Activities included in the research were fully adjusted to the current kindergarten curriculum while the research focused on establishing the children's interests in various useful materials and tools and on exploring the didactical possibilities that are available to the educator. The activities were carried out in the heterogeneous age unit of the kindergarten, with children aged 3 – 6. They were conducted within four consecutive meetings intended for experimental visual art activities. With the research we tried to recognize research possibilities that are activated when presenting various useful visual art materials whereby we consistently considered the children's expressive autonomy which is the only factor that ensures the expression of authentic visual art forms structured with children's logic. Since it is relatively simple and in pre-school period very sensible to connect visual art expression as experience and expression media to different cognitive fields (Matthews 2003: 13) because this gives the children interesting research material, we tried to realise this aspect as much as we could. The results showed by the research are extremely encouraging and they strengthen our beliefs that discovering through visual art is something which without a doubt activates the children's interests and enables the educator to focus on exploring the authentic children's visual art expression and make sense of their attitude towards it.
We are convinced that systematic observing of one's own educational practice and appropriate self-analysis of the educational process can greatly contribute to the changes in the way educators function within visual art field (Lunenberg, Willemse 2006: 81). However such analysis should have to be regularly enhanced with continual

professional training of educators in the field of different artistic practices (formally and informally).

Key words: pre-school period, visual art expression, manipulation with materials, discovering interest, expression autonomy

Genuine interest, research zeal and visual arts expression which are typical of the pre-school period, can pose a challenge to every teacher but at the same time, can guide them when they are planning different content for children to explore and discover. As one of the primary means of expression and an important source when forming concepts, visual art plays an indispensable role during the pre-school period. Nevertheless, just a quick look at this field indicates that the non-subtle perception of children's visual art expression is often present in environments (kindergartens, schools) where it is considered unacceptable from the professional perspective. Not understanding a child's natural need to explore, disregarding and disrespecting their natural visual art forms can be observed primarily in the absence of visual art autonomy which adults are not willing to recognise in children.

The following thesis is based on action research where the key tendencies were focused on establishing the interest of children in different useful materials and tools, while enabling them autonomous use of visual art tools and teaching possibilities for the teacher involved. The activities included in the research were fully in line with the current kindergarten curriculum and the project was carried out through several successive meetings intended for visual art creative activities. All activities in the research were documented with photographs, with the analysis of the research based on observation and written notes referencing an individual child's response, his or her questions, ideas and incentives, the course of the cognitive and creative process, communication with peers and teachers and other potential possibilities.

Research material and discovering the options for its use, spontaneously guides children into manipulations, the outcome of which is a product that can be defined as visual art. Needless to say, the product is not very important to a child, particularly in the early stages of their visual art development. To a child, it primarily represents a materialisation of a certain activity, a stage of discovery and throughout this process, a child can change the product completely, he or she can upgrade it, leave it, destroy it or cast it aside. The ability of flexible formation, reformation and deformation of the existing form, are encouraged mostly by the child's genuine curiosity, self-initiative, focus on the activity and an unstoppable desire for practical manipulation representing the basis of the discovery that children are often more competent than acknowledged.

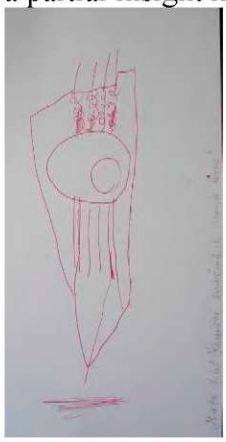
False perceptions of children's visual art tendencies originate from different causes, from inadequate knowledge about the purpose and importance of children's visual art to the generally weak visual art sensibility of adults. Visual art teaching experts have been trying for a very long time to correct these anomalies and therefore this thesis should be regarded as a small contribution to the sensitization and cultivation of adult observers of children's visual art functioning, primarily with the aim of learning how to let children express their own visual art and expressive persuasion and how to draw inspiration for further educational activities.

Children's visual art derives from the need to discover (Matthews 2003: 4), structurally it gives meaning to the importance of perceptive and practical experience and at the same time presents one of the most accessible expressing media for children (Edward, Gandini, Forman

1998). *Silent acquaintance* (Kroflič 2010: 50) that marks children's visual art interpretation structures an artistically simple but explicitly solid and imaginative form. Despite the expressive modesty, each individual form includes all the things that, in a certain phase, seem important to a child when discovering the object, so in this respect children should be considered as competent, thinking human beings (Vecchi 1998). Taking into account the *relationship pedagogy* (Rinaldi in Ceppi, Zini 2003: 115) and the *pedagogy of listening* (Rinaldi: 2006: 26) deriving from it, we can mostly enable children to sensitize and enrich adults with their perception and understanding of things, especially those adults who are willing to acknowledge these expressive abilities.

Considering that a pre-school child needs a tangible experience to successfully materialise the understanding of certain cognitive concepts (Kroflič 2010: 54), visual art represents an ideal expression medium for a child. Through visual art, children can use different materials, tools and more or less complicated manipulations (Prentice, Matthews, Taylor in Riley 2003) to embody their thoughts and understanding. Adult rigidity and lack of imagination in this field can severely diminish a child's need for practical manipulation. However, if we expect that children will find the necessary material conditions on their own or that they will adjust the ones available to them, the situation becomes much more serious if we respond to children's research (discovery) needs and incentives in an inappropriate way. The adult lack of ability to observe, listen and respect a child's explanation regarding a visual art image that is being created or imposing false patterns, significantly impersonalise, depreciate and explicitly underestimate a child's visual art ability.

How important children's visual art is to children themselves and also to adult observers of children's visual art manifestations, can be described with the thoughts of Milan Butina who says that "… thoughts are not directly accessible /…/ they can only be observed indirectly through expressive means and systems of signs that carry meanings and thereby ideas. If the ideas are abstract and inaccessible, signs however are accessible, they are concrete because they are always material." (Butina 1997: 101) Visual art forms enable children to have an insight into objects, to materialise their thoughts and to form an idea. However the recognisability of children's visual art or its original background is often not entirely evident to adults (in contrast to the general belief) which is why listening is so important. Regardless of the fact that visual art expression in not equal to verbal expression and these two expression forms do not entirely correspond (Butina 1997), complementing visual art expression with verbal interpretation of the created form gives adults a chance to have at least a partial insight into children's perception of objects that are important or interesting for them.



A picture by a 7 year old child ("A revolving pencil")

Children seek and develop meanings from birth, their concepts and theories differ greatly from those of adults (Clark, Kjorholt, Moss 2006) and despite the fact that they see the actual characteristics and image of an object, children have no need (Golomb 1992, 2004), no ability and no desire to directly imitate reality through visual art. They focus on that aspect of the

object that activates their interest at a particular moment and with the help of direct visualisation, they explain the object in accordance with their understanding, in a subjective and partial way.

Properly designed research content that enables children to test their own ideas in different phases (from the construction of an idea to testing its adequacy) (Forman 1994; Giudici, Vecchi, 2004; Filippini, Giudici, Vecchi 2008) and well thought out research and experimental activities, represent a guarantee that children will actually master their psychical activities and direct them into solving the tasks they are faced with.

Taking into account the fact that visual art represents an accessible and useful means through which pre-school children get to know, explore and interpret the world around them (Vrlič 2001: 13), visual art also represented a link between all the activities undertaken in our research. The research activities were carried out in an age heterogeneous group in the Škofja Loka kindergarten with children aged 3–6; the group included 21 children (seven under four years of age, ten older than five years). The research took place during four successive meetings which were devoted to experimental visual art activities through which we tried to identify the research possibilities that are activated when introducing different materials useful for visual art expression. When carrying out the activities we continuously considered the children's expressive autonomy which is the only factor that ensures the expression of authentic visual art forms structured with a child's logic. It is relatively simple and in the pre-school period very sensible to connect visual art expression as experience and expression media to different cognitive fields (Matthews 2003: 13) as it provides children with interesting research material and therefore we tried to realise this aspect as much as possible. The result of the research is extremely encouraging and strengthens our belief that research through visual art is something which undoubtedly activates a child's interest and enables teachers to focus on exploring authentic children's visual art expression and sensitizes their attitude toward it.

We carried out a quality analysis of data consisting of photo documentation, observation notes by the author or teacher (observation of child functioning during the project activity, writing down their ideas, questions, remarks and other special features) plus the original visual art products of the children. Aside from the typical characteristics of visual art expression by pre-school children (emotional disproportion, searching for rules and balance, economy, distinguishing principles, clearness of depiction, partial control of the drawing surface, specific arrangement of forms etc. (Vrlič 2001: 24-28)), the data analysis revealed some other characteristics which also mark a child's early visual art functioning, namely:

- The ability to reform the visual art form (forming-deforming-upgrading and/or destruction). This derives from the freedom to solve problems and relaxed manipulation with the objects (in our case primarily through visual art). By experimenting with objects and researching their qualities, children get to know the characteristics of a certain object and face the consequences of their own manipulation. The activity is analogous to a game whose final aim is not a product but the activity itself enabling children to get to know the environment they are entering. Forming, reforming, upgrading and/or destruction of the given result (product) is therefore understandable, during active manipulation it gives children exactly what they need in a certain phase. By imposing instructions on how to start a certain activity or how to produce a foreseen result, we take away the child's opportunity to use their own manipulation to come to certain acknowledgements and although their findings are not always correct according to the parameters of adult knowledge, they are of vital importance to the child. The incorrectness of their findings will cyclically push

the children into new manipulations, experimenting, research and discovery. Again and again corrections will be made. The ability to ensure the conditions for testing one's own ideas, about which Forman (1994) writes, represents one of the basic generators of permanent research in the Reggio Emilia kindergartens.

- Syncretism and associative complexity in design. Young pre-school children (aged 3) have no problem using different materials and experimenting with different processes on a picture surface which they will also exceed without hesitation. With confidence, they form a syncretic image, disregarding external responses and not falling under their influence. In a child's imagination, individual objects are connected in some way, they connect them into a uniform formation which Vigotsky describes as "children's inclination to substitute the lack of objective connections with an abundance of subjective connections /…/ the links among impressions and thoughts are perceived as a connection among things." (Vigotsky in Butina 1997: 105).

Typical for thinking in complexes, which according to Vigotsky represents the second phase in concept formation, is the establishment of connections and relationships on which such thinking is based (Butina 1997: 110). "Generalisations represent complexes of individual concrete objects or things that are not only linked based on subjective connections formed in a child's impression but also on the basis of objective connections that actually exist among these objects." (Butina 1997: 105). Older pre-school children (aged 5) who are already capable of more complex thinking (in this period we mostly talk about associative complexity) observe and compare new materials with interest, however when it comes to using the materials, children tend to be more careful, they also feel a greater tendency toward the recognisable and organised visual art form. So, when creating, they prefer to use materials that complement their ideas, namely materials that children associate with certain characteristics (e.g. eyes).


- The ability of flexible modifications when naming the visual art form; upon the creation of a closed (circular) form, this form is usually given a name which is at first very flexible and "carries very different meanings without marking the meanings in this primary figure /…/; it is an example of unspecified and unformed syncretic combining of individual objects that are connected to this form in the subjective children's psyche" (Britsch in Butina 1997: 105). Eventually the name of the form is more explicitly defined however, throughout the pre-school period, the flexibility in naming is preserved - if the name does not correspond to the child's notion of an object or if they get new associations when observing their visual art image, they will not hesitate to change the name or reform the image.

A picture by a 6.1 year old child ("A house with a head")

- The visual art response, which is often influenced by an experience and depends on the intensity of that experience, triggers certain thoughts and it usually takes some time to develop an idea through self-initiated research and experimenting. In our opinion, adults should help pre-school children search for additional materials, information or sources of information only when a child expresses the need to acquire them. At the same time, we should ensure a flexible organisation of activities which would enable continuous and repetitive returning to the same starting point with the chance of different manifestations of cognition caused by a certain experience. We must ensure children have the autonomy of visual art presentation which must not depend on the potential illustrative example. Even the fact that we gather quality visual art products cannot serve as an excuse for directing children to imitate a certain

visual art masterpiece. We must however use the masterpiece to search for alternative expressive possibilities that derive from the exposed visual art artefact.

In the following section we present three visual art activities that formed the basis of our research and resulted in certain conclusions which are described below.

Discovering expressive possibilities with colour-limited materials

The key aim of our first research experiment was to observe the responses of a heterogeneous group of pre-school children to various colour-limited drawing materials (crayons, charcoal, pencils, dry pastels, chalks, tempera and ink) – in white, red and black and with drawing surfaces of different colours (white, red, grey and black squares of different sizes). We tried to ensure either a distinct contrast or extreme similarity). We wanted to find out:

- to what extent the children would decide to use the colour surface,
- whether their choice of surface influenced the choice of colour of the material with which they would create,
- whether the choice of drawing material influenced the visual art expression,
- how the differences in expression tendencies were displayed among older and younger children.

The children mostly chose surfaces of less usual colours and at first they picked the already tested materials (crayons, dry pastels) in contrasting colours (one exception). It turned out that pen-like drawing materials mostly stimulated a linear response. With the exception of one girl (3.8 years old) who used a crayon to fill up a larger surface, all children expressed themselves linearly. When introducing tempera, the children's attention was focused on testing the unusual brushes, transferring paint from the cup to the surface, applying the paint, "ploughing" the paint, scratching the paint ... we must emphasize that with the choice of the painting surface and expressive material the contrast was diminished but the children mostly corrected their "false" decision in their second attempt. In the use of tools, boys were more bold and unlike the girls, they chose very wide brushes and in this way seized the opportunity to use tools they had not had a previous expressive experience with. Small painting surfaces did not present any obstacles.

Younger children (3-4 years old) carried out their experimenting with various materials on the same surface all the time while doing this they freely combined different materials (layering or copying). In most cases they did not finish their expression activity until they had filled up the entire surface, from one edge to the other.

Older children used a new drawing surface for each new attempt and when experimenting with materials, they did not display any self-initiative to combine different techniques. In their work we can observe spontaneous appearance of (figurative) images.

Whiteness, white materials and creating white composition

The "whiteness" research included 13 children. Children were offered white materials of different visual and tangible characteristics and different kinds of white and transparent surfaces to experiment with. We primarily wanted to know:

- whether the children would accept whiteness with interest,
- would they pay attention to the differences in whiteness,
- would they describe the whiteness of material and the whiteness of surface as problematic,
- would they use the chosen materials in one-layer only or use them in multiple layers or cover one with the other, and

- how the differences in design tendencies would be displayed among younger and older children.

The children were very interested in the materials and quickly upgraded the visual perception with tactile perception. The possibility to design a composition from white materials was encouraged with the question of whether it would be possible to create something from the materials available (we did not wish to expose a defined visual art motif because we were interested in the design inspiration the children would develop on their own).

Younger children mostly experimented with the materials without any restrictions, ignoring the *depiction recognisability* of the image they were creating. Their ideas mostly developed spontaneously as they created and were difficult to identify because the children did not verbalise their thoughts on their own (posing questions could have been understood as an incentive to follow the interviewer's idea).
Older children were interested in materials less familiar to them, they keenly observed them, touched them, talked about them and even compared them but despite their great interest, they rarely used them for creative purposes.

The difference displayed between older and younger children in relation to the choice of materials was related to the motif with the older children. They spontaneously reached for the materials that they associated with a certain form they were trying to realise (a very distinctive example are the eyes for which they mostly used circular or round objects).

Experimenting with a spatial object
The third experiment included 15 children and we were interested in:

- differences between the children's drawing and the sculptural visual art form of an object familiar to them,
- the extent to which the familiarity of the object and testing the object influences the expressive (visual art) interpretation and whether children would correct their visual art form based on a guided experience.

We tried to discover all the things mentioned above through experiment, observation and talking about the spatial object (chair), drawing the object presented and designing the object from sculpturing material (clay, playdough). In the introduction we let the children discover the physical characteristics of the object related to its functionality (older children responded with relatively typical answers while younger children tended to hold back). A drawn presentation of the object revealed that a lot of older pre-school children already have a simple image formed for a chair (flat profile image) and this image did not change in spite of deliberate focusing, conversation and testing the functional characteristics of the object.

A very distinct example of a different drawing presentation was displayed by a girl (5.4 years old) who also listed the largest number of details and functional characteristics of a chair in the introductory activity. Her drawn form of a chair had all the elements she had previously mentioned: seat, legs, back support, arm support and even head support.
Observing the chairs that were drawn led us to the conclusion that it is possible to sit on these chairs (a girl 5.7 years old, showed us that we can sit on the piece of paper), however it is difficult to lean against them because they lack stability. We continued the activity by introducing soft sculpturing material (clay), whereby children mostly stumbled onto the problem of stability and lack of solidity. An interesting example was the case of a boy (5.1 years old) who first used clay to follow his drawn image but later discovered the tangible

quality of the material and started to exploit these expressive possibilities. During the creative process, the object created had, in his opinion, lost the image of a chair and no longer corresponded to his notion of the object presented so he renamed it into a house.

Our thoughts and findings within this research support us in our belief that Malaguzzi's vision of children as cognitively competent, sensual and expressively rich human beings (Malaguzzi 1998) reveals exactly what children need in their research: *"Children are capable of researching, discovering, changing their points of view and beliefs, they are capable of falling in love with forms and meanings that transform their personality - that is why creativity cannot be perceived as a sacred, exceptional quality but as something that develops on the basis of everyday experience."* (Malaguzzi 1998). By considering this as one of the key elements of relational pedagogy (Rinaldi 2006) we enable children to manifest and build their ideas in different ways and share them with others, their peers and adults.

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LEISURE ACTIVITY AS AN INNOVATION

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ABSTRACT

Young people have to be taught soon enough to treat their free time as a meaningful and pleasing part of their lives after having done their chores. For this purpose there are many different leisure activities offered in Slovene primary schools. The goal of those activities is to develop pupils' skills and interests during classes. One of those activities is also a club Moj Maribor. Arguments supporting the claim that before mentioned activity is innovative are listed next.
Presentation of the empirical research follows. The research took place during the school-year 2008/2009 on a sample of thirty pupils. Purpose of the research was to enlighten quality of the club from the aspect of a teacher mentor and the aspect of pupils. Research results are encouraging. We should therefore continue with this leisure activity which includes pupils of different age and their parents and takes place once a month on a Saturday morning.

Key words: free time, leisure activity, field trip, innovation

INTRODUCTION

People do not only differ by knowledge and experiences, but also by the way we spend our free time. It is good that we spend it in a way that makes us happy. Namely, useful spending of free time can have a positive impact on the preservation of our physical fitness, good health, and beside that various abilities and interests are developing.

Free time is "/.../ time that remains outside of work and other necessary vital tasks." (Lešnik, p. 113) It is a possibility of a relaxed creating, freedom of choice and of deciding for activities. This is not idleness, but time that an individual has at his disposal according to his volitions and inclinations, when not being influenced by any force or commitment. »Free time has a distinctive personal touch, subtly expressed in forms, way of expressing and in personal sense. Passivity of people in their free time reflexively influences on people's mood and on their work efficiency. « (Strojin, 1983, p. 53) Lešnik (1982, p. 118) states that »in the antiquity free time meant everything that was not physical labour and at the same time was not a torment. It was a time for thinking,

curiosity, talking, and a possibility to restore spiritual balance. But in the industrial society a standard of value is not a man, but economic efficiency, therefore the phrase free time gained a negative connotation: free time is wasting time, idleness and as such a source of evil.« For a long time, historical evolution has tolerated that some people only had to work, and were not allowed to enjoy the free time. This was accessible only to some people (the upper class). Derganc (2004, p. 49) comments, that »/.../ education, social environment, individual's abilities, interests and needs have an impact on the handling in their free time. A series of research confirms that the activity of adults in their free time is also set according to the patterns of handling in their childhood and youth. «

The fact is that children have a lot of strains during schooling period. They have to be taught to take time to rest after home and school obligations, what does not necessarily mean aimless watching of TV channels and pointless sitting in front of the computer. Here, they have at least two possibilities: they can participate in various interest activities in their schools, or can enter different clubs and associations outside of schools.

According to Šetor (2003, p. 113), children are »/.../ very early included in various interest workshops and activities that are organized by various external institutions and with this they gain experiences for an active use of free time.« In past years many clubs and workshops have opened their doors for children and youth, in which free time activities for them were organized. Very famous are creative workshops, organized by the Association of friends of youth, in elementary schools during the school year and in autumn, winter and summer holidays. Workshops include visits to Slovene attractions, hiking, cycling, sports activities in school gyms, etc. »In working with children we should work on experiential values as an indirect pointer towards meaning of life. « (Zalokar Divjak, 1996, p. 39) Precisely with experiential values which are formed during sports, in nature, culture or among friends, the child's personality is then "equipped" for life tasks, and at the same time they are a prevention for other fillers for achieving individual's pleasure, like alcohol and all types of drugs.

To leisure (extracurricular, interest, voluntary) activities we can add up all those pupils' activities, that teachers do for them after classes. The content of these activities is not explicitly bound with classes; therefore their criterion is knowledge in a broader sense, as well as acquiring new experiences in a sense of experiential learning.

Namely, school does not only have the function of educating and upbringing in the narrower sense of the word, but also socializing, with informal socializing, cultivation and humanization. Gomboc (2007, p. 82) says that "/.../ in the 8-year primary school system interest activities had a clear role and meaning. With the introduction of the 9-year primary school system the meaning of interest activities was reduced; there was not much talk about them during the process of reconstruction. Priority has been given to important novelties, levelled classes and the electives. In the last triennium the organizational possibilities for implementing interest activities are also significantly worse. Even without them, structuring the schedule causes considerable problems." Komljanc (2003, p. 1) believes that "/.../ interest activities (clubs) are a part of an extended primary school program. It is about those forms of educational work beside classes which discover, form and develop interests, special abilities and the creativity of

pupils, and at the same time the develop working habits, responsibility and a sense of cooperation within a group." Within interest activities pupils and teacher mentors should form a dynamic balance of psychosocial relations. In this way is the interest activity a good means of mutual socialization and communication, of course only when it largely includes individualization.

LEISURE ACTIVITY AS AN INNOVATION

Innovations are necessary in all fields and in the field of education as well. Innovation as a pedagogical category Miles (1973, p. 14) defined as "an intentional, new, distinct change, of which we expect to be efficient in achieving systematic goals." When we talk about education, "/.../ innovation can be a transfer of use of new learnings and introduction of new forms and methods of work, altered cooperation and connecting in education - all with the intention of raising quality of this kind of education." (Likar, 2004, p. 128) In the beginning, when innovations became a trend in upbringing and education, they often did not achieve the real purpose because teachers were often assigned for carrying out a certain innovation in which they were not at all interested. In her research Uršič (1974, p. 16) states that there is really not that much of completely new and previously unknown educational ideas and procedures. "A change has to be a novelty in an exisiting situation, but it is not necessary to be new in general. It could have appeared once before in a given environment or elsewhere." (Ibid) It seems important to mention that changes that appear in educational sytems through reforms and laws cannot be considered as innovations. With such changes teachers feel that they are a tool of the authority, so they are seldomly creative. Real pedagogical innovations are "/.../ considered as behavioural changes in teachers, pupils, school board, parents. " (Inbar, 1996, p. 19) "An essential characteristic of an innovation is the deviation from the conventional and reproductive activity and a transition to creative thinking." (Naji, 2009) When a school or an individual teacher decides for an innovation, then this means he/she wants to motivate the pupils for an additional or somewhat different work.

MY MARIBOR CLUB AS AN INNOVATION

In Drago Kobal primary school an interesting leisure activity, that has some elements of innovation, takes place for three years already. It was named "My Maribor club". Many call it "Saturday school", because its' main part- the field trips around the city of Maribor- really do take place once a month on Saturdays. The mentor developed this activity on her own, from the idea to realization because she felt that the pupils are not so familiar with their own town. Their parents lack time during a stressful work week to take their children to the cultural institutions in the city, to take a walk with them around the regulated pathways near river Drava, to climb the elevations, that rise above the city and to teach them to admire and respect green surfaces in the city, etc. Actually this idea was taking shape all throughout her 30-year teaching career. She decided to prepare the program of Saturday field trips for the school year 2007/2008 and so the work began. The club still exists after 3 years although her colleagues predicted it would not last long. The interest for it has not died; the field trips have been extended to the near vicinity of the city.

My Maribor club tries to raise an active, curious, but also a sensitive and proud citizen that has a broader look at his city. That is why we develop *a complex or integrated viewpoint* on the city they live in, and their placement in it. Other clubs occasionally also go on field trips in the city and see occasional exhibits in one of the museums and galleries. We do not deny that these kinds of field trips aren't rich in content, but they probably serve only one goal. With My Maribor club field trips we try to raise a contionus global awareness in youth. We encourage them to benefit from the cultural events in the city, to be sensitive about environmental issues (felling of trees in parks for no reason, condemning of vandalism), be aware that there are also ill people living in the city, people with mental health and development problems (Institution Hrastovec), people at the social bottom (visiting a homeless shelter). They are becoming proud of the cultural heritage our ancestors have left us (old town houses with beautiful facades and portals), look for traces of important writers, artists, scientists, doctors that have lived and created in our city (visiting their graves at the cemetery or their residences in the city) and are proud of them. But the mentor also makes it possible for them to meet currently important people of the city, shows them both technical literature and fiction, published about Maribor. He tries to present them this little piece of Earth that was given to them as their home carefully and from many aspects. Here they should fully fulfil their physiological, psychosocial and intellectual needs, but in a way tha it woud be kind to them, other people and the whole environment.

My Maribor club takes place in a form of field trips, followed by evaluation meetings in school.

Field trips take place outside the work week, on Saturdays (rarely on Sundays) between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. once a month. The goals of these field trips are: pupils learn about *geographical, cultural and historical attractions* of the city, learn about *cultural institutions, monuments and establishments*, get to know *professions* in institutions and establishments, admire city's *architecture* that is interesting from fine arts viewpoint, meet *important citizens of Maribor* from both past and the present, get to know important *events* that take place in the city, get to know *numerous natural possibilities for recreation*, experience *pride* being citizens of this city, develop *critical attitude* towards the city (environmental issues), get to know the *literature* about Maribor, both *professional* and *popular science* as well as *fiction*, *recapture* Saturday's visits of the city in the classroom, look for *web pages* regarding Maribor's attractions, events, catering and tourist offers, event manual in the newspaper Večer, etc, pupils are becoming more social when *interacting with their peers and adult escorts*, *curiousity* and the search for answers when they come across the unknown is constantly being encouraged, they raise *respect towards animals and plants*, pay attention to *traffic safety* and *person's urge for regular exercise*.

Structuring the field trip program for the new school year is very difficult academic work because it covers: planning, preparation, execution and evaluation of each field trip. In the planning stage it is necessary to coordinate work with many contact persons in institutions they are about to visit. Possible fee requirements have to be checked.

Each field trip is designed complexly, interdisciplinarly (from viewpoints of: history, architecture, geography, fine arts, musical art, word art, physical education, zoology, botanics, sociology and psychology). On field trips mentor has to focus pupils' attention in the desired field of perception. He has to take care of the additional teacher escort. Despite the extensive organizational work with all the logistics that this kind of extra-curricular activity requires, his work is rewarded every time as it comes along, when he feels the contentment of the pupils and parents with the new cognitions and experiences after completing a field trip. It also seems important that there are always some parents present on the field trips. This is how the children live in symbiosis with them, also with the help of field trips.

The second equivalent components of the My Maribor club are the regular weekly evaluation meetings of pupils with the mentor. Without the evaluation and the deepening of the knowledges from the field trips club's activity would be very poor. At these meetings the motivation for each subsequent field trip also takes place. Without the good motivation the pupils would not get the desire for visiting for example the Jewish synagogue, because prior to that many of them did not even know what this was.

To conclude, the club's innovation is in the fact that the mentor deliberately guides pupils to various, also unpopular spots of the city. He intentionally pays more attention to more sensitive areas, such as the cemetery, homeless shelter, the memorial for post-war killings, institution for people with mental problems, prison, etc. Schools which also carry out field trips as a part of their regular program usually avoid such visits. Here the mentor risks a lot, but with a systematic and emotionally deepened motivation he achieves that the pupils want to meet the darker, perhaps concealed stories of his city. Often the mentor faces a dilemma whether a certain topic isn't too shocking for the children, but he is aware that sometimes he has to take a risk, but all in teaching ethic limits. Further on: the My Maribor club is tripartitely designed. Beside the mentor and the pupils parents are also involved and also the external consultants of the institutions we visit. In this way bigger interest diversity is ensured and consequently bigger knowledge quality and perception intensity. And because many pupils stay in the club for over a year, the mentor has to be very careful when he plans the program for the next school year in order of not repeating it thematically. With this he also grows personally because he is always discovering some new horizons. All of this offers him a lot of opportunities to stay content with his profession. In this we can see an added value of this leisure activity.

THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

PURPOSE OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

With the empirical research we examined the work quality in the My Maribor club, as pupils preceive it, namely from the viewpoints of work of a teacher mentor and work of pupils, club members.

DETAILED ETERMINATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Elucidation of work quality in the club is based upon following characteristics:

- *Before the field trip, we always have to thoroughly discuss everything we are about to see and experience on the field trip in school.*
- *The teacher always notifies us on time and in writing about the content of each field trip.*
- *The teacher always provides a relaxed atmosphere on the field trips.*
- *We can sense that the techer loves the club.*
- *We can sense that the teacher is always well prepared for the field trip.*
- *After the field trip we always talk to the teacher in school about the impressions.*
- *And at the meetings in school prior to the field trip and after it the teacher provides us with the additional information about Maribor.*
- *I always look forward to each field trip.*
- *Ever since I joined the club, I have learned a lot about Maribor and I appreciate my city even more.*
- *Ever since I joined the club, I know my way around the city much better.*
- *Rather than to go everywhere on foot, it would be better to go to the city on foot and to return with the bus.*
- *I like that My Maribor club also includes mountain hikes besides the city tours.*
- *I like that my parents and the parents of other pupils are present.*
- *When my parents aren't on the field trip, I provide them with the new learnings and impressions about the field trip.*

In doing so, we oversaw the role of the sex and we set the following hypotheses:

H1: In evaluating work quality of the club's teacher mentor there will not be any differences among pupils of different sex.
H2: In evaluating work quality of the pupils, club members, there will not be any differences among pupils of different sex.

METHODOLOGY

Here we used the descriptive and causal-nonexperimental method of the empirical educational research.
In accordance with the basic dimensional characteristics (validity, realiability, objectivity) we compiled our questionnaire with a set of assertions with a three-level scale and open type questions.
The research is based on an occasional sample of thirty pupils (fifteen boys and fifteen girls) that have attended the leisure activity (club) My Maribor in the school year 2008/2009 at the Drago Kobal primary school. The majority was in the 5th and 6th grade, some of them were also younger and older. The collecting of data took place in June 2009 after prior consultation with the school and with the parents' consent. The survey was anonymous and voluntary.
We processed the data with the SPSS program. We used the methods of the descriptive statistics (frequency distribution of responses, the arithmetic means of the graded, numerically pondered answers) and the inference statistics (t – test for independent samples).

THE RESULTS OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

At first we present the results of the analysis of the individual characteristics of club's work, and then the results of verification of posed hypotheses, bound to differences among pupils of different sex when evaluating work of teacher mentor and pupils, club members.

The means of the graded answers are between 3 and 2. For the My Maribor club mentor it is very important that everybody, from the youngest to the oldest pupil and regardless of the sex, have estimated her personal interest for the club the highest. The assertion, where the mentor always notifies them on time and in writing about the content of the field trip, was estimated the highest. The lowest estimate about the My Maribor club activity was about the dilemma whether it would be better to combine the field trips with the public transportation. The pupils' opinion on this question could be divided into 3 in number almost equivalent groups: the first is an advocate of the tested model ("we go everywhere on foot"), the second is undecisive and doesn't care, and the third is inclined towards the easier version, the combination with public transportation. This gives the mentor two considerations. Firstly, when there is such a field trip that could exhaust the pupils too much due to the length of the track, it is not wise to insist with walking, because the opposite effect could be achieved. Then it is truly wise to return with the bus, what the mentor should already predict in the planning stage. Secondly, when the field trip is not too strenuous, it is better to encourage pupils to continue overcoming the distances on foot. In the end they are even proud of this achievement, because, as they say, they never thought that it was possible to "come from the suburbs to the city centre in 45 minutes and this even in winter." Further on, the mentor is not surprised by the fact that one third of the pupils, My Maribor club members, only partially like mountain hikes being occasionally included in the field trips. Of course it is true that this form of activity is straining for them. Mentor has to encourage them a lot. Here is an opportunity for creating a club with a healthy sports activity of the pupils. Two thirds of the pupils like the presence of parents on field trips, which is also an interesting fact. It is important to mention that not a lot of parents are usually present on these field trips (2-3) and that the mentor has no intention of giving up their presence. Some of them can help with the technical explanations, others with the organization of the field trips. In short, with parents' presence we reached a higher quality of field trips.

Below, we present the results of the differences regarding the sex of the pupils in their evaluation of work of the club mentor and the pupils, club members.

Table 1: The result of t – test of differences in evaluating mentor's work regarding to sex

Sex	Number	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Test of homogeneity of variances		Test of differences of arithmetic means	
	n	$\bar{x}$	s	F	P	t	P

Male	15	20.0667	1.22280	6.098 0.020	-1.830 0.078
Female	15	20.7333	0.70373		

Because the assumption about the homogeneity of variances is not justified (F=6.098, P=0.020), we are making a reference to the Welch-Satterthwait method. The result shows that the difference between the means is not statictically characteristic (t = -1.830, P=0.078). Basod on this we confirm the research hypothesis (H1), but at the same time we point out the difference tendency. The girls have evaluated the mentor's preparation for the field trip higher, what is allegedly linked with their usually higher controllability.

The results are encouraging. Based on that, we can conclude that in the My Maribor club there is an appropriate approach towards planning, preparation, execution and the evaluation of the field trips and an appropriate approach towards pupils, regardless of the sex.

Table 2: The result of t – test of differences in evaluating pupils' work regarding the sex

Sex	Number	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Test of homogeneity of variances		Test of differences of arithmetic means	
	n	$\bar{x}$	s	F	P	t	P
Male	15	17.9333	1.70992	0.062	0.805	-0.655	0.518
Female	15	18.3333	1.63299				

The assumption of homo geneity of variances is justified (F=0.062, P=0.805). However, the result of the t – test shows that the difference is not statistically characteristic. Therefore, the set research hypothesis (H2) is also confirmed in this case.

The obtained results are encouraging. Answers of the pupils show that they know more about the city, they appreciate it more and are interested in it ever since they started attending My Maribor club. It is nice to hear them when they talk casually, when they say that they "never thought that Maribor has so much interesting to offer" and "that so much technical manuals and poular science books have been written about Maribor." Mentor notifies them on a regular basis about her attending the concerts, round-table discussions, exhibits, etc. These activities would normally be tedious for them due to their youth, but the mentor describes and depicts them in such a way that they become important events in their home town. Pupils also very often bring newspaper clippings and photographs about important events and people in the city to school (together we form club's bulletin board in the school hall). This is a proof for the mentor that she achieved the purpose. We also highly appreciate the willingness of the pupils for forwarding their experiences and new knowledges to their parents about the field trips.

Even more: many say that they returned with their parents to a certain point that was the destination of the field tirp (bookshop that sells used books, apiculture centre in Radvanje, the 454 stairs to the Kalvarija hill, the park at the Betnava castle with an enormous plain tree, the Three angels under the Kalvarija hill).

Some events on these field trips are very emotional. For a child, that has a fear of height, climbing up the bell tower of the cathedral surely means overcoming his limits. An overweight child that manages to step over 454 stairs to the top of the Kalvarija, has defeated himself! To see and hear evangelical priestess speak was quite an adventure for them. A walk along the Maribor asylum amog the abandoned dogs also raises positive emotional experiencing in the children's soul.

Pupils that take part on the My Maribor club field trips receive all of this, and they, as confirmed by the results of our research, highly appreciate it regardless of the sex.

CONCLUSION

Free time is intended for disburdening and relaxing of an individual. That is why a relaxed and calm atmosphere is important on a field trip. In a sense of some newer warnings against the permissive upbringing it seems important to us to enlight making pupils aware that it is important to follow the agreed rules of behaviour in free time as well. Thus in My Maribor club, parallel to the exploration of historical, cultural and other city attractions, the cultivation of behavioural standards, humanization oof relations, responsibility and education for a sense of cooperation within a group also take place. The psychological and social extensions of free time are important as well. For a young person social contacts and informal gatherings are very important for their cognitive, emotional, social and moral development. Psychologists warn about the addictions to TV and computer of young people. Leisure activities redirect the children from such destructive bad habits that harm their physical health, and at the same time accelerate the social isolation from their peers. At My Maribor club field trips children between ages from 8 to 14 are active, ocassionaly their parents are also present. Research shows that two thirds of pupils like it when their parents are present on the field trips. The group dynamics is very stirred up, together we learn for life and together we grow personally.

Realization that this kind of activity not only benefits the children and their parents but also the teacher is very important for the mentor. How many new people can they meet, how many new realizations to come across, how many social webs to weave, how much new literature can come to teacher's hands during this period! All of this is possible only when the mentor enjoys this kind of work and is not forced into it, thus if he is given full pedagogical freedom. But surely the mentor also has to consider pupils' suggestions. In the questionnaire they gave some good suggestions for updating club's program. Therefore the mentor entered two of them for the new school year: a biking tour and rafting on the river Drava.

Based on the covered literature and empirical research results we can conclude that every leisure activity is a chance for an informal lifelong learning. With it we can achieve

a range of educational and upbringing goals that cannot be achieved within regular classes, particularly if it contains elements of innovation.

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EDUCATION: A COMPARISION BETWEEN PORTUGAL, ENGLAND AND SLOVENIA

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ABSTRACT

This study emerges from a research project entitled *Participatory Citizenship Education in Transitional Societies* that aims at a wider understanding about Citizenship Education (CE) across Europe, and particularly whether educational policies, curricula and practices emphasise a political culture that values citizens' active and critical participation in civic and political issues in different contexts. To accomplish this, an understanding of the visions and roles of NGOs is essential to discern the kind of CE to which they are committed to. The inquiry of European NGOs through an e-mail survey involved 41 European countries; however, in this paper the authors will present the results for Portugal, England and Slovenia. Among other findings, the research highlights the important role of NGOs as CE providers, and the need for policy makers to acknowledge their involvement in the topic. Especially in countries with authoritarian pasts, NGOs consider that models of conformism and submission are still dominant in the relationship between citizens and the government, and emphasize the role of CE in promoting a strong civic society.

Keywords: critical consciousness, participation, Citizenship Education, NGOs, democracy.

INTRODUCTION

Citizenship education has been assuming a central role in educational policies across Europe in recent years and it has been the object of international research regarding its guidelines and curricular design, its impact on the lives of schools and on the knowledge, values and skills of students (Ross 2008; Wilde 2005; Menezes 2003; Araújo 2008). Even if the predominant rhetoric about CE emphasises active and responsible citizenship, it is important to recognize that it is diversely conceived by different democratic traditions (Eisenstadt 2000; Heater 2005) from a minimalist version that reduces citizens to the passive role of being "spectators who vote" (Walzer, 1995:165), to communitarian views that advocate participation should involve many formats in diverse contexts (Benhabib 2004; Osler & Starkey 2005).

But even if schools have a consensual role in promoting citizenship, it should be underlined that, more than in other areas of the curricula, students' learning does not solely occur in schools, as CE involves experiences that take place in many other social contexts and institutions. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can play a significant role in providing CE through non-formal and informal education that complement schools' provision. Besides, they promote connections between young people, society and schools (Park, Senegacnik & Wango, 2007). The potential of NGOs lays therefore in their capacity "to act as bridges, facilitators, brokers and translators, linking together the institutions, interventions, capacities and levels of actions that are required to lever broader structural changes" (Edwards & Fowler, 2002:8-9).

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Citizenship education (CE) is clearly a major goal of educational systems across Europe, and it has been in the centre of academic and political discourses since the mid eighties as a central task of both schools and the civil society. However, more information is necessary to effectively understand *what kind of citizens* are schools and civil society organizations, such as NGOs, advocating for. How do NGOs view their roles as CE providers? How do they perceive current CE practices in schools and how do they envisage their engagement with schools regarding the promotion of CE activities?

THE STUDY

3.1 METHODOLOGY

The inquiry of European NGO's through an e-mail survey took place between August 2010 and February 2011. Contacts from European non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were drawn from existing databases of NGOs broadly working within the CE field – e.g. Networking European Citizenship Education, Democracy and Human Rights in Europe, European Network of Political Foundations, and Euro Partners Development. An invitation letter in five different European languages (English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Ukrainian), was e-mailed to a sample of 424 NGOs from 41 European countries, as shown in Table 1.

Table 3: Table : E-mail survey response rates for 41 countries

Invited	No answers	Refused	Accepted	Responded
424	222	27	175	127
	52,36%	6,37%	41,27%	29,95%

Approximately 30% of the European NGOs that were involved in the study answered the e-mail survey; if we exclude from the initial sample the 27 NGOs that refused to respond (because they were currently not involved in the topic, among other reasons) the response rate was 32% - a value which is quite positive if we consider the tendency for the decline in email surveys response rates (Sheehan, 2001).
As already mentioned, this paper presents the results for a subset of this sample, 23 NGOs from Portugal, England, and Slovenia – countries which have different cultural, historical and political traditions –, as shown in Table 2.

Table 4: E-mail survey response rates for the NGOs from England, Portugal, and Slovenia

Countries	Invited	No answers	Refused	Accepted	Responded
England (EN)	17	6	1	10	8
Portugal (PT)	20	7	3	12	12
Slovenia (SI)	6	2	0	4	3
Total	43	15	4	26	23

Once the NGO accepted to participate in the study, an e-mail survey was sent to them. The e-mail survey consisted of the following six open-ended questions:

- Could you please give a brief description of your work in this organization?
- Can you describe the organization's role and projects regarding Citizenship Education?
- From your personal perspective, what is the dominant vision of Citizenship Education in educational policies and practices in your country?
- Taking your experience into account, what would you say are the major barriers to implementing Citizenship Education in your country? And the most positive experiences?
- On the whole, how do you evaluate the work done until now, either by your organization or by specific schools?
- In many European countries there have been periods of dictatorship, but even in countries with a long democratic tradition, the quality of democracy has suffered fluctuations. How relevant do you think it is to include a critical historical consciousness into Citizenship Education?

Data from this e-mail survey was analysed using content analysis through computer-assisted qualitative data analysis (Kelle 2004), using NVivo 9.0 software package. A structure of so-called *tree nodes* was designed that followed the main questions asked in the e-mail survey. The main questions captured the research questions that were first defined. So, the initial available categories (*tree nodes*) were: roles of respondents; role and activities of NGOs in CE; dominant vision in CE; evaluation of CE, highlighting the barriers to implementation and positive experiences in national and international CE; and integrating a critical historical consciousness in CE. From the interesting elements found and coded in respondents' answers new categories emerged, the so-called *free nodes*, such as target groups, key-concepts, themes, topics and skills addressed by the NGOs; perspectives of the NGOs regarding CE and school's role on it; and suggestions for change. Due to space concerns we chose to present only the results for the categories more relevant to the current study: roles of the respondents; role and activities of NGOs in CE; dominant vision in CE; barriers and positive experiences in the implementation of CE; and integrating a critical historical consciousness in CE.

3.2 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Because the questions were open-ended, it was possible to obtain a rich and extensive database on the visions of European NGOs regarding CE. Data was organised by grouping together similar views, while retaining the specificity of the opinions. The NGO was used as unity of analysis.

As it was mentioned in the methodology section, in the first question of the e-mail survey we asked to the NGOs' respondents to briefly describe their work in the NGO.

Taking into account their responses, it can be concluded that 52% of the respondents have predominantly coordination, management and leadership roles in projects, programmes, activities, teams, and research activities in their organisations. Therefore, they constitute an important source of information. It is important to mention that some respondents have more than one function simultaneously, which could reveal the lack of resources that is expressed by many NGOs.

Through the question about NGOs' roles and activities, it was possible to perceive which are the target groups for the activities mentioned. The participating NGOs target simultaneously diverse individuals or groups according to age and gender. However, they mainly focus on the school community (50%), including teachers/educators, students, experts, and stakeholders, and youth (28%), including youth institutions, workers or leaders.

Analysing the roles and activities highlighted by NGOs in their responses, it was possible to point out some topics and themes they considered important in CE. The participating NGOs from England, Portugal, and Slovenia cover a very wide range of themes and topics related to Citizenship Education in their services and actions. Illustrating this we could note that the most referenced concepts were 'human rights' (30,43%), 'citizenship' (26,09%), 'democracy' (21,09%), 'gender equality' (17,39%), 'participation' (17,39%), and 'volunteering' (17,39%).

When NGOs were inquired about how they promote Citizenship Education, it was mainly mentioned the development and implementation of non-formal and informal projects, programmes, and activities which aim at promoting awareness, information and support citizenship among different target groups, addressing the themes mentioned above.

Participating NGOs assume themselves as CE providers through the organisation of different activities, mainly focused on the development of educational projects and programmes, according to non-formal and informal methodologies, addressing distinct target groups, despite the emphasis on school, community and youth. It could also be concluded that 47,83% of the participating NGOs highlighted their responsibility in training different actors, at national and international level, as well as (43,48%) for creating opportunities to exchange knowledge and practices supporting the implementation of CE in their countries and abroad(such as workshops, conferences, seminars, round tables, meetings, debates, journeys, discussion, visits, and lectures). Furthermore, 30,43% of the respondents point out the provision and publishing of educational, pedagogical, and methodological materials – such as manuals, textbooks, guidelines, books, educational and documentary films, and web multimedia tools (websites, blogs, podcasts, interactive DVDs, and forums) –, and information places. They (21,74%) also mention youth group activities, such as peer qualifications, youth clubs, the simulation of parliaments, role playing games, annual field work, and academic competitions.

The respondents were invited to make explicit their different roles in the implementation of CE. Taking into account their responses, it seems clear that the participating NGOs (65,22%) claim their role as CE providers through non-formal and informal methodologies, complementing school provision at all levels of education. CE is at the core of their actions. Although is not one of the main areas of action of some of the participating NGOs, it has become a core issue in several of their activities. Furthermore, 78,26% of the participating NGOs consider that they contribute to strengthen the culture of active citizenship and participation in different contexts, through enabling individuals to become informed and capable citizens. To accomplish this, 73,91% of the

participating NGOs believe they are responsible for building partnerships with other private and public actors and institutions, in order to further social transformation and welfare.

Participating NGOs, also shared their perceptions regarding the dominant vision of Citizenship Education in educational policies and practices in England, Portugal, and Slovenia. Taking into account the diversity of the results, it can be affirmed that these European countries have different dominant visions and approaches to CE. The position of 30,43% of NGOs is that the effective opportunities to participate in decision-making are few, therefore, it is difficult to influence improvements in educational policies and practices. Furthermore, 30,43% of respondents from England and Portugal pointed out the fact that the 'active' and 'critical' elements of CE are not fully recognised in educational policies, and they (21,74%) also criticize that CE is too focused on spreading knowledge about national and European democratic systems and their formal functioning. Some NGOs from England and Slovenia (21,74%) consider that CE gives pupils the knowledge, skills and understanding to play an effective role in society. However, some NGOs from Portugal and Slovenia (17,39%) ask for more systematic or better-structured work where different actors in the field of CE can come together. Some English NGOs (17,39%) highlighted the interest to reduce the dependency on state and increase individual responsibility.

NGOs were also invited to express their positions on the major barriers and positive experiences they found along the implementation process of CE. NGOs identified many different barriers to the implementation of CE. Firstly, participating NGOs (43,48%) criticise the fact that CE has been neglected in the school curricula. Some participating NGOs (39,13%) also referred that CE is focused mainly on the transmission of knowledge about citizenship in formal education, neglecting the creation of effective opportunities to exercise it. They (34,78%) also pointed out not only the lack of human and financial resources in different organizations, whether NGOs or schools, to efficiently deliver CE, but also the lack of preparation of teachers and educators to effectively deliver it (17,39%). It is also important to mention that some participating NGOs (21,74%) from Portugal and Slovenia considered the culture of resignation, conformity, and acceptance of authority, which is a legacy of long periods of authoritarian regimes, a barrier to overcome.

Looking at the positive experiences in Citizenship Education highlighted by the respondents, at national or international level, it can be concluded that various different positive experiences in CE around Europe were identified. NGOs (30,43%) particularly consider the increased interest, involvement and participation of all members of educational communities (e.g. heads of schools, teachers, students, and parents) in CE. Some participating NGOs from England and Portugal (26,09%) highlight not only the experiences that allow learners to participate actively in their education process, but also the growing governmental concern for CE, expressed through the creation and implementation of some national initiatives and documents (21,74%), such as the "National Strategy for Development Education (ENED)" (2010-2015) in Portugal or the "National Citizens Programme" in England. Some NGOs (17,39%) pointed out NGOs' projects developed within school contexts as good examples of the implementation of CE providing opportunities to produce and share knowledge and good practices. NGOs (13,04%) also value services and actions promoting social and political development, which emerged from partnerships between governmental and non-governmental organizations, and citizens. It is also important to notice that 2 English NGOs emphasise

the importance of a hands-on approach to CE, whether in the school or in the surrounding communities, through volunteering initiatives.
In many European countries there have been periods of dictatorship, but even in countries with a long democratic tradition, the quality of democracy has suffered fluctuations. Our last question to the NGOs asked them to express their opinions about how relevant they think it could be the inclusion of critical historical consciousness into CE. Based on their most referenced responses it can be stated that most of the participating NGOs (56,52%) consider the integration of a critical historical consciousness perspective in CE as a relevant goal. Furthermore, they (34,78%) also consider important that people understand past and various stages of the historical processes in order to comprehend present reality and to be able to perspective future realities. Besides, the critical historical consciousness is seen by 56,52% of the respondents as a basic condition to the effective exercise of citizenship and as essential to strengthen the democratic process.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The research highlights the important role of the NGOs as CE providers and the need for the policy makers to acknowledge their involvement in the topic. However, "The advisory councils are few and end up to not allowing the views and contributions of citizens and NGOs which are, indeed, very crucial in terms of policy decisions", as it was mentioned by a Portuguese NGO.
NGOs consider that CE in schools is too focused on formal democracy, which means that students learn about public institutions, elections, political parties, etc., as it was pointed out by a English NGO: "Citizenship in this sense brings with it certain rights and responsibilities that are defined in law, such as the right to vote, the responsibility to pay taxes and so on".
Especially in countries with an authoritarian past, NGOs consider that models of conformism and submission are still dominant in the relationship between citizens and the government. Therefore, on the perspective of a Slovenian NGO "(...) the term "democracy" is understood differently as in democratic countries with tradition. It was misused under previous regime".
The participating NGO criticise the fact that CE has been implemented in a reductionistic way and it is not seen as a priority. Therefore, we can conclude that their perceive that CE is neglected in the school curricula, "often not implemented as cross-curricular, not seen as skills-bound experiential learning – more or less taught as theoretical subject. Teachers have not enough knowledge to approach it as skills-based learning instead of knowledge-based", as was stated by a Slovenian NGO.
Finally, NGOs also stress that the creation of effective opportunities to exercise citizenship in daily life has been neglected. As it was expresses by an English NGO "The 'active citizenship' element of the Citizenship programme of study is often regarded as difficult (or impossible) to deliver well or properly as it is often difficult to take children and students out of school in order to be actively involved in for example, their local community".

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THE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF GIFTED STUDENTS AS CHALLENGES IN EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Gifted students differ from each other as much as they differ from their average peers, but nevertheless they do appear to have certain social emotional traits in common including heightened sensitivity, emotional intensity and reactivity.
The intensities and sensitivities that the gifted may experience in their every day and school life, can make them more alive and even more creative, but this also makes them more demanding.

In education we can overlook perfectionism of students or we can even foster it because of the high results we all want, ignoring any negative consequences it may have. So, our next challenge is to differentiate between students with healthy eagerness to achieve high standards of excellence allowing for the limits of certain situations and those with forced persistence aiming to reach unrealistically high goals, feeling dissatisfaction and showing inadequacy unless achieving.
We are in the role of helping students reduce stress that derives from unhealthy perfectionism, to encourage them in setting realistic goals and facing the fear of making mistakes. And for sure there will be less unhealthy perfectionistic behaviour if educational goals are challenging for the gifted.

Key words: social emotional characteristics, gifted students, emotional intensity, emotional sensitivity, perfectionism.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to emphasize the importance of understanding and acknowledging these social and emotional characteristics of the gifted students as school counsellors and in education in general being and prompt in accepting them as challenges

EMOTIONAL INTENSITY AND REACTIVITY

We can find out that some highly intellectually or creatively gifted students possess a level of emotional sensitivity and »overexcitability« that is quite foreign to their peers, parents, teachers, counsellors and they hardly accept and understand it. The result is that the gifted students may become doubtful about themselves, depressed, alienated, they may feel guilty for their differentness; they can develop feelings of inadequacy and inferiority. To resolve the conflict they might disguise their tendencies, try to be more »normal«, they might become emotionally withdrawn, sometimes they take refuge in the imaginary world they can so ably create. Piechowski (1997) said: such solutions exact a severe cost in lost vitality, reduce enjoyment of achievements and confusion about one's identity.

Through his experiences of working with intellectually and artistically gifted children and adults, Dabrowski comprehended the intensity of their emotions, their sensitivity and tendency toward emotional extremes as part and parcel of their psycho-physical makeup. He concluded that in their intensified manner of experiencing, feeling, thinking and imagining, they perceived a potential for further growth towards self-awareness and self-actualization (Piechowski, 1991; in Lovecky, 2003; Piechowski, 2006).

What are the characteristics of emotional excitability as Piechowski (2006) defined it? The feelings and emotions are intensified: we can find positive and negative feelings, extremes of emotions, complex emotions and feelings, integrated with their strong sense of right and wrong. Emotionally gifted pupils identify with others' feelings and are aware of a whole range of feelings. They may show strong somatic expressions: tense stomach, sinking heart, blushing, pounding heart, sweaty palms. We can find strong affective expressions: inhibition /timidity, shyness/, enthusiasm, ecstasy, euphoria, pride; strong affective memory; shame, feelings of unreality, fears and anxieties, feelings of guilt, concern with death, depressive and suicidal moods. Gifted students with emotional heightened excitability have the capacity for strong attachments and deep relationships, attachments to animals; difficulty adjusting to new environments; compassion, responsiveness to others, sensitivity in relationships; loneliness. They have well differentiated feelings towards self; they develop inner dialogue and self-judgement. They can feel a deep sense of responsibility, which can lead to feelings of failure and guilt (Piechowski, 2006).

Emotional intensity varies between individuals. High emotional intensity means that the emotions are very strong and tend toward extremes of joy or misery, which can easily alternate. People of high emotional intensity lead more complex lives, in which much is going on that is interesting and stimulating, their emotional processes are richer and their sense of self is more complex, too (Piechowski, 2006).

EMOTIONAL SENSITIVITY

But intensity of emotions is only one aspect of emotional over-excitability; the other aspect is emotional sensitivity. Roeper (1982) and Piechowski(1991; in Lovecky, 2003) describe empathy and compassion as emotional giftedness. Sensitive talented persons with high empathy do not only know what others feel, but they experience the feelings themselves, what is particularly true for intensely unpleasant feelings. It can happen that they cannot distinguish between their feelings and the feelings of others, so they need to learn how to separate them and learn how to feel »with« rather than »for« the other person. If they have difficulties in separating other people's feelings from their own, we ought to help them to cope by learning to build appropriate interpersonal distance (Lovecky, 2003).

Accepting and acknowledging that this way of experiencing is natural for an excitable child or adolescent (and even adult), reassures him. They can experience a relief when they find out there is a theoretical model that makes sense out of an »abnormal« manner of feeling and acting.

The strongest support for gifted children or adolescents coping with intensities and sensitivities is parents' loving patience and acceptance and an atmosphere which is open to the free expression of heightened excitabilities. The same is important in the school setting. Many strategies can be offered to help the individuals to cope with these intensities in an understanding and accepting way, but the first condition is that the social environment does not condemn it as over-reacting, but see it as inner reality and in fact as a remarkable ability. It is also important for individuals that they are allowed to act by predictable routines; they need reliable markers of consistency and support.

PERFECTIONISM OF GIFTED STUDENTS

We should mention perfectionism as an important social emotional trait of gifted students. As a school psychologist I often identify among gifted students those who have perfectionist tendencies to reach unrealistically high goals, which sometimes affect their strivings to such an extent that they cannot achieve even average results.

Perfectionism is a combination of thoughts and behaviours generally associated with high standards or expectations for one's own performance (Burns, 1980; Hamachek, 1978, in Schuler, 2002). Perfectionism has repeatedly been cited as a major counselling focus for gifted children and adolescents, especially when addressing underachievement and emotional turmoil.

But we must have in mind that the main source of data on perfectionism of gifted pupils are case studies and anecdotal records, while empirical studies have focused primarily on adults and college students.

Research and clinical studies of gifted children and adolescents (Adderholdt, 1984; Ford, 1989; Hollingworth, 1926; Karnes in Oeher-Stinnerr, 1986; Lovecky, 1994; Oden, 1968; Roeper, 1982; Silverman, 1990a; Whitmore, 1980; in Schuler, 2002) draw three conclusions about perfectionism:

1. As a group, gifted students are perfectionistic;
2. They seem to be more perfectionistic than average-ability peers;
3. Their perfectionism can be a positive force for high achievement.

Adderholdt – Elliot (1989; in Davis and Rimm, 1998) named five characteristics of perfectionistic students that contribute to underachievement: procrastination, fear of failure, an all-or-nothing mindset, paralyzed perfectionism and workaholism (which leads to burnout, depression, and a lost balance among school, family and friends).

It is important to understand perfectionism as a multidimensional construct, which can be connected with both positive and negative psychological results, with favourable and unfavourable emotional reactions of an individual. In my opinion, it is very important to differentiate between students with healthy eagerness to achieve high standards of excellence allowing for the limits of certain situations and those with forced persistence aiming at reaching unrealistically high goals, feeling dissatisfaction and showing inadequacy unless achieved.

Ramirez Basco (2000) describe perfectionistic schemas which can help us to understand more how perfectionistic tendencies are functioning. Perfectionistic schemas are beliefs that suggest that perfection is attainable and necessary and we can recognize them in the counselling process. We can use counselling interventions to help talented students to focus on their thinking in concrete situations, on understanding emotional reactions and past behaviour. This is the way to enable their possibility of influencing cognition, the type of emotional reaction and the choice of behaviour in the future.
An example of such perfectionist belief: *'I have to be perfect otherwise ...'*
Self-oriented perfectionists as well as other-oriented perfectionists are apt to believe that something bad, unpleasant, unacceptable will happen if they are not perfect. Self-oriented perfectionists are afraid of being rejected by others, while other-oriented perfectionists fear being humiliated.

COUNSELLING AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF GIFTED PROGRAMME

Counselling should be an integral component of programming for the gifted and talented. Many thoughtful specialists in gifted education argue strongly that counselling and guidance are essential for the full development of gifted children and that counselling should be an integral component of every gifted programme (Bireley & Gallagher, 1990, 1991a; Landrum, 1987; Perrone, 1997; Roeper, 1982; Silverman, 1997; VanTassel-Baska, 1983a; Webb, Meckstroth & Tolan, 1992; in Davis, 1998). A general rule is: The greater the gift, the greater the counselling need.
And what can we do in the role of school counsellor? We can provide individual counselling to assist students in their self-discovery, to help them better understand their strengths and weaknesses, so that they can integrate their specific traits with specific aspects of life, wherever they have troubles (in social life in general, in close relationships, for the purpose of career orientation) and so they will be able to develop their potential more fully.

Perfectionistic students need a counsellor's support in understanding that their wish to reach high goals, to be excellent, their delight in discipline and orderliness can be advantageous. At the same time a counsellor's task is to focus these students on prioritizing some goals, to be able to assess their mistakes. We are to reduce stress that derives from unhealthy perfectionism, to encourage setting realistic goals, facing the fear of making mistakes. Educational goals have to be challenging for the gifted.

We should help students find satisfaction in what they do, encourage them to put much more effort in what is really worthy and not just waste their energy in constantly wishing to be perfect in everything. They have to learn to consider all the alternatives if the chosen way does not lead to the set goal, to allow mistakes. They should experience situations in which they are not ready and in doubt, they have to learn to be able to laugh at themselves (according to Davis in Rimm, 1998).

CONCLUSIONS

To work effectively with gifted pupils and to counsel their parents and teachers, counsellors need more than general counselling knowledge and skills. They need to understand how unique features of giftedness contribute to the problems.

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THE CHOIR – A WAY TOWARDS THE ART OF MUSIC AND A STIMULATION OF THE GENERAL PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

In Slovenia school choirs have a long tradition. The paper first presents the position and role of the school choir as an interest activity in the extended primary school programme. The curriculum (2003) defines choral singing as a creative artistic activity with the aim of transmitting special musical values within the school area and outside it, and developing aesthetic sensitivity and cultural responsibility. General objectives of choral singing are integrative, as they connect musical components to other elements which stimulate general development of children. Learning the choral repertoire includes numerous interdisciplinary connections and also promotes multicultural approach and raises awareness of one's own cultural heritage and values. Apart from learning singing technique and developing musical abilities, skills and knowledge, by singing we also develop emotional and cognitive aspects of experiencing and expressing. Messages which singers receive from musical and textual contents build singers' spiritual worlds and their systems of values.

Musical communication eliminates many barriers children are faced with at school and supports social integration as well as inclusive education. Group work strengthens social connections among singers and educates them for responsible work. The routine of choral rehearsals is often enlivened with various motor and other activities in order to boost children's interest, attract their attention and develop their ability to memorise. Singers' motivation increases during preparations for different performances and competitions.

The segments that follow are presented through the *Pedenjped* project in which the children choir Glasbena matica participated under my artistic leadership. I shed light upon strategies which at different stages of the project enabled the attainment of the objectives set.

Key words: choir; interdisciplinary connections; emotional aspects; *Pedenjped* project.

INTRODUCTION

Much has been said and written about singing and its role and importance for mankind. Through centuries, awareness about the values and importance of singing has influenced its role in general education systems. The impacts of choral singing are very wide-ranging and are important for an individual's future attitude towards music. Choral singing is "the fastest road to the kingdom of high art" and includes the phenomenon of "joint giving, where a heterogeneous group can function as one artistic body only if every individual contributes their best" (Lah, 2008).

PRIMARY SCHOOL CHORAL CURRICULUM

School choirs in Slovenia have had a long tradition which Žvar (2002) researched in detail. For years, primary and secondary school choirs had the status of an spare-time activity. After the curricular reform in 1999, they were included in the extended school programme as a compulsory component of the cultural life at school. Music teachers /conductors have six hours per week available for school choirs (Žvar, 2006). In 2003 the curriculum for choirs was issued which is not just objective and process oriented, but also shows holistic approach to education of children and youngsters.

The curriculum defines choral singing as a creative artistic activity with the aim of transmitting special musical values within the school area and outside it, and developing aesthetic sensitivity and cultural responsibility. The general objectives of choral singing are integrative, as they connect musical components to other elements stimulating general development of children. The curriculum also defines operational objectives of the subject in connection with the general guidelines and by types of choirs as well as the developmental achievements. Based on this, the conductor is then free to choose the repertoire, taking into account also the pupils' interests and needs.

EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF CHORAL SINGING

Learning the choral repertoire includes numerous interdisciplinary connections and also promotes multicultural approach and raises awareness of one's own cultural heritage and values. Apart from learning singing technique and developing musical abilities, skills and knowledge, by singing we also develop emotional and cognitive aspects of experiencing and expressing. Messages which singers receive from musical and textual contents build singers' spiritual worlds and their systems of values. Habe (2007) believes that values are only formed during the teenage period, while in childhood the foundations for the values are set on the basis of the categories pleasant/unpleasant, nice/ugly, good/bad. Personal experience matters most, so it is very important what is the selected repertoire like, how it is presented to the singers and how the conductor activates the singers' emotions, imagination and intellect (Žvar, 2007).

Musical communication eliminates many barriers children are faced with at school and supports social integration as well as inclusive education. Johansson (2002, p.15) claims that singing in a choir offers a great opportunity for an individual to gain respect for others and to learn solidarity and loyalty despite differences. Group work strengthens social connections among singers and educates them for responsible work.

Žvar (2002) points out that a choir is an ideal group for bringing into effect the principle of socialisation. She believes that joint singing helps develop adaptability and

restrain excessive ego, encourages cooperation and helps understand the importance of each singer's presence at the rehearsals and performances.

In the time when individuality is nurtured everywhere, it is important that the value of group work which requires each individual to adapt, to give something up and to work for achievement of common goals is strengthened through art and with art at school and outside it. Performing at different events connects the school with its local and broader community and promotes intergenerational gathering within cultural activities. Networking of the arts connects with networking of relationships, thus promoting emotional and social maturing of children (Rotar Pance, 2011).

The routine of choral rehearsals is often enlivened with various motor and other activities in order to boost children's interest, attract their attention and develop their ability to memorise. Singers' motivation increases during preparations for different performances and competitions at regional, national or international level. Žvar (2002) says that singers have to be motivated by success. If their experience confirms that the invested work leads to success, they will be willing to remain in the choir. Singers' entire experience in the choir plays a crucial role in this: the feeling of being accepted, the conductor's attitude towards singers, the way the conductor directs the group's dynamics and reflects their achievements. The conductor needs to be more than a competent professional; the way they influence singers with their personality and how their actions stimulate singers' wish for and responsibility towards performing an artistic work. The influence of conductor's work and attitude is far-reaching, as "choral singing often remains a cultural need of an individual for the entire life" (Oblak, 1995, p. 26).

CHILDREN CHOIR OF GLASBENA MATICA

Besides the school choirs, there are other children and youth choirs in Slovenia. The Children Choir of Glasbena matica was founded in 2005. Its work is planned in accordance with the objectives of the curriculum for school choirs, but its requirements regarding knowledge and achievements are higher. The singers are aged between 6 and 11 and they meet for rehearsals twice a week. The choir has performed at many events which has taken place at various settings: from the most eminent Slovenian concert halls to old people's homes and institutions that educate and take care of handicapped children and youngsters. Every performance is very important and precious to singers, not only in terms of music but also in terms of personal growth and connecting with various audiences.

THE PEDENJPED PROJECT

Under my leadership, the Children Choir of Glasbena matica carried out two thematic projects: The ABC cycle by Marjan Kozina (2007) and the *Pedenjped* project (2009/2010).

Who is Pedenjped? He is the main character in the cycle of poems for children by Slovenian poet Niko Grafenauer. His mischief, thinking and explorations inspired composers of different generations and styles. When I was choosing among the songs written for children choir with piano accompaniment, I had in mind the presumed interest of children in good performance of each individual songs, as well as the different characters and messages of the songs. Among the already existing works, I chose the

following songs: *Pedenjped, Šlik šlak, Pregled, Pedenjura, Zadrega* by Karol Pahor, *Vrtnar* by Borut Lesjak, *Pedenjhišica* by Peter Šavli, *Sladkosned, Trd oreh, Dvojčka* by Matevž Goršič. Glasbena matica also ordered five new songs from three composers: Aldo Kumar (*Uspavanka, Korenjak*), Tadeja Vulc (*Slikar, Glasbenik*) and Črt Sojar Voglar (*Učenjak).* The choir started learning the songs in February 2009 with the aim to present them in December 2009 in a scenic musical performance in Cankarjev dom.

After a while, we started presenting individual songs at public appearances. For some compositions we had to choose soloists among the members of the choir. At first, we had to encourage them to sing alone and try their voices. After a while almost everybody got relaxed and find courage and wanted to be soloists. Children had got a special encouragement when the composer Aldo Kumar visited one of the rehearsals, listened to our performance of his two new compositions and commented on it. At the end of the rehearsals he signed the singers' scores of both compositions which, in the eyes of children, gave them an additional value. It also meant a lot to the singers that the poet Niko Grafenauer and two of the composers attended the choir's annual concert (May 2009) where we performed a bigger part of the cycle. The meeting of the singers and the audience with the artists left a lasting impression and represented an encouragement for further work. The summer holidays gave the necessary opportunity for the programme we had already learned to settle and mature. In autumn the choir learned the last two new songs and started the preparations to the December shows prepared in coproduction of Glasbena matica and Cankarjev dom.

The scenic musical performance with the subtitle *Pravljičen glasbeni potep s Pedenjpedom in otroki* was directed by Katja Pegan. The script writer Jože Humer put musical language and singing of the children choir and its soloists, accompanied by the pianist Tina Bohak, to the forefront of the show. Dramaturgically arranged songs were connected by pantomime performed by the academic actor Vesna Slapar. A 45-minute show was created which was premièred on 12 and 13 December 2009. Five more performances followed in the subsequent days. They all received positive feedback by the audience and experts. The shows were attended by kindergarten and primary-school children from Ljubljana and others. The audience was actively involved in the show by singing one of the songs. The poet was present at one of the performances and he addressed the audience and explained how the *Pedenjped* cycle was created. He expressed his appreciation for the varied musical renderings of his poems and his delight with the whole show. For the audience and the performers his address gave additional value to the entire artistic and cultural event.

The singers of the Children Choir of the Glasbena matica were then faced with another new challenge: the 15 songs of the *Pedenjped* project had to be recorded for a CD. Recording in a studio requires special focus and accuracy. A careless move or a wrong note can ruin the recording of a song and it has to be done all over again. This required, on one hand, a lot of patience and tolerance of the entire group and on the other hand, huge engagement by every individual, so that the songs could be recorded at a required level. As the choir leader, I, too, had to be very patient, inventive and creative to motivate children to be focused and sing accurately. When the CD was issued, together with a new collection of poems by Niko Grafenauer, the satisfaction was great.

We can say that the results of the *Pedenjped* project were more than encouraging for the Children Choir of the Glasbena matica. The very process of the project was particularly valuable, as it enabled children's creativity to mature in connection with professional artistic activity. Anyway, all this would not be possible without effective

support by our society and the help of singers' parents who diligently drove and accompanied children to rehearsal and performances.

CONCLUSION

The sociological aspects of singing in a children or youth choir are very closely related to the musical achievements that singers fulfil at rehearsals, performances, recordings or competitions. Programmes that are studied and performed in public for a longer period of time, as it was the case with the *Pedenjped* project, are particularly important. When children-singers start loosing motivation, the choir leader and other co-workers of the choir as well as parents have to stimulate them in a suitable way and help them overcome the strains also by organising various social events. In the *Pedenjped* project we invested much effort to prevent that children would get tired of the repertoire, that it wouldn't become annoying or even repulsive. We also worked a lot regarding every singer's self-confidence, so that they were ready to perform as soloists at different occasions. We took care that they were never jealous of each other or got the feeling that we favoured someone. Our efforts to build a positive group dynamics of the work in the choirs paid off, as we had successful performances, went through beautiful musical experience and built positive relations. In this process each individual received a lot of stimulation for their development in general.

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INCLUSION AS FACTOR OF SELF-CONCEPT AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

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ABSTRACT

Many contemporary authors stress the inclusive educational system, which enables the optimal inclusion of children with special needs into social environment, thus providing conditions for more balanced personal development, greater motivation and better productivity for these students. Other researchers believe that teachers in special schools are more qualified to work with children with special needs due to their acquaintance with students' learning and emotional needs, which enables them to provide more positive feedback for these students. The main goal of our research was to investigate self-concept, self-esteem and social support among adolescents with special needs, with regard to their educational institution (regular or special school). Participants were 105 deaf and hearing impaired, blind and visually impaired, and physically disabled students. They filled in three questionnaires: Self-description Questionnaire, Self-Liking/Competence Scale – Revised Version and Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale. The results show that educational institution and type of disability affect students' self-concept, self-esteem and social support, while gender, age and parents' disability have only a minor influence on these characteristics, although some variables were influenced by the interaction between gender, age and aforementioned factors. In conclusion, the results show that, regarding self-concept and social support, inclusion of students with special needs to regular schools is rather successful in Slovenia. Students attending inclusive education have better self-concepts and receive more social support than students attending special schools. Findings of the present research therefore offer an additional view of considering pros and cons of special and inclusive education and emphasize the importance of positive self-concept for adolescents with special needs.

Keywords: self-concept, social support, special needs, special education, inclusive education

INTRODUCTION

Children with special needs in Slovenia receive their education in mainstream or special schools. Although the researches (Broadhead, 2006) show that inclusion enables a more balanced personal development, greater motivation and better productivity for students with special needs, the majority of children with special needs is still segregated.

Researches about self-concept and self-esteem of students with special needs provide inconsistent results. For example, LaBarbera (2008) states that teachers in special schools are more qualified to work with children with special needs, due to their acquaintance with students' learning and emotional needs. Beaty (1992) claims that children with special needs attending mainstream schools experience feelings of inadequacy and inferiority resulting in deficit of their self-concept. On the other hand, Heward (2003) claims that inclusion helps to improve communicative and social skills and helps to raise self-concept and self-esteem of children with special needs. Fitch (2003) also states that students with special needs included in mainstream schools have a more positive feeling of themselves than students in segregated schools.

Regarding social support, the researches (Kef et al., 2000) show that many blind and visually impaired adolescents are socially isolated and have less friends and smaller social networks than their normative peers because they lack interpersonal skills. These children also often experience problems with establishing contacts with normative peers, mainly because they spend most of their time socializing with teachers and other children with special needs, with whom they feel emotionally safer (Antia et al., 1993). Nevertheless, children with special needs also receive plenty of social support, especially from parents, peers and teachers (Kef et al., 2000).

1.1 OBJECTIVE

The aim of the research was to investigate self-concept, self-esteem and social support among adolescents with special needs, concentrating on the differences between adolescents who are attending regular schools and those who receive their education in special institutions.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

Participants were 105 deaf and hearing impaired, blind and visually impaired, and physically disabled students from secondary schools (see Table 1). There were 51 girls and 54 boys with the average age of 18.2 years. 12 participants also have either one or both parents with disabilities. The average academic achievement of students attending mainstream schools was slightly higher (M = 3.86) as opposed to the students attending special schools (M = 3.3).

Table 1: Participants with different types of disabilities attending mainstream and special schools

Type of disability	Educational institution		
	Special	**Mainstream**	
Deaf / hearing impaired	**42**	**13**	**55**
Blind / visually impaired	**6**	**9**	**15**
Physically disabled	**22**	**13**	**35**
	70	**35**	**105**

INSTRUMENTS

The participants filled in three questionnaires: the Self-description Questionnaire, the Self-Liking and Self-Competence Scale and the Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale.

The self-description questionnaire (SDQIII; Marsh, 1992) measures the self-concept in late adolescence and early adulthood. It measures 13 aspects of self-concept: general self-concept, academic self-concept, mathematical aptitude, verbal aptitude, physical aptitude, emotional stability, creativity / problem solving, physical appearance, peer relations – same gender, peer relations – opposite gender, parent relations, religion / spirituality and sincerity / reliability. Students are asked to read each of the 136 statements and rate how characteristic these statements are for them (1 – not at all, 6 – completely).

The self-liking and self-competence scale (SLCS-R; Tafarodi and Swann, 2001) measures two dimensions of self-esteem: self-liking and self-competence. The self-competence subscale measures the part of self-esteem originating in individual's feelings of ability and efficacy, while the self-liking subscale measures the part of self-esteem depending on society. Students are asked to read each of the 16 statements and rate how characteristic these statements are for them (1 – not at all, 5 – completely).

The Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale (CASSS; Malecki et al., 2000) measures the perceived social support of children and adolescents from five sources: parents, teachers, classmates, close friends and other people in the school. Students are asked to read each of the 60 statements and rate how often they perceive that support (1 – never, 6 – always) and how important it is to them that they perceive that support (1 – not important, 3 – very important).

Students were asked to fill out a battery of abovementioned scales/questionnaires along with several additional questions about their education, academic achievement, eventual parents' disability and to whom they turn when in distress.

PROCEDURE

To collect data from students in special institutions, we first acquired permissions from the institutes' directors and students' parents. Students then filled in the questionnaires. The majority of students were able to complete the questionnaires on their own, due to certain adjustments that were previously made in the form of the questionnaires (enlarged text for visually impaired students) and in the procedure (sign

language interpreter for deaf and hearing impaired students). However, some students needed additional help, so their answers were written down for them.

To collect data from students attending mainstream schools we contacted various associations, mobile specialist teams and advisers in secondary schools. Students who decided to participate filled in the questionnaires and returned them.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results show that the students on average perceive the most social support from close friends (M = 52.87), followed by parents (M = 50.40), teachers (M = 47.47), classmates (M = 44.32) and people in their school (M = 42.99). Close friends' support is also the most important to them (M = 27.86). Parents' (M = 26.43), teachers' (M = 26.01) and classmates' support (M = 25.57) is also quite important to these students, whereas support from people in their schools is not so important (M = 23.59).

These results are congruent with the findings of the former researches, where parents' and peers' support proved to be the most important source of social support in adolescence (Helsen et al., 2000).

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

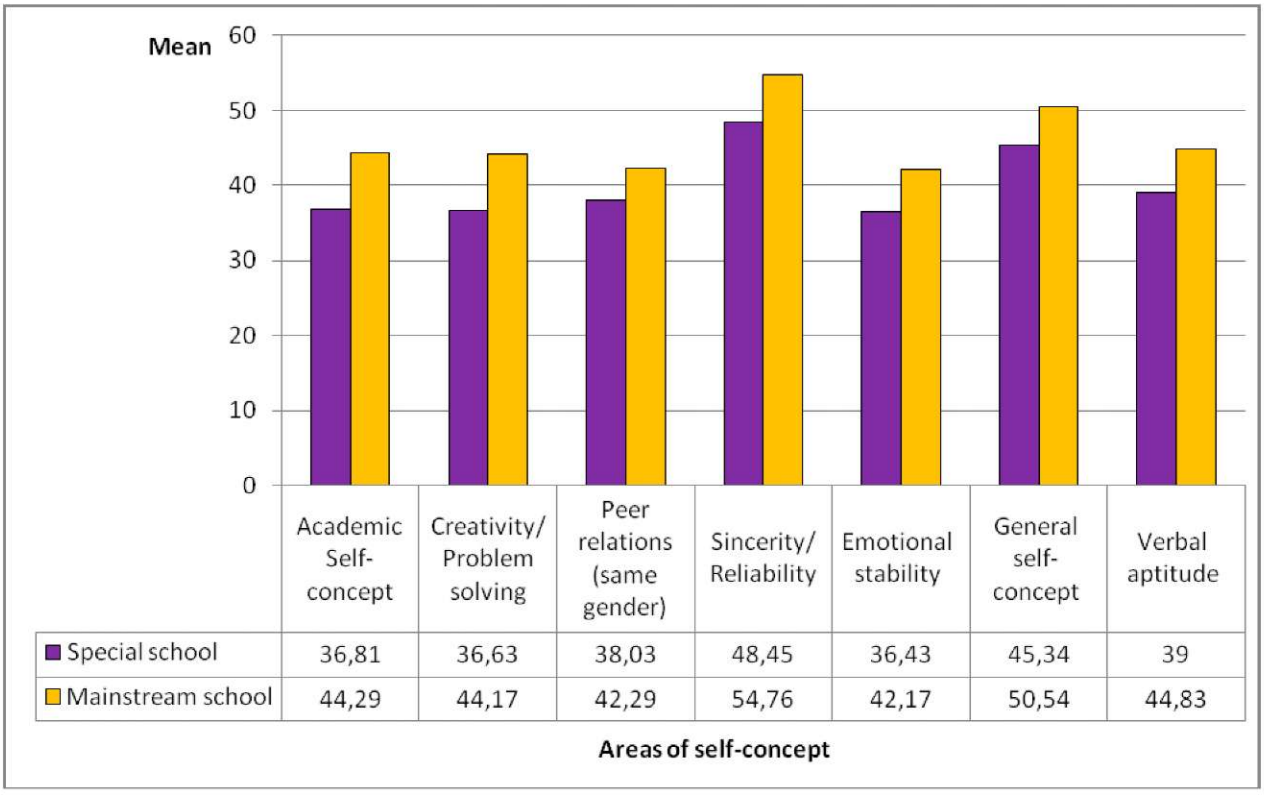
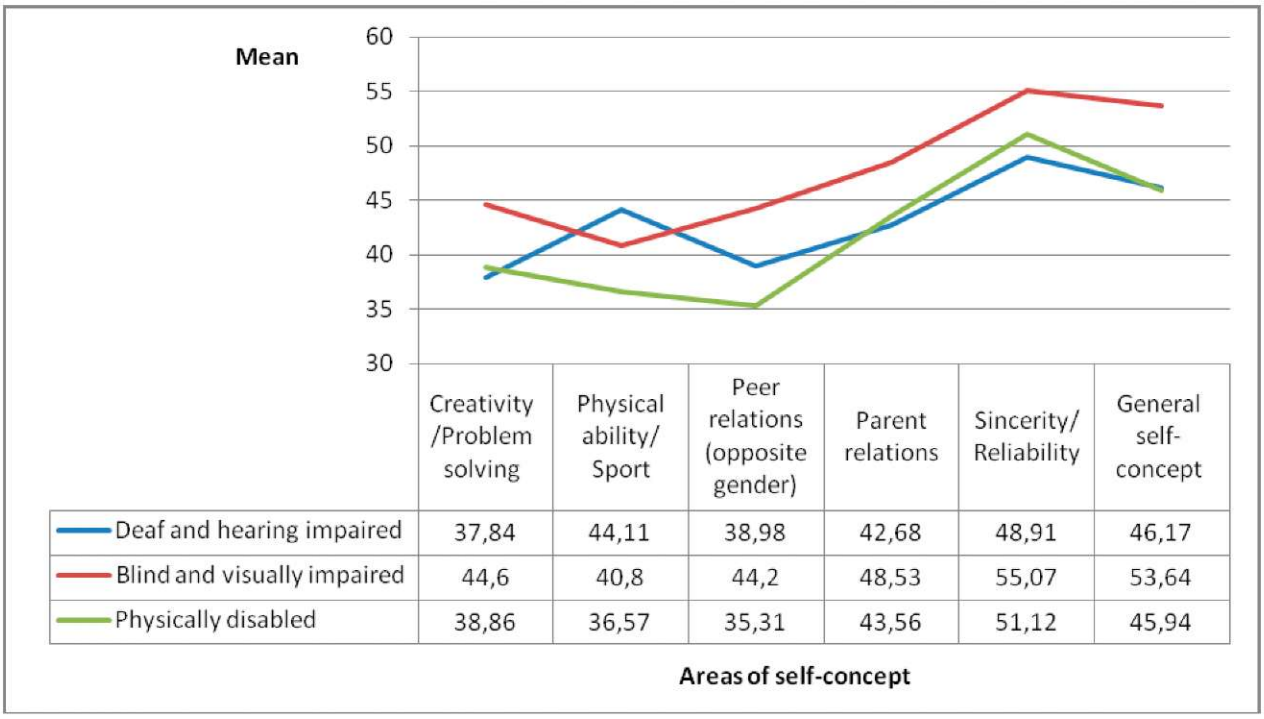


Figure 1: Differences in self-concept between students attending special and mainstream schools (only statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) are showed)

The results show that students attending mainstream schools have significantly higher general self-concept, academic self-concept, and self-concept in the areas of problem solving, peer relations with the same gender, sincerity and emotional stability. Students

attending mainstream schools also have better self-concept in the area of verbal aptitude. There were no significant differences in other areas of self-concept, in self-esteem and social support.
Results referring to self-concept are congruent with Heward's (2003) and Fitch's (2003) findings: the authors determined that inclusion contributes to a more positive view of the self and the world, therefore to the better self-concepts of the children with special needs.
Heward (2003) found that the positive effect of inclusion shows primarily in better communication and social skills. This effect is visible in the differences in the areas of verbal aptitude and peer relations, where students in mainstream schools achieved higher scores. We believe that the differences in the academic self-concept and problem solving are the consequence of the differences in academic achievement. Most researchers support the model where academic achievements form certain spheres of academic self-concept, and these spheres influence further academic achievements.

TYPE OF DISABILITY



	Creativity /Problem solving	Physical ability/ Sport	Peer relations (opposite gender)	Parent relations	Sincerity/ Reliability	General self-concept
Deaf and hearing impaired	37,84	44,11	38,98	42,68	48,91	46,17
Blind and visually impaired	44,6	40,8	44,2	48,53	55,07	53,64
Physically disabled	38,86	36,57	35,31	43,56	51,12	45,94

Figure 2: Differences in self-concept between students with different types of disabilities (only statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) are showed)

In regard to self-concept, the results show that the physical appearance self-concept is the lowest with physically disabled students. These results were expected because physical appearance presents an important part of understanding oneself in adolescence, and physical appearance of the physically disabled usually deviates from general ideals more than appearance of the blind or the deaf.

Regarding the differences in interpersonal areas of self-concept we believe that they are linked to social support. For example, the blind and visually disabled perceive the most support from close friends and therefore have higher scores at peer-relations self-concept than other two groups.

Differences in general self-concept and problem solving are probably the consequence of better communication and thus more successful learning. For example, with the deaf and the hearing impaired, communication can be quite hindered, which affects learning as well.

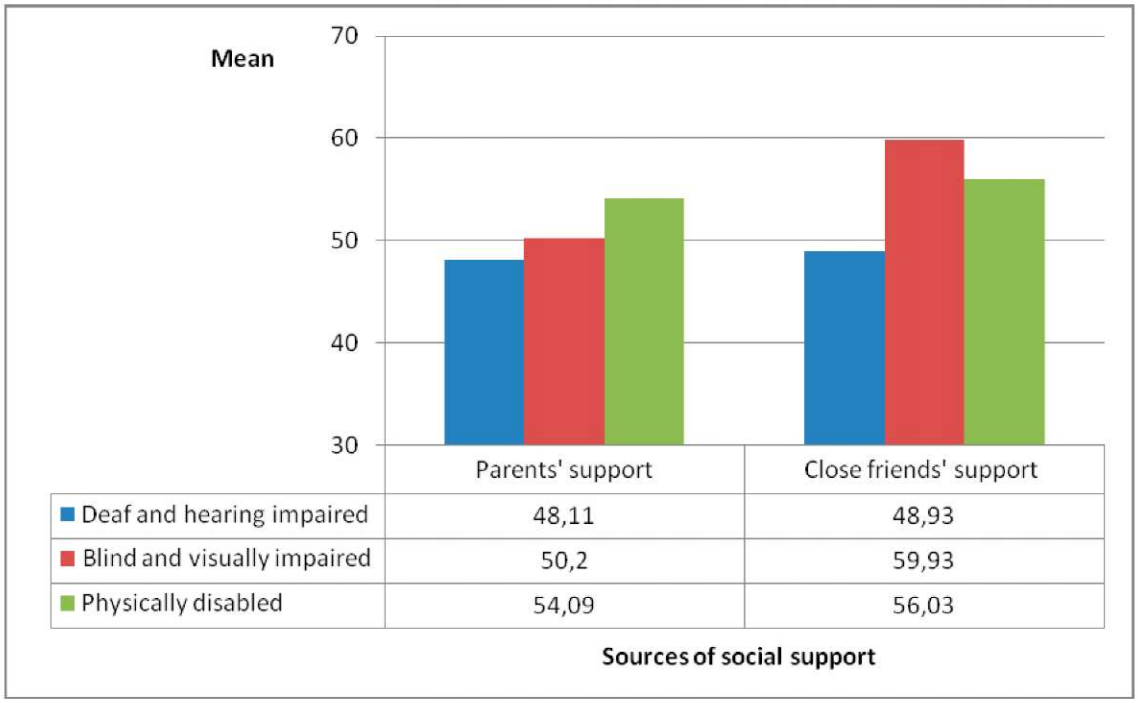


Figure 3: Differences in social support between students with different types of disabilities (only statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) are showed)

Figure 3 shows that physically disabled students perceive the most support from parents. The blind and visually impaired perceive the most support from close friends, whereas the deaf and hearing impaired the least.

We believe that the reasons for the physically disabled perceiving the most parent support lie in their functional disability: these students mainly need adjustments at going to school and shaping the environment, which is mostly provided by parents. Hindered mobility could also be the reason for perceiving less close friends' support, because it prevents access to certain places where their peers spend time together (Kef et al., 2000). The reason for blind and visually impaired students perceiving the most support, and deaf and hearing impaired students the least of it could also lie in the mere communication. It is possible to communicate with the blind and visually impaired about everything, which is why they can be very active in social activities, while communication with the deaf is much harder and consequently more exclusive.

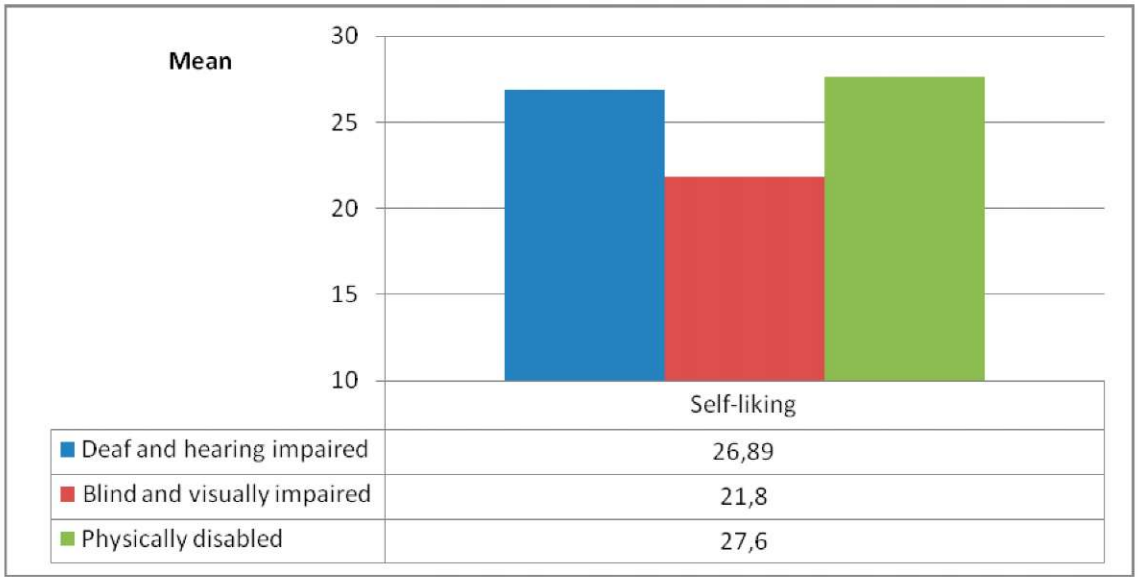


Figure 4: Differences in self-esteem between students with different types of disabilities (only statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) are showed)

There were also some significant differences in self-esteem: physically disabled students had the highest scores, while the blind and visually impaired had the lowest. A possible explanation for this could be the more explicit self-protective behaviour of physically disabled students that reduces the value of tasks they cannot perform and emphasizes dimensions where they stand out, thus increasing their self-esteem.

PARENTS' DISABILITY

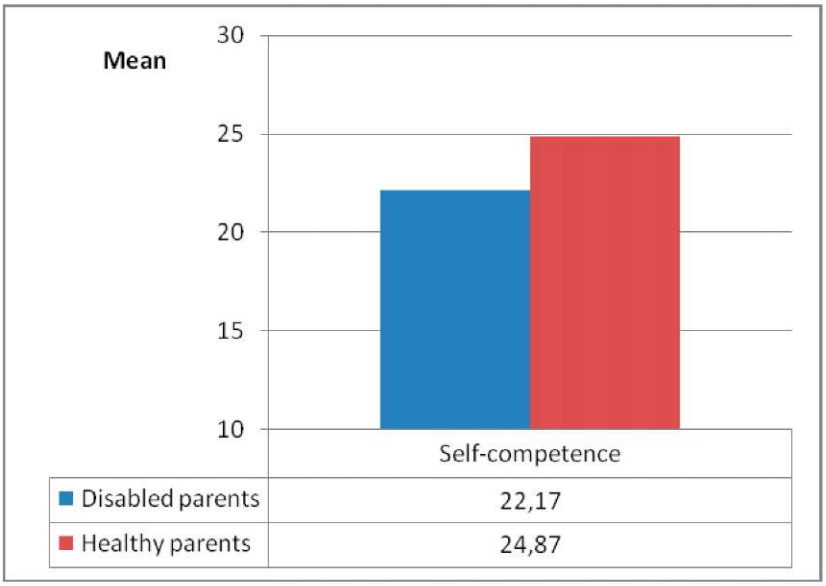


Figure 5: Differences in self-esteem between students with disabled parents and students with healthy parents (only statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) are showed)

The results show one significant difference in regard to parents' disability: self-competence was higher with students who do not have parents with disabilities. Higher self-competence of students who have normative parents probably originates from the ability to perform different activities with their parents, while students with disabled parents have a more limited set of activities they can do together. Students with normative parents may feel that their family is more able to control the environment and life challenges in general, which is one of the sources of self-esteem.

CONCLUSIONS

It seems that with the blind and visually impaired, deaf and hearing impaired, and physically disabled students, educational institution and the type of disability present the factors with the greatest influence on self-concept, self-esteem and social support. Gender, age and parents' disability have none or little influence on these characteristics.
In conclusion, the results show that, regarding self-concept and social support, inclusion of students with special needs to regular schools is rather successful in Slovenia. Students attending inclusive education have better self-concepts than students attending special schools, and they also receive quite a lot of social support. The results therefore confirm inclusion's positive effect on students' personal and social functioning.

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EXTERNAL DIFFERENTIATION AND SOME DIMENSIONS OF EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL ASPECT OF LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

The paper discusses the relation between external differentiation and some dimensions of emotional and social aspect of learning. First, we discuss external differentiation in the field of compulsory basic schooling within the European and within the Slovenian school context. We deal with the so called setting model which has always been a target of criticism. The final part of theoretical framework shows the importance of emotional and social aspect of learning.

The aim of the empirical research was to determine the relationship between external learning differentiation and some dimensions of emotional and social aspect of pupils' learning when pupils attending lessons in different ability groups classes.

The survey included 395 pupils attending Grade 8 and Grade 9 of a nine-year compulsory school. A standardised and well-recognised instrument (Thiel, Keller, Binder & Boben, 1999) was used as a tool in the research. Differences among pupils according the levels were assessed by the use of a variance analysis, after the prior test of variance of homogeneity.

On the basis of our research study, we can establish that pupils at Level 3 are more tolerant to their own failure, they perceive their success more positively, are more resistant to stress, they are more independent in learning and they express a more positive attitude towards school.

The research leads us to a conclusion that it is important to create an emotionally and socially favourable learning environment especially for pupils at 1st level and 2nd level. They need safe environment in which they have opportunity to succeed.

Key words: external differentiation, emotional aspect of learning, social aspect of learning

INTRODUCTION

In school year 1999/2000 the nine- year basic compulsory education programme was initiated in Slovenia. Among other changes, different types of learning differentiation were introduced. One of them was setting model, where ability grouping takes place in some of the subjects, most commonly in mother tongue, mathematics and foreign language classes (Strmčnik, 1987: 166-169).

External differentiation critics claim that it is unfair and non-democratic to group learners according to their abilities. They believe that learners included in lower levels are marked and they also claim that mixed-ability classes are more effective, since better learners motivate the other learners (Plut-Pregelj, 1999: 35).

Our research shows that emotional and social aspect of learning can also be one of the criterions to evaluate the setting system.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

DIFFERENTIATION IN EUROPE

Many educational systems are faced with the need to consider individual differences among learners in the very beginning of their primary schooling. European countries seem to follow two different streams. The first group are the countries with multi-course compulsory basic education (e.g. Germany, Austria). After four years of common basic education, pupils continue their schooling in one of the three systems: gymnasia, secondary modern school or main school (European Comisssion, 2006). The lower secondary level is compulsory and externally differentiated. In the other group there are countries where differentiation is performed within common basic compulsory education. In this group there are Scandinavian countries, Netherlands, Iceland, Great Britain ... Swedish primary school, for example, is based on differences among learners. Their system offers many possibilities: a variety of different elective subjects, classes can be divided in smaller groups and grouping is done according to learners' interests. In the last three classes of primary school they also use ability grouping, which is performed considering both, learners' abilities and wishes (Krek, 1999: 111-113). Ability grouping is most common in basic subjects. However, the decision about subjects is done by individual schools, after previously consulting with parents and local government. The system gives teachers the right to organize lessons in homogenised groups (Medveš, 1999: 92).

DIFFERENTIATION IN SLOVENIAN SCHOOL

Learning differentiation in Slovenian schools has been the theme of interest since after the World War II, due to the fact that society needed more educated people. Differentiation became even more useful with the school reform in 1958, which initiated common primary schooling, which was too unique to consider individual differences (Strmčnik, 1989: 3). Finally, in 1980s the need to reform school was stressed. The fact was that in practice, school was far from being unique, but the legislation didn't follow the changes, which caused many problems to the teachers. Slovenian primary school could no longer provide appropriate development of learner's abilities (Bela knjiga 1994:124).

In 1996 the Basic Compulsory Education act was adopted. It ordered primary schools to initiate the nine-year lasting primary schooling in school year 1999/2000 (Official Gazette 12/96, 33/97). It also meant the external differentiation in grades 8 and 9 was initiated. However, serious criticism related to it reached a legal epilogue in 2006. The Basic Compulsory Education Act and some Rules (Official Gazette 60/2006, 63/2006) were changed. So today, according to the law, lessons in mother tongue, mathematics and foreign languages in grades eight and nine can be organised as follows: formation of learners learning groups, applying team teaching, teaching subjects at different levels or combining various types of differentiation.

EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL ASPECT OF LEARNING

Emotions direct learner's behaviour in a specific situation and they are at the same time the factor which motivates for learning new information. They help learner organising information and lead him towards his own thinking and functioning. The teacher should encourage learner's interests, his feeling of safety, which is the key factor of emotional environment (Pečjak & Košir, 2002:128). Different researches (e.g. Žagar, 2003), dealing with different social and emotional aspect of learning show there are important differences in tolerance to failure. The least tolerant to failure are learners attending classes in higher ability group, and in the other two groups tolerance is changing according to the subject.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Since setting system is still present in our schools and the existing researches (e.g. Plut Pregelj 1999, Žagar, 2003) remind us about the relationship between the external differentiation and the emotional and social aspect of learning, we wanted to determine it. We checked the relation for the following categories: (1) tolerance to failure, (2) resistance to stress, (3) perception of success, (4) social dependence in learning and (5) attitude towards school.

METHODOLOGY

We used descriptive and causal non-experimental method of pedagogical research. 395 learners attending grade 8 and grade 9 were included. They attended Slovenian, Mathematics and English classes in various ability groups.

Table 5: Frequencies (f) and percentages (f%) of pupils according to the levels in basic subjects

Level	Slovenian		Mathematics		English	
	F	f%	F	f%	f	f%
1st level	38	9,6	48	12,2	53	14,4
2nd level	200	50,6	192	48,6	183	46,3
3rd level	157	39,7	155	39,2	159	40,3
All	395	100	395	100	395	100

The most successful learners are included in the 3rd level, the average learners are included in the 2nd level and weak learners attend classes on the 1st level. As it is seen from the table above, the majority of learners attend classes on the 2nd level.

Data were gathered in 5 different urban primary schools in Slovenia by standardised and well-recognised instrument (Thiel, Keller, Binder &Boben, 1999). It consisted of a set of 155 three-level assessment scales, 23 refer to emotional and 16 to social aspect of learning. Instrument is valid (r=0,67) and reliable (α=0,93).

Data were processed by the statistical package SPSS. Numerical values were previously adopted to descriptively expressed levels in accordance with the conditions of the use of parametric testing.

Differences among learners according to the levels were assessed by the use of a variance analysis (general F-test) after the prior test of variance homogeneity (Levene test). When the assumption on variance homogeneity was not justifiable, the Welch approximate method of variance analysis was used.

RESULTS

TOLERANCE TO FAILURE

Table 2: Variance analysis for tolerance to failure

Subject	Level	N	M	S	Equality of variances		Variance analysis	
					F	α	F	α
Slovenian	1st level	38	15,26	2,04	2,560	0,079	3,227	0,041
	2nd level	200	16,04	2,35				
	3rd level	157	16,34	2,57				
Maths	1st level	48	15,14	2,29	1,217	0,282	6,018	0,003
	2nd level	192	16,01	2,35				
	3rd level	155	16,47	2,47				
English	1st level	53	15,45	1,68	3,918	0,021	1,310	0,272
	2nd level	183	16,02	2,34				
	3rd level	159	16,34	2,57				

Assumption of variance homogeneity was met for Slovenian and for Mathematics and but it was not met for English, so we used the Welch approximate method for the last one. According to the result of variance analysis for Slovenian and Mathematics there are statistically significant differences among learners attending different levels, when tolerance to failure is in question. The most tolerant to failure are the learners attending the 3rd level. They cope with their failure well, because they know they can do better and will try to compensate the failure with some success in the future. The least tolerant are the learners in 1st level. They are depressed by the failure. There are no statistically significant differences shown for the case of English.

RESISTANCE TO STRESS

Table 3: Variance analysis for resistance to stress

Subject	Level	n	M	s	Equality of variances		Variance analysis	
					F	α	F	α
Slovenian	1st level	38	13,84	2,88	2,358	0,096	6,043	0,003
	2nd level	200	13,55	2,17				
	3rd level	157	14,46	2,74				
Maths	1st level	48	13,92	2,55	0,538	0,584	1,330	0,266
	2nd level	192	13,75	2,39				
	3rd level	155	14,18	2,64				
English	1st level	53	13,92	2,56	2,525	0,081	1,777	0,170
	2nd level	183	13,70	2,24				
	3rd level	159	14,21	2,76				

The assumption of variance equality was met for all three subjects. The variance analysis shows that statistically significant differences exist only in the case of Slovenian. Results show that the learners attending 2nd level are the least resistant to stress. They probably want to have better results so they work a lot and they are under a lot of stress.

PERCEPTION OF SUCCESS

Table 4: Variance analysis for perception of success

Subject	Level	n	M	s	Equality of variances		Variance analysis	
					F	α	F	α
Slovenian	1st level	38	15,76	2,23	4,101	0,017	27,291	0,000
	2nd level	200	16,57	2,70				
	3rd level	157	18,58	3,19				
Maths	1st level	48	15,50	2,39	1,622	0,199	30,428	0,000
	2nd level	192	16,68	2,87				
	3rd level	155	18,59	2,96				
English	1st level	53	15,52	2,24	5,506	0,004	35,003	0,000
	2nd level	183	16,61	2,66				
	3rd level	159	18,66	3,17				

The assumption of variance homogeneity was met only for Maths and we used variance analysis test. For Slovenian and English Welch approximate method was used. However, in all three cases statistically significant differences among learners attending different levels are shown. Learners attending 3rd level mostly have positive perception of their own success. They think they are good at school and they are satisfied with their grades. Learners attending 1st and 2nd level have more negative perception of success. They are not satisfied with the grades and think they are not doing well at school.

SOCIAL DEPENDENCE IN LEARNING

Table 4: Variance analysis for social dependence in learning

Subject	Level	n	M	S	Equality of variances	Variance analysis

					F	α	F	α
Slovenian	1st level	38	15,74	2,62	2,771	0,064	3,974	0,020
	2nd level	200	17,15	2,81				
	3rd level	157	17,18	3,29				
Maths	1st level	48	16,18	2,79	2,659	0,071	2,315	0,100
	2nd level	192	16,97	2,83				
	3rd level	155	17,37	3,25				
English	1st level	53	16,07	2,67	2,399	0,092	5,578	0,004
	2nd level	183	16,83	2,88				
	3rd level	159	17,55	3,19				

The assumption of variance equality was met in all three cases. Variance analysis test shows that there are statistically significant differences among learners in Slovenian and English and that there is the tendency of difference in Maths. Learners attending 3rd level are more independent in learning. They study because they want to have good results. On the other hand, learning of learners attending 1st and 2nd level depends on their sympathy towards the teacher and the group.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS SCHOOL

Table 5: Variance analysis for attitude towards school

Subject	Level	n	M	s	Equality of variances		Variance analysis	
					F	α	F	α
Slovenian	1st level	38	15,28	2,65	0,825	0,439	4,709	0,010
	2nd level	200	16,16	2,93				
	3rd level	157	16,81	3,16				
Maths	1st level	48	15,32	2,80	0,415	0,660	6,737	0,001
	2nd level	192	16,10	3,08				
	3rd level	155	16,94	2,92				
English	1st level	53	15,31	2,50	1,146	0,319	8,671	0,000
	2nd level	183	16,02	3,01				
	3rd level	159	17,03	3,06				

The assumption of variances equality was met for all the subjects. The variance analysis test shows there are statistically significant differences among learners attending different levels when attitude toward school is concerned. Learners attending the 3rd level have the most positive attitude towards school.

CONCLUSION

By performing empirical research we came to the conclusion, that external differentiation is related to emotional and social aspect of learning. We confirmed differences among learners attending different levels, when the above dimensions are concerned. In some cases differences are statistically significant.

Learners attending 3rd level are the most tolerant to their own failure, the most resistant to stress and they perceive their success positively. Are also independent in

learning and have positive attitude towards school. On the other hand, learners attending 2nd and 1st level are not so tolerant to their own failure, they are less resistant to stress and they think they are unsuccessful. They don't like the school and their preparedness to study depends on their relations with the teachers.

Based on the results, we can say, that teachers teaching 1st and 2nd level learners should pay special attention to emotional and social aspect of learning. They should provide safe and emotionally encouraging learning environment. Learners learn better in emotionally favourable environment where they feel safe to learn, experiment, make mistakes and they actually have opportunity to succeed.

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ROLE OF PARENTS IN KINDERGARTEN

CASE STUDY OF VRTEC TRNOVO

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ABSTRACT

In contemporary times pre-school education in Slovenian context has been exposed to different changes. In the Trnovo kindergarten we have been designing our own pedagogical model, called The Trnovo model of basic learning (TMTU), and have been paying special attention to parents and their role in kindergarten. We are searching for different ways of making interpersonal relationships between parents and kindergarten teachers better as well as manners of helping parents find a better and easier way of monitoring their children, their progress and the time they spend in kindergarten. We are looking for different possibilities to make interpersonal communication between parents and kindergarten teachers effective and improved, but what I am interested in, is what the role of parents is within a kindergarten and how it has changed through the years. My research question was about changing perception of kindergarten and role of parents in kindergarten through years, and the social changes over last two decades. I conducted qualitative interviews, and developed the following categories: preschool teacher as a professional, parent – teacher cooperation, ICT, safety, respect, expectations.

Keywords: social changes in Slovenia, Kindergarten Trnovo, parents, categories, interpersonal relationships

SOCIAL CHANGES IN SLOVENIA IN THE RECENT YEARS

In 1991 Slovenia became an independent country. Before, it was one of the Republics within the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which had a socialist social order. After gaining its independence Slovenia went through the process of transition and in 2004 became a member of European Union. The transition from socialism to democracy and capitalist economic policy plays an important role in this article because the interviewees have often mentioned the differences regarding the conception of kindergarten and life itself thirty or forty years ago, when there was a socialist social order, and the interviewees regarded it as »socialism«. As it is difficult to elaborate on the socio-political situation within these time periods, I can only explain that »today we regard as socialist and communist those countries where The Communist Party was at

the head of state long enough for the proper »consolidation« power to occur, whilst the economy was centrally-planned with a highly strong public sector. In this way, there has never been only one type of socialism, as there has after all never been only one type of capitalism« (Žepič, 2007:3).

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION IN SLOVENIA

"Kindergartens in Slovenia have been reformed over the last decade. Many changes, systemic and content reforms have been implemented and concurrently also professional development was done/.../" (Antič, 2009:23). After the independence of Slovenia preschool education or namely kindergartens became part of Ministry of Education and Sport in 1993, and in 1995 The White Paper on Education was published, which was redesigned in 2011 (Bela knjiga, 2011:2).
Trnovo kindergarten provides »excellent opportunities for implementation of different research projects. It collaborates with institutes, faculties and other institutions, and has professional reputation – it is a place for students' practice, professional exams etc. Within the last three years the emphasis has been put on the development of a unique model – the Trnovo model of basic learning (TMTU)." (Antič, 2009:24). Parents are regarded as partners, as 'representatives', 'mediators', 'liaison officers' in preschool teacher-child, child-parent relationships.

METHODOLOGY

I performed a Qualitative Case Study in selected kindergarten (convenience sample). Research questions were: What perceptions on the role of parents in kindergarten are held by participants in the study? How have perspectives evolved over time/generation span?
Within kindergarten quota sample consisted of 15 participants: 5 professional workers, 5 parents and 5 grandparents. The data collection method was a semi-structured interview, performed within three focus groups: a) only parents and grandparents; b) mixed group, and c) professional workers. I was interested in whether responses will differ among groups. The data analysis method was content analysis with elements of Grounded Theory with coding, categorization, analysis and interpretation.

FINDINGS

The categories are:

- Preschool teacher as a professional.
- Parent – teacher cooperation.
- ICT.
- Safety.
- Respect.
- Expectations.

5.1 TEACHER AS PROFESSIONAL

"When I started, I was not a professional. I was an assistant and dependent on whom I worked with ... I see this as a huge difference. Maybe with education we, assistants, have become more sovereign for ourselves. /.../ I think it has been going better. And if we feel better, which we obviously do, then we also work better. Probably. ..." Professional workers have expressed great satisfaction with the years when they were enabled to experience more training and further education, as they have thus achieved a higher level of professionalization, or namely what we can call a career development. As it was said of teachers by Hall in Javrh (2007:71): »The career - once understood as a series of vertical shifts with steady increases in income, power, status and security - is dead. Yet people will always lead working lives that change in time, offer challenges, growth and learning. Consequently, if we perceive career as a series of lifelong work-related experiences and personal learning cycles, then it will never die«. As stated by Javrh (2007: 72): »It is thus important how teachers perceive their own careers, how much satisfaction and fulfilment they get from them. It is also important how their wider environment evaluates and perceives the significance of their work.« The professional workers are thus satisfied with a higher level of professionalization.

5.2 PARENT-TEACHER COOPERATION

The parent-teacher cooperation has changed through the years. As said by one of the professional workers: »When we lived in socialist times, the Curriculum was based on it. We had Patriotic education; /.../ Everything was already »prescribed« by the state and that was it. Nowadays /.../ parents participate«. Today parents have a greater insight into what happens at kindergarten – not only during the process of introduction of a child into a kindergarten, but also during the year when parents are still invited to certain events, which today are not prescribed by the state, but autonomously by the kindergarten itself. Parents are in this way familiar with the group's work; they have a chance of joint organization of workshops and they also prepare workshops for children themselves. An important factor of cooperation is also the use of ICT which is a regular communication pathway in the Trnovo kindergarten.

5.3 ICT

Years ago working time was different or as explained by one of the professional workers: »In the past parents came home at 2 pm and they had enough time in the afternoon to cuddle children. Now children are more or less left in the hands of the kindergarten«. ICT has thus become one of the important categories in the lives of parents and professional workers. As described by one of the mothers: "... we are informed through new media. When I worked, I had no time. When I brought him in the morning, there were preschool teachers; grandma came to pick him up. I didn't have so much contact with the kindergarten. Now you get information even if you are not present. /.../ And then photos come and he comes to my lab and tells me everything. Also communication is better." Today a child's daily stay in kindergarten is legally limited to nine hours, which represents a major part of a child's whole day, and in this manner ICT is of great help to parents in experiencing their child, whilst at the same time being one of the assignments of professional workers. As said by Frankl in Lukas: »When is the right moment for taking a photo of a small child? Not when he/she notices he/she is watched but at the moment when he/she forgets the environment, excludes

photographers and him/herself, when he/she is completely devoted to the game, lost in the game; then it is the right moment.«

5.4 SAFETY

"Before she came, her husband had already furiously come to the kindergarten and I got scared immensely because I was convinced he was going to hit me. That it was my fault the girl got injured ... I don't know. She broke her wrist. It was ... For the first time I was scared of a parent because he threatened me ..." said one of the professional workers. So what has happened to safety? Furedi (2002:47) explains: »What has changed is the society's perception of children's resilience. Physical injury to children is no longer accepted as a fact of growing up." The standards of safety are rising, as agreed by parents as well as professional workers. However, we must not forget that »the attempt to construct an injury-free childhood can only inhibit children's development. Societies that still believe in children's resilience understand that the risk of a child injuring himself is worth taking in order to allow him the freedom to explore the environment« (Furedi 2002: 48). Nevertheless, even if the higher safety standard is realized, we must not forget that not everything can be prevented.

5.5 RESPECT

"They are different generation from us, we grew old here ... Life is also different, not only age." This is a thought, stated by a professional worker, while discussing experiencing the changes in parents and their conception of professional workers. "Maybe this profession or we do not have so much anymore ... Perhaps we were valued more in the past. We had a better role – with parents and children ... Now some still have it – the respect – but some not. And this is radiated through children." Penelope Leach (1994: 115) explains: "Even allowing for the historical fact that every generation considers the one that follows it worse behaved than itself, it does seem that parents are worrying and working at discipline yet signally failing - in their own eyes and the eyes of others- to install it." Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2006: 120) elaborate on the changes in experiencing parenthood: "Adults use teenagers and children as 'projection screen of their sublimated and utopian desires'." As stated by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2006), the perception of a child by the parents has changed. If children in the previous centuries had especially the economic benefits, they today offer »psychological benefits«. After all, there has also been a change in the perception of education as the further developmental and educational pathway of a child. Kenway and Bullen (2001:83) explain: »Adults use entertainment to sell education to children." Question can be raised what is then the treatment of pedagogical workers like if already knowledge is sold through entertainment, and how has then the perception of teachers through the eyes of parents been changing.

5.6 EXPECTATIONS

There is a big difference in expectations of parents. »In the past children were brought to the kindergarten mostly so as they were left there, that parents could go to work. They weren't interested in what sort of program we offered, no they weren't. All that mattered was that children were fed and well-slept (professional worker)« Today parents want to know what their child learned because the pressure in schools for knowledge is strong, the selection is tough. »You see, when a child starts school,

everything has to be 'top'. A child who comes second at something is really nobody. The first one was the best one. The silver one is almost ... I think times have changed and that we are above all scared. Of parents. And then the expectations for a child to be left with as much information as possible, to know as much as he can, are surely greater (professional workers)«. One of the mothers says: "I used to see play and games in kindergarten. Now, when my child comes home, I expect new knowledge: he talks all the time, but when I ask what they did, he says they played". However, despite ever greater pressure parents and professional workers are subjected to, »indeed attempts to teach them by making them do anything are pretty well doomed: as every experienced parent or a play leader knows, you have to make them want to, because while early childhood knows no difference between play and learning, it often makes an important distinction between play and lessons." (Leach 1994:138).

CONCLUSION: UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN

"I remember that as a child if I did something wrong, I looked at a watch and said: »Dad will come". The teacher looked at me and said: »I will tell your dad everything". And she did; I don't know how, what, but she did. Here he comes. I ran home, he was furious, he beat me so badly I still remember what I did. It used to be like that, it was different. If you did something, it was shameful. 'What will others say? O, how embarrassing ...' Well, that is it. I did it and my father heard it. And I was beaten at home. Normally. And I was ashamed of myself, simply saying, to have done it. When I met my partner, then I started to understand ... and I started to like myself". All that has happened is that this woman showed her naked buttocks in the kindergarten over thirty years ago. Things have changed through the years, so say the interviewees, both parents and professional workers, and they have changed for the better, to something different. There have been changes in the perception of a child's development, in general social norms and values; many things have changed. Our mission, however, remains: we must prevent such things and must support a child in his development, perception, whilst not forgetting the parents. Not only the socio-political situation has changed, we all have.

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HUMOUR IN ENGLISH CLASSES

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ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on the role of humour in the context of teaching English as a foreign language. Humour significantly influences students´ motivation but can also be instructive, since it aids in the acquisition of vocabulary and grammar, thereby helping students recognise linguistic features as outlined in a lighter note.

Special attention is paid to jokes based on polysemy, homonymy and homophony and the cognitive processes that make such jokes possible. The paper addresses the issue of polysemic/homonymic/homophonic jokes from a cognitivist perspective. Cognitive science understands homonymy as a result of polysemy, which is in turn perceived as an issue of categorisation. Metaphorical extensions of a core word within a category act like multiple, polysemic meanings of the core word. Models of categorisation including Rosch´ s prototype model (1978), Lakoff´ s radial model (1990) and Langacker´ s network model (2002) of categorisation serve as the bases for studying the functioning of jokes based on polysemy/homonymy/homophony. The study refers to Nerlich, Todd and Clarke´ s empirical study of the semantic development of children in connection with the use of polysemes, homonyms and homophones in jokes and riddles (1998).

The initial hypothesis that humour based on polysemy and homonymy relies on the specificities of the language studied has proven itself correct. Humour based on homophony is characteristic for English humour, but not for Croatian. The main outcome of the study was the finding that differences in conceptualisation result in a different use of polysemes and homonyms in English and Croatian jokes, while similar conceptualisation leads to a similar use of polysemes and homonyms in humour. Jokes based on polysemy, homonymy and homophony contribute to the establishment of a more relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere in class.

Key words: humour, homonymy, polysemy, motivation, cognitive processes

1 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HUMOUR IN CLASS

Humour is an important component of the teaching process. It contributes to establishing a more relaxed atmosphere in class, regardless of the students´ age. However, research has indicated that a positive learning environment is particularly important for young learners (Moon, 2005: 15). It is, as the methodologist Jayne Moon pointed out, one of the most important motivating factors in the context of learning a

foreign language at an early age. The other factors include the teacher, teaching methods and appropriate learning materials (Moon, 2005: 16).

The sociologist Miloš Ilić names five crucial social and cultural functions of humour (Ilić, 1989: 255):

1) It serves as a medium of decreasing tension in society and as a means of establishing a psychological balance between the ″serious″ and ″non-serious″ parts of life;
2) It functions as a medium which aids communication in society;
3) It helps to identify and remove weaknesses that affect society;
4) It is an important medium of entertainment and leisure;
5) It helps individuals to protect themselves against social isolation.

Humour is, claims the Croatian didactician Milan Matijević, not used enough in Croatian classrooms. There is no straightforward answer why this is the case, however, there is a general feeling amongst Croatian teachers that humour might ″distract″ students from performing ″more serious″ tasks in class (Matijević, 1994: 27).

In further text I intend to focus on jokes based on polysemy and homonymy in English and Croatian. A cross-semantic overview will outline the specificities of the two languages as well as the importance of these jokes for learning a foreign language.

2 POLYSEMY AND HOMONYMY

According to the semanticist Frank R. Palmer, *polysemy* is the existence of a set of meanings for the same word, whereas *homonymy* is the existence of several words with the same shape (Palmer, 1995: 101). Cognitive scientists emphasise the connectedness between different meanings of the same polysemic word. Thus Paul D. Deane asserts that the different meanings of the same polysemic words are usually related and that their common origin can be experimentally documented (Deane, 1988: 325). The cognitive linguist Barbara Lewandowska – Tomaszczkyk points out that the main criterion for determining whether a word is polysemic or homonymic is the *historic relatedness* between identical forms of words. Identical forms with historically related meanings are considered to be *polysemic*, while words that are identical in form due to a historical reason but whose meanings are etymologically unrelated are considered to be *homonymic* (Lewandowska – Tomaszczkyk in Geeraerts and Cuyckens, 2007: 142).

Dictionaries usually provide information on the polysemic/homonymic character of entries. In this manner, words of identical form but of different origin are treated as homonymous by dictionary writers and are, accordingly, given separate entries in dictionaries. On the other hand, if it is known that identical forms of words have one origin, they are considered to be polysemic and are given a single entry in the dictionary (Palmer, 1995: 102). Some words may appear, as pointed out by Palmer, to have unrelated meanings despite the fact they historically have the same origin. These include *pupil* (=student) and the *pupil* of the eye, or the *sole* (of a shoe) and the fish *sole* (Palmer, 1995: 102). Contrary to the words that share origin despite apparently

unrelated meanings, there are words which we tend to connect in spite of the lack of historical proof. Thus we tend to perceive the *ear* of the body and the *ear* of corn as polysemes, although etymologists claim that they do not have the same origin and therefore should be treated as homonyms. Palmer further argues that we are led to see an etymological relation between the ear of the body and the ear of corn because we are influenced by similar examples of the *foot* as a part of the body and the *foot* of a bed/mountain or the *hands* and *face* (parts of the body) and *hands* and *face* of a clock (Palmer, 1995: 102). The examples of the *hands* and *face* of a clock or *the foot* of a bed/mountain function as metaphorical transfers of the *hands, face* and the *foot* onto the body. Cognitive scientists understand these transformations as extensions of the central meaning of words and treat them as instances of polysemy (Lewandowska – Tomaszczyk in Geeraerts and Cuyckens, 2007:140).

3 HOMOPHONY

Homophones arise when words share the same pronunciation, but differ in spelling; for example, *sight* and *site*, and *court* and *caught* are spelt differently, but pronounced in the same way (Palmer, 1995: 101). However, homophones do not necessarily originate from different sources. Palmer provides the examples of historically related words *mettle* and *metal* and *flour* and *flower* (1995: 103).

4.1 HOMOPHONY IN ENGLISH AND CROATIAN JOKES

Homophony is quite common in English jokes since it includes the element of surprise. Unrelated areas of life are brought together by homophony, thereby achieving a humorous effect based on ambiguity:

***Customer**: Waiter, what is the thing that I´m eating?*
***Waiter**: It´s **bean** soup, Sir.*
Customer: *I don´t want to know what it´s **been**, I want to know what it is now.*

The English language abounds in homophones and many jokes are based on humour that originates from an identical pronunciation but different spelling of individual words. Croatian jokes are not based on homonymy due to the fact that the main orthographic rule of the Croatian standard language is "Write as you speak.". Due to this, there is no difference between the spelling and pronunciation of words (apart from examples that result from consonantal changes related to word formation), as each letter represents solely one sound (phoneme).

Prior to drawing parallels between jokes based on polysemy and homonymy in English and Croatian, we shall briefly refer to the problem of the semantic development of children in the context of understanding, telling and creating jokes based on polysemy and homonymy.

5 THE FUNCTION OF JOKES BASED ON POLYSEMY AND HOMONYMY IN THE SEMANTIC DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN

In their article *The Function of Polysemous Jokes and Riddles in Semantic Development,* the cognitive psychologists Brigitte Nerlich, Zazie Todd and David D. Clarke give an overview of the developmental stages of children aged 3 to 6.5 in the context of understanding, telling and creating jokes and riddles based on polysemy and homonymy and, to a lesser extent, on homophony. The reasearch is based on the case study of Nerlich and Clarke´s six-and-a-half-year–old son Matthew.

5.1 STAGES OF SEMANTIC DEVELOPMENT

The authors claim that children gradually acquire these abilities through four stages: 1) the development of a taste for (arbitrary or random) incongruities (around age 3), 2) the acquisition of the bipartite structure of a joke/riddle (approximately 4 years of age), 3) filling jokes with more acceptable (meaningful) incongruities (around age 6) and 4) the ability to understand, tell and create jokes based on multiple meanings, which children acquire at the age 7+ (Nerlich, Todd, Clarke, 1998: 346).

A typical instance of humour based on polysemy for the first stage of development is the situation where one cartoon character addresses another by saying: ˝Give me a hand˝, upon which the second character throws his hand to the first character (Nerlich, Todd and Clarke, 1998:346). The second stage is characterised by a developing awareness of polysemy. Polysemous jokes are still based on arbitrary incongruities (Nerlich, Todd and Clarke, 1998: 347):

A: *What is on top of a fire engine?*
B: *A tree stump!*

In the third phase jokes become more sophisticated as they are based on meaningful incongruities (ex. *Why did the teacher wear sun-glasses? – Because her class was so* ***bright***.). At stage four children freely resort to polysemy in their utterances (After been reprimanded for swearing, Matthew answered: *I never swear, Mummy, unless it´s in the sense of I promise*.).

5.2 POLYSEMY AND HOMONYMY AS SEEN BY COGNITIVE SCIENCE

Nerlich, Todd and Clarke differentiate between three types of semantic jokes: jokes playing with *polysemes*, jokes playing with *homonyms* and jokes playing with *homophones* (Nerlich, Todd and Clarke, 1997: 352). The authors warn that in many cases it is difficult to determine whether a joke is based on polysemy or homonymy. Thus, claim the authors, most people do not recognise a metonymic link in the following joke: *Why do cows wear bells?- Because their horns don´t work* (Nerlich, Todd and Clarke, 1998: 353). While modern speakers, assert the authors, fail to notice the etymological link between *horn* as the outgrowth from the head of an animal and *horn* as a musical instrument, they do tend to establish a metaphorical link between *ear* as a part of the body and *ear* of corn (Nerlich, Todd and Clarke, 1998: 352) despite the fact that these meanings originate from diverse sources, i.e. German *Ohr* and *Ähre*. Cognitive science does not draw a strict line between polysemy and homonymy since it perceives homonymy as ˝pointing to the outer limits of polysemy˝ (Nerlich, Todd and Clarke, 1998: 351).

6 POLYSEMY AND HOMONYMY: A CROSS – SEMANTIC VARIATION

As stated earlier, jokes based on polysemy and homonymy are equally widespread in English and Croatian, whereas jokes based on homophony are typical for English but not Croatian. The differences in polysemous jokes are mostly based on different conceptualisations, which will be illustrated in the following example:

Obraća se jedna plavuša drugoj: Još mogu shvatiti kako roda može donijeti dijete, ali nikako ne mogu shvatiti kako pauk može odnijeti automobil.(Eng. *A blonde is addressing another blonde: I can just about understand how a stork could carry a baby, but it's beyond my imagination how a towing vehicle (pauk) could tow away a car*).

The failure of English speakers to understand this joke lies in the different conceptualisation of the towing vehicle: in Croatian the word with a core meaning, *pauk* (meaning *spider*) obtains, through metaphorical transfers, another meaning, the *towing vehicle*. The Croats, likewise, come accross two different meanings of the word *horn* in the English joke. Croatian, unlike English, has two different words for *horn*: *rog* in the sense of an outgrowth from the head of an animal and *truba* in the sense of a musical instrument.

However, there are many cases of similarities in conceptualisation. Thus time is conceptualised as a moving agent and is attributed with a capability to fly:

Why did the blonde throw her watch? - To see how time flies.

To sum up, the main reasons for semantic variation between jokes in English and Croatian lie in differing conceptualisations of words in jokes based on polysemy/homonymy and in differing relations between spelling and pronunciation in jokes based on homophony.

7 BENEFITS OF HUMOUR BASED ON POLYSEMY/HOMONYMY

Apart from establishing a good atmosphere in class, these jokes bring multiple benefits to students. Humour can be utilized to its fullest potential if students feel free to tell jokes and laugh at other people´ s jokes. Learning in a less formal environment makes them feel relaxed and aids foreign language acquisition. Moreover, humour encourages creativity amongst students since they are able to play with the language.

Instructional benefits are immense. The teacher can resort to humour when introducing new vocabulary. Thus the joke *Why did the crab get arrested? – Because she was pinching things* can introduce a metaphorical meaning of the verb *pinch* meaning *steal*. Grammatical categories can also be introduced or revised. A few ideas for warm – up activities when introducing/revising grammatical categories are provided:

adverbs and adjectives *: I wouldn´t say she´s pretty and I wouldn´t say she´s ugly. I´d say she´s pretty ugly.*

(in)transitive verbs: *Somebody has got a dog with no nose. – How does it smell? - Horrible.*

The Present Perfect tense: *Waiter, what is it that I´m eating? – It´s bean soup, Sir. – I´m not asking what it´s been, I want to know what it is now.*

CONCLUSION

Humour is a very important factor in the context of learning a foreign language, especially at an early age. Many jokes in both English and Croatian are based on polysemy and homonymy, while homophony is specific for English humour. Homonymy is not strictly divided from polysemy by cognitive scientists, who view metaphorical meanings of a word as extensions of the central meaning of the word. A cross–semantic comparison of English and Croatian jokes based on polysemy and homonymy indicates that the differences arise in the conceptualisation of a referent, while jokes based on homophony in English outline the specific relation between words that are pronounced in the same way but spelt differently. There are also examples of similar conceptualizations in English and Croatian. The benefits of introducing humour based on polysemy, homonymy and homophony in English classes are numerous and include establishing a relaxed atmosphere in class, introducing new lexical and grammatical categories and developing oral and written skills, to name only a few.

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CREATIVITY THROUGH TIME – EVOLUTIVE RETROSPECTIVE OF THE CONCEPT

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ABSTRACT

Although the study of creativity goes back to the beginning of the XXth century, with authors such as Vygotsky approaching the theme, only in recent years it has been assumed as a prominent subject in the scientific realm. For this progress greatly contributed the studies of Torrance, Mednick, Czsikszentmihalyi, Gardner and Sternberg, who became involved in the production of theoretical frameworks and in the construction of instruments that allow the assessment of a construct that holds as much of complexity as of multidimensionality. This diversity, although constituting one of the most challenging and enriching aspects of creativity, has caused a counterproductive effect at the scientific investigation level, given the difficulty of finding a widely accepted conception by the scientific community. Therefore, we can observe the production of heterogeneous assessment tools that evaluate creativity from manifold perspectives. Consequently we can find instruments that evaluate the process of creativity as divergent thinking (Almeida & Ribeiro, 1992; Guilford, 1958; Torrance, 1966), as the ability to find problems (Getzels & Czsikszentmihalyi, 1976; Sternberg, 1988), as a personality feature, interest and attitude (Covington, 1966; Urban & Gellen, 1995), as a creative product (Amabile, 1983; Archambault & Gubbin, 1980; Reis & Renzulli, 1991; Westberg, 1990), as a self-evaluatable aspect (Colangelo et al. 1992; O'Neil, Abedi &Spielberger, 1994; Richards et al., 1988), and also as a structural element of the lifelong cycle (Schaefer, 197; Amabile, 1989).
Exploring the intricacies of creativity we draw an evolutive review of the concept and construct, aiming to establish a sound theoretical base, which will allow a deeper exploration of creativity. Hence, we hope to encourage future research, highlighting the reflexes that a critical and profound understanding of creativity can produce in significant and diverse areas of human psychological functioning and society in general.

Key words: Creativity, evolutive review

INTRODUCTION

In a society that is constantly changing, creativity may prove to be a critical tool for success. If we consider that, since childhood, the human psychological subject is confronted with the necessity of solving problems, being compelled to produce a continuous flow of original ideas, to deal with daily changes and constantly resorting to

creative strategies for problem solving, one understands the pertinence that this concept may assume, as well as the influence that its profound understanding may exert, both at the individual and societal levels.
Nevertheless the unanimous acceptance of the importance of creativity for the human psychological development, it continues to be a construct that escapes a consensual definition. Therefore, we attempted some clarification searching for the etymological origins of the concept of creativity where creativity is mentioned as a derivative from the Latin *creare* (meaning to give existence). It was initially linked to the divine figure, which justified that for centuries it had been replaced by the term imagination, fostering the ambiguity that still tends to be associated with both concepts. Moreover, this perspective fed, at the same time that legitimized, a conception of creativity as something that comes from nothing, although, in our opinion, creativity is submerged in contexts, emerging from precedent human creations.

EVOLUTIVE REVIEW

In this sense, an evolutive review of the concept, grounded upon the contributions of Csikszentmihalyi (1999), Gardner (1996), Kegan (1982), Piaget (1945), Sternberg and Lubart (1988, 1991) and Vygotsky (1917, 1930), seems to be a reasonable pathway towards the comprehension of the relevance of the context in creativity.
Based on the concept of creativity as a reflection of any human act that creates something new, regardless of what is created is a physical object or an emotional or mental construct that lives within the person who created it and is known only by him/her, Vygotsky (1930), faces creativity as a superior psychological process that stands for its complexity and unique capability to conduct the human psychological subject to the elaboration of new and intricate structures, starting from the combination of pre-existing elements. The dialectical relationship between imagination and creativity is shown in the conception of a developmental pathway that results from the communication between logical thinking and imaginary thought, where the individual moves towards a progressively more differentiated organization of the mind.
Consistent with its cutting edge position, Vygotsky (1930) already alluded to the influence of context on creativity, highlighting the crucial need for a challenging environment, which would lead the individual to action and reflection, justifying the need to be creative. Above all, he advanced with the influence of social and cultural factors, asserting that any creative individual is a product of his/her time and context, reinforcing that, in order for any invention or scientific discovery to reveal, psychological and material conditions have to be assembled in advance. Additionally, Vygotsky (1917) allows us to equate the relationship between creativity and learning, centered in the zone of proximal development. This notion of development, basic and distinctive to the theoretical perspectives hitherto made, enables us to draw significant conclusions about the interrelationship between creativity and education, since it is through social interaction with other individuals (that possess a more extensive and diverse experience) that the learning process will progress.
From another perspective, Piaget (1945) presents a developmental theory where the place of imagination (and subsequently creativity) is in the realm of impossible, being crucial to reach a superior cognitive and psychological functioning. Eventually, it'll be trough imagination that the range of possibilities opens up before the individual, being that capacity directly proportional to the formal intelligence level achieved.

Consequently, creativity has the power to open to the subject horizons up till then unknown, which, combined with the intellectual functioning will enhance a superior cognitive development. Accordingly, it is impossible to omit the importance that education can play in developing creativity, since for Piaget (1945) it's a key moment in development, donating education a major role in the free expression of creative thought.
Yet in the developmental theories domain, Kegan (1982) elaborated a constructive-developmental model where the self integrates cognition and emotion, underlining the effect of a culture of embeddedness on the individual continuous process of meaning making. Approaching creativity as a construct deeply associated with a qualitatively more complex functioning he considers that the context will determine the majority of creative manifestations, since it is the context that possesses the ability to make creativity visible, as well as the capacity to recognize creativity, which will function as a motivational factor, determinant for its evolution. In short, this neo-Piagetian vision of development permits us to look creativity with a lens more suited to its complexities, imposing a conceptual matrix able to integrate them into the errant path of human development without losing its internal consistency and coherence.
Continuing to trace out the theoretical contributions to the study of creativity in psychology, the functionalist perspectives express the desire to find an explanation, endemically quantitative, to the cognitive process of creation. Guilford (1950) first, and Torrance (1975) after, highlighted the definition of creativity as a process of problem solving, discerned from creative imagination (that was seen as a more or less unconscious process of creating imaginary works). Fully involved in the study of intelligence, Guilford (1967) builds the structural model of intelligence, emphasizing the dominance of divergent thinking in creativity, seen as a reflection of fluency, flexibility, originality and realization capacity of the subject. Continuing the legacy of Guilford (1967), Torrance (1975) developed the most widely used test of creativity: Torrance Test of Creative Thinking. Nonetheless, this and other functionalist tests reflect an excessive valuation of quantity over quality of creative production, which, in our view, is constituted as something too crucial to be relegated to the background.
Exploring now the psychoanalytic perspectives of creativity, Mednick (1962) emerges as one of the most important contemporary authors. Leaning over the understanding of the creative process, he sees it as something that is expressed by the arrangement of associative elements into new combinations. In this light, he built the Remote Associations Test, whose basic theoretical foundation is that creative thinking is derived from pre-existing information from which there will be established multiple associations, whose quality will be directly proportional to the distance of the elements involved. Mednick (1962) believes that the subject's degree of knowledge and access to information will be key factors in its associative ability, as well as fluency, cognitive styles and the type of issue raised.
Advancing to the exploration of the cognitive perspectives we can appreciate the contributions of authors like Gardner (1996), Sternberg and Lubart (1991), and, Csikszentmihalyi (1999), who strove to define consistent theoretical models where creativity is identified as a key element of human development.
Approaching Gardner's (1996) conception we can observe how clearly he states the dialectical relationship between creativity and intelligence, considering both at the same level of importance, in what human development is concerned. Hence, Gardner (1996) promotes a systematic reading of the creative phenomenon based on the assertion that "*creativity goes beyond the cognitive-psychological boundaries*" (Gardner, 1988, p.305), so that its understanding can only be achieved recognizing the influences of such factors

as personality, motivation, individual style, but also the social and cultural context in which it manifests.
On the other hand, Sternberg & Lubart (1991) addressed creativity establishing a conceptual parallel with the notion of investment, considering that creative thinkers are like good investors: they sell high and buy low. Thus, profoundly concerned with separating creativity and intelligence and reflecting the cognitivist paradigm in which they are placed, they defend creativity results from the combination of: intellectual abilities, knowledge, styles of thinking, personality, motivation and environment. Nevertheless, creativity is hypothesized to involve more than a simple sum of a person's level, on each component.
More recently, Csikszentmihalyi (1999), developed a systems perspective for creativity, characterized by embracing individual and social systems, considering creativity as a social and cultural event rather than as an exclusively psychological phenomenon. In this sense he defines three systems: the domain (personified by culture), the field (reflecting society), and the individual (influenced by its personal background), concluding that creativity is directly influenced by culture and society. In summary, the optimal operation of the systems will be achieved when the creative subject, reconciling all the differences between systems and internalizing them into their operating mechanisms and structures, is able to overcome the barriers of intra-individual cognitive functioning towards the social environment, obtaining recognition and support from peers. Therefore, according to this perspective, creativity is as multidimensional and complex phenomenon that surpasses the limits of individual talent and ability. The author accentuates that, ultimately, *"is the community and not the individual who makes creativity manifest itself"*(Csikszentmihalyi, 1999, p. 333).

Summarizing, all the different theoretical conceptions presented before underline the difficulty in defining creativity and, consequently, in achieving a coherent and unique view of creativity, a complex and multidimensional construct. Yet, the role of the context seems to be consensual amongst the authors. Hence, we believe, education and creativity play a profound and intricate relation that cannot be overlooked.

As a result of these thoughts we are led to question how important is creativity for the individual and for contemporary societies?
If we consider that, nowadays, society lives under the technicality patronage, openly promoting innovation and entrepreneurship as panaceas for success, we cannot but consider the inevitable contribution that creativity can give. Otherwise, how else can the psychological human subject face the challenges of modern society, constantly impelling him towards novelty? Not seldom, enforced novelty, a de-historicized mode of an utilitarian use of innovation, in the business and political discourses, supported upon a logic of programmed obsolescence?
Eventually, after the crusades of the defenders of the human capital theory, of the bet on lifelong training, of the pressures for productivity and competitiveness, creativity seems to be a last hope for the rhetoric economicist discourses of today. Almost as if it was the only tool that can ensure triumph against all odds in the competitive world we live in, creativity corrupts itself as value deteriorates as a concept and tends to dissociate itself from intra and interpersonal psychological dynamics theoretically founded and methodologically enforced. Above all, we have witnessed profound social changes that may be pushing the current socio-cultural-economic model to the abyss, as a reflection of his inability to continue to provide credible answers to the challenges of the modern

world. So it seems legit to ask at what cost has creativity, apparently, become the last stronghold of survival?

CONCLUSION

Considering that creativity has become the *pivot* of a belief system that claims spontaneity and that underlines the asphyxiating action of school (Hameline, 1973), it appears unavoidable to reflect about creativity and education. Taking into account the fact that creativity should be envisaged as a continuous exercise into the future, we face an era in which education experiences the need to reformulate its paradigms, policies, politics, culture and pedagogical practices.
Therefore, the creative reconstructive exploration strategies appear as a viable alternative towards the promotion of the diversity and complexity of the human psychological subject as developing in context.

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CLASSROOM ATMOSPHERE: FROM LITERATURE TO RECIPROCITY

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ABSTRACT

Classroom atmosphere is one of the most important socio-emotional aspects of teaching. As a teacher of Slovene language and literature at a vocational upper-secondary school I mostly experience positive atmosphere when teaching literary texts. This was the reason why I have decided to present and focus on the theoretical as well as empirical aspects of teaching literature, referring to the Slovene pedagogue Stanko Gogala, who defined the term 'emotional experience'. I also defined the atmosphere through Buber's relationship philosophy and presented some of the contemporary findings about the authentic relationship leading to reciprocity. In the empirical part, I presented the students' experience regarding the discussion of literary texts as part of Slovene lessons. All of the necessary information had been obtained by means of a survey conducted with students at the school I teach at. Students were given questionnaires with three sets of open format questions and the focus was on their views, opinions and emotional responses to literature and the teaching of literature. In this paper, I listed all of the questionnaire questions and also provided examples of the most common as well as outstanding answers given by students. An analysis of the questionnaires and the findings based on it, have revealed students are satisfied, which can mostly be attributed to a relaxed atmosphere and mutual respect in the classroom. They experience lessons in a relaxed manner and with joyous spontaneity, which confirmed my starting hypothesis about the students feeling the same kind of atmosphere as myself.

Key words: reciprocity, pedagogy of personality, relationship, emotional experience of literature, atmosphere

PRESENTATION

I am a teacher of Slovene literature and language at a vocational upper-secondary school. I have always been aware of the significance of teachers – I see them moderators, as the ones who give guidance. What has since the beginning been a source of astonishment, pleasure and satisfaction for me is a special kind of atmosphere created whenever literary texts are discussed. A special part of literature lessons is interpretative reading, which is quite often the most special moment of a lesson. It is not uncommon for students to give a round of applause, but they usually refuse to read themselves. I have noticed that being in touch with interpretative readings maintains an open model of thinking[40].

CLASSROOM ATMOSPHERE

Classroom atmosphere is built gradually, so in their final year more perceptive students really beam with joy and anticipation. This can be explained by using the term reciprocity, which encompasses mutual understanding, affirmation, acceptance of one's differences, human benevolence and genuine relationships. It does not take long for students to feel that they can contribute their share either. In four years, their literary-interpretative experience and life-experiential sensibility evolve and improve. I can notice progress being made regarding their comprehension and evaluation of literary texts, and »something more«, which is achieved through literature: a genuine connection, a relationship which gives them certainty and the freedom to be different and yet accepted.

I would like to make a connection to the concept of *experience*, which Stanko Gogala considers to be one of the core pedagogic concepts. He considers experience to be the basis of every true education of forming one's ability of personal experience. He gives a definition of what he understands as the concept of experience: »'To experience something' is not the same as 'to have an experience of something' (...).Education is not about (...) passing on something spiritual, but about guiding students' experiences, the awakening of their souls ... the word 'soul' is not merely a literary term, it has its own material sense, which is of great importance pedagogy-wise; human soul is where educational influences end and the educational relation truly is a connection 'between one soul[41] and another'.« (*Introduction to Pedagogy*)[42]

LITERATURE AS ART

This is exactly what happens during literature lessons: we touch upon emotions, experiences; we think about the causes, consequences and questions about the meaning.

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[40] »Belles-lettres maintains an open model of thinking, it expands on metaphysical and existential questions in a primal manner, and when looking for answers to these questions, leaves them unanswered.« P. Kovačič Peršin: *O dihotomični naravi ljubezni*, from: R. Kroflič, P. Kovačič Peršin, V. Šav: *Etos sodobnega bivanja*, p. 22.

[41] **The core of the Slovene word for atmosphere (i.e. vzdušje) is derived from the word 'duša', which stands for 'soul'.**

[42] R. Kroflič: *Osebnostna pedagogika prof. dr. Stanka Gogala*, from: S. Gogala: *Izbrani spisi*, 2005, p. 9.

I believe art is a privileged way to an individual, their inner being, their emotions, their soul. Emotions triggered by a work of art are difficult to define, however, most commonly they are about being amazed and touched - in the sense of 'to be stirred, moved' inside oneself; emotions, perceptions and meanings ... all of it in its entirety occurs in the soul.[43] It is therefore a challenge for every teacher to ask themselves what the pedagogical value of such artistic experience is. What meaning is it trying to convey? How to use it and transfer it to everyday work? A partial answer might be the following: »This 'enthralling and touching' encounter with what a work of art represents can help us become 'more attentive to one another', to life, to become the persons who are capable of expressing respect and even more so admiration.«[44] If amazement and admiration are elements of aesthetics, one could say that »true beauty can be discovered in what is real, in what touches the essence of everything, the essence of life and relationships«.[45] Beauty is thus present in the work of art created by an artist as well as in the ability of a recipient to accept it and to recreate it. A work of art triggers the recipient to feel 'com-passion' (com-passione in Italian) and 'moves' him/her towards openness[46], which is readiness to engage in a dialogue, to establish a genuine connection. Buber's philosophy is likewise based on the belief that a person does not get constituted and human unless there is a relationship, an encounter, reciprocity, a genuine dialogue. According to Buber[47], in a pure relationship man receives something not previously had and is aware that it has happened. »The person does not receive 'content', but presence, presence as strength«[48]. This includes three inseparable things: »comprehensive fullness of actual reciprocity, acceptance, connection«, »an unutterable confirmation of the sense that no thing can be without meaning« and the belief that this meaning »is not the meaning of some 'other' life, but our own, not some 'world beyond our world', but the world we live in«.[49] Man does not know how to define or explain this meaning, he can however actualize it, express it only »with the uniqueness of his being and in the uniqueness of his life«.[50]

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

A survey on Slovene lessons was conducted in two Year 2 and 4 classes in the school year 2007/08 (50 questionnaires) and in two Year 4 classes in the school year 2010/11 (47 questionnaires).
Students were given nine open format questions – the aim was for them to express their opinions as independently and freely as possible.
The questionnaire included three sets of questions, which are presented below. Some of students' answers are also given – the most frequent ones are marked with * and the outstanding/unique ones with **.

a) Questions about being in contact with literature:

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[43] A. Scattolini, *Le emozioni attraverso l'arte*, from: M. Cunico: *Educare alle emozioni*, p. 120.
[44] Ibid., p. 121.
[45] Ibid., p. 123.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Andrej Ule: *Oseba in bitje v dialogiki Martina Bubra*, from: *Personalizem in odmevi na Slovenskem*, Društvo 2000, Ljubljana 1998, p. 89.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid., p. 90.
[50] Ibid.

1. **What does being in contact with literature mean to you?** »a different view of the world«*, »cultural awareness and worldliness«*;

2. **What is the difference between thinking about a text on your own and as a group activity during a lesson?** »together we have a broader perspective«*, »together we see things we otherwise wouldn't«*;

3. **What has literature taught you?** »that we all have very different opinions and that none of them are wrong«**, »literature can be very interesting if explained by someone who does it with joy «*;

b) Questions about participating in lessons and the work method used:

4. **In what way have you participated in discussions of literary works? /;**

5. **What methods have you been most drawn to?** »our teacher really putting herself into reading«*, »use of computers«*, »worksheets«*;

6. **Were you always able to give your opinion about the text?** »yes«*;

c) Questions about the overall impression:

7. **What did you like most about Slovene lessons?** »relaxed atmosphere«*, »the atmosphere and having a correct attitude towards literature«**, »talking«*;

8. **What did you like least? /;**

9. **What do you think you will remember most?** »all of it, Slovene lessons have been something special«*, »our teacher's positive thinking«*, »that we are all changing, we get older and we participate more«**.

The selected answers confirm what I experience during literary discussions myself: an 'encounter' with the other takes place - with the literary content, and then a dialogue emerges through it, by means of which we 'enter' a literary and simultaneously a life reality. Students experience the encounter with literature as an encounter with both another world and the reality they live and thus get in touch with themselves and their peers.

HOW TO VIEW RECIPROCITY

There are several types of relationships. »The relationship which is based on reciprocity represents a paradigm and a relationship model that is very specific. In this relationship both interaction participants see the other one not only as »the other one being different «, but also as »originating from me« (an essential foundation for one's own expression and self-realization). In this sense the other person »enables me to be«, contributes to my exploiting my full potential and »reveals« what I am and what I can become. I am therefore as part of this mutual dynamic »attentive« to the other person, I accept and support him (or her) in his differences and the other adopts the same kind of attitude (...)«[51].

On the other hand, reciprocity-related dynamic is one which takes into account full 'freedom' of the other person, who is thus able to make a perfectly legitimate decision not to respond fully or to respond with a different kind of availability than expressed by us. And this is where a weakness of the reciprocity relationship lies (also the case of any other kind of relationship). »When we open up to a relationship with another person, we get exposed to a risk of the same kind that is involved in 'a bet' (fear of losing). We may or may not accept the response, as a result of which this *uncertainty* awakens the vulnerability and fears inside of us, and constantly exposes us to new conflict situations

[51] Pietro A. Cavaleri, *Vivere con l'altro per una cultura della relazione*, pp. 22-23.

with the other person. If we choose to be exposed to this 'risk', we may be able to turn this uncertainty into a fertile and life value.«[52]
In the context of reciprocity one needs to know that the life disposition of *"being a gift"*[53] is a disposition which enables one to recognize another person as the one to give him/her the meaning of their own existence. What is consequently expected in this context is »the type of person, »*homo reciprocus*«, i.e. a person of reciprocity, who is capable of triggering the ability of gift-giving as (s)he is aware of his own imperfection and 'dependency" on the other person. (...) To be a gift expressed by the »*homo reciprocus*«, is the driving force of reciprocity as part of which each of relationship participants is both 'the gift giver and the gift recipient'(...)«. The teacher is thus a person who always makes the first move, which is »the fundamental condition of reciprocity; an adult is namely by nature the one to unconditionally take care of children, pupils, students. This is a disposition which is educational only if it is a free gift that does not involve any haggling or expectations that something will be given back; a free gift which respect the freedom and identity of the other person. Such a gift may be viewed as primeval aid which is both provocative and fertile«.[54]

CONCLUSION

I based my observations on my own everyday experiences and Gogala's experience explanation, whereby a parallel with Buber's relationship and dialogue philosophy was also at hand. Buber believes there is no relationship without an I-You encounter. However, it is the dialogue principle which enables a person to really establish a connection with other people. This principle reveals a similarity of Buber's perspective to Gogala's pedagogical belief which considers the educational process as a »connection from a soul to a soul«.
An analysis of questionnaires has revealed students experience lessons in a relaxed manner and with joyous spontaneity, which confirmed my starting hypothesis about the students feeling the same kind of atmosphere as myself. And also that I can refer to this as the kind of reciprocity that is commonly uncertain as to whether a response will be provided or not. It can also be observed that this is a matter of the characteristic of literature as art which enables a connection with oneself and with others, so they can have a direct connection with one's »being« and with what gives meaning to one's life. However, personal wisdom and a suitable method are understandably required for literature to be able to maintain its value, as is having an appropriate attitude towards it.
Reciprocity can be defined as the kind of relationship which involves readiness to be a gift for another person and thus creating a special atmosphere – »the presence of the third«. Within this relationship every person feels equal and respected and eventually gets the urge to response. The concept of reciprocity will undoubtedly be evolved further, it can, however, be viewed as the birth of a new ethos which also has its roots in Gogala's personal culture, in Buber's relationship philosophy, which is not merely a dialogue and acceptance, but also the giving and creating of a 'third reality'. This is complemented with the conception of reciprocity which applies to the Trinitarian relationships model. This model presumes a life disposition which is driven by love – in the sense of being a free gift – for oneself and others, which can accept its own and other

[52] Ibid., p. 32.
[53] Ibid.
[54] M. De Beni, *Educare la sfida e il coraggio*, Citta' Nuova Editrice, Roma 2010, p. 111.

people's faults, which is active as the needs of people close to a person need to be addressed. And when a response is given, when the other person recognizes the 'gift' and 'gives it back' reciprocity is created. This can simply be referred to as relaxed atmosphere, a positive attitude, joy of living. As such it is a paradigm of openness, of acknowledging the differences and of respect. It is also a desire to engage in a true dialogue and thus respond to the challenges of the multicultural world we live in.

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A COMPLEX PEACE EDUCATION PROJECT: THE UTRECHT SUMMERSCHOOL EDUCATION FOR PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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ABSTRACT

The basis of peace education lies in the idea that peace can be learnt. But we must have a modest idea of the possibilities to create peace by education. Peace education cannot create peace, but it can offer an important contribution to the development of a peace 'culture', which justifies and supports politics of peace.

After the Cold War, the peace problem changed in a dramatic way. The rivalry between the two power blocks came to an end, but there was no generally accepted world order to deal with the problem of a wide spread anarchy of violence.

This led the United Nations General Assembly to promote the idea of Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World. In several resolutions this culture of peace is described as "a set of values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behaviour and ways of life, based on respect for life, ending of violence and promotion of the practice of non-violence through education, dialogue and cooperation". The promotion of this culture of peace was a strong incentive for peace educators to develop new projects all over the world. From the perspective of the idea of a culture of peace and non-violence peace education - both in the formal and non-formal area - must be seen as a very dynamic process in which people are permanently challenged to organise living together in a just and peaceful way.

Peace education as a learning activity of the student cannot be understood from the traditional rationalistic theories of current western learning psychology. It asks for a broad theory of learning, which includes the cognitive, the affective and the action domain of human understanding, which have their own rationality. To put it in a nutshell, such 'rationalistic' theories fail to understand the complex process of moral learning and the development of basic values (Vriens, 1987; 2005; Coles, 1997).

In our paper we will present a summerschool course Education for Peace and Human Rights as a successful experience with the realisation of our complex theory of teaching and learning
In this course we offered not only our academic theories, but also aimed at creating an atmosphere of openness, shared responsibility and co-operation: the students were invited to learn with their brains, with their heart, and -as far as possible for each

person- with their whole body and soul. The students were also challenged to develop their own frame of mind regarding education for a culture of positive peace, non-violence, social justice and human rights, and to integrate this in their own situation. We also strived to make our strategy explicit for both students and teachers.

To get an idea about our results we asked our students to write down their experiences in an open ended questionnaire, and analysed their comments in a qualitative way. In our paper we also present the results of our qualitative evaluations.

Key words: peace education; complex theory of learning; formal and non-formal curriculum

In our modern society education of the younger generation is justified by three main arguments. First, education is important to help the young person to overcome his congenital helplessness and dependency and to develop his potential for an independent life. Secondly, education is important for the socialisation and enculturation of the youngster, which enables him to contribute to the society in which he lives. And thirdly, since the Enlightenment with its ideology of human progress education is seen a necessary and s important tool for the development of the future culture and society.
This means that the very idea of education necessarily includes a future oriented optimism. Education as an introduction to the world is a necessary tool both for the human being as a person and for the culture which will shape his/her life in the future. Without the idea of becoming an adult in the world of the future, education would be senseless.
In our modern society this future-orienting idea is connected with the idealistic view that education is a very important social instrument for the creation of the future. The history of education teaches us that this orientation on the future includes the notion of a human responsibility for a better future, in which education is one of the main instruments for human progress. During more than two centuries the idea that education can make a difference in the creation of a peaceful world has been part of our cultural inheritance.

However, this idea that peace can be learnt is not evident for everybody. Many people see peace and war as only political concepts and not as an educational responsibility. But since at the end of the 1990's the United Nations accepted the idea of a culture of peace, which is described as "a set of values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behaviour and ways of life, based on respect for life, ending of violence and promotion of the practice of non-violence through education, dialogue and cooperation." (Resolutions A/RES?52/13 and A/53/L.79)
A consequence of this concept of a culture of peace and non-violence is, that peace education must be seen as a very dynamic process, which takes place both in the formal and non-formal area. It has to take into account the content of the subject, but also the form of the teaching process (methods) and the context in which the teaching takes

place. All three have their own messages, explicit and implicit, which are very important for the educational influence on young people. This means that peace education needs a complex theory of learning, which comprises the cognitive, affective and action domains of human understanding, which all have their own rationality (Vriens 2001; 2002; 2005).
In this article we want to present a case study, in which we tried to practise these ideas. It is the Summerschool 'Education for Peace and Human Rights' in which we developed peace education as such a complex strategy of teaching and learning. For the students it was a process with new ideas of learning including reflection on the processes. For organizers it was a process in which we developed our ideas and in which we taught ourselves to learn about what a culture of peace and nonviolence can be when you cooperate with young people from cultures all over the world.

HISTORY

The idea to organise an international summerschool with a program about peace education evolved after 2000. In those days the Dutch peace movement was very enthusiastic about the United Nations General Assembly's Declaration
of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World (Resolution A/RES/53/25; November 11, 1998). Several traditional and new peace groups were inspired by this UN initiative and cooperated in a Platform to promote its acceptance and elaboration in the Dutch situation. This included a group of peace educators, who saw chances for a revival of this topic.
A second incentive came from the Education for Europe as Peace Education (EURED) project, in which educators from several European countries started an initiative to promote peace education in Europe by training teachers in peace education issues and strategies. This project, in which also some Dutch peace educators participated, offered an important integration of teaching methods and strategies of learning. EURED based its teaching methodology on four so called educational pillars, which the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century (Commission Delors) proposed in its publication *Learning: the Treasure Within* (1996) for adequate learning in the new century: learning to know (cognitive learning), learning to do (action learning), learning to be (existential learning), and learning to live together (social learning).

In the Dutch situation it appeared to be very difficult to participate fully in the EURED strategy. Teachers could not get funds for EURED courses, teacher education institutes showed hardly any interest and did not see peace education as a priority and school counselling institutes had their own programs and strategies. In this situation the peace group of the Platform had to look for other opportunities. One of the group members had contacts with the Summerschool organisation of the Utrecht University, and asked for the opportunities for a course on peace education. The summerschool organisation

was enthusiastic about this idea and asked to develop such a course in connection with the topics of human rights and (social) justice. Hence, a working group of Dutch peace educators was formed which started with the construction of a two weeks course in the summer of 2005. However, for the students the time appeared to be too short, so the course had to be cancelled, but the idea stayed alive.

In 2006 the organising group started earlier with the preparations, got help from a volunteer, and included teachers from outside. Twelve students applied to the course and the organizing group decided to start with the summerschool as an experiment on a low budget basis. The course was successful. The students were enthusiastic and offered several suggestions for the future in their evaluations.
In 2007 twenty-five students from every continent in the world followed the program. Most of them worked hard, contributed to the discussions and offered critical comments in the evaluations. The general judgement of the summerschool course was positive. The organisers took the critique seriously; especially the remark that false expectations arose from the name the course. It appeared that in the general information about the Utrecht Summerschools the term *education* was skipped out of the title for marketing reasons. So we got some students who were interested in peace, human rights and justice issues, but not in *education* for these topics. The evaluation also led to the conclusion that it would be wise to incorporate some younger persons into the organising team to prevent the course from the image of 'older peaceniks with old stuff'.

In 2008 the working group accepted United Network of Young (UNOY) Peacebuilders, a global network of youth peace organizations, as a cooperating partner. They played an active part in both the organisation and the content of the program.[1] This partnership with UNOY appeared to be an enrichment for the program in all its aspects: it brought in new themes, methods and a lot of young idealism. The course had twenty-three sometimes very critical students. The remarks in the evaluation forms taught us that we had to offer much more information about the educational philosophy of our program. Again, the working group analysed the critical remarks of the students thoroughly and selected the most useful suggestions for the improvement of the program. Firstly, we agreed that the educational philosophy could be explained more thoroughly. Secondly,

[1] In its work, UNOY connects different peace actors and organisations from different parts of the world to each other and builds up their capacities, by means of organising training and study sessions, job shadowing projects, and by developing toolkits and manuals. Within its capacity building training and study sessions UNOY uses methodologies developed by youth work, peace education, community development and intercultural learning. Keywords to describe UNOY's approach with its capacity building activities are: interactive, inclusive, equal, friendly, innovative, attractive, entertaining, personal and involved relationships rather than authoritative, distant and detached.

the term justice was skipped out of the name of our course, so that the title of the Summerschool would be 'Education for Peace and Human Rights' instead of 'Education for Peace, Human Rights and Justice'. Students tended to interpret the concept 'justice' too narrowly as a mainly juridical concept, which was beyond the topic of the course. And finally, we looked for opportunities to invite the students explicitly to bring in their own expertise into the summerschool.

The 2009 summerschool was a very special one. In the half-informal introduction meeting we offered twenty-six students not only an introduction to the program, but also an explicit explanation of its basic teaching philosophy and welcomed the students as active learners and experts in their own culture and situation. All the students were very enthusiastic and cooperative, which made it possible to realise a fruitful teaching and learning climate. Both the organizing committee and the teachers experienced with surprise and gratefulness that this group succeeded to shape itself as a really peaceful experience: dynamic, easy-going, decent, eager to learn, and committed tot the topics of the course. In their evaluations the students explicitly affirmed their appreciation of the educational philosophy of the summerschool.

In 2010 the success continued. Twenty-three students from seventeen nationalities started with the course. Many of them had already (some) work experience in peace work or related fields. From this point of view they expressed a need to have enough time to learn from each other. In response the teaching team offered more time for interaction and sharing experiences. Although some students started a bit sceptical, they gave the program the benefit of the doubt and cooperated actively in the discussions, exercises and excursions. Outside the classroom, the people in the group interacted with each other intensively, personally and via internet opportunities. The two student volunteers of the organising group took a natural part in these activities, which was a very positive contribution to the group process and dynamics. All this contributed to strong group ties and an open and friendly atmosphere in the class room. The fact that the students were accommodated in groups, in two/three different buildings, supported the possibility to interact in the informal setting. At the end of the course, the students who had been a bit sceptical about the potential of peace education and the summerschool, verbalized that their criticism had changed to enthusiasm and gratefulness for the educational experience.

BASIC PHILOSOPHY OF LEARNING AND PROGRAM

The challenge of the Utrecht Summerschool was to construct a program which would be in line with its own philosophy of education and learning. To summarise, our Summerschool was set up as educational experience of the culture of peace and non-violence, in which students could explore several aspects of this culture, including their own learning experiences. It was based on our philosophy that learning peace is a very complex process, which includes all levels of the human condition; it includes the level of

macro life of politics and society, the meso level of institutions and organisations and the micro fields of personal violence and inner peace. This broad concept of learning also challenges the common western idea of learning as a pure rational cognitive strategy, which does not support young people in their social learning and the development of their personality. Our broader concept points the idea that *the basis of human learning lies in the affective domain*, and that our cognitive learning cannot develop without this basis. Only the integration of the cognitive into the affective basis permits the person to grow in wisdom and experience by interaction with "essential human phenomena of the affective domain, like friendship, love, hate, involvement in human values, creativity, intuition, etc." (Vriens 2003; 2005)

Since our students expected a traditional academic course, we had to spend much time to explain our broad concepts and to challenge the students (and ourselves) to develop their own values, norms, and skills for an optimal use of their human potential (such as multiple intelligences) for peace and non-violence. In the curriculum of the Utrecht Summerschool we explained our philosophy of learning and our educational goals in the following way:

The concept of peace education includes the idea that peace, human rights and justice can be learned. But learning peace is not only a matter of content (knowledge about peace issues), but also of processes (strategies and their underlying values and norms). Peace education must be based on a broad learning concept that includes the affective and social dimensions of learning as well as cognitive strategies. It challenges students (and teachers) to develop their values, norms, and skills for an optimal use of the human potential (such as multiple intelligences) for peace and non-violence. From this point of view the Utrecht Summer School of Education for Peace and Human Rights and focuses its curriculum goals on knowledge (peace issues), values (basic values of human rights and justice), skills (social competences), and action opportunities for transformation) in relation to personal experiences.

KNOWLEDGE AND VALUES

Knowledge is a very important element of the summerschool. But knowledge is always 'knowledge in a context'. Since peace, culture and education are life world concepts, they are part of a culture and it is important to realise that there will never be 'absolute objectivity'. Knowledge is at all times connected with values in a meaningful context. In our program we try to invite you to understand this contextuality of our knowledge and to understand what this means in your own situation. ***In sum, the program included the possibilities to learn about concepts, theories and case studies of violence, non-violence, diversity and prejudices, conflict resolution and active listening, children rights, peace and human rights and peace education***

SKILLS

In the program of the Summer School skills are introduced in two ways. Firstly they are incorporated in the method of teaching. But they are also dealt with explicitly. The most important skills are:

- *critical analysis of the violent potential of cultures and its justifications;*
- *dialogue as a method to overcome prejudices, tensions and escalation of conflicts;*
- *non-violent strategies for conflict resolution;*
- *conditions of learning and teaching peace;*
- *civil peace action and society building.*
- *critical reflection of personal ideas, values, and opinions*
- *presentation, organizational and facilitation skills*

ACTION

The action component is introduced as a possibility for people who want to be active in the field of peace education and peace work after the course. Guest lecturers, the organisational committee, and the staff of the institutions that we visited during the excursions informed the students of action opportunities in the field of peace and human rights education, and related topics. As far as people are already involved in peace action and/or peace education activities the curriculum will offer opportunities for sharing experiences.

METHODOLOGY AND ROLE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The concept of peace education as presented with its different forms of learning asks for a methodology which combines theory and practical experiences on a basis of respect for each other, students as well as teachers. During the two weeks of our summerschool, we aimed at creating an atmosphere of openness, shared responsibility and co-operation: the students were invited to learn with their brains, with their heart, and - as far as possible for each person - with their body and soul. Since every person is different and has her/his own cultural background, the students were also challenged to develop their own frames of mind about education for a culture of positive peace, non-violence, social justice and human rights, and to integrate this in their own situation.

Our concept also asked for awareness of the importance of the group itself as part of the learning process. A group with participants from diverse backgrounds, in terms of their studies, home countries, religion, etcetera, can become a fruitful environment for informal learning for both students and teachers. The summerschool organisers strived

to make use of this mechanism of informal learning and to make it clear for both students and teachers by asking for explicit commitment about the following values and intentions: shared responsibility, trust of both facilitators and participants for the atmosphere in the class room. We expected that each student would be involved both in the content and the procedures of the program. As organizers we tried to promote this open atmosphere acceptance of shared responsibility, trust and cooperation in the following way:

- *we opened the course with an informal diner and some interactive games and stories, to introduce the students to each other, to the organizational committee and to the topic of the summerschool;.*
- *during the first official day of the summerschool an interactive exercise was implemented to develop a shared code of conduct. The exercise offered time and space for students to verbalize expectations, fears and wishes they had of themselves, of each other, of the organizational committee, or of the course in general;*
- *from the beginning students were invited to act as facilitators of the program and to share their work, life and study experiences;*
- *each morning we started with an exercise to summarise the experiences of the day before and a short reflective introduction to the topic(s) of the day;*
- *we organised several special exercises, which offered students an experience of the physical basis of communication and elementary values like trust, cooperation and responsibility.*

In this way the summerschool combined an academic content with a variety of educational methods, which did not only serve as strategies to understand the content sufficiently, but had their own messages, that were consciously included in the content of the course. Thus, formal education was combined strongly with informal education methodology. The program of the last five years included a combination of methods developed by academia, youth work, peace education, community development and inter-cultural learning. So we offered the students a program with lectures and discussions; working groups; exercises based on the open space technology[2]; exercises

[2] Open space technique operates under four principles and one law. The four principles are:
- Whoever comes are the right people;
- Whatever happens is the only thing that could have happened;
- When it starts is the right time;
- When it's over it's over.

The law is known as the Law of two Feet: 'If you find yourself in a situation where you are not contributing or learning, move somewhere you can'. The four principles and the law stimulate the creation of a powerful event motivated by the passion and bounded by the responsibility of the participants. Through the Open space,

to recognise physical and emotional reactions; self study by using library, internet, movies and other sources of information; learning by sharing experiences and guided excursions with a debriefing afterwards. In this course setting, informal meetings like shared diners and a cultural evening events offered a meaningful contribution.

THE SUMMERSCHOOL CURRICULUM

The curriculum of the summerschool was in line with both our concept of a culture of peace and non-violence and our theory of human learning and understanding. It focussed on integration of knowledge (peace issues), values (basic values of human rights and justice), skills (social competences), and action (opportunities for transformation) in relation to personal experiences.
The two weeks program was organised in two main themes:
1. A Culture of Peace and Non-violence
2. The Challenge of Peace Education

The first week offered a (basic) introduction to the Culture of Peace and Non-violence, in which Human Rights, Social Justice and Nonviolence were predominant. It elaborated on the concept of this UN initiative and its historical roots and offered sessions about the concepts of Violence and Non-violence; A Culture of Diversity and Tolerance in relation to lessons from the past; Human Rights as a Moral Agenda for Peace and Children's Rights at Stake. This week included the movie 'Pray the Devil back to Hell' about a successful non-violent action to overcome civil war in Liberia and a visit to the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam.

The second week paid attention to the potential of Peace and Human Rights Education to contribute to the achievement of such a Culture of Peace and Non-violence. It offered an explanation of the educational challenge of the concept of a Culture of Peace and Non-violence in relation to concepts of peace education and concepts of learning. It comprised special themes in which theory and practice were connected, like non-violent conflict resolution with its methods of non-violent communication, active listening and mediation; gender, peace and education; and world wide peace activities of young people. The week also included an excursion to the Fortress of Democracy, an interactive educational exposition in Utrecht for youngsters between twelve and sixteen years old about democracy, tolerance and peace; a visit to the UNOY office with a program about the peace activities of this peace organisation of youngsters; and an excursion tot the Peace Palace in The Hague. The last evening was spent on cultural presentations and activities from students and teachers.

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participants could individually reflect about their own learning and interest during the course. Also see http://www.openspaceworld.com/users_guide.htm

During the whole course the students were encouraged to connect the knowledge topics with both reflection on their meaning, and with the methods to value their insights as well as the climate of the course and the practical activities. With every of topic that was covered and with every method that was used, the students were challenged to link their personal experiences (at the micro level) with the more abstract topic or case studies (at the meso or macro level) that were discussed. The students were also invited to understand the contributions of the guest speakers and educators, not only for their cognitive content, but also to get an understanding of the context of their life stories and personalities.
In this way we tried to create a connection between information and inspiration in order to promote the internal reflection process of the students as well as their emotional involvement. Our final goal was to reach a better self-understanding as a starting point for a transformation of non-peaceful and unjust personal convictions, prejudices and opinions.

EVALUATION, FOLLOW UP & IMPLEMENTATION OF THAT WHAT WAS LEARNED

The summerschool Education for Peace and Human Rights was evaluated in many ways. First, there was the ongoing informal evaluation, where the organisation team invited the students to make their comments when necessary. Much information was got from our student volunteers, who had a task to help the students with all their organisational problems. They were of the same age and had many contacts with the students, both formal and informal. This helped us to understand our students better, to prevent problems and it offered the possibility of quick measures when necessary for the organisation.
Together with this 'informal' evaluation there were also two moments of formal evaluation, in which the students were explicitly asked to reflect about their learning process and the program: during the mid-term evaluation and the end evaluation. In the mid-term evaluation the students were asked about the quality of each session, facilitations skills of speakers, interactivity, educational approach, group dynamics, physical space etc. The staff explained the program and answered what could be changed in the next week and how, including . Important points were discussed and the students could give their comments about the quality of the program until now in relation to their expectations.

At the end of the course, there was a formal evaluation in which the participants were asked to give a thorough comment on each part with the help of a qualitative questionnaire. Each question gave a formulation of the formal goals of the session, asked if this was recognised and invited to write down both a comment and suggestions for improvement. About two third of each student group gave their comments in this way.

The comments, which were very serious, were analysed and used for our final report. We offer some examples.

In the evaluation of the 2007 summerschool one of the questions was:

> ***The strategy of the Summer school was that peace education can only be learnt if people realise that the complexity of the peace problem demands a complex concept of teaching and learning. Peace education means learning by head, hart and hands; instruction, discussion, self-study, manual activities, etc. Did you recognise this concept of learning in the program and did you experience it as a good idea?***

Apart from three exceptions, each student answered that he/she recognised this effort of the Summer school: "It is an activity from both sides, teacher and student, and this can bring good results. Good experience!". But many also pointed to the fact that it is a difficult idea to realise because of some obstacles: "Lack of time; not everyone in the group is really involved in the field, it is completely new because of another educational background". Some also make the critical remark that there is not a good balance within the unity of leaning by head, hart and hands: the head gets the most attention. But others mentioned that they recognised this concept of learning, and enjoyed it.

We also got some negative responses: "The methods are too complex, only increase of knowledge is important, the methods were not clear to me: it was more repetition than complexity". Some students wanted to concentrate more on macro problems and, as they said, less on the personal level.

The suggestions for improvement taught us the following. Most reactions concentrated on creating more transparency about the choices made by the teachers regarding the set up of the educational program. The concept should be explained immediately from the beginning of the course or even before. Discussions in the course should be stimulated and students who are not used to these interactive methods should be invited personally to participate in the process.

Our conclusion was that, although we did explain the concept of learning in the beginning of the course, we did not refer to it enough during the course. It is a concept which is for many students rather diffuse and we have to reckon with that.

In 2009 one of our questions about our educational philosophy was:

> ***The Summerschool wanted explicitly to use the experiences and capacities of the students as opportunities for learning. Did you recognise this and how do you judge this?***

This offered us 18 positive responses with e.g. the following comments:

- I think we learned a lot from each other. There were many opportunities to exchange experiences; of course it is never enough. But time is limited.

- I recognized it and I found it good, because we were so many students from all over the world and through that could learn a lot from each other.
- I think it succeeded partially. I recognize that teachers asked for personal experiences, and it was important. Of course there is always a balance between new theory and input and experiences from the group.
- I do recognize it and it was one of the most interesting parts of the summerschool – the learning from people from other cultures didn't stop at the end of the classes.

There were no negative comments on this topic. Some students did a suggestion for a practical strengthening the concept of the summerschool concept:

- A short presentation of each student of his background, etc (also useful to better know each others).
- More time for listening to/sharing experiences.

This last comment is in line with other comments of students about the course period of the summerschool. Some students suggest that a longer period of time would be better.

In terms of follow up the students were made aware of other opportunities for training, volunteer and jobs in the field of peace work. The students were also invited to sign up for the newsletter of UNOY peacebuilders or to apply for an internship. All three years of UNOY's involvement 1 or 2 young people that had participated in the summerschool program were offered the possibilities to gather more work experience in the peace work by becoming an intern at UNOY Peacebuilders.

In the closing session of the summerschool the organising committee also held a final evaluation to discuss the results of the course in relation to its goals and objectives and to reflect on the future of the Summer school. Here the students could tell us what they thought about the course and its impact for their own lives. Often students told then that they wanted to stay in contact with each other and that they wanted to do something with what they had learned in their own life situations. Some students told us that they had changed during these two weeks, they wanted to learn more because they saw this as a positive experience. Of course it is difficult to know the full impact of these stories and we realise that many students told us nothing of this kind of experiences. But we have a strong feeling that this kind of learning can be very important for a person, provided that he/she is touched at the affective level of his mind.

A nice example of such a case came to us during the summerschool of 2010. One of our students came from Rwanda and participated in the course with some kind of a waiting attitude. But in the second week of the course he became more open to the rest of the group and told about his personal experiences with the violence in his country. His family had been murdered by their neighbours and he had lost many friends. Just before he left, he made the group a very great compliment. He thanked because this was the first experience in a course about peace and reconciliation, in which he met opportunities to trust other people. He told that the summerschool group felt as family

to him and this he had not experienced for a very long time. He closed his farewell speech with the words "It is something like feeling reborn"!

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SPACES FOR SOCIAL NEGOTIATION: INDICATIONS FROM A STUDY OF EARLY YEARS TRANSITION

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INTRODUCTION

Pastoral education is often regarded as deeply embedded in pedagogical practice with children in the early years (Nutbrown & Clough, 2009). However, the specific aspects of their experience that support social emotional and behavioural development and underpin their learning are less clear (Crossley, 1998). Furthermore child-centred and play-based learning shifts to subject teaching for children as young as five in the UK, following age-related guidance in the National Curriculum, signalling precedence for cognitive over affective aspects of education (Waite & Davis, 2007). In our study of transition between Foundation Stage (aged 4 and 5) and Year 1 (aged 5 and 6), we examined how pedagogies are shaped by context, postulating that outdoor contexts might extend child-centred and play-based learning (Davis, Rea & Waite, 2006; Rogers & Evans, 2008) and that play-based learning might offer greater responsiveness to emotional and social needs (Ross & Rogers, 1990). In this paper, I consider two examples of outdoor contexts that seem to offer an arena for moral and prosocial development and reflect on how these may influence for better or worse.

Key words: social; negotiation; outdoor; early years; primary

METHODS

Our longitudinal study was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council over a period of 29 months (Waite, Evans & Rogers, 2011). Two schools were selected by their interest and capacity for outdoor learning provision and according to wider demographic features. Both have access to outdoor spaces; one school is urban and one is suburban. Each school has 2 reception and 2 Year 1 classes to enable comparisons across different teachers in the same setting and across schools. There were approximately 240 children across the 8 classes, but data collection was centred on 4 target children chosen in consultation with their teachers from each of the 8 classrooms based on gender, ability and ethnicity etc (i.e. 32 target children). With audio, video and photographic data supported by structured field notes, we explored the micro context of children's social interactions with peers and adults in spaces inside and outside their

classrooms using a Mosaic approach (Clarke & Moss, 2001). Further details of methodology, methods and analysis can be found in other papers (e.g. Evans et al., 2011)

FINDINGS

The extent to which adults were absent in outdoor spaces within school boundaries was striking in our study. In these outdoor contexts with lower levels of adult surveillance, we noted greater inter-child negotiation. For example, in one of the schools, Foundation Stage children aged 4 and 5 showed their awareness of school rules regarding tree climbing but one child argued that it did not matter when the adult was not outside. This suggests that socialisation of children to school norms through 'rules' is not enough to influence their behaviour when surveillance is absent. Desirable behaviour enforced by rules appears in this case as unstable and context dependent rather than internalised and the basis for moral development. However, a strong desire to be a member of a peer group is evident below from the turns of conversation emphasising uniformity to form allegiances. This peer–based socialisation is self regulating and therefore more likely to be transferable between contexts. Although power relations also flow through these exchanges, they are not as unilateral as most adult-child relationships within schooling. In the following extract, we see how children negotiate a shared view. The left hand column is the transcribed audio and the right hand, an analytical commentary.

Foundation Stage School B Term 1

Amber: You care for me and my name is Bubbles.	Care is a common feature of play
Amber: Yeah I'm the cat actually	As are animals
Bonny: Shall we be cats?	The children assign family roles from their experience
Amber: yeah and, and I'm the mummy cat	
Bonny (disappointed): Oooh? Can we be two kittens?	But sometimes greater parity of status is sought. Here Bonny suggests both should be young cats.
Amber: Yeah {unclear} and I'm called Bubbles and we're both called Bubbles, but I'm called Bubbles Lara and your other name is Bubbles Tara (Both children say Tara at the same time)	This similarity is developed by Amber who decides they will have the same name. The increasing shared play narrative is illustrated by the synchronised speech.
Bonny: My name is Bubbles	The bond is reinforced by repetition
Amber: And we're sisters, yeah?	The parity is further cemented by a different family bond
There is then a reframing of play so that a child who doesn't want to be a kitten is the mummy cat whose role is to cheer on Amber in the race. She wins!	
Amber: And I be, and we're both be Ariels.	The play narrative changes course.
Bonny: And, but have we got mermaid tails?	
Amber: Yeah	
Bonny: Yeah mum and dad mum and dad Ariel tails and I had a blue, I had a	A difference is suggested to distinguish the baby in the family

different colour tail. I have a bright blue tail	
Amber: We have the same tails yeah?	But the principle of uniformity for bonding is stronger

The language used by the children reinforces developing social bonds; they build upon their shared narrative by the use of 'and' at the start of many statements, so it is clear that they are adding to the former remark and not detracting or diverting. Frequent exchanges of 'yeah?' 'yeah' confirm their mutual affirmation. These merging strategies for maintaining play serve to extend each other's ideas about what it is to care and belong.

Yet, there is a shadow side to the freedom to negotiate ways of relating and being with each other that is afforded by some outdoor contexts. In the following example described below, we see how children can bring different and unacceptable social norms within the school bounds and that then a lack of adult supervision can mean that teachable moments are lost. Freedom to express certain views can lead to persecution of others.

> In the space immediately outside the Year 1 classrooms in School A, a group of children, mostly boys, dived in and over a tunnel while a girl poked a stick at random into holes along its length. Adults came out of the classrooms to remonstrate every now and again. Elsewhere in the space there were quieter games; Mario, for example, was playing with the doll's house with a serious and engaged expression and his back to the frantic physical rough and tumble behind him. He was seemed oblivious to the tunnel group and seemed to have created a place for himself, an oasis of quiet within the chaos and noise. However, one of the tunnel boys began chanting 'Mario is a gaylord' repeatedly and others began to join in. Mario ignored them at first, focusing his attention on his own play, but eventually he stood up and approached the boy shouting at him directly, 'Just stop it!' However, when he returned to his play, the chant began again and so on. In the end, Mario moved away from the doll's house and the site of his absorbing play to get away from the bullying.
>
> **(Based on Field notes, Year 1 School A)**

Here we see a darker side of freedom and peer socialisation which seeks conformity for affirmation of values. The child who initiated the bullying behaviours may have had these values affirmed elsewhere but clearly, they are unacceptable. Leaving such homophobic attitudes unchecked is not an option but it is difficult to deal with them without adults being present to re-direct and question sensitively and contingently.

DISCUSSION

Critical evaluation of the data suggests that one factor contributing to the children's use of these spaces is low levels of adult supervision. This seems to create an open space for children themselves to solve problems and work out how to get along with each other. These are very important skills for future life. In class, the values and norms for behaviour tend to be dictated by adult agenda (Devine, 2003), while outside the classroom, there appears to be greater freedom to negotiate social norms. However,

such outdoor contexts are not blank sheets to be populated by new values and ideas, children inevitably import ideas and values from other contexts to them and, at times, these may conflict with acceptable standards of care and respect within the school and for other social contexts. Adults supporting children's prosocial and moral development therefore need to be sensitive to moments when children can be supported to question such negative values and to co-construct different ways of viewing the world (Nutbrown & Clough, 2003). This therefore implies that a more contingent approach within currently dominant pedagogical practice would be more effective than either adult imposed rules or adults in absentia, whereby adults facilitate further thinking around topics that emerge from children's own interests and play (Siraj-Blatchford & Sylva, 2004). Nevertheless, outdoor contexts are likely to be crucial if 'room', both in time and space is to be created to support a sharing of prosocial and moral development. Many classrooms appear to provide little 'room' for this to occur with pressures to get through curriculum and schedule time efficiently for specific learning goals. Yet, it is with time and space that children appear more likely to engage in inter-child discussion and develop social bonds. Moreover, it is precisely these inter-child negotiations that seem to support an *internalisation* of attitudes and values with consequent greater durability in time and transfer from one situation to another.

CONCLUSION

The creation of lasting but critically aware beliefs are important not only for children as they move into primary schooling but also throughout their future school lives, contributing through better self regulation to successful social cohesion in their class, school and community (Waite, 2011). Within busy classrooms, time to develop values is constrained and furthermore, adult dominance in this context may foster rule obedience rather than self disciplined moral action. Outdoor contexts can provide a necessary more open arena for the development of prosocial and moral values but the promotion of positive attitudes may benefit from timely, appropriate and sensitive adult support.

Keywords: social; negotiation; outdoor; early years; primary

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A PUPPET IN TMTU

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ABSTRACT

A one-year educational project 'Traja at the Ljubljana Marshes' presents the basic fields, we have developed and evaluated in depth.

The methodology of the project is conducted by the method of active research, which is developmentally centred, which means we have derived from a child, and have followed the goals and strategies in which the basic guideline is deepening mutual emotional relationships and the sensitivity of the children to one another.

It involves integrated science, ecology, sustainable development, and the aesthetics of both space and the Marshes. All these fields become intertwined with the assistance of a puppet and its story through several main threads which integrate into a social-emotional Curriculum.

Therefore, the role of a puppet in the process of social interactions deepens the child's self-reflection, the awareness of his own emotions, the development of friendships, as well as enriches his emotional world.

An important principle in introducing a puppet to life and work at the kindergarten is particularly important because it puts a kindergarten teacher on an equal footing with children when solving the problem of a puppet together (making hypotheses, searching for solutions, discovering, verifying, etc.).

A child's research is focused on his experimental learning, enriching the emotions, on getting involved into his own and the puppet's world, by various role plays, and identifying with them. A child enters and exits his own and the puppet's world of experience and thus acquires the foundation for developing empathy, in which the parents represent an indispensable factor in the process itself. Their active role enriches and creates a mutual consensual viewpoint of the child's qualitative development.

An alien girl Traja appears at our kindergarten with a special assignment. She needs to bring grass and an insect, which will conduct pollination on it, and thus ensure the continued survival of her planet.

Are the children willing to accept her and grow to love her, to help her solve the problem, to share with her: the moments of their kindergarten life, emotions, friendship, tenderness, warmth, shared experiences, and love?

KEY WORDS: tmtu, puppet, experimental learning of a child and experiencing

INTRODUCTION:

TMTU PROJECT AND TRAJA

In the Trnovo kindergarten we have for several years been successfully developing and functioning within the method of the Trnovo Model of Basic Learning- TMTU, which we define as a basis of lifelong learning in which a child in his first years of life learns and develops basic abilities and competences which he then uses throughout his life.
It is an artistically pedagogical concept of education in which there is unique foundation for planning and the children's functioning of the puppet and its story.
It is a new pedagogical and operationally-didactic approach in which the function of the puppet and its story is the long-term motivation of children to function, research and create. It represents the common thread of the whole-year educational concept.

The model of basic learning consists of learning the basic abilities and competences- abilities, responsibilities – which are necessary in life. Further more, a child by method of The Trnovo Model of Basic Learning acquires various competences, so as to be able to learn, gain and use knowledge, information, as well as the sources of information; to know how to distinguish among them and include them into his thinking, creating, functioning, communicating, etc.

Our model of basic learning is the foundation of sustainable development at the earliest age when we teach a child the basic value relations to one self, the world, nature and society. By means of the Model of basic learning we introduce a child into the basic human activities and with the model's assistance a foundation of a child's personality as a whole is built.

It also contributes to building a foundation of a child's sociality, experiencing emotions, motivation and the system of values.

The basic relation in the educational process of The Trnovo Model of Basic Learning is, however, the relationship of love. (D. Gobec, 2006).

THE MAIN SECTION:

HOW IS THE PROJECT REALIZED?

Within TMTU there is an on-going project in which the whole team of the kindergarten is creating a story, in which the main protagonist is a puppet, by means of research hubs and basic human activities, raging from culture, arts, science, to natural science which was the main topic in this project.

In 2008/2009 school year we prepared, as part of developing The Trnovo Model of Basic Learning, a project of exploring the Ljubljana Marshes with the intention of early introduction into experiencing, getting to know and conserving nature, in which we offered children the tools for their active introduction into the processes of nature, so as to allow children to establish interactive relations to nature, natural science and ecology. The fields of a child's exploration: the marsh plants, insects, biodiversity and interdependence within the marsh ecosystem.

In this whole-year project an important motivational and problem-based role is played by a puppet – an alien girl Traja. Her problem is the excessive pollution of her planet which is in danger of being ruined. To our planet Traja arrives with an assignment of finding similar or just such plants and animals as those which live on her planet.

In my article I have presented the connectivity of the puppet – the protagonist of the project and her story; research topics within the implementing Curriculum, in connection to the ecology questions and the specific activities of kindergarten children as means of lifelong learning processes.
The role of the puppet is that of a motivator and a link between the story and the activities of children.
The methodology of the project is carried out by the method of active research, which is developmentally oriented; meaning we have derived from a child and have followed the goals and strategies in which the basic principle is deepening the interpersonal emotional relations and children's feelings to each other.
It involves integrated science, ecology, sustainable development, the aesthetics of space and the marshes. All these areas are, with the assistance of a puppet and its story, interlinked through several common threads, which are integrated into social-emotional Curriculum.

THE PROJECT'S COMMON THREAD

With the help of a puppet – an alien girl Traja – we have presented the puppet's own story, which consists of various topical research questions, to the children.
Traja with various research questions leads the children into activities in which the children with their own experience, eagerness, research/by means of collecting data and providing materials/ try to help the puppet.
The project was divided into two phases, which besides the research questions also included the choice of material; plants and animals.
The research of the material is all the time connected to Traja's story, while a child makes discoveries in his own way.
The research materials appear in the story as some sort of a lead.
A child's role in the process of research is to develop his own strategies and tools, needed to reach the individual as well as the common goal.

TRAJA'S STORY

Traja arrives at our kindergarten, she befriends children, entrusting them with her assignment. The children promise her their help and so a whole-year exploring, observing, experimenting begins: by means of learning through discovery and problem-based learning directly in nature, in the living corners by researching sources, cooperation with parents, etc. With the distinctive constructivist approach the children experience the beauty of nature, its laws, the need to nurture, protect and conserve nature, as well as the viability of their functioning.

TRAJA'S ROLE IN THE PROCESS ENABLES A CHILD:

A child solves Traja's problem using the method of research: he sets the hypothesis, searches for information, acquires direct experience through actual materials, discovers, comes to various solutions, which he then checks.

Because of her specific situation and the magical influence Traja motivates the children and is a link through the story and activities throughout the whole school year. In this way Traja enables a child to stay within his game.
During the process of living and researching with Traja there appear special educational situations and opportunities.
When Traja asks the children to help her, she launches in a child his ability of empathy, solidarity, and the pattern of pro-social behaviour as well as assessing the moral decisions.

Furthermore, I will in this article present the connectivity of the puppet – the protagonist of the project and her story to the implementing Curriculum, to research topics and questions, as well as to motivation and specific activities and accomplishments of kindergarten children.

The story begins ...

One late morning suddenly there appeared a strange creature outside the window of our playroom. The creature was moving in an unusual way; it wasn't walking nor jumping, but was floating in the air.
The children were looking at her, astonished and surprised; they were wondering who she was; what she wanted and where she came from.
But this creature didn't let out a sound. The children started guessing if this creature even spoke; they started asking different questions, such as:
»Who is this?«
»Who does she look like; she looks like a doll in a dress with no legs..«
»She looks like those Martians from the syrup commercial.«
»Yes, yes, she comes from space; she looks like she comes from space.«
By asking different questions the children showed an interest in her and were wondering when they were going to see her again, and also, when they were going to get to know her.
After some time this creature revisited them again, but this time she came into the playroom.
At first the children were completely quiet; then they got encouraged and started asking who she was, why she came there, where she came from, what her name was, how old she was.
The creature started mimicking and imitating the children; their voices and movements. The first reaction of the children was laughter, but then they determined that the creature possibly didn't understand our language, so they gradually started her teaching our Slovene language. They did this in such a way that every child repeated his name several times and said where he came from, how old he was, which toy was his favourite.
The children soon found out that the unknown creature was quickly learning Slovene language, so they went on asking her: »Who are you, who are you?«; »Do you come from Mars?«; «Are you an alien girl?«.
The creature soon introduced herself to them and answered that she indeed came from space and that she wanted to get to know us, to become friends with us, to play with us, as well as chat, sing, and dance – namely to socialize with us and mostly to come to know the new planet she arrived to.
The children were all excited at becoming her friends, so they immediately accepted her as part of the group.
Every day they wanted Traja's company and to play with her, so she came to visit them several times.

The children gladly accepted her in their social circle, they played with her, built her a meal corner so she could eat lunch with us; they also at several times expressed their wish that Traja would have a sleepover with them, so they made her a little bed and watched her with

pleasure while she was sleeping; they were whispering her lovely words, were cuddling and caressing her; they were singing her lullabies, telling her fairytales.

Experiencing all this, the children were strengthening and consolidating their knowledge; they were experiencing help and sympathy towards another person, were enhancing their self-esteem as well as social interactions within the group. Also, throughout all the socializing and showing new, unknown things to Traja, the children were expanding their horizon of knowledge itself, of knowledge sharing, information transfer and experience.

The children cooperated with one another; they supported each other and, based on their own, someone else's, and newly gained experience, they acquired knowledge about the omnipotent life and its nature which surrounds us and which we depend on.

It was Monday, late in the morning, when Traja arrived at the kindergarten, all miserable. The children hurried to ask her why she was so sad, but she only opened her mouth and the children could see she had damaged her little tooth. They were asking her if she had a toothache; what they could do to help her so it wouldn't hurt anymore. They suggested her visiting a dentist who would give her a medicine, but Traja didn't dare, she was too afraid.
Then she encouraged the children to help her themselves; that maybe they would find a medicine for her toothache.
»Where and how can we find the medicine that would help Traja ease her pain?«
And so a new research began. The children were bringing different answers and ideas:
«Let's make her some tea; why not give her some pills; let's take her to the dentist; let's give her a cookie with healing powers, ...«.
By providing various ideas the children determined that we could find medicine in the tea that we buy in a shop.
But then someone else suggested that they did not sell such tea in a shop so the children were thinking and determining where they could get this healing potion.
They thought of King Matjaž – the puppet they last year visited the marketplace with herbs and seeds with, and so the path gradually led them to their answers. The oldest children determined that the marketplace also sells herbs which have many healing powers and that maybe one of these herbs could help Traja.
As suggested by the children we set off to visit the marketplace where the children immediately approached the old woman who was selling herbs. They right away told her that our Traja had a toothache and they asked the woman if there was possibly some herb there to take away Traja's pain. The woman showed the children all the herbs and at the same time also advised them which one was the best in helping with the pain and why. The children smelled, were touching, tasting various herbs, and then they took some with them back to the kindergarten. They also discovered a cream which was very healing and of which they were sure it would help Traja get rid of her pain, and yet ...
The children returned to the kindergarten and were waiting for Traja, all excited to tell her the good news, as they had found quite many medicines to help her get rid of her pain. First they offered her various herbs and with her they were discovering what they were like, what they help with, and also what their purpose and usage is; they tried to name them together with Traja ...
Unfortunately none of the herbs the children had brought in could help Traja, so the children took the assignment home and they tried to find a solution at home, with the help of their parents.
Indeed. The next day the children were bringing various recipes which included healing effects as, like they claimed themselves, the recipes consisted of all very healthy vitamin

ingredients. One boy brought a recipe for herbal healing soup and suggested that we prepare and cook for Traja the soup which was originally only on paper.
The children were excited at his idea and they got straight to work. We made a phone call to our kitchen, asking them to help us with the ingredients and the cooking utensils, and then we started slicing, peeling, washing, mixing ...
»It really smells of all healing herbs« the children said and they immediately offered Traja the chosen dish they had cooked only for her.
Traja made a remarkable recovery; the herbal soup really helped her and the children were surprised to find the dirty stain had really disappeared from Traja's little tooth.

Throughout this activity the children were active in every field of their development. They were their own creators and explorers of the process, they were active participants; they acquired new knowledge on the basis of their own experience, sensualisation, visualisation, their own activity, cooperation with one another, and mostly by means of feeling and knowing that they were doing a good deed for someone in distress. With this we gradually install in a child awareness that he is not alone in the world; that people are dependent on one another; and that above all we depend on the nature, on the tolerance to nature itself as well as to other living beings which surround us, and so that we must cultivate this help and empathy towards other people as well as towards everything that surrounds us in the world. In doing so, the children made their first step on the stepladder of being aware of this process.

The children also got to know how important our feelings are; mostly how important the expression of the latter is. Traja offered the children a possibility to express various emotions, as the children were able to express themselves in a direct and non-verbal manner; she taught the children to detect, express and accept emotions, and thus kept a child feeling safe.
A hypothetical relationship of mutuality was established between the children and Traja, and this offered various possibilities of building relationships without the real consequences, and it kept a child feeling secure.

AND AS A CONCLUSION

The whole-year project 'Traja' constantly internally motivates the children to find solutions to the problem which is originally Traja's, but through the children's own experience.

The puppet as the protagonist evoked from a child what an adult is not able to. Alongside the puppet a child feels to be an equal partner in the relationship to an adult (a kindergarten teacher and an assistant teacher) and at the same time a child has optimal conditions for his personal development in his own way. Because of this also the farewell to Traja is a research, emotional and cognitive experience – but in the name of the love for Traja and her planet a child, despite the emotional distress he experiences in Traja's departure, waives his dreams of his life with her. (S. Antič).

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