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CONTENTS

1. Anton Ilica, <i>Man is an educational project</i>	11
2. Grozdanka Gojkov, <i>The Constant Comparative Method or Grounded Theory Methodology</i>	30
3. Yolanda Benito Mate, <i>Giftedness and associated disorders: Oppositional defiant disorder</i>	41
4. Gabriela Kelemen, <i>Pedagogy for gifted children</i>	57
5. Constantin Chevereșan, Alina Padurean, <i>Language, The Media and Social Communication</i>	67
6. Otilia Hutiu, <i>Enhancing argumentative competence in the classroom</i>	74
7. MSc Natasa Sturza Milic, <i>The relation between motor behaviour and Intellectual abilities of preschool children</i>	88
8. Snezana Babic-Kekez, <i>Provincial Secretariat for Education and Culture of the Province of Vojvodina Novi Sad</i>	97
9. Flueraș Lucretia, <i>Romanian writers from Hungary: Alexandru Hoșopan</i>	107
10. Liliana Bran, <i>Emotional intelligence</i>	111
11. Mihaela Gvrilă, <i>Education for the Contraceptive Health in the Schools from Romania- A Lesson for Life</i>	118
12. Camelia Nadia Bran, <i>Promoting social inclusion through basic skills learning- an example of good practice</i>	125
13. Laurentiu Leucea Ilica, <i>Physical education is key to improving a child's confidence, brainpower and long-term health</i>	139
14. Mihaela Leoca –Huppert, <i>A tactile approach – describes some teaching techniques employed with some of the children where they seemed resistant to exploring things by touch</i>	147

15. Marinela Nicoară, <i>Visual and Verbal in the Writer's Portrait from "Daniel Martin" by John Fowles</i>	150
16. Bistran (Terpea) Lenuța-Rodica, <i>The School-Family-Community Partnership in Step by Step Education</i>	159
17. Irina Ciule, Mihaela Bejan, Guzan Teodora, <i>The six thinking / reasoning hats</i>	170
18. Liana Porubszki <i>How do we project lessons that promote the development of a critical thinking?</i>	176
19. Diana Belean, Adriana Bozgan, <i>The formative role of the role play to get ready children for school</i>	189
20. Loredana Baci, <i>Preschool education – an important factor in moulding the child's existence and behaviour</i>	194
21. Book Review	197
Vasile Chiș, Steliana Toma, Mușata Bocoș, Ioan Cerghit Review of book <i>Psychopedagogy of excellence, identification and education of gifted children</i> by Gabriela Kelemen.....	199
22. Recommendation.....	209

CUPRINS

1. Anton Ilica, <i>Omul este un proiect educațional</i>	11
2. Grozdanka Gojkov, <i>Teoria metodologică privind comparații între metode și motivația învățării</i>	30
3. Yolanda Benito Mate, <i>Supradotații cu dificultăți comportamentale</i>	41
4. Gabriela Kelemen, <i>Fundamente psihopedagogice și sociologice privind copiii supradotați</i>	57
5. Constantin Chevereșan, Alina Padurean, <i>Limba mijloc de comunicare socială și Massmedia</i>	67
6. Otilia Hutiu, <i>Îmbunătățirea competențelor comunicative</i>	74
7. MSc Natasa Sturza Milic, <i>Relația dintre inteligență și abilitățile motorii la copiii preșcolari</i>	88
8. Snezana Babic – Kekez, <i>Secretariatul pentru educație și cultură și educație din provincial Vojvodina Novi Sad</i>	97
9. Flueraș Lucretia, <i>Scritori români în Ungaria: Alexandru Hoșopan</i>	107
10. Liliana Bran, <i>Inteligența emoțională</i>	111
11. Mihaela Gavrilă, <i>Educația contraceptivă în școlile din România-O lecție pentru viață</i>	118
12. Camelia Nadia Bran, <i>Promovarea incluziunii sociale prin metode specifice de învățare-exemple de bună practică</i>	125
13. Laurențiu Leucea Ilica, <i>Educația fizică- condiție a îmbunătățirii încrederii în sine, a sănătății șimintale și fizice pe termen lung</i>	139
14. Mihaela Leoca – Huppert, <i>Tehnica de facilitare a explorării senzoriale pentru copiii cu disfuncții</i>	147

15. Marinela Nicoară, <i>Vizualul și verbalul în portretul lui “Daniel Martin” de John Fowles</i>	150
16. Bistran (Terpea) Lenuta-Rodica, <i>Parteneriatul școală familie în alternative Step by Step</i>	159
17. Irina Ciule, Mihaela Bejan, Guzan Teodora, <i>Cele șase pălării gânditoare</i>	170
18. Liana Porubszki, <i>Cum proiectăm activitatea pentru a dezvolta elevilor gândirea critică?</i>	176
19. Diana Belean, Adriana Bozgan, <i>Rolul formativ al jocurilor cu rol în pregătirea copiilor pentru școală</i>	189
20. Loredana Baci, <i>Educația preșcolară-un important factor în modelarea personalității preșcolarilor</i>	194
21. Recenzii.....	197
Vasile Chiș, Steliana Toma, Mușata Bocoș, Ioan Cerghit <i>Psihopedagogia excelenței, identificarea și educarea copiilor supradotați, (autor Gabriela Kelemen)</i>	199
22. Recomandări.....	209

MOTTO

Some principles observed in nature applicable to education:

- *Nature observes a suitable time.*
- *Nature prepares the material, before she begins to give it form.*
- *Nature chooses a fit subject to act upon, or first submits one to a suitable treatment in order to make it fit.*
- *Nature is not confused in its operations, but in its forward progress advances distinctly from one point to another.*
- *In all the operations of nature, development is from within.*
- *Nature, in its formative processes, begins with the universal and ends with the particular.*
- *Nature makes no leaps, but proceeds step by step.*
- *If nature commences anything, it does not leave off until the operation is completed.*
- *Nature carefully avoids obstacles and things likely to cause hurt.*

(Jan Amos Comenius)

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OMUL ESTE UN PROIECT EDUCAȚIONAL

MAN IS AN EDUCATIONAL PROJECT

Abstract: *Man is the entity that „makes” („faber”), that participates in the life of the community, that metamorphoses, that politicizes, that cultivates its own personality, that consciously lives its playful dimension, using opportunities for happiness, that believes in and turns to account the values of the supernatural, that believes in transcendence, that aspires towards knowledge, morality and beauty, that is, has capacity for abstraction. Man is born to live together, that is, to become a social and socialized being; the meaning of his existence is to adapt himself to an agreeable social behaviour, to the specific mentality of a certain community. The potentiality of the human being of continually humanizing itself coincides with the chance of every man to become educated.*

Key words: *education, system, kill, creative person*

What does education mean? Here is one definition, among many other, that meets the author’s intentions: Education, M. Ionescu 1 (2003) says, is” *a system of deliberate or non-deliberate, explicit or implicit, actions and influences that contribute to the formation, moulding, development and transformation of the personality of individuals, irrespective of age, with a view to attaining some ends, established in accordance with the current and future requirements of society*”.

By education, the”inborn predispositions”, as well as the capacities of the environment to influence the moulding of the individual, are activated, education assuming the form of an „interface between individual and environment, with decisive

contributions to the bio-psycho-social transformation of the individual”.

Consequently, education is”a complex social activity”. It is expressed by means of conscious actions, systematized and managed in an organized manner within some organizations. In kindergartens, schools, high schools, faculties, learning and educational activities are carried out, derived from the needs of the society. Such actions are systematically and consciously organized as they aim at achieving some type of education that conforms to the will of the community which finances such actions. The aim of the “conscious actions” is that of”transformation” of the individual into an “active and creative personality”. The sense of the change tends to some type of personality, in conformity with a prototype identified by the”collective subject” as being ideal. So, education is exerted by the society (by means of specialized institutions) for the formation of a *personality*, according to its own will.

Education has ben defined as “*specialized, specifically human activity, that mediates and diversifies the relation between man and his milieu, helping the development of man by means of the society and of the society by means of man*”². Education follows, step by step, the level of economic development, setting itself “*to consciously prepare people for types of society that do not yet exist*”, just as there is the variant that “*society might reject a large number of products offered by institutionalized education*”³. Education acts upon some in-training persons so differently that, in their multitude, no two persons alike result. As many characters as there are faces and as many temperaments as images! The particularity of each child is given by his/her biological and psychic structure.

By his chromosomal organization, man is an instinctual potentiality that, however, needs a desirable socio-cultural milieu, the way a tree, in order to grow, blossom and yield fruit, needs a certain kind of soil, climate, light, water etc. Without grafting, tending, pruning, the tree would yield wild, small, bitter or rather sour fruit, would grow a random crown. The care of man for giving the tree some usefulness pertains to man’s involvement in tending the tree. If the skill in growing trees has become a science, the skill

in growing children is called *education*. It is "a specialized human activity" which ensures and helps the adaptation of man to his social and geographical environment. Education is a controlled and conscious link between man and society, with a view to establishing a timely and ecological, tolerable and sustainable relation. As an essential factor, exerted as a specialized activity required by the society, education is meant to achieve the adaptation of the individual to the mentality and behaviour of the community, and to the latter's specific level of civilization. By education, possible hereditary aggressions become attenuated and the spirit of socialization and humanization is supported.

Society has created for itself a series of institutions by means of which it ensures this harmonization and adaptation of each individual to some particular standard of education. Concurrently, society has created for itself institutions for the punishment of those who break or reject the norms of education. Ultimately, delinquents are the products of lack of education, that is, of awareness and acceptance of the values of norms of social living, of humanization of the relations with the others. Education is the consequence of the learning process, by means of which man assimilates the positive experience of his predecessors and of his context, with a view to preventing the existential and conflictual discomfort in his social and spatial milieu. By learning, man comes to be aware of the educational values which should ensure his personal development and that of his species, bringing him to a position in which to build his own destiny, a desirable future and to become aware of his relation with his real and virtual milieu. By learning, man acquires education, becoming responsible to himself and to his peers, he analyzes and directs his hereditary traits, being capable of gestures by which he humanizes himself and creates culture and civilization. By education, man removes his privations (hunger, thirst, fright, survival, pain, sexuality) by consciously ensuring for himself some social comfort and community existence. Finally, society manifests cultural (educational) care for his future by protection against hereditary aggressions (Freudian complexes) and against supernatural and natural phenomena that threaten the existential balance of humanity.

The term "personality" originates from the Latin "persona", which designates a mask worn by actors on stage, that is, an individual form shown to others. Starting from this semantic foundation, personality has become a dynamic concept, meaning an individual with a set of attributes, qualities, features, endowments, flaws, ensuring his/her identity and individualizing a man, defining him/her with relation to others. By psychic manifestations, temperament, character, conduct, conception, etc., the human personality is a non-repeatable, unique, singular-contour entity.

Educators consider "personality as being a particular cognitive, emotional, behavioural and biological structure of a person, a structure that, on one hand, defines and expresses the individuality of that person and, on the other, influences and mediates that person's relations with the environment" (C. Stan 2001). Any man has a series of particularities that differentiates him from another man and the others. There are as many personalities as there are faces. They pertain to temperament, character, abilities, intelligence, affects, will, as well as to the unequal physical qualities, even in twins. Moreover, personality is contextual, as each man's behaviour is conditioned by and related to the mentality of the group in which he acts. Man's personality is the consequence of a life-style, characterized by existential identity.

The direct influence of the "ontogenetic "development relates to what specialists have called genotypical structure". Human personality develops owing to a genotypical identity and a phenotypical education. The *genotypical identity* refers to the fashioning of the genetic code of each individual, which, more simply, would mean *hereditary traits*. *Phenotypical education* relates to the transforming influence the socio-geographical milieu exerts upon the individual, shaping up his human personality. Psychological research has been slow to assert that heredity can be "educated", even if it speaks of *normal* and *flawed heredity*.

Ontogenetic development depends on *heredity*, *environment* and *education*, specialists say. Children inherit (from *heres*) from predecessors-parents, grandparents, maybe great grandparents-certain traits, that is, a **genetic code**. The combinations of *patterns* are so unforeseeable that an absolute identity of parents and

offspring is impossible, which means that each individual is unique and non-repeatable. Only some hereditary elements are noticeable, that children inherit from their parents, and they relate to physical and behavioural characteristics. Among them are: bearing, height, colour of eyes and hair, hands configuration, paternal signs, as well as conduct, instincts, "mood" etc. Directly observable are some psychic manifestations, such as temperament, emotional intelligence, cognitive intelligence, abilities, but also will, character, dynamism, etc. Impulses or emotional pulsations are a little bit more hidden, but they have extraordinary force in the balance or imbalance of actions of people badly lacking sensible ideas: the value of the survival of our emotional repertoire has been attested by the fact that "they have been imprinted upon our nervous structure as autonomous tendencies of the human soul" (D. Goleman, 2001).

The socio-cultural context is another important factor that influences the shaping of human personality. "*The context includes the environment with which people interact, the space of their existence*", as well as "*the totality of physical and socio-cultural determinations*" that hosts the development of the human being. Considered by Lucian Blaga as "man's second face", space has a capital influence not only upon the individual but also for the whole community (ascending or descending) that includes him. The morphology of space leaves its mark upon personality traits, determining the assimilation of characteristics specific to all who coinhabit the same type of space. Modern psychology speaks about the collective psyche, of the common unconscious. Mountain people perceive the same reality differently from plains people, while the inhabitants of the hot regions react differently to the same phenomenon than people living in the colder regions. Space has a philogenetic role (the idea of the collective unconscious has been put forth), leaving its imprint upon its inhabitants.

Geographical space is not the environment. It represents the geographical level (relief, climate), a kind of existential nest that had something else, too. This "*something*" relates to the social character of human being, that of belonging to a community, a family, a group, a collective mentality. The context, which harbours

the development of human being, determines the individual to adapt to the geographical, social, cultural or virtual milieu. The latter interacts with nature, with the relations and significances suggested by the environment, with which man communicates or which constitutes the active background for communication.

The environment influences the development of human being, favouring it or hindering it in the formation of a natural personality. The environment helps the psychic and physical universe of the being if it stimulates the development of some personality traits. "The personality niche", as it has been called by Super and Harkness (1986), designates the objects and the places the forming individual interrelates with, the child's company, the adult solicitations and models, family and contextual culture, the degree of civilization and civic comfort. The possibility of personality development is favoured by the family atmosphere, which refers to ensuring optimum growth conditions: food, company, individualized space, hygiene, aesthetic surroundings, symbolic suggestions granted by adults (stimulating toys, models), care for psychic balance, stimulation and encouragement of maturation, etc. On the other side, a disfavouring milieu induces the idea of a closed, terrifying space, determined by poor food, unhealthy living space, brutal atmosphere, loss of security and induction of own fragility.

An important role is played by the care of the community for the earliest possible socialization of the children, in nurseries and kindergartens, by their participation, alongside of parents, in trips, leaves, and parties, in acquiring electric and electronic toys, meant to open out new spatial and cultural horizons.

The active medium of parents can be widely opened out to new spaces, which induce in the child longings of eager and creative conquerers. The context of ontogenetic development can constitute *an opportunity*, if it is favourable, or *a blockage*, if it is hostile. So, by context, we mean both the natural configuration (the environment) and the manner in which adults "furnish" the day-to-day activities in this space. Here is the example of the twins (with close heredity), brought up in differing geographical landscapes and social contexts. One would be entrusted for upbringing to a well-off

family, capable of providing the child with all the surrounding comfort, while the other would be entrusted to a disorganized family, living in a sordid milieu. Obviously, after thirty years, the twins would have differing personalities. The latter would be the consequence of the "models" the twins have known. If the two were entrusted to well-off families, but belonging to different geographical settings (mountainous space and marine space), the evolution of their personalities would, surely, also be fundamentally different. So, heredity loses its power of defining primary genotypical behaviour function of the upbringing conditions. The geographical setting and the social-cultural atmosphere are essential factors that support or block some hereditary propension or potential. The spatial context can help forward or inhibit the genotypical manifestations, which already means a form of discreet persuasion of the development and evolution of human personality. Moreover, the milieu can "disturb" the genetic structure by adaptation of the individual to a philogenetic reality. But just as reality is a given element, the milieu also becomes a factor that imprints itself upon personality. The genetic and the philogenetic codes constitute the hard core of personality, imposing not only the specificity of differentiation but also the adherence to some kind of self-control in the process of individual development.

The socio-geographic context is the way it is owing to an exercise in culture. The civilization indices of an environment, which hosts the ontogenetic development of man, are the consequence of a process of education. This is why, scientists (American psychologists, for example), consider education as embedded in the environment factor, because it cannot be separated from an assumed mentality, and the environment exerts its influence owing to education. The environment itself is a bearer of education.

Accepting such a point of view, an individual is the result of the impact between internal data (heredity) and external data (the environment), of a congruence of the individual aspirations of a hereditary type and the collective aspirations of a social type. Man's socialization means a progressive adaptation to the ethical, aesthetic, economic etc., laws specific to a community, norms that are promoted by culture and education. The level of educational

culture confers value and quality upon the contextual milieu which an individual is born in, grows in and adapts to. Actually, this is a blind confrontation between inborn, instinctual tendencies, between genetic yearnings and passions, and the educational, social and behavioural pressures of a mentality, specific to the community inhabiting a certain place. Social life has created for itself a legislative apparatus of adaptation (written and unwritten orders, laws, regulations, and traditions), resorting for assistance to specialized institutions, such as schools, church, state, and public opinion. When norms and laws of the community are broken, the community acts through punishments and judicial bodies. European psychology considers that education remains an essential factor for ontogenetic development and prefers not to include it in the environment factor. Thus, heredity, environment and education contribute equally to the child's upbringing, and education is an element of the continuing formation of the individual, within the process of his/her human becoming.

Studying the **pathology of psychic life**, Doctor S. Freud had his name linked to psychoanalysis, according to which the psychic structure of man has three levels: conscious, unconscious and pre-conscious. The unconscious "houses" the hereditary part of human personality, with a power to determine the manifestations of the individual, by uncontrolled outbursts. The so-called "complexes" subjugate man's destiny, ordering his reactions, yearnings, and passions. Oedipus, the Sophoclean character, is a typical example of a man driven by *heredity*, because his instinctual pulsations cannot be controlled by his own reason. His unconscious outbursts (of an unconscious type), identified by the oracle, are the consequence of a malefic heredity, stronger than the rational conscious. He came to be criminal and incestuous, because of his suppressed consciousness, inherited from his predecessors, in whose psychological configuration elements of their consciousnesses have "fallen"; consciousness in conflict with moral and social norms. Furthermore, Lucian Blaga, speculating, in his philosophy, on the options of psychologist Jung, assigns a "cosmotic" character to the unconscious, extremely well-organized, even better structured than consciousness. Forming-together with consciousness- the

spirit, ” the unconscious does not represent a mere residue of images and regular drives, but a cosmic psychic-spiritual reality. The unconscious has its own horizons, accents, attitudes, formative inclinations, which can be totally different from those of the conscience, but which have their personalizing role in the consciousness”. From this point of view, heredity would play “*a devouring role*” in the lives of the individuals. The latter would not even be responsible for their deeds. The yield of such a view would allow including a cultural significance, of an educational type, into the existential gestures of a person.

Inborn inheritance is not an absolute authority that fundamentally marks man’s destiny. The genetic code can be educated by behavioural control and selection. So, it has been observed that heredity loses its echoes if a child comes (accidentally to be brought up by animals, and atypical manifestations of the species have been identified. The genetic constraints do not mark man’s existence, even only if the instinct for survival is low during the first years, the child being “assisted” up until adolescence by parents or adults in becoming. The instinctual predispositions-inherited- can be controlled and educated, allowing man not to be a “victim” of his predecessors, and the latter not to be blamable for the ontogenesis of their descendants. Otherwise, it would mean that destiny decides upon his life, and the semantics of Sophoclean dramas would essentially mark our existence.

Psychology treatises comment on the multitude of theories that refer to the general development of the individual, as a human entity. We will dwell on some conceptions produced in the Romanian area, convinced that a theory fits in with some practice if it achieves a coincidence with the specificity of the thinking, action and feeling of the community that has generated it. We shall be dwelling on the ontogenetic theories of the Romanian philosophers Vasile Conta and Lucian Blaga.

1) ”Never has a great man, who has reached the culminating point of evolution of his family, had a child or a descendant to equal him”, says philosopher Vasile Conta in *Theory of Universal Undulation* (1877). According to his theory, the organic life of a human species is, by fate, subject to increase and decrease,

symbolized as a hemi-circle, including an ascending curve, a culminating point and a descending curve. If, within his genealogical branch, a man is located on an ascending curve, his descendants will progressively have more vigour, while if he is located on a descending curve, his descendants will lose some of the hereditary vitality of his parents. According to V. Conta, ”two elements cooperate in the transformation of organic life: a fixation one, called *heredity*, and a mobility one, called *adaptation to the environment*. Heredity would be the conservative factor in the evolution of descendants (as a link between all the individuals in the genealogical branch), while adaptation to the environment would be the active factor, the refreshing by new forces of the balance of life (“mobile balance”). Adaptation is defined as” *a law by virtue of which an organism tends to become modified, so that it should appear to have been particularly made for the circumstances in which it is placed and for the kind of life that impose these circumstances upon him*”. (V. Conta).

The man-environment compatibility means the congruence of heredity (as genetic fixation) and surroundings (as an opportunity for incentive to activity and mobility). Consequently, from a heredity point of view, each individual is dependent upon his place in the genealogical undulation, dependent, in its turn, on its place in the genealogy of the community, race, culture to which it belongs. There are incentives for dynamizing a position on the descending curve, such as blood crossing, change of habitat (emigration):” *a new race will be better constituted and will produce more vitality if it is the result of as man yas possible crossings and emigrations within a relatively short time, and if the human races the emigrants that are crossing come from are nearer to the culminating points of their undulations at the moment of their emigration*”. It is the example illustrated by L. Rebreanu, in the tale”*Ciuleandra*”, where a landowner’s family, perceiving their genealogical devatization, try to refresh their”blood” by crossing with a pretty girl, a rural “ciuleandra”dancer.

On the other side, the change of geographical surroundings places the individual within a new reality, dynamizing him/her and enegizing him/her. The people coming into a community are more

motivated to assert themselves, finding, within themselves, the resources for vitalization, with a view to adaptation to the new habitat.

In conclusion, the heredity of an individual depends upon his position on the undulation of his genealogical branch, a position which also determines the quality of his/her genes and anticipates the latter's evolution. Adaptation to the environment presupposes improvement of the opportunities for existential vitality, and a balance between heredity and space confers the chance for a desirable living. Psychopedagogically, Conta's theory places the individual in a fatalistic position, the individual being the victim of his/her position on the existential undulation. The genealogical branch, like the life of the human being, has an organic evolution, being born, enjoying fulfilment and grace, and ending in exhaustion and disappearance.

2). From a heredity point of view, man is the consequence of the "stylistic matrix", says philosopher Lucian Blaga, of a "style" as "permanent" medium, "a supreme yoke under which we live", that manifests itself unconsciously and expresses itself as such in people's deeds and gestures (*"The stylistic matrix is like a bundle of categories, that engraves itself, from the unconscious, upon all human creations and even upon life, as it cannot be moulded by the spirit"*). Belonging to a community that inhabits a place over a long time, man has unconscious characteristics imprinted upon his spirit, stronger, psychically, than the conscious ones. The spatial horizon imposes upon the human spirit a series of "categorical garnishes" by which it unconsciously probes the reality of mysteries surrounding it. With the aid of consciousness, man knows the concrete world, while the unconscious acts for the knowing of the unknown, of the surrounding abyss. Consequently, heredity is not a mere genetic inheritance, but has a set of specific "inheritances", acquired by man's inhabiting a horizon of space.

Lucian Blaga analyzes the stylistic matrix of certain peoples, showing, for instance, that "the traditional Romanian sheep-breeding space" constitutes a basic imprint upon the Romanian spirit. : "this soul abandons itself to the protective care of a destiny with infinite hills and valleys, of a destiny which, symbolically speaking,

'descends from the mountainous area, culminates on the mountainous area and ends on a mountainous area'". He then goes on to specify that *"this spatial adherence belongs to the subterranean floors of our psycho-spiritual existence"*. As a unique identity, man is style, but belongs to a stylistic matrix because no-one can jump over his shadow.

One thing should be noted: man is educable; he needs education to socialize him, making him aware of the virtues and values of culture and civilization, which are, themselves, a consequence of the educational exercise. By education, heredity can be improved and tamed; by education, the environment can become an ally in obtaining desirable behavioural configurations; by means of education, man polishes his personality, ensuring its chance of enjoying happiness and the pleasure of seeing his peers happy.

Earlier we mentioned the fact that the factors of ontogenetic development belong to the "heredity engineering", to "social engineering", and to "institutional engineering". The "pedagogically" exerted constraints upon the child as well as the concessions made by human nature, confirm man's capacity to be educated. The sources of educatability, which might help forming conditioned and unconditioned reflexes, according to L. Antonesei, would be: anatomic-physiological maturation; predominance of the intelligent conduct over the instinctual one, and the role of cultural determinations. The capacity for reaction to stimuli coming from the social milieu and man's receptivity to the values that provide comfort and well-being mean human educatability.

If man is an educatable being and is permissive to influences and adaptation, which ensures him such a feature? Does his handling in his becoming not constitute "a threat" that affects his natural development, and the controlled action of education a masked manipulation? How much Procoustianism and how much freedom exist there in the process of educatability? The questions above still maintain the aggressive potential of the intervention of society in the formation of the young in accordance with its will and, possibly, with its own look. The responsible education of the social presupposers the identification of core values the process of educatability tends to. The formation-development of personality

pursues the identification and stimulation of those positive elements of behaviour that should ensure a desirable social and consensually acceptable integration. Educational values neutralize primitive instincts and pulsations, for the integration of each individual within a humanistic living together. The man covets the fulness of values, aspiring, first following models, then improving himself, towards acquisition of behaviour, convictions, beliefs, abilities etc., that should offer him happiness, well-being, social and personal balance.

What are these values and who selects them? It is obvious that each society has its own kind of attachment to some axiological standards that configure its options. For example, the current period, called *postmodernist saeculum*, shows negligence to the classical traditional values (truth, the good, the nice, faith) and puts forth others for a change, such as cooperation, tolerance, freedom, libertinage, psychic comfort etc. Education in the spirit of other values than those of modern society appears to be a contradictory phenomenon. The mature generation wants to achieve an education that proposes other standards than those to which the educatable tend.

Being a reality that is so hard to conceptualize in a clear and acceptable expression, education is contextual and, consequently, is achieved by influences and actions, within an institutional framework or by spontaneous influences and actions. They have been pointed out by educators, being called formal education, non-formal education and informal education. The educational field represents "*the sum of influences that man individually suffers and can assimilate*" (D. Salade, 1955), and it identifies with the significance of the space, time and facts of life of the individual. The deciding society exerts its educational influence upon children by means of specialized institutions, manned with professionals, but the same society exerts spontaneous influences upon children by means of their families, social-cultural milieu, the media etc. : "*each individual finds himself, concomitantly and successively, under the influence of several educogenic factors, that cause changes in the structure of his personality*".

There exist, within the category of the so-called "educogenic factors", some that have negative influences, that produce

undesirable changes. The school educational field is part of the social context and the new theories of "contextual learning" justifies the fact that acquisition of some behaviour ("educations") would be the consequence of a permanent relation of man to his existential milieu. As a whole, society constitutes an "educational city" (E. Faure, 1974), in which there is an "intimate blending" of the individual and his milieu, the aim being that each person in the "city" should be a citizen, capable and conscious of the need to assume the educational function of the milieu specific to that "city".

The negative influences that society exerts, directly or sinuously, are (the formula "can be" must be excluded) educational (proposing acquisition of axiological values) and non-educational (by acquisition of ill behaviours and asocial convictions). This is the case of pupils who "learn" how to "handle it" by copying over or cribbing, of youths who "learn" how to use drugs, of adults who "learn" impudence and alteration of truth, of people who assume false values and justify their laziness, aggressiveness, hatred, envy, insensitivity etc., or of others who know how to steal clean (e. g. tax dodging, money laundering, intercession). All the above exist in the hidden mentality of a society, pregnantly influencing the people's personality. Education has the task not only to inoculate respect for the accepted cultural, social, contextual values, but also to remove the corruptible effects derived from negative influences.

School- as an institution of specialized education- is the organization in which a systematic process is unfolding, designed by documents and programs. School represents an exemplary educogenic milieu, whose purpose is to achieve systematic learning of the aspects of education by means of an exercise that is controllable by the society. By virtue of an educational ideal, of educational aims and objectives, the educational institutions ensure the formation and development of the young, making them capable of acceptable social integration from all points of view.

The view of G. G. Antonescu, a remarkable Romanian educator of the inter-war period, author of some basic works in education and the history of pedagogy is worth considering. In the

volume *General Pedagogy (1930)*, extremely modern ideas are expressed, as regards education and its content:

1. "education is only achieved within the society";

2. comparing social life to organic life and the role of the process of renewal of the social organism, Antonescu asserts that "the social organism is subject to the natural order, to physiological laws and, equally, to the moral order". Of the heredity characteristics, mention is made of primary features (inherited from parents and transmitted by them to descendants) and secondary features (acquired in course of one's life by contact with the environment), which, in turn, are transmitted to successors. Examples are provided, such as the intellectual or moral qualities of a parent, transmitted to his/her children, owing to certain cultural influences and to the influences of the social milieu;

3. During a man's growth, there are unintentional influences (of the older generation upon the new generation, the basis of the child's instinct for imitation). These influences are exerted by parents, family, the immediate social milieu, as well as by the environment ("relief has outstanding importance not only for the physical development but also for abilities pertaining to the individual's soul"). The individual is subject to an intentional influence "aiming at either the development of the natural characteristics of the child or the transmission of the cultural assets of the older generation", which means *education*. It is to be noted that not any influence of the older generation is considered to be *education*; only the intentional influence:

4. The relation between the two types of influences (mark that unintentional influence does not belong to the concept of *education*-excluding what, today, is called *informal education* (a meaningless phrase) determines the establishment of a relation between school and family: "You may have distinguished educators in a school, who prove, by the measures taken concerning their pupils that they offer the best guidance, the best education, that they, consequently, exercise the most favourable intentional influence upon their pupils, and yet, if you ask yourself why the results are not the desired ones, you will realize that the decisive cause lies with the family's influence";

5. Education has a social role, but this does not mean that we deny the significance of the individual ("the fact that, by the process of renewal, new individuals must be assimilated within the social organism does not mean that these individuals must be like all the others, it does not mean that the greatest variety of such individuals is not admissible");

6. From such a simple definition of education ("intentional influence"), G. G. Antonescu derives the concept of pedagogy as a science which establishes well thought-out and scientifically grounded norms to influence the child's upbringing: "pedagogy is the science which, based on knowledge of man's nature and considering the ideal humanity must strive for, establishes a system of principles, to guide the influence of the educator upon the one being educated";

7. Education can transform human character, which is determined by heredity ("man's nature") and the environment ("the nonintentional influence of the social and natural milieu"). The sense of the transformation relates to the educational ideal, a virtual landmark of values: ("The ideal in education, G. G. Antonescu specifies, consists in cultivating all strengths that constitute the psycho-physical organism of the individual, as well as the ideal values aiming at inspiring the former and lending them direction; in other words, education will continually tend to achieve the ideal values and to idealize the real strengths, that is, towards an active idealism". We are talking here of integral education, that is, of an outstanding care of the educator for the harmonious and complex growth of the person being educated, in the intellectual, moral, aesthetic, civic, pragmatic etc., aspects;

The above considerations are important for the concerns of contemporary pedagogy regarding education. The extension of intentional influences from the statute of a child to that of an adult, meaning continuing education, and awareness of educating the "city", the society, such as its influences (of the "environment") should become "educational" ("the educational city") are current challenges that render both the individual and the social milieu he/she belongs to responsible for the continuous readjustment of the

educational condition. The individual is as educatable as the society that has yielded him/her.

In conclusion, the multiplicity of the knowledge about nature and society, the complexity of the relations within the group, the behavioural interference of populations, the historical contexts, a. o., have made education into a requirement for dignified co-existence, which should calm down as many as possible of the individual and collective yearnings, causes of many conflicts and tensions.

The transmission of the experience accumulated in the process of relationing becomes difficult if not structured, tamed and assisted by the society. Knowledge becomes ever varied, the interferences of mentality and behaviour come to be diversified, man's personality has more and more unforeseeable manifestations. So that the transmission of models and values towards the new generations, the acquisition by children and youths of knowledge, of the formation of behaviour, require a specialized activity.

Man is a permanent project, a continuous "making". To build him, specialists are needed, who are concerned with education and learning about the becoming of personality. In the formation of man, the most dangerous influences are the random ones. This is why, in the course of history, the care of each generation and of the community has concerned the upbringing and education of children in conformity with the educational ideal (stated or not) of each society. Because education, primarily, is related to social life. Society alone asks for education and an educated man alone belongs to the society. The term "mitocan" (boor) is used about a man whose gestures and behaviour are not liked by the society. "Mitocan" (Boor) (as an uneducated man) derives from "mitoc", an improvised structure besides a monastery, for a former monk, expelled for disobeying specific norms of co-habitation and conduct in a monastery. Only a man who remains in the "city" belongs to the category of the "educated", because education serves the society.

Elaborating on the metaphor of education as a form of culture (*educare*=to cultivate), we will say that an educated society is like a tended garden, while an uneducated one is like barren land. Within social evolution, education and instruction have confirmed

the societal character of the formation and development of human personality.

by copying assignments and tests.." scrie,te rog,:"...by copying over or cribbing."

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THE CONSTANT COMPARATIVE METHOD OR GROUNDED THEORY METHODOLOGY

TEORIA METODOLOGICĂ PRIVIND PERMANENTA RELAȚIE COMPARATIVĂ DINTRE METODE ȘI MOTIVAȚIE

Abstract: *The text considers the grounded theory, as a general theory development methodology grounded on the data systematically gathered and analysed. It deals with the similarities and dissimilarities in comparison to other qualitative research models, as well as to diffusion with risk. In the end the issue of grounded theory is considered in its interrelation with the data, as well as its development in the course of a research.*

Key words: *grounded theory methodology*

The aim of the papers is to drive thoughts on the purpose, use and contribution of grounded theory methodology. We will not deal with the suggested procedures of methodology or with the logic underlying them. This has already been abundantly dealt with in the literature (see, for example, Corbin and Strauss, 1990; Glaser, 1978; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss 1987; Strauss and Corbin 1990, Charmaz, 1983; 1990).

Grounded theory is general methodology for theory development grounded on the data systematically gathered and analysed. The theory is developed in the course of an undertaken research through continual interrelations between analysis and the process data gathering. The main characteristic of the analytic approach is “general method of (constant) comparative method” (Glaser & Straus 1967). Therefore the approach is often called constant comparative method (for original formulation see Glaser &

Straus 1965/1967). Since it was introduced thirty years ago, a large number of guidelines and procedures has been developed through the research experience of those using the methodology; these procedures have initially been designed to constantly improve the methodology in research. It is considered that the suggested guidelines and procedures allow great openness for invention and facilitate creativity – the feature we will often refer to in the discussion.

In the case of this methodology, theory can be generated initially from the data or, if the existing (grounded) theories seem inadequate for the given field of research, the theories can be elaborated or modified while the arising data are in detail brought into correlation with them and compared. The methodology of grounded research explicitly includes generating of theory and carrying out of pedagogic research as two parts of the same process (Glaser 1978: 2). Suggesting the approach to theory development Glaser and Strauss were completely aware that the alternative approaches to creating and elaboration of a theory – without explicitly connecting it with the real research being undertaken – were at the time very popular; they were either supposed or certain authors passionately advocated them (at the time Parsons, Merton and Blau); the same situation can be found today (see Laumann, Habermas or Alexander). In this sense, and also having in mind its involvement in general instructions, as well as increasingly more specific procedures for grounded theory creation, this approach is still unique. Impressed by the radical research approach to theory development, Baszanger (Baszanger 1992: 53-55), French sociologist has recently commented on industrious and detailed work necessary for generating of resulting concepts and finding relations existing among them.

Some similarities and dissimilarities are in comparison to other models.

The essence of the model can best be grasped in comparison with other similar models of qualitative research. The similarities could refer to the following:

- studies of grounded theory have given some similarities to other forms of qualitative research;
- data sources are the same: interviews and field observations, as well as various documents (including diaries, letters, autobiographies, historic narratives, newspapers and other media materials). Video tapes can also be used.
- like other qualitative researchers, theoreticians relying on grounded theories can use quantitative data or combine quantitative and qualitative techniques of analysis (see Glaser & Strauss 1967: 185-220);
- those advocating the methodology assume, like many other researchers, that some form of social science is possible and desirable;
- those relying on grounded theory have redefined the usual scientific canons for the purpose of human behaviour study (see the explicit discussions in Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1990);
- the common redefining involves insisting on the fact that the work of researchers is interpretative, and that interpretations have to include perspectives and voices of studied people;
- Interpretations are necessary for understanding of actions of individual and collective actors included in a research. Nevertheless, those using the procedures of grounded theory share a common position with many other qualitative researchers. They accept responsibilities for their interpretative roles. They do not believe in the mere reporting or giving voices to standpoints of people, groups or organizations which are the subject of study;
- the researchers accept further responsibility for the interpretation of what has been observed, listened to or read.

The main differences refer to the following:

- putting accent on theory development – the researchers can focus on various levels of theory when using grounded theory procedures. However many grounded theory studies have been focused to the development of substantive theory. This is due to the extraordinary substantive (additional, broader) interests of

researchers relying on grounded theory, not due to the nature of their methodology;

- the higher level of “general” theory is also possible, but in the case of grounded theory it differs from more deductive types of general theory because of the way it appears, i. e. it is generated and because of the development going on through the interrelation with the data gathered in certain current research (see, for example Glaser and Strauss 1970);

- regardless the level of theory, explicit demand for verification of its resulting hypothesis (the statements appearing within concepts) is built into the style of extensive data gathering interrelated with theoretical analysis. This is done throughout the course of the research project, it is not assumed that this verification is possible only through the final assessment of qualitative research.

- The procedures of the methodology encourage possibility to develop theory with great conceptual density and important meaning variations.

Other characteristics differing the methodology from other research form refer to the procedures:

- Certain other general procedures have made the methodology effective and influential. Apart from the constant comparisons, the procedures involve systematic raising of generative issues, as well as those questions referring to concept, theoretical sampling, systematic coding procedures, suggested guidelines for reaching conceptual (not only descriptive) “density”, variations and conceptual integrations. Conceptualization and diagram visualisation of “conditional matrix” (Corbin & Strauss 1988; Strauss & Corbin 1990) have recently facilitated in the reach of determining conditions and consequences, at every scale level, from “macro” to “micro” level and to their integration into resulting theory.

Having in mind that in the following text we will deal with conditioning matrix, it will be useful to say several words about this analytic instrument. The matrix can be visualized “as a set of circles, one within the other, while every level suits various aspects of the world. The outer rings include those conditioning

characteristics which are the furthest in relation to action/interaction, while the inner rings contain these conditioning characteristics closest to the set of action/interaction (Strauss & Corbin 1990: 161). The levels involve conditions ranging from international to national, organizational and institutional, sub-organizational and sub-institutional, group, individual and collective to actions referring to certain phenomenon. In any study, conditions at each level have their own significance, but in what way, it is to be determined. The researcher should build specific conditional characteristic in each level referring to the chosen field of research, regardless of the level in question (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 161).

Risk facing diffusion

The methodology is now facing risks inevitable when something becomes modern. One part of the risk refers to the fact that the users do not understand significant aspects of methodology, nevertheless claiming that they use them in their research. For example, they often discover the basic process, but do not succeed in developing in conceptually, because they anticipate, but do not understand that variation provides grounded theory analysis with its conceptual richness. It seems that people convinced that they are dealing with a study relying on grounded theory often focus only on coding, as the main and most exclusive characteristic of the methodology, but they are not dealing with theoretical coding. The other part of the risk appearing due to the sudden theory diffusion is that some researchers do not want to get involved in theory development on purpose. Consequently, they ignore the central feature of the methodology, often using its procedures in a way which is not appropriate and anticipating alternative methodology which might be better ones to serve the purpose.

Theory and interpretation

The theory is designed to incite further development of effective theory. Why theory? In the end, a whole conception of social “science” nowadays finds itself under the attack, especially by some postmodern and feministic advocates. Strauss himself considers that a great number of those defending faith in science

have again and again explained and defended the reasons for science and its principles. According to him, a man does not have to adopt positivistic position or procedures and methods specific for natural sciences in order to advocate desirability of social science.

On the other hand, a man does not have to insist on the demand that all social research, or even qualitative research, have to lead to development or theory use. Qualitative forms of interpretation include all the possibilities between the two extremes from the statement: “Let the informant speak, and do not stand in his/her way”, through the theme analyses to pattern (biographic, social, etc) explications, theoretical frames or models and theory which is formulated at various levels of abstraction (Tesch 1990). All these forms certainly are useful for some purposes, but they are not so useful for others. Therefore, he does not claim that creation of theory is more significant than any other shape of interpretation, or that theory produces more useful and meaningful results; he only claims that theory should be grounded in a way we have described in the text above – in interrelation with the data and it should develop in the course of a particular research.

Beyond all this, we cannot but ask ourselves: What does theory consist of? How does it look like and when does it represent itself? What is its relation towards “reality” and “truth”? What is its relation towards actors’ perspectives? What is the use of it and what kind of responsibility do the researchers/theoreticians have to produce it. Strauss himself has the following standpoint: He first considers the question: what does the theory consist of? His view on the matter is the following: theory consists of reasonable, plausible relations assumed among the concepts and sets of concepts (although only plausible, their plausibility should be strengthened through continuous research). Without concepts there can be no propositions and consequently no cumulative scientific knowledge based on the plausible yet verifiable propositions. (For explication Strauss recommends the work of Herbert Bloomer “Science without concepts” 1934/1969, where he clearly points out the necessity of concepts and conceptual relations for scientific understanding).

The methodology of grounded theory is designed to lead the researcher in creation of a theory which is “conceptually dense” – i.

e. which has numerous conceptual relations. These relations stated as proposition, are, like in literary every other qualitative research, represented in discursive forms. They are presented in abundant context of descriptive and conceptual writing (Glaser & Strauss 1967: 31-32; 1987: 263-264). Discursive presentation catches conceptual density and descriptively expresses substantive contents of the study far better than this is done by the form of propositional presentation in natural sciences (typically described as “if-then”).

Theoretical conceptualization means that the researchers relying on the grounded theory are interested in the patterns of actions and interaction between and among different types of social units (i. e. actors). The researchers also to a great extent deal with discovering of processes – not necessarily in the sense of levels or phases, but in the sense of reciprocal changes in the patterns of actions/interaction and in relation the process itself has towards the changes of conditions, no matter whether they are intrinsic or extrinsic.

Strauss points out that the earlier allusions to the importance of substantive grounded theory in the sense of what a researcher has actually seen and/or heard should be accompanied by two additional characteristics of grounded theories, regardless of their levels of abstraction:

- Firstly, theories are always possible to follow and connect with the data they have arisen from – within the interactive context of data gathering and analysis, where the analyst is also a crucially important actor in interaction.
- Secondly, grounded theories are very “fluid”. Having in mind that they encompass interaction of multiple actors and since they emphasize temporality and process, they indeed have extraordinary fluidity. They demand research on each new situation in order to see whether it suits, how could it suit or how could it not suit. They demand openness of the researcher, grounded on “ever” appropriate character of each theory. Due to all this, for Strauss and others grounded theories are not just another set of phrases, they are systematic statements on plausible relations instead.

Answering the question how grounded theory looks like, Strauss and others have often come from the often quoted text, i. e. chapter on “the context of closed awareness”:

There are at least five significant structural conditions contributing to the existence and sustainability of the context of closed awareness. Inherently, the context of closed awareness is inclined to instability, while the patient is moving either towards doubt or towards full awareness of. . . the end. The basic reasons for instability. . . demand only a brief overview, since they have already been described. First of all, each break in structural relations which leads to the context of closed awareness can lead to its disappearance. These conditions involve (the examples are given) some unpredictable discovery of what has been kept like a secret or warning appearing from organizational conditions. New symptoms will probably and understandingly confuse and alarm the patient – the longer its retrogressive flow, it becomes harder to provide him with reasonable (plausible) explanations; although very complicated drama with wrong representations can be going on for the sake of the patient. Even when it is so, in a way it becomes more and more difficult to keep. . . trust for a long period of time.

The second risk for closed awareness. . . is that some treatments do not have sense for the patient who does not recognize that he is dying. . . From time to time, moreover, a patient might no longer be able to fight his increasingly worse physical condition, if a nurse does not interpret the condition and the symptoms. In order to do this, it might seem to the nurses that they are forced to tell the patient that he/she is dying. Not to reveal a secret. . . could mean isolate the patient, which is opposite to the central value of the care for elderly, i. e. to make him/her feel as comfortable as possible. . . This leads us to the question if and how the medical staff can actually arrange the change of the context of close awareness. Anyway, when the family knows the truth, a threat to preserving the context of closed awareness is increased, due to the fact that the relatives are under greater temptation to signalize the truth. (the statement is followed by systematically given consequences to: patients, nurses, doctors, relatives, the ward and the hospital) (Glaser & Strauss 1964: 29-46).

The author's attitude towards the relations between theory, reality and truth regards issues we will briefly outline in the text below. The author himself points out that in the discussed questions

are based on the American pragmatic position (Dewey, 1937; Mead 1917). Theory is not a formulation of a discovered aspect of reality pre-existing "out there".

To think in a different manner would mean to take a positivistic stand, which is rejected by Strauss and other advocates of the grounded theory, as well as by the majority of other qualitative researchers. The prevailing attitude is that the truth is taking place (Addelson 1990): Theories are interpretations derived from the given perspectives as adopted or studied by researchers. To say that a given theory is an interpretation – and that it consequently might be wrong – does not mean to deny that the judgements of its validity or possible usefulness can be made.

All interpretations, no matter whether they have the characteristics or status of theory are time limited – in two ways. Majority of grounded theory advocates emphasize that they are always temporary, never determined for ever; their own nature allows infinite elaboration and partial negation (qualification). Secondly, like many other types of knowledge, theories are limited in time: researchers and theoreticians are not gods, but common experts who live in certain period of time, who are raised in specific societies, influenced by contemporary ideas and ideologies, etc. Therefore, the conditions changing at any level of conditional matrix, it influences the validity of theories, i. e. their relation towards contemporary social reality. Theories are constantly becoming outdated or they need qualification, as underlined by Strauss:

Interpretative nature of grounded theories means that such conceptualization means intellectual process, going on through the whole duration of the given research project and having multiple perspectives of actors and analytic interpretation.

According to Strauss, grounded theory procedures promote the possibility, drawing attention to, for example, in vivo concepts reflecting deep concerns of the actors; their procedures also force the researchers to examine and to sceptically get back to their own interpretations at each step of the research. The main argument of the methodology is the necessity to search for multiple perspectives throughout the course of the research. The principle contributes to building of a theory which includes incompetent conceptions, in the

same time helping to prevent a theory from becoming their captive. Not the perspectives of all the actors are possible to be relieved, nor it should be the case, but those perspectives sooner or later turning out to be significantly relevant have to be incorporated in the appearing theory (we are dealing with “multiple voices” of our subjects, but it should also be pointed out that these voices are also conceptually interpreted by a researcher who is following the methodology). The procedures of coding – including the important procedures of constant comparison, theoretical sampling, conceptual development and other relations – help to protect the researchers from accepting any of the voices for granted.

Concepts of grounded theory are formulated and analytically developed, conceptual relations are postulated, including multiple perspectives of actors. Therefore grounded theories, representing abstractions, just like any other theory, are grounded both directly and indirectly on the perspectives of various actors to the studied phenomena. Grounded theories connect the multiplicity of perspectives with the patterns and processes of action/interaction which are further connected with carefully specified conditions and consequences. Efficient theoretical coding is also to great extent improved by theoretical sensitivity (Glaser 1987; Strauss & Corbin 1990). It consists of disciplinary or professional knowledge, as well as of research and personal experience, brought into the research by the researcher. This point is connected with the previous discussion on conditional matrix, due to the fact that theoretically more sensitive researchers towards class, sex, race, power, etc will be more careful to the issues. The procedures of theoretical sampling and constant comparison are related to theoretical sensitivity.

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GIFTEDNESS AND ASSOCIATED DISORDERS: OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER

SUPRADOȚĂȚII ȘI DIFICULTĂȚILE ASOCIATE COMPORTAMENTALE

Abstract: *Although it is common to find a great deal of literature related to the education of gifted pupils, information regarding gifted children with associated disorders is less frequent. This article refers to cases of highly intelligent children with Oppositional Defiant Disorder. This summary is the result of our personal training, research and experience. In this article we have placed special emphasis on the fact that the descriptions of the cases include all the necessary information available for performing the diagnosis. In the descriptions we will only give those most essential results in order to illustrate the diagnoses. The article concludes with the educational implications and the treatment for these children and, more specifically, with the treatment carried out in those cases of children with intellectual giftedness.*

Key words: *giftedness, associated disorders, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, case studies and educational implications.*

INTRODUCTION

Love and hate towards others are not opposed entities, but rather both originate from the same source: desire and dissatisfaction. Children learn to wait to obtain their satisfaction and

also to give in order to receive. Aggressiveness is an energetic potential and to suppress it completely leads to passivity (Ajuriaguerra, 1980).

E. English and G. H. J. Pearson think that children display aggressive reactions on specific occasions:

- When they are in a state of real danger or when they try to free themselves by attacking and destroying the object or person which they fear, by losing their temper with somebody.

- When they feel deprived of a desired pleasure: their anger is directed against the object or person which is the cause of their deprivation.

- When they try to do something which constitutes a satisfaction and, at the same time, they are denied it. Their anger is directed against the person who induces them to do something which is prohibited and against those who prevent them from carrying it out.

It should be pointed out that the state of chronic aggressiveness occurs when a child finds itself exposed to certain danger and to specific privations or persistent temptations.

According to Noshpitz and Spielman, hyper-aggressive children can be divided into four categories:

- A child in the throes of a separation and frustrated reacts very violently and even dangerously, to such an extent that any argument may end in an outburst.

- A child who tries to dominate, fights to achieve it, divides in order to rule, separates and whose actions are aimed at ruling the world of the adults. In his conduct, sadistic aspects may be evident. He is very sensitive to his environment and he knows how to take control of the situation.

- A child who is aggressive because of its erotic aspect, whether in terms of sex games in which he participates or in the satisfaction he obtains in obliging others to perform sexual acts.

- An anxious child whose actions are the product of great anxiety and who in a state of tension explodes to gain attention. On the one hand, this tension is related to certain primitive phantoms which invade the region of consciousness, drowning the personality and, on the other hand, it is related to the fear of a

reprimand: a fear which is so important that it impels the child to seek out a punishment with the aim of preventing all the possible reprisals (Ajuriaguerra, 1980).

The DSM-IV-TR assigns children with Oppositional Defiant Disorder characteristics such as the following: they often get angry; they often argue with adults; they often refuse to obey requests and rules; they often deliberately annoy others; they often accuse others of their own mistakes or bad behaviour; they are often susceptible to or easily annoyed by others; they are often angry and resentful; they are often rancorous and revengeful.

It is common for these children not to think that they act in an oppositional way, but rather they believe it is a problem of others and that they make unreasonable demands of them.... Frequently, the parents underline that these children appear to be insensitive to punishment and are unimpressionable and difficult to deal with. Furthermore, they like taking risks and are daring and very insensitive to punishments and physical harm. They appear to be exceptionally tough as though pain does not affect them. The possession of these character traits from the early years of their lives is significant because of the experiences which they produce and the reactions which they provoke in others.... It is very likely that these children cause more conflicts and problems than the majority of children but, because they are so recalcitrant to punishment, they also receive more than would be needed to control the majority of children of the same age (Millon & Davis, 1998).

Unlike the Antisocial Disorder, they do not violate the basic rights of others or the principal social norms with regard to their age.

The Oppositional Defiant Disorder usually makes its appearance before the age of 8 and, in general, not later than the beginning of adolescence. The negative symptoms usually flourish in the family environment but, with the passage of time, they may occur in other situations. Their beginning is typically gradual and usually lasts for months or years. In a significant proportion of cases Oppositional Defiant Disorder constitutes an evolutionary antecedent of the dissociative disorder (DSM-IV-TR) but many

children who suffer from this affliction never have serious problems as a result.

Oppositional children openly show their unease and tension and use them both to annoy others and also to seek attention and care.

They also usually disguise their apprehension behind repetitive complaints of the kind that other people do not understand them and that life is full of deceit: unhappy, irritable and oppositional, they are wont to use physical complaints in order to disguise their hostile urges and to hide their profound anger and resentment. Oppositional children show slight and transitory types of *conversion symptoms* such as facial tics or laryngitis and their complaints about vague sensations and pains are aimed in part at attracting attention and obtaining care as well as at worrying others and laying the blame on them. When they yield or accede to the wishes of others they feel anger and resentment for having allowed themselves to be so “weak” and having surrendered their independence. On the other hand, if they show themselves to be defiant and affirmative, they suffer anxiety for having placed their safety, based on dependence, in danger (Millon & Davis, 1998).

Although there exist indicators of a biological nature which predispose some children to acquiring an antisocial personality pattern, psychological and sociological factors have an important influence on the moulding of the moment, the nature and the way in which these dispositions are expressed. It should also be taken into account the fact that psychological influences may be sufficient in themselves to activate these types of anomalous behaviour. It is highly likely that biological and psychosocial factors interact in a very complex way (Millon & Davis, 1998).

SAMPLE CASES

Below, we will describe various cases of gifted children with this disorder.

*** Rubén, a child of 7 years and 2 months, attended our consulting rooms in September, 1997 when he was in second**

grade of Primary School. He showed maladjusted behaviour in the school, social and family ambit.

Development and first learning. After a pregnancy of 41 weeks and 5 days he was delivered by caesarean section. The scores in the Apgar Test were 9 after the first minute and 10 after five. He was breast-fed for four months. As a baby he was very restless and given to crying: “he never stopped crying from 18 hours after birth until he was 2”. The reaction of the child to noise and pain was slight. For example, when he was vaccinated, he hardly cried. He was clumsy in his movements.

His linguistic, social, motor and sphincter development was normal. He was always considered a very lively child with an excellent capacity for observation and memory. At 18 months he knew the colours, the numbers from 1 to 10 and the vowels. At 2 years old he could draw the human body and at 3 he knew the alphabet and asked questions about any new words that he learnt. From the age of 3 and a half, approximately, he was very curious about things and asked exploratory questions: about Archimedes’ principle, why the Earth was round, the reception and transmission of radio waves, everything related to animals, etc.

His vocabulary advanced and he started to use words such as “exterminate”, “reprieve” and “trachea”, etc. He showed a precocious interest in time: at 3 years old he always asked about the day, date, time and he tried to say these things himself. He began to count the time in hours at the age of 5. His parents observed that when he wrote he changed the /s/ and the /5/, the /b/ and the /d/, writing them in a mirror, especially if he hadn’t written for a while.

Family background. The parents described their child as having a sophisticated sense of humour, intolerant when frustrated, strangely perfectionist, restless, dependent on adults and mature. From the age of 3 years old he had imaginary friends which were always animals and he was the farmer or the owner. At times he imitated the animals and he began to play at killing. Rubén had no obligations at home and only occasionally had to take out the rubbish or look after his sister.

His family behaviour was described by his parents as miss adapted. He was nervous and restless and until he was 5 he couldn’t watch television because he couldn’t remain seated. He couldn’t stop talking, he had fears, he was untidy, he hit his sister, he found it difficult to obey the rules and was very disobedient. He didn’t accept timetables (“get dressed or we’ll be late”) and if you got on top of him, he screamed and kicked. As a child his parents put him in his place and it worked. He was impatient and liked to be the centre of attention. He couldn’t bear to be told off and adopted an offensive attitude. He cried when he couldn’t get away with things. He had little common sense, was impatient towards everything and very dependent on adults. He maintained negative attitudes, showed a lack of motivation about doing things well and any activity which his parents tried to encourage he stopped doing: for example, he stopped reading.

This type of behaviour frequently made his parents tell him off and a vicious circle was formed which, at the same time, created a sense of guilt on the part of the parents: “perhaps we are not doing things well or we attach too much importance to things than they deserve”. The parents tried every type of method to resolve the problem: threatening the child by leaving him on his own for a few minutes, slapping him, banning him from watching the television, maintaining a positive attitude, reducing the degree of interest on the part of other adults, above all regarding the child, etc. According to the parents, Rubén was always like this ever since he was a small child and later it became more exaggerated. The child said that he was not happy like that but that he couldn’t change. The dissipative behaviour was more intense when there were other older people around. The self-esteem of the child was low and other characteristics of Rubén which attracted the parents’ attention were his exceptional language ability and his great capacity for logical deduction.

The family was composed of the parents, Rubén and a younger sister, Ana, of two with whom he got on well from time to time. The mother had a university degree and the father had a PhD. Both parents worked: the mother as a midwife and the father as a paediatrician. The financial resources were sufficient to cover the

basic needs of the family and they possessed a good home. The parents were aware of their duties and maintained consistent criteria as regards education.

Academic record. He went to a nursery school at 20 months and adapted to it without difficulty. He liked getting his own way, was very playful and he complained that he was bored. At school he also adapted well. Although his performance was very high, his behaviour was not adaptive, he always had to be the centre of attention, he got into fights easily, he was a trouble-maker, he always wanted to be the leader and he liked to order around. He had very little patience for doing things and showed no interest in doing them well. In general, he was happy at the school. He was in the course year corresponding to him and he attended classes normally.

Socialisation. Rubén was a sociable child. He always liked to be with people and couldn't stand being on his own. He always wanted to speak to someone and for playing games he preferred children of his own age. In his relations with others he was at times tedious. He didn't seem to understand that the rest of his friends and schoolmates didn't want or didn't like the same things that pleased him or that he wanted to do. He had difficulties with interpersonal relationships and always wanted to dominate the others. He was a group leader and if it wasn't him who led, he left the game. Rubén didn't mind being different to the other children and he didn't like to accept what the others said without arguing about it. He thought that he wasn't good, he didn't consider himself happy and he believed that his father wasn't happy because of him. He thought that he didn't fulfil the expectations of his parents towards him.

Behaviour during the examination. Rubén adapted to the evaluation situation. He collaborated with what he was asked to do even though he was restless, open, communicative, but not very thoughtful or persevering. He was friendly and happy. As the sessions advanced he became calmer and more thoughtful. The self-concept of the child as regards his competence was low: "I won't know how to do it". He required the constant supervision of an adult

in order to work. He needed praise and stimuli to perform the tasks. He liked to learn and was inquisitive: he asked for a piece of paper to write down the words he didn't know so that he could later ask his parents about them. Rubén justified his bad behaviour in the classroom by saying: "because I like playing the silly ass". During the examination, it was frequently observed that he would put his fingers in his mouth. During the testing he showed no difficulty in following the instructions of the adult.

Summary of the integrated results. His attention and concentration span was very high, corresponding approximately to an age of 9 years 10 months (Digit Retention of the WISC-R, PT= 13; Stanford: approximate equivalent age of 9 years).

His visual memory and visual constructive skills were very high, corresponding, according to the correct answers obtained, to an age equivalent to 9 years and according to the evaluation of errors to an age equivalent to 10 (TRVB, PDA= ?, PDE= 5).

His motor aptitude and perceptive maturity was low, corresponding to an age of approximately 6 and a half and 6, respectively (Bender, number of expected errors 5. 3, obtained 8; Reversal Test, number of errors expected 9. 1, obtained 11; percentile 65).

His academic performance capacity was high, corresponding to an equivalent age of +7 years and six months (Keys, PT= 15). This test is more related to academic performance since it tells us the writing speed. In the psychometric intelligence tests he obtained very high results: higher intelligence (Stanford, IQ= 152; WISC-R, IQ= 128; MSCA, OIQ= 130). The mental age on the Stanford Test was of 11 years 2 months. He performed lower than the average in tasks which involved spatial orientation, memory of shapes and perceptive prediction (Block Design PT= 9, age equivalent to 6 years 6 months; Object Composition PT= 9, equivalent age of 6 years and 2 months; Labyrinths PT= 9, age equivalent to 6 years and 2 months). Significant differences in performance existed between the verbal and the manipulation or performance tests (VIQ= 142, MIQ= 108). Furthermore, within the tests of each scale some very interesting results were observed,

among which the high score in comprehension and vocabulary stands out. Rubén was a child with a very high intellectual capacity but with a clumsy motility and a space-time disorientation which explains the low scores with the Cubes, Jigsaws and Story Ordering.

In practical intelligence, Rubén obtained a PIQ= 142, which indicated certain very high abilities. In comprehension and verbal fluency he reached an age of approximately 11 years (Peabody, confidence intervals of age's equivalent to between 9 years and 6 months and 10 years and 5 months). His numerical reasoning ability and automatic symbol handling was high (Arithmetic PT= 15, age equivalent to 8 years and 10 months). In instrumental learning, mistakes were observed in reading and writing: in writing, letters indistinctly writes.

Based on the overall evaluation, **Rubén was diagnosed as a child with higher intelligence: “gifted (intellectual giftedness) with an exceptional ability for learning”.**

Difficulties in reading and writing were observed, significant differences in VIQ and MIQ linked to the space-time orientation, a low visual motor aptitude, and a lack of discrimination in simple right-left symmetries.

In our diagnostic judgement, taking into account the DSM-IV-TR, Rubén also suffered from Oppositional Defiant Disorder and symptoms of attention deficit with hyperactivity were also observed. In Rubén, the oppositional defiant behaviour was shown in his resistance to orders, active defiance and carrying out acts which annoyed other people. He got angry easily, he shouted and kicked out. He deliberately and persistently pushed the limits established, normally ignoring the rules, disputing or not accepting blame for his acts. The disorder was shown almost invariably in the family environment although it was also clearly shown at school. He was a trouble-maker and always wanted to be the centre of attention by means of unreasonable behaviour. The symptoms of the disorder were usually more evident when the he was with adults or schoolmates whom the subject knew well and, therefore, they were not observed during the clinical examination. Given the difficulties of coexistence which it caused fundamentally in the family home,

we would specify the degree of seriousness as moderate, since he did not demonstrate seriously bad behaviour.

With respect to **personality**, Rubén was an open and communicative child, but unstable, immature and unable to control his feelings and adapt to the surrounding reality which made him intolerant to his frustrations, restless and dominant. He liked to dictate his opinion on others and ignored his obligations and the social rules, behaving as he saw fit. He was relatively insensitive, unrealistic and unsociable. He was also astute, perspicacious, insecure, frustrated and with a high level of anxiety which made him dissatisfied with his possibilities of responding to the obligations of life and with his successes in what he desired.

Normally, children with this disorder do not consider themselves to be oppositional or defiant but rather they justify their behaviour as a response to unreasonable demands or circumstances.

In our experience, perhaps what has most surprised us is the awareness by the children of their difficulty in behaving well and the sensation that they have that being able to change is beyond their possibilities.

Second sample case:

* **Mario**, a gifted child of 6 years and 4 months with an IQ of 141 who, according to his parents, always identified with the “baddies” in the films. He continually sought to be told off and he found it difficult to follow the rules. During the evaluation he commented that he didn't know how to obey: “I don't know how to obey. At school I behave badly because I have a friend who is bad”.

Third sample case:

Another gifted boy with an IQ of 154: **Federico**, at 5 years and 9 months he accepted no rules, he went his own way, was disobedient and when the children he liked didn't accept him he became furious. The problem began in the first year at nursery school and from there worsened. It was more intense in the presence

of third persons. At the age of 5, he was expelled from music class for bad behaviour. The child complained that he had bad dreams and told his parents that “the powers of Isis enter me and make me do bad things”, or “I’m different from the others, things enter me which make me different” and “I’m your destiny, I’m sorry, every child has a parent”.

The child was full of remorse and asked his mother if he was going to go to hell and when she said no, only terrorists went there, he was afraid of being like them and would ask them to take him to the doctor to remove the bad ideas from his head, to stop him doing bad things and hitting his 2-month old little sister. The parents got annoyed when they were told he was a bad boy. Federico returned to our consultancy at 10 years of age. He still couldn’t control his impulses, he went his own way and had the feeling that everybody was after him and wanted to harm him.

It was very difficult for the parents to accept the diagnosis of the child and while it is hard for anybody to accept faults, it is even harder to accept the defects of our own children and perhaps the difficulty of lacking awareness of the feelings of others is perceived as one of the most significant defects.

Frequently, the mothers cannot hold back their tears. The fathers usually tend to think that young children behave badly because they are dependent on their schoolmates and allow themselves to be influenced by them, although on many occasions it is they who look for these types of friends and situations because they coincide with their own wishes. When a child misses class, he is influenced by other schoolmates who do it, but he isn’t influenced by those who stay in class paying attention to the teachers.

On numerous occasions teachers tend to think that the parents are very permissive or that they spoil their children and let them get away with too much and blame them for the bad behaviour of the children.

We have frequently heard that sensitivity and emotional intensity are characteristics of the highly gifted. They have also been described as being very sensitive to the feelings of others, to criticism and injustice. But, as we have been able to observe, it is not always thus. There are intellectually gifted children who do not

appear to be very sensitive to the feelings of others. We understand that all the gifted are more sensitive as regards the perception of the reality which surrounds them since their abstract capacity is greater. But this does not mean that they are more sensitive than other children to the feelings of others and injustices. Within the group of gifted children there may also be those with little awareness of the feelings of others. The prevalence of Oppositional Defiant Disorder is situated between 2 and 16%, in terms of the nature of the population studied and of the methods of evaluation according to the DSM-IV-TR.

The motive which underlies the anti-social behaviour is “to exploit them before they exploit me”: the children think that those who surround them are against them, that their parents love their brothers and sisters more, that the teachers have it in for them, that the other children annoy them and this distortion of the perception of reality means that they act in consequence of this distortion. They are insensitive to punishments and pain and sometimes appear to provoke it. They like to be the centre of attention and impose their ideas. Anti-social young boys have difficulties in delaying their rewards, resisting temptations and repressing their anger at the slightest frustration. In short, they seek to gratify their desires without bothering too much about the dangers or complications involved.

The prevalence of Oppositional Defiant Disorder, as we have said, is situated between 2 and 16%, in terms of the nature of the population studied and of the methods of evaluation. Attention Deficit Disorder with hyperactivity is common in children with oppositional defiant disorder. The learning and communication disorders also tend to be associated with this disorder (Pichot, 1995).

As adults, children from a more privileged socio-cultural background may progress in the educational and professional ambit to positions of respect. Nevertheless, they continue trying to overcome the emptiness of indifference which they suffered in childhood. As they are not, in a conventional sense, seen as anti-social because of their social success, these individuals always look for enhancement and are competitive, avaricious and boastful.

These anti-social people, socially sublimated, can be found among the well-known legal professionals and businessmen, comprising a segment of our respectable competitive society (Millon & Davis, 1998).

Conclusion:

In this article we have tried to broaden and analyse the characteristics of the pupils with special educational needs who are intellectually gifted. The majority of the children diagnosed as gifted who we have evaluated are children without associated disorders. The associated disorders which we have observed most frequently were: "Attention Deficit Disorder with Disturbing Behaviour", "Learning Disorders" and "Anxiety Disorders due to Separation".

The possibility of carrying out a correct diagnosis allows a social and emotional intervention matched to the needs of the children. It also allows the parents to have a more realistic vision, who in general feel very guilty and frustrated by the cause of the disorder and by the implications and educational limitations of their children.

In all these cases, the desynchronise between the chronological age and the mental age, as well as frustrating personal academic experiences as regards learning levels and their family background, meant that the symptoms of the disorder were greatly exacerbated.

With respect to the psychometric evaluation of intelligence, it is important to consider that, in those gifted children with associated disorders; it is frequent to find a wide disparity of scores. Therefore, it is essential to use different and varied methods for measuring intelligence in order to carry out the diagnosis of the child and it is the whole of the evaluation which will help to form the criteria concerning their educational needs. On the other hand, we should remember that the high scores are never random.

The principal goal of this article derives from an old medical precept: "Don't ask what illness the patient has, but rather who the patient that has the illness is" (Millon & Davis, 1998). It appears to us a little artificial to deal with the problem of

intellectually gifted children as such when, as we have been able to observe, these students are very heterogeneous. But we believe that it is necessary, both for professional teachers as well as for the parents, to understand that education is only possible if we start from the specific knowledge of each child and that all students should be dealt with individually. It is difficult to give general, guiding rules for these children since, within the term "gifted" there are very different personalities, skills and socio-cultural backgrounds.

Implications for Practice and Future Research

Nowadays, an understanding of the characteristics of these children is more relevant than some years ago, given that this knowledge will enable professionals to understand quickly the context in which the problems of the pupils arise. This information is even more important if we take into account the fact that specialists now have the means available to help the students.

In the case of children with associated disorders it is not usual for a single type of treatment to exist. We refer, with the word treatment, to any action which may be necessary to optimise the development of the child in the family, school or social environment.

This treatment may include various approaches: educational, pharmacological and psychological.

1. Pharmacological.
2. Educational backup: for example, special lessons, tutorials, corrections, etc.
3. Psychological:
 - a) Individual, cognitive and behavioural therapy.
 - b) Family therapy.
 - c) Advice for parents and members of the family.
 - d) A multidimensional treatment model which could include certain psychological therapies: individual therapy, family therapy and behavioural modification.

Gifted children with disabilities form a group of children which are under-attended and under-stimulated (Cline & Schwatz, 1999). An approach to the adaptations for their incapacities may

exclude the identification and development of their cognitive skills. It is not unusual, therefore, to find an enormous discrepancy between the average academic potential in these students and their real performance at school (Whitmore & Maker, 1985). For these children to be able to achieve their potential it is necessary that their intellectual capacities are recognised and developed and that their disabilities are accommodated accordingly (Willard-Holt, 1994).

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PEDAGOGY FOR GIFTED CHILDREN

Abstract: *Gifted are exceptional children with special qualities and needs. So that, it is necessary to undertake educative actions their interest domain and their real level of develop. In order to help the gifted children on their unique way we must to understand their personality and to create special strategy for their education.*

Key words: *gifted child, identification, education, special needs*

1. General considerations

1.1. Why are we interested in a pedagogy for gifted children? It has been noticed lately that more and more specialists direct their preoccupations towards the problematic of children of high potential, towards identifying them, towards finding the most adequate methods for developing that potential and towards creating legislation in this field. This aspect is marked by the necessity of recognizing individual differences and observing them, based on human rights: gifted children need adequate educational opportunities to develop their inborn aptitude potential. Educational interventions for gifted children find their place among the preoccupations of the organisms accredited to deal with education, and an opinion about and special room for excellence are seen to have been built and found within the current educational system, by the setting up, in an increasing number of counties, of centers of excellence. Implemented at the level of educational policy, the regulations, well-specified by law¹, concerning the problematic of high potential children, are admirable. The development of educational strategies and the working out of the support curriculum, as well as the writing out of materials for instructors, are capital needs in the pedagogy of high potential children. Training of instructors for the instruction-

¹ 1 The law concerning the education of the gifted and performance-capable children was adopted on December 13, 2006.

education process with gifted children represents another essential need; besides vocation, they need competences for designing a differential curriculum, to support pupils with high aptitude potential. Changes should be made in the initial and continuing training of teachers, in the sense of introducing specialized courses for training in this field. Application-oriented research is necessary, particularly in the domain of identification and cultivation of talents.

Any individual, whoever that might be, represents a particular individuality built out of a number of features bearing the imprint of genotype and phenotype. Besides genetic inheritance, the social-cultural milieu the individual was brought up in represents a defining factor. The individual blends all these features in a unique way, which gives him/her identity, defining him/her as a distinct and original person, as Allport put it: "... Organizing individual life is, first, last and ever, a main fact of human nature"².

1.2. We can put people into typologies, but we should not forget about the uniqueness of the individuals, of each of them. Each person differs from another: first we differ as to sex, then each of us is unique, acquiring some originality through the fact that we were born on some particular day or in some particular historical era, into some particular family, in some particular social milieu, and we have come some way in life marked by various influences. G.W.Allport noted: "No door should be closed in the study of personality"³. Theoretically, part of what is transmitted hereditarily comes from the mother and the other part comes from the father, in random percentage. So, no two human beings can be identical or, rather, have the same development potential (except for the monozygotic twins, but there is room for discussion and interpretation even here).

In order to understand the uniqueness of human personality, we must see that a man is:

- identical to other people as to species (human);
- similar to some people (social-cultural group);
- unique, as a non-repeatable and original personality.

Each person is identical with the others by his/her mere

² Allport, G.W., Structure and Development of Personality, E.D.P., Bucuresti, 1991.

³ No aspect should be neglected in the study of personality.

belonging to the human species, has characteristics resembling those of the people in his/her social and cultural group, for example he/she speaks a particular language (mother tongue), he/she is unique in all he/she is, different from the others. By his/her way in life he/she is different from the others by his/her unique destiny. Regardless of the variables of the metaphysics of his/her destiny, his/her existence is a certitude, distinct in its peculiarities for each individual, his/her personal life follows some particular course. Within the great human variety there are people who distinguish themselves by physical, psychic, moral traits; some people are tall, others are short, some are hard-working, others are lazy, some are lively, others are apathetic, some are sensitive, others are insensitive, some are genial, others are idiotic. And we shall never be able to say that two children are identical, because, clearly, one is different from the other in specific traits⁴.

1.3.By education, primarily, man passes from the condition of mere biological existence to that of social existence. The basic function of education is that of circulating, selecting, updating and turning to account social experience, to ensure an efficient and rapid integration of the individual within society and, through this, to create premises for the self-determination of the individual as factor of social progress⁵. As to the process of man's advancement as a social being, there is no difference between the child born in a metropolis and one born in a primitive tribe, as both of them have to learn everything, starting from what genetically inheritance has offered each and going through the stages of epigenetic development⁶. The result of the formation of man as a preponderantly social being comes from man's spontaneous contact with various aspects of social life, but the most substantial part of knowledge accumulates by instruction within in organized and systematic form. The illustrious pedagogue J. Piaget has made important specifications on the relation between instruction

⁴ Sir Fr.Galton, Heredity genius, (1869), (In his study he analyses the correlation between genealogical ascendancy and the performance in activity of some eminent personalities of the 20 th century in England).

⁵ See Miron Ionescu, Education and Instruction, University Press, Arad, 2005.

⁶ Piaget, Jean, Inhelder, Barbel, Child Psychology, Cartier, Chisinau, 2005.

and formation⁷. The role of education is not only the result of mere instruction, school must be conceived as a centre for actual, practical activities, carried out in a group so that logical intelligence should be built function of social action and changes. Educational action is a finalist action, and the essential subjects of this action are the instructor and the learner, both of them existing within a system that includes many factors coming from the outside⁸. Within psychic development and the formation of the adult personality, learning has a central place as, through learning, the individual acquires new patterns of behaviors. From habits and abilities up to intellectual knowledge and operations, all are acquired through the activity of learning. Learning is the process of acquiring the intellectual experience of behaviour⁹, this meaning assimilation of information and, besides this, formation and development of thinking processes, of the affective side, of will, that is, the formation of the personality system. Given the importance of learning, the other psychic processes and functions are involved in it, too, interdependence relations existing among them: on one hand, all psychic processes and functions combine within learning and, on the other; they are themselves built and structured through the act of learning. It can, then, be said that learning involves the whole of the psyche and has a formative, generative and constructive role concerning it, being directed, socially, towards a precise aim-the educational ideal.

As the goal of education, the educational ideal expresses the requirements and the aspirations of a society in a particular historical moment, in the shape of a desirable pattern of human personality; the educational ideal is a credo. The rational man, the personality in progress, does not act before understanding and trusting something. Goal-oriented belief feeds the spirit, organizes the forces, leads on before the unknown, surmounts obstacles and lends strength. One of the challenges already launched within contemporary society is the

⁷ J.Piaget, *Ou va l'éducation*, Denoel-Gauthier, Paris, 1972.

⁸ Ionescu, M.Chis,V., *Teaching and Learning Strategies*, Scientific Editoriel House, Bucharest, 1992.

⁹ Norton, W.W. (1997, August). *The life cycle completed* [WWW document]. <http://www.wwnorton.com/catalog/spring96/003934.htm>

need for re-thinking school, formal education, alongside of non-formal and informal education, in their various way of articulation¹⁰. Efficient learning manifests itself in cognitive productivity and creativity only if they are based on the potential qualities of pupils.

1.4.High potential children, due to the configuration of their personality (asynchronous development) fall into a category that must be protected by specific educational measures, fact reflected in the European legislation in the field¹¹: they need increased attention from the pedagogical community for their integration within a coherent educational system. The absence of a framework adequate to their outstanding endowment may lead, on one hand, to the loss of their high creative potential and, on the other, there is the risk of onset of alienation, failure and school abandonment, as well as that of developing antisocial behaviour¹². Therefore, gifted children must have adequate learning conditions to allow them to fully turn to account their potential, to their own interests and to that of their society. Wasting talents means wasting human resources by not identifying their intellectual potential in due time. Current legislation¹³ however, considers this category of children with special needs and, at least at the declarative level, promotes and supports human excellence and talents in all domains of their manifestation: science, art, management, leadership¹⁴.

¹⁰ Chis, Vasile, Contemporary pedagogy, pedagogy for competences, Scientific Book House, Cluj-Napoca, 2005.

¹¹ Recommendations of the European Council for High Ability-ECHA, The Netherlands 1991)

¹² Council of Europe, Answer of the Committee of Ministers, December, 2004.

¹³ Law concerning the education of gifted and high performance-capable youth was adopted on December 2006. The law was published in the Official Monitor on January 9, and entered into force on February 18, 2007.

¹⁴ IRSCA Gifted Education, with its 30 partners in education launched, in a private initiative, the Romanian Consortium for the Education of Gifted and Talented Children and Youth in support of the first National Program Gifted Education launched in Romania. IRSCA Gifted Education is recognized by WCGTC, World Council for Gifted and Talented Children, and ECHA, European Council for High Ability, the highest forums at international and European level in the field of education for gifted children.

2. The psychopedagogical domains of manifestation of general giftedness

2.1. Intelligence and its characteristics

What is the nature of the cognitive system ontologically? The human psychic system is a system for processing information, the informational nature of psychic phenomena, with a very complex organization and operation being recognized. The cognitive system is, also, an open system presupposing, basically, a cognitive receptiveness to all external influences (photons, air waves, pressure, heat, air qualities, foodstuffs qualities or composition etc). Without this receptiveness, knowledge of the external world would not be possible, and all the capacities of this macro-object are mainly due to its higher structure or organization. Modern psychology defines intelligence along two dimensions: as a complex system of operations and as a general ability. If we accept that intelligence represents a complex system of operations conditioning the general manner of approach and resolution of the most diverse situations and problematical tasks, we have in view operations and abilities, such as: adaptation to new situations, deduction and generalization, correlation and integration within a unitary whole of the disparate parts, statement of consequences and anticipation of result, rapid comparison of action variants and retainment of the optimal one, correct and easy resolution of problems with increasing degree of difficulty. All these abilities and operations reveal at least three basic characteristics of intelligence:

- capacity to solve new situations;
- rapidity, mobility, suppleness, flexibility of constituting processes;
- adequate and efficient adaptability to the circumstances.

2.2. Precocity

Precocity is a concept that refers, in terms of generality, to children with certain patterns of behaviour, different from those of other children of the same biological age, as an early manifestation of skills, abilities, knowledge, and determining their perception. Precocity can manifest itself within any side of personality: cognitive,

motor, linguistically etc. We say that a child is precocious if the child starts speaking at an early age, if the child starts walking sooner than other children, if the child starts reading early by own effort. Research carried out by specialists has revealed that some children have precocious manifestations in certain domains of human activity. The precocity of a child will not automatically determine attainment of outstanding performances. Other, socioculturally determined, conditions of development are necessary for the development of inborn abilities, for the improvement of abilities.

2.3. Talent

Psychologists maintain that the main features of personality, which differentiate individuals among themselves, are temperament, character, as well as abilities and talent. We, then, ask ourselves what factors determine the appearance and manifestation of talent. Some authors, such as Torrance, Myters, Keating, remark the existence, with talented persons, of special factors: divergent thinking, creative imagination, and intelligence of some kind, for example, social or interpersonal intelligence. But abilities imply, primarily, the existence of some hereditary factor (the totality of predispositions), of a capacity factor (acquired through life experience), an improvement factor to be reached by practice and concerning the assimilation, coordination and differentiation of the other factors. Talent presupposes a certain development of abilities and, often, a specific combination of them (not merely a sum of them), designating perfection, virtuosity, originality in the respective domain of reference. We distinguish here, out of these considerations, the following aspect: *talent is that capacity of a person of manifesting a higher effectiveness in a specific activity within a human behavioral domain, from the academic domains to the technical, artistic, relational ones, with positive results on the social level.*

2.4. High ability giftedness

High ability giftedness represents a degree higher than the conventional average level of development of general or/and specific abilities; the gifted is the individual with an intelligence above the average and, from a psychometric point of view, with an intelligence

exceeding 130 on the IQ scale. The gifted child is remarkable by qualitative differences, but also quantitative ones, as regards cognition, a rapid processing of information acquired through perception or memory; it is also to be noted the development of the metacognitive capacity from an early age, an outstanding precocity and perspicacity in solving problems; one can notice that creative capacity that animates the domain of preoccupation and an intrinsic motivation for knowing. The concept of giftedness differentiates itself by association with general intellectual abilities, and talent denotes special capacities and aptitudes in a distinct domain.

2.5. The genius. Determining factors for geniality

Galton argues that the genius is a product of intelligence, a product of perseverance and work and the result of a long effort accompanied by strong motivation.

According to modern psychology, geniality is determined by several factors; besides intelligence, high creativity and special abilities, adjacent factors must be listed, such as: opportunities, luck and chance. The creative genius invents and imagines beyond common minds, thinks at a level surpassing human power, because eminent creators possess fondness of and devotion to what they are doing, self-disciplinary force, which allows them to exploit the ideas that stir their interest. The genius is that person who, by the discoveries achieved, by his creations and innovations, adds to the good of humanity in various aspects: scientific, medical, cultural, social etc.

3. The concept of creativity

3.1. Components of creativity

Creativity, as the transformative-constructive side of personality, can be seen as product, as process, as disposition, as general human potentiality, as creative capacity and ability, as complex dimension of personality. The word creativity comes from the Greek *create*, meaning *to forge, to give birth to*.

3.1.1. Creativity as process. This acceptance concerns the phase-like, procession character of creativity, the fact that it necessitates going through distinct stages, their number varying from

one author to another. From the procession point of view, creativity becomes creation, it acquires unfolding expression, it passes from virtuality to actuality.

3.1.2. Creativity as product. Most psychologists defining creativity have referred to the characteristics of the creative product, as its distinctive notes. And the essential characteristics of a product of human activity that allow its inclusion into the category of creative products have been considered to be its novelty and originality; these attributes of the product have been interpreted, in the very broad meaning, considering the novelty of genre¹⁵, the narrow meaning considering only the product as novelty for the society¹⁶. The novelty of the product must, however, be considered only in relation with its usefulness: "Because a product can be original but valueless, the two terms of the definition cannot be separated"¹⁷, value, social usefulness and vast applicability.

4. Conclusions

Giftedness is attributed to a sum of factors coming from two directions: the natural, hereditary factor, doubled by the educational factor; the two factors being in reciprocal determination. The fact that people are born with certain specific features has been revealed by studies concerning monozygotic twins brought up in separate families, showing surprisingly similar psycho-behavioral characteristics, although they have been raised separately and in different social milieu. The educational factor plays, in great measure, a role in the development of abilities to the maximum, in giftedness, but these are achieved under certain conditions and are determined by educational and social factors, but also by self-motivation, even from very early ages. The motivational factor, together with creativity, can often compensate for the absent factor, but when all the three factors: intelligence, creativity and self-motivation operate concomitantly, in an educational and social environment favorable for the children; the

¹⁵ Jigău, M., Gifted children, București, Scientific and Technic Society, 1994.

¹⁶ Roșca, Al., General and specific creativity, București, Editura Academiei Române, 1981.

¹⁷ Idem

latter can attain absolutely outstanding performances in developing their own potential.

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- <http://www.supradotați.ro>
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LANGUAGE, THE MEDIA AND SOCIAL COMMUNICATION

LIMBA- MIJLOC DE COMUNICARE

Abstract; *Dealing with social communication, the paper analyses the role of language competence in communicative competence, communication in nature and in culture, the contribution of media to culture and civilization and their relation to society and the culture to which they belong.*

Key words: *(social) communication, language, mass media, culture, civilization*

1. Introduction

The **media** indeed represent a great leap forward in the history of mankind, on condition they do not diminish but enhance the freedom of creation in the human spirit, being thus subordinated to human goals.

Four kinds of **theory** concerning mass communication are in use today:

1. **social scientific** theories relate to their nature, working and effects;
2. **normative** theories represent a branch of social philosophy;
3. **working** theories have been developed by practitioners themselves;
4. **common-sense** theories have been developed by virtue of direct experience in the audience. (McQuail 1987:4-5).

The journalist's entire activity is based on communication, social communication. In order to carry out this activity at a high standard, the journalist must know, thoroughly, the relations that underlie civilized human societies.

Communication is the transmission of a **message** by means of a **code**. The code refers to the syntactical and lexical selections the message is built and conveyed by. Social communication requires that any sender acquire communicative competence. Application of the linguistic code characteristic of journalistic, radio or television communication considers the fact that information constitutes the substance of any message. Genuine communication conveys a piece of information that was, at some point in time, accessible to the sender and s/he must make it accessible to the receiver, too. But the former should not forget that only that communication that offers new knowledge has informative value. That which tells us what we already know has no informative value. Some communication takes place, in the latter case, but no information occurs.

2. Language in communication: nature vs culture

Language has a paramount function in communication, in its various aspects. Information is conveyed via language. But human information cannot be considered quantitatively alone, but also in a mediated manner, by mutual understanding. In **nature**, the source communicates *to* the listener, in **culture**, the sender communicates *with* the receiver. In nature, the information propagates through **signals**, in culture, the information is conveyed by means of **signs**, that is, **signifiers** and **signified**. By the verbal signifier, intellectual **signification** increases the creativity of thinking, which ceaselessly increases the information, increasing human culture, too.

Culture represents whatever man adds on to nature. Culture is the aggregate of the means by which man uses the data of nature to build spiritual works. By culture, man adds a spiritual dimension to the material world. Evolving between material tendencies and spiritual intentions, culture becomes the means that allows man to oppose nature, to rise above it and dominate it.

Culture is the medium within which matter can generate spirit, can regenerate matter, the site where determinism can change into freedom.

Undoubtedly, through his materiality, man belongs in nature; however, through his spirituality, he is a creator of culture. One cannot speak, scientifically rigorously, about “material” and “spiritual” culture. This is because any cultural product is, concurrently, material and spiritual. Culture remains, always, the contradictory unity of matter and spirit. In other words, culture is bi-dimensional. Spirit cannot change matter unless it becomes material. Thus, culture is the field developing between materializing spirit and spiritualizing matter. Through culture, man humanizes not only the surrounding nature but nature itself, too. Through tools, ideas become material, and through speech, perceptions and emotions become ideas. Consequently, man is matter that thinks, and culture is thinking that is being materialized. Man, then, is the only creature capable of building means of production and of communication, which means that, by its essence and structure, culture consists of means of production and communication. Through tools, people put nature in the service of man, while through language, they organize social cooperation in facing nature so as to achieve **civilization**.

3. Language, culture and civilization

Through **language**, the media contribute to the development of civilization. The term **civilization** cannot be defined independently of that of **culture**. The essence of human culture consists in its capacity for foreshadowing the future, for achieving “the better”. Culture is, in this perspective, the aggregate of material and spiritual means by which people ceaselessly transform their surrounding milieu according to their needs, by which they change their future into their present, their ideals into their current reality. The distinction between culture and civilization is not that civilization is material and culture is spiritual. Culture and civilization are the two basic aspects of man’s very condition in the world. By culture, people continuously enhance their power over nature and society,

civilizing, more and more deeply and extensively, the relations among themselves. While culture is the product of the relations between man and nature, civilization is the product of the relations between man and man; that is, civilization is the way people behave to one another, in social life. As culture is the manner in which people change nature, the degree of civilization depends, ultimately, on the degree of culture. Culture is the product by which people endow nature with human purpose. What nature offers to people does not belong to culture, because only what people add to nature belongs to culture. Culture enables people to achieve the uninterrupted and two-way flow between past, present and future. Through culture, the future participates at any moment in the huge practice of the present. Even the past, with its authentic values, participates, via culture, in the activity of transforming the projects of current reality. By culture, any success of people over nature means, at the same time, an enhancement in the civilization of the relations among them.

4. Social communication for culture and civilization; humour

A man is all the more cultured and civilized as he is more capable of using the material and spiritual values for social progress. As social communication is an instrument of both culture and civilization, its practitioners will have to continually raise their standard of culture and competence in civilized manifestation. Actually, culture can only be acquired by militating along the line history advances. In any act of culture, there is the dialectical unity of “pros” and “cons”: *against* stagnation and *for* advancement. Culture must be an act of opposition, a polemic act, a struggle against nature and everything that hinders the exercise of man’s power over nature. Culture must not be considered a state of affairs, but an activity in progress, whether it is an act of value-building or one of value-consumption, that is, an on-going process.

Being un-mediatedly related to culture, civilization consists of the totality of material and spiritual means by means of which the society continually increases mutual respect among its members, the freedom and responsibility of each of them. While culture

particularly records the victories of man over nature, civilization conserves, especially, the victories of people over the relations among themselves, which means humanizing nature by culture, while civilization implies humanization of relations among people. Civilization also means politeness and discretion and decency and sensitivity (not servility!). It has been long commonly said that one has to show **civilized** behaviors towards one's fellow men.

Journalists then, the main instruments of social communication, should direct (their) attention towards practicing and explaining the various aspects of civilized relations among the components of human society. Social communication by mass media requires the journalist to choose the sound side of the word (signifier) in such a way that the meaning (signified) express, as faithfully as possible, the particular aspect of civilization imposed by the situation/circumstance of that interpersonal relation. The circumstance (*place, time, action*) determines the manner of expression, of language use. Expression, according to the interlocutors' (source and receiver) may be ample or concise. (e. g. it differs according to place: church, street, reading room, railway station, sports-ground, theatre hall, auditorium). The circumstance of action, considering, also, the degree of culture and of culture-civilization interdependence, may induce seriousness or jocularity, and **humour** may play its role.

Humour is a specifically and profoundly human attitude. Through humour, the superiority of subject over object, of spirit over matter, of thought over its object, of the creator over all his/her creations and even over him/herself, is expressed. By thought, man goes beyond the present of things and enters their future, and by humour, he laughs at what *is* in the name of what *ought to be*. Humour punishes, sometimes with some sympathy, any lowering of spiritual "voltage", any abandonment of search for what has been found, any survival of the finite to the detriment of the infinite. Humour is one of the most precious correctives to dogmatism or fanaticism. Humour is a typically cultural phenomenon. It tries to repair without destroying. This makes it recommendable to those who practice language interchange. Philosophically, it has been considered that humour completes the rule of man over nature and man's self-rule.

Humour highlights the contrast between the real and the ideal to criticize the real. Its means definitely reveal this: *comedy, irony, parody, pun*.

Social communication accommodates both the precision of seriousness and the humorous expression, each in good time.

Conclusions:

-The media institution is regulated by society. Concurrently, the media are a power source and, so, a substitute for force: as a means of control, management and innovation in society.

-The mass media are "the location of developments in culture", as "art and symbolic forms" and also in civilization, in "manners, fashions, styles of life and norms". They "express values and normative judgments", while disseminating ideas and providing entertainment (McQuail 1987:3).

-The mass media use language-verbal or audiovisual- that conveys both denotative meaning, characterized by universality and objectivity, and connotative meaning, including variable meaning (depending on the culture of the recipient) and elements of evaluation (positive or negative direction).

- The mass media are continually performing a negotiation between two opposed modes: the 'performative' (also the interpretative and the 'fabulative' (story-telling)) and the 'constative' (also the 'demonstrative' and factual mode).

- The mass media "do not form a complete culture on their own.... but simply a fraction of such a system which is, of necessity, the culture to which they belong" (Burgelin 1972:317).

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ENHANCING ARGUMENTATIVE COMPETENCE IN THE CLASSROOM

ÎMBUNĂTĂȚIREA COMPETENȚELOR COMUNICATIVE

Abstract: *The article presents a definition of communicative competence and within this competence it focuses on a subtype - the argumentative competence- highlighting the importance it should have in the teaching process. The definition of argumentative competence draws on principles and concepts from the theory of pragma-dialectics, a modern theory of argumentation which offers the methodological apparatus both for the description and the assessment of argumentation.*

The author reviews and analyses some of the projects meant to enhance argumentation skills in the classroom pointing to the major benefits these projects bring to teachers, i.e. the possibility to develop the argumentative competence of their students which in its turn leads to a discussion –minded attitude in conflict solving.

Key words: *communication, argumentation, competenc, attitude.*

Introduction

When speaking about developing and improving argumentation skills, teachers usually resort to argumentative essays and debates in the classroom. They even organize competitions in which students can display their abilities to conduct a debate and to win an argument. These kinds of practices are frequent in English language classes in Romania , as most text books of English as a foreign language have activities meant to develop argumentative

skills. Students are requested to produce argumentative essays and to conduct debates on given/ free topics. Text books give minimal information on the overall structure of the essay or offer examples of arguments and standpoint and even samples of essays, but all in all, the theoretical training in argumentation is kept at its minimum. This seems reasonable because argumentation is a highly abstract discursive practice and cannot be understood easily and that is why argumentation is present mostly at high school level. Besides English classes, students in Romania also get some knowledge of argumentative discourse during the Romanian language classes.

There are two reasons for the focus placed on argumentation in English classes. Firstly, the stress laid on argumentative skills in the English language teaching can be traced back to the importance given to arguments, debates and critical thinking in Western and mostly Anglo-Saxon cultures and to the long tradition of democratic regimes of these countries. Argumentativeness- namely, the predisposition to advocate *positions* on controversial issues and to verbally attack the positions of others – depends to a certain extent on personality traits but it is also a characteristic of democratic societies in which conflict is solved via argumentative discussions and negotiations. Argumentativeness, however, should not be mixed up with verbal aggressiveness- namely, the predisposition to attack the *self-concepts* of individuals instead of, or in addition to, their position on issues.

Romanian society, on the other hand, had a long experience of totalitarianism, a fact which has left its mark on the private and public discourse which is still highly aggressive. Therefore, the need for a replacement of verbal aggressiveness with assertiveness and argumentativeness is an important task that teachers have to face and ultimately solve in order to make their students discussion-minded argumentative communicators.

A second reason for the importance of argumentation in the English class is the widespread use of communicative methods of teaching not only English but most foreign languages. According to the European Common Framework of Reference in teaching modern languages teachers should adopt an action-based approach, so that the students might be able to cope with an ever wider range

of communicative activities in different languages. They are supposed to be able to have a dialogue on ordinary everyday matters, but also to conduct disputes, negotiations or interviews in a foreign language, they have to be able to produce a wide variety of written texts (letters, applications, essays, reports, etc.). All these aspects call for the steady development of communicative competence. Competences are the sum of knowledge, skills and characteristics that allow a person to perform actions. *General competences* are those not specific to language, but which are called upon for actions of all kinds, including language activities. *Communicative language competences* are those which empower a person to act using specifically linguistic means. Communication and learning involve the performance of *tasks* which are not solely language tasks even though they involve language activities and make demands upon the individual's communicative competence. To the extent that these tasks are neither routine nor automatic, they require the use of *strategies* in communicating and learning.

In order to carry out the tasks and activities required to deal with the communicative situations in which they are involved, users and learners draw upon a number of competences that are developed in the course of their previous experience. In return, participation in communicative events (including, of course, those events specifically designed to promote language learning) results in the further development of the learner's competences, for both immediate and long-term use.

All human competences contribute in one way or another to the language users ability to communicate and may be regarded as aspects of communicative competence.

Argumentative competence is a form of communicative competence which is meant to solve conflicts using reasonable constructive argumentation. Factors which may be associated with communicative competence are: openness and self-disclosure, listening, feed-back, supportive communication, empathy, trust, perspective-taking ability.

Having in view all the above mentioned aspects, we feel that argumentation skills should be taught more in the Romanian

school and even more in the English classes in high schools for their obvious beneficial results for the students.

In what follows our paper presents a modern theory of argumentation – the pragma –dialectical argumentation theory– developed by the Amsterdam University and scholars from US Universities – which lays great stress on the importance of practicing argumentation. Besides the valuable theoretical framework researchers working in pragma- dialectics have developed programmes which are meant to evaluate the students and speakers abilities to understand and use argumentation.

Pragma- Dialectics - A Short Presentation

Due to the significant insights brought into several aspects concerning the study of argumentation, pragma-dialectical theory can offer an appropriate analytical framework for the generic study of argumentation. Thus, it gives a new definition of argumentation that incorporates in a well-balanced theory three dimensions of this activity as shown in van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004) below: “*Argumentation is a verbal, social and rational activity aimed at convincing a reasonable critic of the acceptability of a standpoint by putting forward a constellation of propositions justifying or refuting the proposition expressed in the standpoint.*”(2004:1)

Argumentation is regarded as a way in which people use language in order to interact socially with other people in a reasonable manner.

The pragma-dialectical theory presents a twofold methodology of studying argumentation. On the one hand, it uses concepts from pragmatics and discourse analysis to describe the language used and its social context (the argumentative process with its moves and stages seen as hierarchical speech act sequences) and on the other hand, it sets up normative rules of conduct that serve to evaluate real life argumentative discourse as against a reasonable framework

The rules of conduct which shape the theoretical model integrate the Searlian (communicative aspects) and Gricean insights (interactional aspects of conversation) into a unified theoretical model that enlarges the Principle of Conversation into a Principle of Communication.

The pragma-dialectical theory is suitable for spoken discourse, for the dialogic, task oriented speech genres.

The concept of critical discussion and the 10 rules of conduct set up a frame against which everyday argumentative discourse can be examined both descriptively and normatively.

Although in the genre studies concerned with written texts, the rhetorical organizational pattern is used (Swales, 1990; Superceanu 1998 in their analyses of scientific article), the dialectical organizational pattern offered by the pragma-dialectical theory is more suitable for spoken discourse. The process like, dialogic nature of debates, for instance, is better captured by a structure based on the four stages of the argumentative discourse delimited by sub-tasks.

These stages however, are similar to a certain extent to the parts of discourse in the rhetorical analysis. Thus, both the rhetorical organizational pattern and the dialectical one have *introduction, argumentation and conclusion*. Pragma –dialectical theory has set up a new phase that of *confrontation* in which the issue to be debated is established by the participants. It has an interactional aspect, which differs from the *statement of the case* or *narration* in the rhetorical analysis. In fact all stages of the critical discussion differ from the parts of the rhetorical analysis in as much as they are viewed as being made up of moves and steps that interact dialogically. The participants in a dispute are both speaker and listener; they both participate actively to the development of the dispute.

The stages are delimited by the complex interactional tasks that are performed, while the moves are delimited by speech acts that are accomplished in them. As we have seen argumentation can be a complex speech act which is cooperatively constructed and can be displayed over one several steps within the move.

Arguments viewed as complex speech acts, that can be felicitous or not is an important idea that enables the analyst using this perspective to outline the superstructure and at the same time to evaluate it.

The pragma-dialecticians have not analyzed genre texts and they have searched for argumentative patterns, which they consider

as discursive devices that shape chunks of discourse. However, one of the most important defining characteristics of the concept of genre is precisely this communicative purpose which contributes largely to the shape of the generic superstructure. Thus pragma-dialectical theory also stresses the importance of the overall purpose of the critical discussion, as well as the sub-tasks of the component stages which contribute to the dialectical organization into stages.

Besides the normative aspect which enables the analyst to evaluate argumentative discourse as good or bad, the pragmatic dimension of the theory offers a method of establishing the stages and moves that make up the generic structure of a speech event. Pragmatically, any argumentative discourse is made up of speech acts having a communicative and interactional function appropriate to the speech event to which they belong. This pragmatic dimension takes into account the purpose of the speech event and therefore fits in with the generic approach that considers purpose as a main feature that determines the type of genre. The interactional analysis of the speech acts adopted by pragma-dialecticians from the methods used in discourse analysis offers a possibility to delimit the moves and steps within larger generic structures, such as the argumentative stages.

Among the practical consequences of genre studies, an important place is held by the influence of the findings upon the process of teaching the respective genres.

As far as the teaching of argumentation is concerned, one has to distinguish between the teaching of argumentation to people belonging to the discourse community which is supposed to use argumentations and the teaching of argumentation as part of second language acquisition within the programmes for English for Special Purposes (ESP).

The main point that has to be stressed with respect to this concept of argumentative competence is the fact that it is *relative*, it can be acquired gradually and it comprises various kinds of *different competencies*.

“The relative character of argumentative competence implies that a person’s competence should in principle, be measured in terms of standards that are pertinent to the specific type of

context in which this competence should be applied. In order to improve argumentative practice in a purposeful way, argumentation must therefore be studied in different institutional and non-institutional contexts, varying from legal and administrative contexts, where the argumentation takes place in a more or less well defined procedural setting , , to the context of personal conversation.” (van Eemeren, 2004: 101)

Therefore the aim of a teaching programme should focus within the general argumentative competence, as a certain subtype of communicative competence that can be better defined and understood in the framework of a generic approach. This approach encompasses information concerning the discursive tasks and sub-tasks, the macro and microstructures, as well as a multi-level analysis of interactional moves, argument types and schemes and specific linguistic clues. The teaching of argumentative competence should therefore expand beyond the task of the prescriptive literature (which focuses on strategies and tactics meant to bring about successful results) to aspects concerning the argumentation process proper as well as to aspects concerning higher-order conditions that have to be fulfilled in order to make students capable of producing good argumentative texts and speeches, both in their mother tongue and in a foreign language they study. Thus, training should refer to the identification and evaluation of argumentative schemes, types of arguments (topoi) and their relevance for argumentation, and also to face and politeness strategies that are meant to preserve a collaborative attitude during the argumentation process.

Teaching Argumentation

In the last twenty years research in the field of the pragma-dialectical theory of teaching argumentation has been conducted along two major directions. The first refers to the extent to which ordinary speakers recognize good or bad argumentation, namely whether they can distinguish between standpoint and argument, between good and bad arguments, between argumentative schemes. The second line of research aimed a step forward to design argumentation protocols so as to improve the argumentative skills

of students and of all those that need argumentation in their profession.

In what follows we shall present two of these studies, illustrating these two directions.

The first study *Understanding argument schemes* by Bart Garssen (2002) analyzed the ability of students to recognize different argumentative schemes. Argumentative schemes can be defined as principles or rules underlying arguments that legitimate the inferential step from premise to standpoints. The literature on argumentation classifies these argumentative schemes in various ways, however the author who adopted the pragma-dialectical framework of analysis distinguishes three main types of argumentation : a) symptomatic argumentation where there is a relation of concomitance between premises and the standpoint (e.g. I think this dress must be very expensive because it is created by a famous designer); b) comparison or argumentation by analogy, where the relation is one of resemblance (e.g. I think that Dirk's birthday party will be very nice because last year it was a success) and c) instrumental or 'consequence ' argumentation where there is a causal relation between the premise and the conclusion (e.g. This boy must have eaten a lot of candies as a child because his teeth are rotten). The author used a pen and pencil test submitted to 14-15 year old Dutch students who practiced argumentation but had no previous theoretical training in the field of argumentation.

Argumentation schemes are highly abstract notions, however linguistic markers (e.g. connectors like because, *therefore*, *so*, etc.) and the semantic content (the proposition) of the examples presented signaled the type of argumentation used.

The results of the test showed that the students classified argumentation based on a relation of analogy quite well and the argumentation based on a causal relation even better. The symptomatic argumentation scheme proved to be the most difficult to identify for them.

Presented with a new test in which some faulty argument schemes were present among the correct ones, the results were similar, namely the incorrect causal and comparison argumentation

were easily spotted, whereas the faulty symptomatic argumentation schemes were more difficult to understand by the students.

Similar studies were carried out by other researchers () but the students selected belonged to different types of high schools from highly theoretical to vocational ones. The results were similar with the remark that the students belonging to theoretical high schools scored better than those from vocational schools. This conclusion comes to support the view that argumentation is a complex discursive and interactive phenomenon whose improvement can be obtained through theoretical and practical education.

The ways in which argumentation skills can be improved have been the object of much research work in the field of so called design engineering. Such a study among many others, was carried out by Sally Jackson (2002) and discussed in her article *Designing argumentation protocols for the classroom*.

She starts from the generally accepted assumption that discourse and therefore argumentative discourse is designable. "Argumentation which occurs in all kind of discourse as a method for repairing disagreement, operates according to procedures which are more or less formal and more or less explicitly invoked. These procedures define participation roles, allowable forms of communicative action, and their features, such as the awarding of presumption to one side or another in a dispute. "(Jackson, 2002:105-206).

Various argumentation protocols have been designed by researchers in the field. For instance contrastive formats such as litigation vs. adjudication (Feteris, 1994), three party mediation formats (Jacobs, 1989) and computer –supported collaboration (Aakhus, 1997). All these formats have value as forms of educational technology and have been construed as ideal models of argumentative texts, highlighting the overall generic structure of an argumentative text, as well as the moves and speech acts that are part of the discursive microstructure.

The practical problem motivating the design of these protocols is that of incorporating argumentation into classroom interaction or other instructional discourse. The inclusion of

argumentation in the instructional process has invaluable benefits as it stimulates deeper processing and more critical thinking and help students learn “how to learn”.

The practicing of argumentation in the classroom faces, however, some difficulties due to the fact that it is a very complex discursive activity conditioned by many extra linguistic factors: different individual abilities, social constraints, hierarchical relationships and authority which are manifest in the classroom. “Different socialization practices might or might not be able to make students indifferent to authority, identity and peer processes. These dimensions of social organizations appear to be highly generalizable from culture to culture and are pervasive influences in ordinary discourse” (Jackson, 2002:109).

Therefore in the process of teaching and learning argumentation skills the teacher should use those methods which minimize the impact of authority, identity and social relationships on the argumentation discourse. One way to do this is to invent abstract discussion formats that can be implemented in non-ideal conditions (e.g. in the classroom).

“The real trick in designing plans for argumentation in instruction is to preserve argumentation’s cognitive advantages while managing its interpersonal complexities.”(Jackson, 2002:111).

Examples of such argumentation protocols are the set of argumentation templates or protocols incorporated within a theory-based web tool called Polis (Jackson and Medison, 1999). These templates are used to create argumentative dialogues to support instruction in any topical field. They contain speech act sequences that are specific for argumentative discourse. POLIS’ most important feature or characteristic is that it allows for the creation of highly sophisticated, interactive dialogues on any topic. The interactive argumentation dialogues, aim for *substantial* interaction requiring thought and effort, mostly in the form of free verbal resource to questions and arguments.

Jackson states (1996), POLIS’ uniqueness is in its pedagogically sound tools that aid in the delivery of more effective teaching and learning.

The Polis programme contains three protocols: *Recitation*, *Adversary*, *Virtual Peer*.

Recitation recreates the classroom recitation, a ritual in which a teacher checks one student’s knowledge about a certain topic. The traditional recitation sequence which consists of teacher’s question-student’s answer- teacher’s assessment, whereas the computer protocol contains besides the teacher’s question and student’s answer sequence a model answer and the student’s self-assessment. In this way the student’s critical thinking is enhanced while his/her face remains unthreatened.

The Recitation protocol may include optional elements such as display of any amount of background information in text or multimedia, and it can include display of others students’ writings at any point in the response sequence. As compared with an in class recitation, the online version has the advantages mentioned above, plus the advantage of allowing every student to give an independent answer to every question in a set of exercises.

The Adversary protocol’s elements are as follows: description of a controversy; student selection of a standpoint and preliminary defense of that standpoint; presentation of an opposing argument; student reaction to opposing argument; and student reconsideration of standpoint and explanation for changing standpoints or keeping his/her point of view. Any number of opposing arguments may be presented for the student’s reaction.

Virtual Peer, the third protocol is designed to stimulate a controversy between a pair of students. Based on Mazur’s (1997) ConcepTest protocol, the Virtual Peer is an alternative format for incorporation of argumentation into courses in any subject.

The teacher presents them with a problem, and each student develops an individual answer. S/he then tries to persuade the other student that s/he is right. The last part contains the correct answer and the explanation.

The online version sacrifices live interaction with peers, but improves on the live version by assuring that every student will have to respond to reasoning that differs from his or her own and by assuring that this reasoning will present significant intellectual challenges.

The use of these protocols has brought about positive results concerning the development of critical thinking of those who have used them.

Even if computer technology is not essential to the incorporation of argumentation into the teaching process, it has however some benefits over the traditional ways of teaching argumentation in which disputes are organized between peers/groups in the classroom with the teacher as a moderator and supreme authority. Computer programmes provide the discursive formats required for argumentation- disconfirmation, confrontation, contradiction- however because there is no face-to-face confrontation and no constraints imposed by such a confrontation and students can fully concentrate on their argumentative skills, without the danger of losing face.

Such computer-aided programmes could be applicable in our schools as well in the teaching process of many disciplines, including the teaching of foreign languages or of the first language because a gradual and constant practicing of argumentation allows students to cope with real life conflicting situation that are extremely numerous. Students and people in general who are well trained in argumentation are able to solve conflicts better, to adapt easier to new and even stressful situation, their critical thinking is improved, and even their discussion-mindedness helps them learn better and easier.

Conclusions

We believe that the teaching of argumentation should be part of many disciplines at high school and university level and computer-aided protocols could be adapted and used in many disciplines. As our field of teaching and research is English, we also consider that argumentative skills should be taught within a generic approach and should also be accompanied by more theoretical knowledge.

The teaching of argumentative competence within a programme of second language acquisition (ESP or EAP) will have to lay more emphasis on the linguistic aspects through which generic structures become manifest and on the cultural similarities and differences that are mainly noticeable as difference in styles.

The drawing up of textbooks and other teaching materials using the generic perspective will have to generate not only skills but a certain *discussion-minded attitude* of individuals that will improve not only their ability to use the first order rules of reasonable argumentation but also the second-order rules.

“Compliance with second-order conditions can to some extent be stimulated by education that is methodically directed as reflection on the first-order rules and understanding their rationale. And the third order conditions can be promoted by a political choice for individual freedom, non-violence, intellectual pluralism and institutional guarantees for the right to information and criticism.”

(Van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004: 190)

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THE RELATION BETWEEN MOTOR BEHAVIOUR AND INTELLECTUAL ABILITIES OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

RELAȚIA DINTRE ABILITĂȚILE INTELLECTUALE ȘI PSIHOMOTRICE LA COPIII PREȘCOLARI

Abstract; *The problem of this work is aimed at establishing the relation between motor behaviour and intellectual abilities of 129 preschool children old 6-7 year. Motor behaviour has been estimated by means of 10 mobile tasks. Intellectual abilities have been estimated by means of two psychological tests: Raven's progressive matrices in colours and Wechler's intelligence test for children. Singular mobile tasks have not showed statistically significant connection with intelligence. Singled out, G and S factor of mobility have showed little correlation with intelligence. A certain distinction between sexes has been established in the efficiency of motor performance. Boys were mostly more successful than girls in motor performance. Some characteristics which accompanied the performance of mobile tasks couldn't be measured numerically. Knowledge resulting from this research can be used for advancement of process of physical education within the scope of educational work with the youngest.*

Key words: *motor behaviour, intellectual abilities, preschool children*

Introduction

Better understanding of children and their development contributes to the general improvement of man. Children are one of the most interesting phenomena and this is the reason why the

potential benefits of studying children, in practical as well as in theoretical purposes, do not have to be specifically underlined. Starting from the fact that the motor activity of pre-school children is still insufficiently expressed field of the motor activity and one of the most important areas of child psychology as well, the study of this phenomenon was the essential matter of this research work.

The structure of the motor activity of adults can be discussed with much more reliability than the structure of motor activity of pre-school children. The reason for this might be searched for in the fact that the process of children's growth and development is tumultuous, and the variability of results is extremely high (Junger, Belej and Feč, 1998). Limiting factors could as well be the individuality of developmental processes at this age, insufficiently precise and undifferentiated movements, caused by incomplete proximal-distal and cerebral-caudal development principles, impossibility of controlling the environment of the child in long period of time etc.

New tendencies of the educational work in a pre-school institution view a child holistically, respecting the acknowledgement that the different aspects of child's development are in interaction and that they cannot be roughly separated (Gardner, 1993, Sturza, 1999, Šefer, 2000, Khire, 2000, Malina, 2004, Sturza-Milić, 2007). But, in spite of this, and in order to understand the functioning of a child as an entity, separate parts of this entity and their interaction have to be considered and studied. What still leave enough space in the child individual study are exactly the relations of some separated segments. So, the relation between the most frequently studied abilities, intelligence and motor activity of a pre-school child, is still insufficiently defined (Sturza, 1999, Gojkov, Gojkov, Sturza and Stojanović, 2002, Tubić, 2006).

An effort to confirm if there is correlation between the efficiency of motor behaviour and intellectual abilities of pre-school children is defined as the basic aim of this research. The obtainment of the aim was realized through the following tasks:

- Movement tasks should have been chosen, and according to them the evaluation of motor behaviour of pre-school children should have been done.

- A choice of psychological tests should have been made, and according to them evaluation of intellectual abilities of pre-school children should have been carried out.

- It should have been confirmed if there was a connection between single movement tasks and intellectual abilities.

- It should have been confirmed if there was a distinction in motor behaviour efficiency and intellectual abilities between the subsamples of boys and girls.

- The characteristics of motor task performance should have been defined.

Methods

The first phase of the research included gathering data in two levels. The first level was the evaluation of intellectual abilities by psychological tests: Wechler's intelligence tests for children, Roven's progressive matrices in colour and the drawing of human figure were in question. The second level of testing included the evaluation of motor behaviour by 11 movement tasks constructed according to the previous researches of this field and already existing batteries of tests for child's motor activity, depending on motor and functional abilities of a child, program contents and basic principles of educational work with children. When making a choice of movement tasks, the joy and motivation of a child in motor activity were in the foreground. Discovery, exploration, problems solutions, combining, the feeling of success in the symbiosis with various requisites, diversity of colours, materials, atmosphere of rich cooperation were the including parts of every movement task.

Movement tasks for the evaluation of motor behaviour efficiency:

1. Body rolling (KOTEL)
2. Foot-by-foot skipping from one hoop into another (SPOO)
3. Scrawling along the obliquely positioned bench (PUKPK)
4. Running with the change of direction and carrying an object (TSPP)
5. Running with carrying concentric hoops (NPNS)
6. Running across a bench with a turn (TPKO)
7. Standing on the left and right leg (SLN, SLD)
8. Going through hoops carrying an object (PRPP)

9. Throwing rings on the stand (PPKO)

10. Long jump (SDAM)

Psychological tests for the evaluation of the intelligence of pre-school age

1. Wechler's intelligence test for children - WISK

2. Raven's progressive matrices in colour - RPM

The final sample of the tested children was reduced to 129 entities. At the beginning of the research we operated with 149, but because of the irregular attendance, illnesses of children, travels, this number became much smaller (it represents an important characteristic of research when pre-school children are in question). All the children included into the research were born within the period of 6 months, because of the tumultuous growth and development at this age. The sub sample of boys was 67, and the sub sample of girls was 62 entities. All the children included in the sample were healthy, without visible deformities, from different social environments.

All the data acquired by the motor behaviour and intellectual abilities evaluations were processed by the procedures of descriptive and comparative statistics.

Acquired research results have not entirely confirmed the basic idea of the existence of the connection between motor and intellectual abilities in pre-school period.

Results

By reading Pearson's correlation coefficient and comparison to critical tabular values on the importance level ($p = 0,05$) it can be seen that, except motor task – running with carrying an object, there is not a correlation between the values of intelligence coefficient obtained by applying Wisk and motor variables (Table 1). The truth is, some values are very near to critical, but insufficiently to be statistically important.

Table 1 : Correlation WISK and motor variables

motor variables	r	p
TSPP	-.33	+
TPKO	-.044	–
SPOO	.017	–
SDAM	-.009	–
PUPKP	.231	–
PPKO	-.127	–
SLN	.202	–
SDN	.146	–
NPNS	.165	–
PRPP	.008	–
KOTEL	-.02	–

When the correlation of motor variables and Raven's progressive matrices in colour are in question, the acquired data are similar (Table 2). None of the movement tasks did show significant statistic correlation.

Table 2 - Correlation RPM and motor variables

motor variables	r	p
TSPP	-.187	–
TPKO	-.061	–
SPOO	-.13	–
SDAM	.028	–
PUPKP	.068	–
PPKO	-.044	–
SLN	-.003	–
SDN	.206	–
NPNS	.14	–
PRPP	-.104	–
KOTEL	-.02	–

However, the idea of the connection between the motor activity and intelligence at this age could not be completely rejected, for, after the third line factor analysis, the correlation

between Wisk and motor variables was after all acquired. Separated G and S factors have shown the statistically important correlation (Table 3). Correlation between RPM and G and S factors is statistically unimportant (Table 4).

Table 3 - Correlation between G and S motor factors and WISK

	WISK
G - faktor	Kanon. koef. kor = . 308
S - faktor	Kanon. koefic. Korel = . 309

Table 4 - Correlation between G and S motor faktors and RPM

	RPM
G - faktor	Correlation = . 041
S - faktor	Correlation = . 09

And so, according to these results, this research is, in a way, classified in the group of researches which have not completely rejected the idea of the connection between motor activity and intelligence, but which have not explicitly proven the existence of the connection neither. We can probably find the reasons of this in the fact that the sample was small, and the balance and coordination that provides best groupings according to intelligence are still insufficiently differentiated at this age.

Modern education considers individual as an entity, recognizing inner interdependence of particular components of one personality. Relying on this concept, it is indisputable that action, reaction and interaction always exist between physical, mental, emotional and other factors of one whole individual. However, in the field of physical culture, especially at pre-school age, rare are the empirical studies directed to the confirmation of relations between motor activity and intelligence. On the basis of the review of previous researches it can be concluded that the existing results are very contradictory and that according to them generalizations that would definitely enlighten and confirm the relation between motor activity and intellectual abilities cannot be undertaken at this age. It is very risky to evaluate a child cognitively on the basis of

motor successfulness or unsuccessfulness, and vice versa. This attitude is also confirmed by this research.

In spite of the fact that the study was carried out at a small sample, and the results cannot be categorically generalized, certain distinction between sexes in the efficiency of motor behaviour confirms the results obtained in recent researches. The data corroborate the thesis that it is not possible to definitely claim that there are no differences in the efficiency of motor performance between boys and girls. No matter which crucial factor influenced this distinction, this question still remains unanswered and this is the reason why there is a need for that to be enlightened by broader study. It is also confirmed that in motor space there are still great differences between minimal and maximal results in particular motor tasks. This makes the correct programming and dosage of particular program contents very difficult, and it is necessary to think in that direction, to have in minds the efficiency in motor performance when forming particular groups in the process of physical education in pre-school age.

Discussion

All motor tasks applied in this research are constructed according to previous researches, current professional praxis, having in mind the developmental characteristics of children and program characteristics of educational work. The author tried not to neglect the basic principles of educational work, especially the principle of healthy recreation and fun which is in the work with the youngest very important. Using the variety of requisites, equipment, colours and materials, children were motivated to undertake anticipated tasks as good as possible, playing in the same time. This is the reason why all the movement tasks can be used not only during the evaluation of motor behaviour of pre-school children, but in everyday activities of physical education in a pre-school institution also (as a part of free and combined activities, when organizing a recreational break, in directed activities, in excursions, walks. . .). Because of its uniqueness, a new trend will be respected in educational work with the youngest which imposes demands of as much interweaving of one educational field with others as possible. According to this, in spite of the fact that the general

hypothesis of the connection between motor activity and intelligence was not entirely proven, all the activities of physical education should be directed to the encouragement of cognitive development of a child.

We cannot neglect the fact that balance and precision are not well differentiated at this age, and this is the reason why the results at these tests were pretty weak. Because of this, we should try to use the activities from the physical education program contents more. These activities should be directed to the development of the stated hypothetical abilities, organized in such a way to be in harmony with the abilities of children, taking care of the interests of children and their safety.

This research leads to the conclusion that in the work with pre-school children we cannot put everything into numbers. Particular errors in performance, emotional situations during the performance, creativity of a child, and different resourcefulness when solving some problems cannot be viewed numerically. Surely, there is a need for this problem to be considered in some way, and this research represented only one step in the mentioned direction. In the field of physical culture, the means to identify motor giftedness and creativity have not been determined yet, among other things, probably because of the previous mentioned perplexity. The same problem is the reason why is so little number of researches directed to the pre-school period, which is essential for the accurate development of each entity.

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**DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION
 TEACHER COMPETENCES AS A
 PREREQUISITE OF TEACHING QUALITY
 ASSURANCE**

**DEZVOLTAREA COMPETENȚELOR DIDACTICE-
 CONDIȚIE A CALITĂȚII ÎNVĂȚĂMÂNTULUI
 ACADEMIC**

Abstract: *The paper considers issues and problems regarding the acquisition of the minimum of competencies of university teachers for immediate work with students and the development of these competences in order to ensure the quality of teaching in higher education. Evaluation and self-evaluation of teaching by all the participants in the process should not be only one of the starting points in determining the level of competence of teachers in higher education but also a guideline as to how to ensure the quality of teaching and to promote the process of teaching. Identification of educational needs is the first step in the determination of the program content of professional training and improvement of teachers. Therefore a questionnaire for teachers has been designed and commented on in the paper.*

Key words: *higher education teacher competencies, higher education didactics, educational needs, teaching quality assurance.*

Introduction

The paper starts from the recommendations of the Conferences of Ministries in Bergen (2005) and London (2007), referring to the definition of quality standards of higher education institutions in accordance with the principles of the Bologna

declaration. The recommendations refer before all to the fact that higher education institutions have to ensure the minimum of competences of teachers to organize and carry out teaching, and the possibility for these competences to develop and expand. The basic question we are facing is what the competence of higher education teacher implies.

The work of higher education teacher refers not only to scientific-research work, but also to knowledge transfer, to gained scientific truths transfer, to teaching, learning, guidance of students towards knowing. Consequently, teacher in higher education has to have the competences of a lecturer and teacher, not only the competences of a scientist or researcher. The issue of personal and interpersonal competencies of teachers and their intercultural sensibility is another issue, not to be dealt with on this particular occasion, since due to its importance for the teaching process it demands more profound approach, not only multidisciplinary but also interdisciplinary.

DETERMINATION OF TEACHER COMPETENCIES

The criterion for determination of competencies of teachers in higher education institutions has been arranged according to law, according to the procedure of appointing junior or senior lectureship to higher education teachers, i. e. professors. This is very important, but it is not sufficient having in mind that the lectureship appointments are based solely on scientific-research work, not on teaching achievements. On the other hand, the criterion itself has not been sufficiently defined and determined in the sense of how much time a teacher is to spend in teaching, i. e. in scientific and research work. A teacher who spends more time in work with students in comparison with a teacher who is engaged in scientific work will not have the production needed for the lectureship promotion. We can assume then that he/she will consequently lose motivation for work and achievements in teaching. Having in mind that the achievement in teaching has been measured solely according to the percentage of students' success on exams and the quantity of acquired facts, and not according to the level of adopted,

applicable, i. e. functional knowledge, it can be stated that the teaching achievement itself is not a sufficiently strong motive for the improvement of immediate work with students, i. e. the strengthening of competencies in this aspect of teacher's work.

The mechanisms of higher education institutions quality assurance are, among other things, evaluation and self-evaluation of teaching carried out by all the participants in the process. This should be one of the standpoints in the determination of the level of higher education teachers' competencies, as well as the guidelines on the field where the teaching process should be ensured and promoted. Evaluation and self-evaluation instruments should be in their general part uniform, before all in order to equalize the quality at the level of the whole system of higher education in a country. In this way the criterion for determination of competencies of teachers would be more complete and equal in its demands.

COMPETENCIES DEVELOPMENT AS AN INCITIVE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION DIDACTICS DEVELOPMENT

The development and the promotion of the competencies of higher education teachers is in direct causal – effect relationship with teaching quality assurance. The accreditation of study programmes assumes the minimum of teaching quality higher institution is obliged to maintain and improve. It is beyond dispute that teachers possess precious experience gained in teaching and work with students to be continually promoted in accordance with contemporary currents in pedagogic theory, before all didactics and teaching methodology. According to Bognar (Bognar 2006: 7) “when teaching at university level is in question, there are numerous prejudices. It is commonly thought that it has to be in the form of lectures or, sometimes followed by the questions of students or discussion. Consequently, it is often pointed out that lectures are the most important and the most valuable form of teaching. Another widespread delusion is that teaching at university should be significantly different from teaching in schools, so that any attempt to modernize teaching at university would mean to deteriorate it and bring it to lower level. ” The same author holds that the

consequence of these delusions is the existing standpoint that there some special higher education didactics, not to rely on common didactic insights, so that these theoretical fallacies prevail nowadays thanks to the development of andragogy. The contribution and importance andragogy has had on the higher education teaching development is beyond dispute, however the fact remains that the theorists have not reached a consensus on the need to develop a didactics of higher education as a separate part of didactics. At the same time, since 1972, when Schmidt published “Higher school didactics” there has been no attempt to promote this part of teaching. Speaking of teaching quality assurance, it is important to resolve the stated dilemmas of theorists and to undertake more comprehensive research on teaching in higher education in order to promote the quality of the whole system of higher education.

It is possible to overcome traditional methods and forms of work in higher education teaching by introduction of contemporary approaches. It is undisputable that the teaching in which students are active does not contribute only to the acquisition of permanent knowledge and the development of life long learning ability, as well as professional development, but it also to the development of creativity and sense of success in students. New ways and forms of work, such as, for example, pair activities, group work or collaborative work, research projects of students etc. demand new organization of work, material support, as well as the training, professional improvement and motivation of teachers for such a work. In other words, contemporary approach to higher education teaching, as a prerequisite for quality assurance, presupposes the development of higher education didactics in order to train both junior lecturers (assistants and lecturers) and senior lecturers – professors, having in mind that the level of scientific and professional expertise does not necessarily mean successful teaching. According to Kalin (Kalin 2004: 55) “it is a fact that there is a difference between knowing something and knowing how to teach it. Moreover, we should also recognize the difference between knowing how to teach and knowing how to teach successfully. Namely, it is differentiated between the knowledge of a subject, the knowledge of teaching methodology of the subject and knowing

how to teach the subject successfully. We are therefore supposed to make a difference between an expert in a field, a qualified teacher in the field and an excellent teacher of the field. Teaching is both thoughtful and practical activity. ” A teacher should be actively involved in the development of his/her scientific discipline and he/she should continually improve his/her pedagogic skills in order to teach his/her subject and to develop his/her professional and scientific competencies and therefore contribute not only to the assurance but to the improvement of the quality of teaching in higher education.

DETERMINATION OF EDUCATIONAL NEEDS –
A PRECONDITION FOR TEACHING QUALITY ASSURANCE

Having in mind all the above stated, a question imposes itself what are the contents to be offered to higher education teachers, before all those with junior lectureships (assistants and lecturers) without much experience in teaching, contents which would contribute to their training and professional improvement for teaching. It is not possible to clearly determine these contents without results of a comprehensive research which would identify educational needs of higher education teachers themselves, as well as without external evaluation and self-evaluation. It is possible to determine the educational needs according to a poll, while the obtained results would serve as a ground for design of a program for in-service professional improvement of higher education teachers. One of the instruments would be the following:

Questionnaire for Teachers

The poll is to determine educational needs of teachers in order to ensure teaching quality at university level. The results of the poll will be the starting point for the design of program for professional in-service training and improvement of higher education teachers. The poll is anonymous.

1) Teacher's _____ title:

Years _____ of _____ teaching _____ experience:

3) The number of classes weekly in teaching and immediate work with students: _____

2) Evaluation of the need for further professional development regarding teaching (please, circle a number on the scale):

I certainly need it 5 ___ 4 ___ 3 ___ 2 ___ 1 I do not need it at all

5) Would you please rank (from 1 to 10) the program contents according to the level of their importance for your work in teaching and further professional pedagogic improvement:

PROGRAM CONTENTS:	RANK
1. The term, subject and aims of pedagogy; development of pedagogy as a science; the system of pedagogic disciplines and the place of the <i>General pedagogy</i> in the system of pedagogic disciplines; the term of subject of general pedagogy study; basic pedagogical terminology.	

2. The term subject of study and the aims of didactics; basic currents and movements within didactics; the principles of didactics;	
3. Teaching; factors of work in teaching; aims of teaching; curriculum;	
4. Class, teaching methods and forms of work, teaching means.	
5. Teaching methodology – the term and aims of teaching methodology; the aims of subject matter; sources of knowledge; choice of contents; work planning; keeping pedagogical records.	
6. Organization of teaching; the course of teaching process; teaching methods application; evaluation and self-evaluation – evaluation of work in teaching.	
7. Pedagogic psychology – the term and subject of study; learning, basic learning theories.	
8. Learning and motivation; methods and techniques of learning; learning abilities; memory and forgetting; work and tiredness.	
9. The factors of successful learning; learning transfer; guidance of students in learning.	
10. Met cognition learning– learning for lifelong education.	

6) Would you please circle one of the offered themes which is, according to your opinion, the most interesting or add the scope of your interest, if you would participate in the program of professional development of teachers in higher education.

PROVISIONAL THEMES OF THE PROGRAM FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHERS

- TEACHING – Factors of teaching, aims of teaching, teaching planning and organization, teaching methods application, use of forms of teaching and teaching means.

- LEARNING – grounds of learning theory, methods and techniques of learning, learning ability, motivation, memory and forgetting, work and tiredness, factors of successful learning, learning guidance, met cognition learning – learning for lifelong education.

- EVALUATION – teaching evaluation, evaluation of learning and teachers;

- INFORMATIONAL – COMMUNICATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES - TRADITIONAL on-line teaching, e-learning, new methods and approaches to learning and teaching.

- THE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK

- _____

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**ROMANIAN WRITERS FROM HUNGARY:
ALEXANDRU HOȚOPAN (1937-2007)**

**SCRIITORI ROMÂNI ÎN UNGARIA
ALEXANDRU HOȚOPAN (1937-2007)**

Abstract: *Our article explores the role of the roumanian writers to develop the Hungarian literature and the universal literature. In our more complex study, we explore how these writers describe happy and unhappy childhood.*

Key words: *roumanian writers, literature, study*

“...in the infinite space that spans the world and toys, upon a place, which from the first beginning had been prepared to serve a pure event. ” (Rainer Maria Rilke-*Elegy*), childhood with its ineffable universe and adolescence come into the limelight in the remarkable works of Romanian authors from Hungary: Ilie Ivănuș, Gheorghe Santău, Lucia Borza, Ana Varga, Petru Popuță, Lucian Magdu, Alexandru Hoțopan, Vasile Roxin, Ioan Halasz, Petru Anton, Ana Crișan, Nicolae Gândilă, Ioan Sz. Kiss, Maria Berenyi and in the works of the new wave of women writers such as Ana Radici Repisky and Ana Hoțopan, etc. It is a literary group whose members have put their talent at the service of small children and youngsters.

They have poeticized the two universes by rendering their reality depicting the pains of childhood.

In our more complex study, we explore how these writers describe happy and unhappy childhood, the mother's and the grandparents' image in the warm and beneficial atmosphere of the family, the feeling of separation from childhood and the native village appearing as “*the wonderful fortress “the universe of kindergartens as the space of happiness of pre-school children, the dumb world of*

nature, the period and character of adolescence with a poetry dedicated to love, a universe of all ages ardently lived through in adolescence being characterized by continuous happiness here and there, in the intimate universe of married life of all those who have interwoven their destiny from mysterious love and later on revealed with the fruits of intimate love, namely children ” (Al. Hoțopan-From Common Roots).

Alexandru Hoțopan, being a teacher, a folklorist, a journalist and a poet, is one of the most outstanding personalities of the Romanian community from Hungary who has written the charming tale in verse called *The Fairy-Tale of a Snowflake* for the universe of small children, of pre-school children and pupils published in the anthology entitled *Buds* (1973). During the years, Alexandru Hoțopan, the folklorist disclosed his talent and soul as a poet.

The tale of a snowflake is one of the most beautiful poems for children from Romanian literature from everywhere published in the anthology called **Buds** (1973). It is a tale without kings, queens, good and bad fays, but with a lot of charming personalities as Al. Hoțopan is a true founder of ineffable universes in the work entitled *Cosmos* : “*in celestial heights*” , the tale “*of the snowflake-little star*” and its brother is taking place being united around their mother “*the cloud-mother of snowflakes*”. The Universe has a peculiar magnificence due to “*silver snowflakes*” meant to be united in order to crown the land with its beauties. A “*little-star snowflake*” *swung by a light breeze* has been separated from the wreath of the snowflakes, and had a tragic end due to its curiosity specific to children to see what is happening on earth. The poem is written in a rhythm based on folkloric sources with paired rhymes easily to remember.

„. . . As a butterfly floating
drawing near smiling
to the cage of a puppy,
playful and tiny.
the tiny puppy
seeing the small butterfly
believed it is a toy

and barked of joy
 and with its lukewarm jaw
 touched it silently
 . . . but the snowflake gladly entertained
 in a flash melted

The morals of the tale make up a beautiful poem: it is advice the tale gives you and teaches you to be always wise to obey your parents” (fragment).

Since the literary work is an open universe, we may also comment on this tale in verse in a more pretentious way: in the first quatrain, the atmosphere of the tale is set:

“Once upon a time in heavenly heights, there was a motionless cloud with silver snowflakes being brilliant.”

In *Cosmos*, there is a certain harmony, the components of the tale in verse of Alexandru Hoțopan are subordinated to the order of nature and to that stipulated by “*the mother of the snowflakes-the cloud*”. The game of the snowflakes in *Cosmos* is harmonious and brilliant. The balance of “*the celestial heights*” is maintained as long as “*the snowflake children-snowflake little star*” observe their mother’s advice (“*the snowflakes’ mother cloud*”) to remain united hand in hand with each other in order to wait for the suitable moment, and donate beauties to the land. This gesture is possible provided that they observe the harmony and order of nature.

The disobedience of their mother’s advice, the child’s curiosity “*the snowflake little-star*” spoil the harmony of the atmosphere “*the heavenly heights*”, but the descent to the earth means a dangerous game with a tragic end. Curiosity and games are specific to children, but they become dangerous unless the harmony stipulated by cosmic order is maintained.

The tale atmosphere is maintained only on cosmic level, and it is subordinated to the harmony stipulated by cosmic nature in which “*the snowflakes’ mother-cloud*” plays a balancing role. The game in the earthly paradise (children, domestic animals and all that existing in the surrounding world) can be beautiful and educative providing that the harmony “*in the heavenly heights*” is maintained.

The paradise from the immeasurable atmosphere and the universe are full of both light and balance. Cosmic harmony can generate

beauties which can be donated to the earthly paradise in which the happy moments of game have their “*own laws*.”

Alexandru Hoțopan has created a new genre of poems for the universe of young people and the grown-ups. His poetry is modern characterized by a simple poetic expression, but filled with metaphors. The volume entitled *From Common Roots, Poems* (1991-1992) is an indisputable proof of the poetic talent and his artistic expression which define him as a modern poet of Romanian poetry from Hungary.

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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

INTELIGENȚA EMOȚIONALĂ

Abstract: *Emoțional intelligence –E Q, refers to the capacity to recognize our own emotions and sentiments and of other persons as well. It also refers to the capacity to motivate our selves and to do a better management of our spontaneous impulses. E. Q. describes complementary, but different, qualities from the EQ. Then two diferent types of intelligence, the former intellectual and the latter emotional, express the activities of diferent structures of the brain. Intelligence is only based on the functions of the neocortex and the emotional centers spread in subcortical areas. E Q comes from the function of the connection of these two centers*

Key words: *Emoțional intelligen,e emoțiuni, functions*

Emotional intelligence – EQ refers to the capacity to recognize our own emotions and sentiments and other person's as well. It also refers to the capacity to motivate ourselves and to do a better management of our spontan impulses. EQ describes complementary qualities, but different from the EQ. The two different types of intelligens – the former, intellectual and the latter emotional – express the activities of the different structures of the brain. Intelligence is based only on the functions of the neocortex and the emotional centers spread in subcortical areas. EQ comes from the functions of the connection of these two centers. The human being is changeable. We are judged not only after our intelligence and competence but also after our behaviour in relation to ourselves and to other people. All of us want to be successful. But what is the success? We can define it as being the skill of a

person t sit and achieve the personal and professional objectives whatever they are, obviously the definition of success given by each of us will change. We wish different things and aims and just because we get old we gain experience, develop other responsibilities. The youth's ideals are replaced by the mature responsibilities, realities. We should be better on professional level, partners of life or parents. No matter of the purpose, the important thing acceptable manner, in many situations.

IQ and EQ.

Cognitive intelligence refers to the capacity to concentrate, plan, organize and use the words to assimilate and interpretate the deeds.

Cognitive intelligence defines the possibilities to organize and express the cognitive structures pointed out through performances. IQ is thought enough. It tends to reach a higher value for a person aged 17, it remains constantly in adult period and diminishes when get older EQ determines our potential to get practical abilities based on five elements. The conscience of our own affects, reactions and resources, motivation self-control, sociability. EQ is not a skill that refers to a person's capacity to react properly is a specific activity. It is not an achievement and hasn't got vocational character that focuses on a person's natural talent or on a predilection in a certain domain. EQ doesn't mean just to be "kind" (in a certain strategic moments, EQ means exactly not to be kind) but doesn't mean to release your sentiments. It means to control your affects, to give them the most proper and efficient expression. This allows cooperation among people in or to manage the same objectives. Our level of EQ is not determined genetically and doesn't develop only in childhood. As compare to IQ that doesn't suffer noticeable changes, after adolescence EQ seems to be to a great extent hereditary and develops as we grow old with all we learn from our experiences. Our capacity in this domain may increase continuously.

The structure of EQ

EQ has been organized in five units and five sub-units.

I. Intrapersonal unit / domain refer to the capacity of self-knowledge and self-control. It determines the way we perceive our sentiments and how content we are for what we do in life. Success, in this domain, means that we are able to express feelings, to live and work independently, to feel strong and to be confident when we express our ideas or opinions. This domain / unit is made of five sub-units.

1). Self-emotional conscience. Which is the capacity to recognize how we feel and why we feel like that? It is also the impact of our behaviour with somebody else. This quality allows us to identify our emotions and their effects. People who possess this quality can recognize their emotions and their causes, identify the relation between what they feel, do and say and recognize the way by which the emotions and sentiments affect the performance. The perception of that emotion affect our activity is a fundamental emotional quality. The tide of our emotional conditions flows in parallel to the mental tide. We always feel in a certain mood, even though we usually don't pay attention to the minor modifications of our affective tonality. Sentiments are always at our disposal but we are rarely at theirs. We notice them only when they grow. The rhythm of modern life doesn't provide too much time, in order to assimilate, meditate and react to sentiments.

2). The Assertive Character. Our capacity to express directly thoughts and sentiments, defend / protect our position. People with this type of character are shy or too controlled / tempered, but they are able to express directly their sentiments and opinions without being aggressive and abusive. The capacity to act in a certain degree of assertivity is structured on three levels. Firstly, we must have enough conscience to be able to recognize sentiments before express them. Secondly, it is important to control our impulses in connection with the expression of disapproval and sorrow, as we should not get mad. The third level refers to the capacity to sustain our rights, causes and deep / profound faith.

3). The independence is the capacity of self control and self-direction, the capacity "to keep stand up". Operational memory, "the capacity of concentrating and stocking the significant information lies in the pre-frontal area of the brain. Operational memory is vital to understand, organize, and decide rational thought and learn as well. When the mind is calm, operational memory acts in a proper way, In unforeseen situations, the brain takes measures of preaction to maintain the body on after; the activity of this counter being reduced. Prefrontal area is related to the amygdalian nucleus-the bank of affective memory and emotions. There are stocked all our moments of victory and failure, hope and fear revolt and frustration. All information received are examined and evaluated according to the potential of anger or opportunity comparing the present event with the pattern of past experiences. The response of the brain follows even today, and old strategy in which the crisis moments may have dramatic consequences.

4). Self-respect. The capacity to know our strong and weak points and to feel good even though we have weak points. People who have this quality are aware of their power and limits; (reflexive), learning from their experiences open towards a sincere feedback, toward new perspective, and sentiments perfection (they have humour sense and are able to keep distance).

5). Self-fulfilment is the capacity to recognize our potential and to feel satisfied of our professional and personal achievements. People who possess these qualities are confident, determined, capable to make decisions despite of the uncertainties and pressure. People endowed with such feature give off charm and inspire confidence to other people. People endowed with self-confidence are firm without being arrogant made.

II. Interpersonal domain refers to our capacity to interact and collaborate with other people. It is made of three sub-units.

1). Empathia is the ability understands what others could feel and think. It is the capacity to see the world through other people's eyes. Empathia means more than an intellectual understanding of others sentiments. It goes beyond the cognitive knowledge, involving a certain type of subjective understanding MAYEROFF describes the

empathic ability: "As you care about other person you have to understand her or him as if you were him or her. You have to see through his / her eyes and the way how that person sees her / himself." Such ability doesn't come easy. You have to work hard to develop it both by means of the examination of the accumulation of knowledge that allows understanding of the human behaviour.

2). Social responsibility is the capacity to be cooperant and active member of the local group we belong.

3). Interpersonal relation refers to the skills to build up benefic interhuman relations for both relations in which they leave or give.

III. Adaptability domain refers to the capacity to be flexible and with the sense of reality in order to be able to solve a series of problems as they come. The three sub-units are:

1). The evaluation of reality is the capacity to see things as they are not as we wish to be or we would be afraid of them to be; the capacity to evaluate the link between what happened and the objective existence. The evaluation of this level involves a survey for identification of some objective, evidence for confirmation, justification and supports the sentiments, perceptions and thoughts. The accent lies on pragmatism, objectivity, proper degree of perceptions. The evaluation of reality is associated with the lack of withdrawal into inner world and with adaptability to concrete situation, lucidity, clarity in the process of perceptions and thoughts.

2). Flexibility is the capacity to adopt our sentiments, thoughts and activities according to the changeable conditions. Flexible people are agile, compatible to react to changes without rigidity. Their capacity to modify the thought and behaviour is unusual and arbitrary but in accordance to the changeable feed-back which he gets from environment. People who doesn't possess this capacity can hardly adapt to the new situations and don't know to benefit from the opportunities.

3). The solution of the problems is the capacity to define the problems and to elaborate and introduce proper and efficient solutions. This process has more stages and includes the capacity to identify a problem and to feel confident and motivated to succeed it efficiently the capacity to define the problem as clearly as possible,

the capacity to give many solutions the capacity to introduce one of the solutions, the capacity to test the results of the solution and the capacity to revise this process if the problem maintains. This process is associated with a well-disciplined conscientious, methodical and systematic in approaching the problems.

4). The stress administration domain refers to the capacity to tolerate the stress and to keep under control the impulses. The two sub-units of this domain are:

a) The tolerance to stress – the capacity to stay calm and concentrate, to manage constructive the opposite events and emotional conflictual conditions without being affected. The tolerance to stress means the capacity to resist to the hostile events and oppressive situations without giving up, in order to manage actively and passively the stress. This skill is based on the capacity to choose the way to act as to vanquish / defeat the stress, to know what and how to do an optimistic mood concerning the personal capacity to exceed a certain problem and a feeling which the stress situation can be controlled and influenced

- the control of the impulses

- the capacity to resist or delay the reaction to a certain impulse.

It is important to control of the impulses attracts the capacity to accept our aggressive impulses, to be the masters of the situation and to control our aggressivity, hostility and irresponsible character. In this process, the problems are connected with the tolerance reduced to frustration, impulsibility, the loss of the control and an explosive and unexpected behaviour. People who possess an efficient control of the impulses, think before acting and are able to resist to the impulses, to react automatically. To control of the impulses have not be confused with the lack of flexibility and spontaneity.

5). The domain of general mood refers to the way how we consider life, to the capacity to enjoy life. It also refers to general sentiments of content and satisfaction. This domain has two sub-units:

a) The optimism – the skill to maintain a neolitic and positive attitude especially in difficult moments. The capacity to see the good aspect of life, keep a positive attitude in spite of the adversities. The genuine / real optimism is the realistic and total approach of life.

b) Happiness the capacity to be content satisfied, to enjoy ourselves and others and to be full of enthusiasm in a series of activities. The capacity to be happy is not an isolated skill. It influences and is influenced by other skill like the evaluation of reality the self-respect and self-fulfulment. At the individual level, the emotional intelligence elements may identificate, evaluated and cultivated success in life and profession depends on our intelligence in different types of manifestation and our creative potential. Who know him / herself and cultivates him or her qualities will profit of a real advantage.

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**EDUCATION FOR THE CONTRACEPTIVE HEALTH
IN THE SCHOOLS FROM ROMANIA-
A LESSON FOR LIFE**

**EDUCAȚIA PENTRU SĂNĂTATEA
CONTRACEPTIVĂ ÎN ȘCOALA ROMÂNEASCĂ –
O LECȚIE PENTRU VIAȚĂ**

*Motto: The education represents the methodical process of thinking.
(Ernest Dimnet)*

Abstract: *Nowadays, teenagers begin their sexual life at an early age, however, most of them neither know nor understand the contraceptive methods that exist, thing which increases the cases of pregnancy among teenager girls. Consequently, there has been felt the need of introducing during the counseling classes, essential information about sexual health as well as about contraceptive education.*

Key words: *the education, health, contraception, Romanian School.*

Importance of the problem: There has been noticed one higher incidence of pregnancy and/or infections/sexual diseases (STI/STB) among Romanian high school students since the beginning of the 21st century. Every year, 29. 000 young Romanian women become mothers, with 500 births under 15 years old and 18. 000 choose to make an abortion (SCES, 2007).

There have been recorded more than 250 cases of pregnant females who were under 18, from the beginning of 2008 at the

Obstetrical and Gynecological Hospital "Salvator Vuia" from Arad county.

At the Clinical County of Emergency Hospital of Arad, at the Pediatrics department, it had been remarked, in the last years, one change of profile in the pediatrics surgical pathology. This being the increase incidence of the diseases which occur at the beginning of the teenagers' sexual life: genital infections and inflammations, and other diseases which appear on the infantile body.

The majority of pregnancy cases among teenager girls, are the consequence of their sexual life, which starts at a very early age, combined with their lack of knowledge about the different contraceptive methods. That is why it is extremely important to introduce different lessons about the sexual life health and contraception during the counseling classes (Borbala, 1992).

Lesson subject: contraception and the prophylaxis of sexual determinate infections and diseases (STI/STD).

Lesson aim: evaluation of teenager students' knowledge about the contraceptive methods, the hygiene of sexual life, sexuality, sexual determinate infections and diseases (STI/STD) and the education of these (change the non sanogenetic behavior) about the subject. Moreover, it is important for the students to know about the contraceptive methods as well as the place they can get them from. They must make sanogenetic behavior in sexual health and life.

The place of lesson: one school (maybe a special school, for example a school for the amblyopic children).

Addressability (the age group): the 10th graders

The lesson: during the counseling and school orientated class, duration 50 minutes.

The method: students response to an evaluative questionnaire which is focused on their knowledge of contraceptive methods in the schools from Romania (the questionnaire was adapted to the National Program of Education for Health in the Schools from Romania, Ministry of Education and Research, 2004).

Class management: the educational methodology is supposed to be discussed for 2 or 3 lessons during the counseling

and school orientated classes taking into account the student's knowledge about such subjects as well as their ability to personalize the information that they had been told.

Technique:

- The participants give their oral answers to the posted questions (in case of the visually impaired children) and it can be also used the Braille questionnaire in order to maintain confidentiality made by a doctor or a teacher.
 - In case of mass schools, students give their written answers to the test (for the confidentiality purpose the participants are not mentioned).
- The objectives :**
- Evaluation of the students' knowledge about contraception
 - Inquiry about their personal opinions and behaviour about the sexual life
 - Information about contraception;
 - Contraceptive education (changing the nonsanogenetic behavior);
 - Getting students familiarized with the sanogenetic facts regarding the sexual life.

Items:

1. The contraception's purpose is to prevent :
 - a. menstruation
 - b. ejaculation
 - c. sexual contact
 - d. pregnancy
2. The natural contraceptive methods don't use:
 - a. body temperature diagrams
 - b. the analyze of cervical mucus
 - c. spermicide solution
 - d. menstrual calendar
3. The natural contraceptive methods function when:
 - a. the woman's menstruation is irregular
 - b. she refrains during the fertile period

- c. the menstruation is interrupted
 - d. all answers: a, b, c due to a disease
4. *Coitus interruptus* is a contraceptive method:
- a. unpleasant
 - b. the efficiency is of 50%
 - c. better than nothing
 - d. all answers: a, b, c
5. The vaginal bath isn't a good method for the prevention of pregnancy because:
- a. is too expensive
 - b. the vagina is too large
 - c. the sperm reaches the uterus in few seconds
 - d. the sperms are much faster in a cold water
6. The chemical foams, unguents, gels or suppository prevent the pregnancy if it is placed in the:
- a. uterus
 - b. urinary tubule
 - c. penis
 - d. vagina
7. The condom is a contraceptive method because it:
- a. can be fun
 - b. the sperm doesn't reach the ovum
 - c. prevents STD
 - d. all answers a, b, c
8. The use of the condom and chemical contraceptive foams is just as efficient as the:
- a. non- contraceptive methods
 - b. diafragma
 - c. oral contraceptives
 - d. calendar method
9. The spermicidal foams prevent pregnancy by:
- a. destroying the ovum
 - b. blocking the ovulation
 - c. destroying the sperm
 - d. releasing the menstruation

10. If 10 sexual active couples don't use any contraceptive methods, in one year there results: a. 9; b. 7; c. 4; d. 2.

The personal opinions about contraception can be tested under the form of a team game; by grouping the class into two parts (right and left) taking into account the students' personal opinions and attitudes towards contraception. The items are (adapted to the informative material of National Program of Education for Health in the schools from Romania, made by the Ministry of Education and Research):

1. the use of the contraceptives is mainly the woman's responsibility;
 2. young boys must use the condom during every sexual contact;
 3. young girls must always have a condom in their purse;
 4. the abortion as the best method to control the number of births per year;
 5. the use of the oral contraceptives represents the best method to prevent pregnancy;
 6. it is unlikely for girls to begin their sexual life before they get married as compared to boys who may do that very well
 7. most boys or men would prefer to marry only a virgin girl
 8. mass-media influences extremely much the teenagers' behaviour and attitudes towards their sexual life
 9. the church should offer a serious system of moral values regarding the problem of beginning sexual life before the marriage
 10. to inform and educate high schools students about different facts that are concerned with the sexual life, should become a „must” nowadays in all the schools from Romania
- The 10th graders' evaluation concerned with different sexual diseases (STI&SDT) and the presentation made by an authorised person (a doctor) of the most important elements regarding those diseases: general knowledge about the major sexual disease (STD), ways to contract the diseases, the symptoms (manifestation way – signs), prevention.

This final stage can be done in an interactive way through different discussions and with the help of illustrative handouts as

well as a visit paid to a medical office concerned with family planning. (Billing, Westmore, 1990).

Results and conclusions:

The information offered, the tests, and the educative activities performed during the counseling classes, will hopefully raise teenagers' responsibility towards a possible sexual relation making them aware of the risks they are exposed to whether these risks have a medical, social or psychological nature.

The increased BTS incidence among teenagers and the need of paying a visit to the doctor in case of an ITS contraction, should make the young boys and girls feel more responsible as to the moment when they begin their sexual life and the contraceptive methods that can protect them from BTS (Hatcher, Ziemann, Cwiak, Darney, Creinin, Stosur, 2005-2007).

In Romania, 2008 stands out as the second year that marks „The Contraception Day” held worldwide (on the 26th of September). On this occasion, informative campaigns are held whose aim is to inform teenagers about the latest contraceptive methods.

The ambassador of this important event, Kelly Osbourne, said that: „ . . . we should talk more openly about sex and contraceptives. I do not think that one should start the sexual life unless one is aware of these two important aspects. ”

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**PROMOTING SOCIAL INCLUSION THROUGH BASIC
 SKILLS LEARNING- AN EXAMPLE
 OF GOOD PRACTICE**

**PROMOVAREA INCLUZIUNII SOCIALE PRIN METODE
 SPECIFICE DE ÎNVĂȚARE –
 EXEMPLE DE BUNĂ PRACTICĂ**

Abstract: *Policy cooperation in education and training is gaining momentum in the EU with the approval of the work programme concerning the future objectives of education and training systems on 14 February. It focuses on the following three strategic objectives, which are broken down into 13 associated objectives: improving the quality and effectiveness of education and training systems in the EU; facilitating the access of all to education and training systems- opening-up education and training systems to the wider world. A lot of initiatives were developed across Europe in order to contribute to the attainment of these objectives.*

Key words: *objectives, cooperation, training, education*

According to the European Association for the Education of Adults, The European Council held in Lisbon in March 2000 marks **a decisive moment for the direction of policy and action in the European Union.** Its conclusions affirm that Europe has indisputably moved into the Knowledge Age, with all that this will imply for cultural, economic and social life. Patterns of learning, living and working are changing apace. This means not simply that individuals must adapt to change, but equally that established ways of doing things must change too.

The conclusions of the Lisbon European Council confirm that the move towards **lifelong learning must accompany a successful**

transition to a knowledge-based economy and society. Therefore, Europe’s education and training systems are at the heart of the coming changes. They too, must adapt. The conclusions of the Feira European Council invite the “Member States, the Council and the Commission within their areas of competence, to identify coherent strategies and practical measures with a view to fostering lifelong learning for all”.

The Memorandum for Lifelong learning has as purpose to **launch a European-wide debate** on a comprehensive strategy for implementing lifelong learning at individual and institutional levels, and in all spheres of public and private life.

The ordering of the six key messages in the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning reflects three broad categories of action required for effective implementation of lifelong learning:

- essential preconditions for lifelong learning
 - KM1 – New basic skills for all; KM2 – More investment in human resources;
 - improving the quality and benefits of learning processes and outcomes
 - KM3 – Innovation in teaching and learning; KM4 – Valuing learning;
 - providing learner-friendly contexts and support services for lifelong and lifewide learning
 - KM5 – Rethinking guidance and counselling; KM6 – Bringing learning closer to home.

Nevertheless, the themes of the six messages are obviously interrelated and there are certainly other equally credible ways of dividing up the topics they discuss.

Many of the Member State reports use the six key messages to structure their responses, but the topics they discuss under each key message vary and overlap to some extent. For example, the responses under KM1 (New basic skills for all) tend to address general principles in relation to lifelong learning and its implementation, as well as considering the nature of ‘old’ and ‘new’ basic skills and related access issues. By way of illustration, France (in company with all the reports) recognises the need to design targeted lifelong learning measures for the hard-to-reach. At the

same time, the target group approach should not be taken so far that it overshadows the principle of ensuring universal and equal access to and participation in quality mainstream education and training throughout life. Ireland's contribution, for its part, underlines that much more attention should be paid to assuring a solid foundation for lifelong learning through early childhood education. Furthermore, Ireland is now becoming a consciously multicultural society. The implementation of lifelong learning can and should play an active role in putting integration policies into practice.

Key Message 1 – New basic skills for all

Memorandum Objective: *Guarantee universal and continuing access to learning for gaining and renewing the skills needed for sustained participation in the knowledge society*

This key message attracts much attention in the majority of Member State reports, which cover a wide range of issues that often reach beyond the immediate theme at hand. The issues raised under KM1 are also frequently closely linked with those addressed under other key messages.

Basic skills

There is no firm consensus on the definition of basic skills – and little enthusiasm for a European-led initiative to resolve this question, as had been suggested in the Memorandum through the development of a shared European framework of basic skills. Indeed, responses to KM1 contained few real proposals for action at any level, although (throughout the reports) greater opportunities to exchange information and good practice, together with proposals for European research topics, find favour.

For some countries, basic skills essentially comprise traditional and digital literacy and numeracy, whereas others also include what might elsewhere be termed core or key skills covering a broader and perhaps more advanced range of knowledge and competences. Some reports (for example, Finland and the Netherlands) do not make strong distinctions between 'old' and 'new' basic skills. Many reports consider the 'Lisbon list' of new basic skills (**IT skills, foreign languages, technological culture, entrepreneurship and social skills**) too narrow and too heavily focussed on employability.

Most reports thus add to the 'Lisbon list' of new basic skills. Most frequently, the reports extend and specify a range of competences falling, on the one hand, **into the communication, intercultural and social domain (for example, see France, Iceland and Spain)** and, on the other hand, into a cluster of personal skills anchored in the motivation and capacity to learn continuously, the competence for **self-direction and critical analysis, and the ability to manage and use dynamic knowledge flows creatively** (for example, see the Austrian, British, Danish, Dutch, Finnish and Italian reports). The Irish report adds that sports, recreational activities and community arts are also important for nurturing richly contoured basic skills with an eye to the development of the whole person.

The German report, for example, points out that employability itself increasingly requires the development of versatile people with strong personal and social skills, which accounts for the directions in which the 'Lisbon list' has been extended in the responses as a whole. Alongside this, Austria, Ireland, Norway, and the United Kingdom give particular mention to fostering entrepreneurship – but definitions, appropriate learning contexts, methods and assessment mechanisms remain unspecified. Indeed, the Austrian report wonders whether entrepreneurial spirit can be intentionally taught at all. France raises the broader question of whether all skills can be taught and learned in the conventional manner.

Most reports (in particular, see Austria, Belgium, Germany, France and Portugal) recognise the great importance of multilingualism in today's Europe. The Icelandic report points specifically to its incontrovertible necessity for small nations using lesser-spoken languages. Several reports (for example, Austria, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, The Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom) also underline the importance of multiple language competence to foster intercultural understanding and to combat xenophobia. This includes learning languages spoken by indigenous or immigrant groups in one's own country or those spoken in neighbouring countries. However, whether learning foreign languages can realistically be a priority for those individuals, which struggling to

attain foundation literacy and numeracy in a country's official language (s) remains, in the expressed views of some reports, a moot point.

Regardless of the importance of 'new' basic skills, many reports consider that the 'old' basic skills (literacy and numeracy) remain at least as important, both in themselves and as the essential foundation upon which acquisition of these new skills is built. Some point out (for example, Ireland and the United Kingdom) **that functional illiteracy and innumeracy remains major problems for which a range of revamped policy measures are being developed and implemented.** At the conjunction between old and new basic skills, a number of reports perceive the risk of a growing digital literacy divide (although the Dutch report dissents, arguing that this is not a significant problem in The Netherlands). Several reports therefore propose that access to ICT hardware and software should be available to all citizens free of charge, and in some countries, plans to achieve universal access are already well underway (for example, in the United Kingdom).

Nevertheless, with the exception of France and Luxembourg, the reports contain no concrete consideration of the implications of changes in and expansion in the range of basic skills for curriculum and pedagogy, despite the fact that the Memorandum had specifically raised the question of how to deal with existing curriculum overload and the interdisciplinary restructuring of areas of knowledge. Luxembourg, for example, includes a specific proposal for linking areas of knowledge and skill to different levels of initial education and training. On the other hand, several reports propose that basic skills is a theme best dealt with within the framework of the follow-up to the Education Council's report on the concrete objectives of education and training systems, in which the identification of a basic skills package and how best to ensure its availability and acquisition have been given priority status by the Education Council.

An Action Plan was adopted by the European States in order to promote the initiatives in the field in of Basic Skills Education. A

wide range of international collaborative projects were designed and implemented at European level.

The Grundtvig 1 project "**Promoting social inclusion through basic skills learning**" was coordinated by the Folk High School Institute of the Hungarian Folk High School Society in partnership with similar institutions from Romania, Czech Republic, Poland, Spain, and it have benefit from consultancy offered by organization from Great Britain and Denmark.

The project aimed to:

- identify the learning needs in the field of basic skills education within a region
- use the gathered information in order to influence the local government and to provide adequate resources for the adults in need for basic skills education.

Good practices in the field of basic skills education were identified by each partner country. A set of criteria, for recognizing good practices were identified and applied.

Such as good practice example was identified in Arad, provided by the *The Foundation for the Development of the Nations through Mutual Support*

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

1. Title: Basic skills education in the field of literacy and numeracy for the adults with risk

2. Name and full contact details of key informant:

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The Foundation For The Development Of The Nations Through Mutual Support is member of the Association of Volunteers in International Service (AVSI) network.

3. Summary of the project

The project “*Basic skills education in the field of literacy and numeracy for the adults with risk*” belongs to a vaster programme called: “*Human promotion of the person with risk- children and families in difficulty within the Arad county*”. Other projects within the programme are: the preventing or reintegration of the children abandoned in the maternities, distance support of the disadvantaged families, vocational training and counselling for disadvantaged adults.

The basic skills programme aimed to develop reading, writing and mathematical basic skills of the learners by involving them in a 240h programme, during 4 months. The programme also succeeds to develop the learners’ efficient communication skills by teaching them how to present themselves in front of an employer.

A team of 45 members implement the programme between November 2003 and February 2004. The learners obtained a certificate recognised by the Arad Territorial School Department, equivalent of 4 years of primary education.

4. Aims

- Developing the capacity of oral communication
- Developing the capacity of written communication
- Knowing and using the basic mathematical concepts
- Developing the exploring and problem solving capacity
- Developing the capacity of communication by using the mathematical language

5. Objectives

At the end of the programme the learners will be able to:

- Distinguish the words and their meaning in a given sentence;

- Distinguish the sounds and the syllables (needed for the learning of reading and writing in the Romanian who is a phonetic language);
- Read in their own pace;
- Extract the global meaning from a written and oral text;
- Elaborate short, correct written sentences;
- Elaborate different type of documents: family notes, letters, official demands, C.V., motivation letters;
- Write and read the numbers from 0 to 10000;
- Effectuate different types of additions and subtractions;
- Effectuate multiplications and divisions;
- Recognise and identify the basic properties of the basic geometrical figures;
- Know the standard measure units for length, volume, weight, surface, time and monetary units;
- Present themselves properly in the front of an employer.

6. Target Group

The target group was the persons without basic education (less than 4 years of schooling) and without jobs from Arad.. 25 adults aged between 16 and 48 enrolled in the programme but only 15 graduated. 95% of them belonged to the Roma minority but this wasn’t a selection criterion. They lived in Arad. Most of them were persons socially assisted by the Municipal Council.

7. Key activities

The members of the target group were selected by the programme’s psychologist within the following categories:

- the families counselled in the maternities in order to prevent or to reintegrate the abandoned children;
- the families benefiting of distance support offered by some families from Italy;
- the families benefiting by the social support of the Municipal Council.

The selection criteria were the lack of the basic 4 years of education and the lack of the jobs.

The main motivation of the learners was the fact that after the attending of the basic skills programme they will be assisted by the representatives of the foundation in obtaining a job, or other personal achievements (such driving licence, etc).

The initial evaluation of the learners revealed some differences between their levels of basic skills (eg. some of them knew how to write some letters and some didn't know how to handle a pen). From those results the teacher split the group of the learner in two level subgroups and works with them simultaneously and differentiated.

The teacher and the psychologist prepared the programme by elaborating the curricula, the selection of the materials to be used, the schedules, by correlating the contents with the time allocated. There is no standard national curriculum for basic skills intensive programmes addressed to the adults. The organisers adopted the aims and objectives from the National Curriculum for Primary Education (grades I-IV) and elaborated some materials adapted to the learner's characteristics but they also used different alternative manuals elaborated for the children.

The programme was implemented in 4 months, 16 weeks, 15h/weeks, and 3H/day, totally 240 hours.

The curricula included 2h/day of reading and writing and 1h/day of numeracy, totally 160h of reading and writing and 80 hours of numeracy. The competencies acquired through individualised learning strategies were used in order for the learners to elaborate official document, requests, C.V, motivation letters etc. Even officially the curriculum included only Romanian language and Mathematics during the programme interdisciplinary approaches were implemented especially in the field of history and geography.

Interim evaluation took places after the ending of each content unit and two school teachers from Public Schools nr.2 Arad did a final evaluation in order to release a 4 years of education equivalent certificates recognised by the Arad Territorial School Department.

After the ending of the training session the learners were assisted to get a job and to obtain a qualification at the work place, to enrol themselves in the cheapest driving schools etc.

8. Working methods

Wide ranges of working methods were used during the programme. The whole programme was centred on the learners' activity. They were the mains responsible for their learning process. The role of the teacher was to facilitate the learning

Individual work had represented the most used working method. After the demonstration and explanation done by the teacher the learners work individually on individualised work sheets in order to exercises and strengthen their skills. The learners had optional homework to do.

Group work it was used also especially on task related to the understanding of the meaning of a text or to the problem solving.

The teaching approaches were strongly related to the real life. For example the teacher used newspapers, magazines, tabloids in order to enhance the student's motivation to learn reading and maths problem were always easier to solve when the numbers represented some amounts of money.

The learners were involved in exercises about how to manage the information. They learned were and how to search information about jobs, weather, training opportunities, movies, etc. The learners also elaborated notes, letters, official demands, C.V., etc.

The evaluation methods used were:

- ❖ the observation of the learners' behaviour during the programme

- ❖ the oral examination

- ❖ the portfolios- containing the individual work sheets

- ❖ written papers, etc

Their teachers continually assessed the learners during the programme after the ending of each content unit.

After the ending of the activities the learners were evaluate in both oral and written form by the two teachers from the Public School nr.2 Arad. They all passed the examination with epithets

between “satisfactory” and “very good”. The examination was personalised, each learner having different subjects at the oral examination.

9. Financial support

The Foundation for the Development of the Nations through Mutual Support Arad supports the entire costs of the programme.

10. Perceived strengths

- ❖ very good communication between the organisers and the learners;
- ❖ very good working atmosphere based on mutual trust and respect between teacher and learners;
- ❖ significant progress from the BS point of view demonstrated by all the learners;
- ❖ very good collaboration with the Public School nr.2 Arad;
- ❖ certificates recognised by the Arad Territorial School Department equivalent of 4 years of basic education;
- ❖ the team of the programme was prepared from the psycho pedagogical point of view to work with the learners (the teacher was attended a pedagogical high school and a pedagogical university college) and can sustain other basic skills programmes;
- ❖ the learners benefit from a constant pedagogical and psychosocial counselling offered by the psychologist and by the teacher;
- ❖ adequate material resources (rooms, furniture, educational materials, etc);
- ❖ very good collaboration with The Social Service of the Municipal Council who offered information about the target group.

11. Perceived weaknesses

- ❖ the high rate of abandon; at the beginning were enrolled 25 learners and only 15 graduated
- ❖ the low feed from the target group; about 100 person were informed about the programme but only 25 enrolled

- ❖ there is no standard national curriculum for basic skills programmes for adults
- ❖ there are no manual and materials addressing to the adults enrolled in basic skills programme

12. Outcomes, specific achievements

- ❖ 15 learners with increased level of knowledge and skills in the reading, writing, mathematical and efficient communication
- ❖ 15 recognised certificates obtained by the learners
- ❖ 15 more self-confident peoples, better equipped for the social life and with grater chances on the labour market
- ❖ 240 hours of the programme-15hours/week, 16 weeks of programme
- ❖ a team of 4 experts who taught and counselled the learners (1 psychologist, 1 teacher, 2 examiner teachers)
- ❖ 163 Euro/learner
- ❖ 15 C.V., 15 motivation letters
- ❖ a tested curriculum
- ❖ specific educational resources
- ❖ learners who acquired a job or enrolled in further training or in driving school

13. Future prospects

- ❖ new programmes will be implemented because the members of the foundation are permanently in touch with the target group
 - ❖ the programme will be implemented also for the children under 16 with the lack of basic skills
- Such examples of good practice need to be generalized. Some of the measures that can be taken in order to facilitate the acces to basic skills education refer to:
- Encourage universal and continuing access
 - individual right framed by collective agreements
 - right to learn guaranteed by public authorities;

- lifelong learning for all action programme, including making available ESF co-funding in cooperation with the social partners
 - encourage individuals to take responsibility for their own learning
 - improve access routes, including wider delivery, e.g. using libraries, museums, family and community learning initiatives, etc.
- Promote learning among vulnerable groups and those hard to reach
 - more resources for the disadvantaged, low-qualified and women, including free provision to recoup compulsory education
 - attainment of minimum qualifications for those whom school is failing
 - Vocational Education Qualification Campaign in cooperation between federal government and Social Partners to raise participation levels in CVET, especially for the low-qualified and disadvantaged, and with a particular accent on workplace learning and eLearning
 - focus on the unemployed trying to re-enter the labour market
 - awareness/motivation-raising campaigns and promotional activities
 - action research and initiatives to raise motivation
 - improve access to, and development of, alternative learning methods
 - Raise the overall level of basic education and increase overall participation
 - prioritise early childhood education and child care sector
 - increase influx to polytechnics
 - boost level of education among adult cohort, especially older workers - through company-based CVET and opening adult access to higher education
 - encourage older workers to gain post-secondary qualifications

- development of the adult education system (EL), attention to literacy for adults
- requisite skills for workforce entrants and upgrading of these skills

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**PHYSICAL EDUCATION IS KEY TO IMPROVING A
CHILD'S CONFIDENCE, BRAINPOWER AND LONG-
TERM HEALTH**

**EDUCAȚIA FIZICĂ - CONDIȚIE A ÎMBUNĂȚĂȚIRII
ÎNCREDERII ÎN SINE, A SĂNĂȚĂȚII FIZICE ȘI PSIHICE**

Abstract: *One of the most important things parents can give to their children is a physical education or involvement in organized sports activity. Physical education has slipped in priority over the last few years, especially in our public schools. Some schools don't even have recess anymore. They're producing children that can (sometimes) pass standardized tests at the academic level, but who are obese, diabetic, predisposed to heart disease and likely to live a relatively short life with high medical costs and lots of pain and suffering to boot. But what good is an education program that educates children on academics if those students won't live a productive, healthy life using their academic skills?*

Key Words: *physical education, healthy body, healthy mind, physical fitness*

Healthy body, healthy mind

Why are these activities so beneficial? They not only physically help the child's body be healthier in terms of immune system function, circulation, strength, flexibility and hand/eye coordination; they also greatly enhance the child's self-image. Participation in sports can dramatically boost children's self-esteem. That's why I think physical education needs to be put back into our public schools as a top priority. Ten minutes of recess a day is not enough. Beyond recess, parents would do well to get their kids involved in additional physical education programs, like after-

school programs or organized sports - anything that involves moving the body, whether it's running track, playing soccer, playing basketball, practicing gymnastics... you name it. These are all excellent for children.

Amazingly, I've heard some parents come up with the most unbelievable excuses for not involving their children in physical activities or organized sports programs. One parent told me she didn't want her daughter, a seventh-grader, to play soccer because she thought all women who played soccer end up with bulky-looking legs, and she didn't want her daughter to have ugly, bulky legs. Is it unbelievable?

This is a case where a parent, who greatly misunderstands what physical fitness does to the physical beauty of a person, has made a decision that will impair her child's development in an important way. That child wants to play soccer, but the parent is more worried about the cosmetic appeal of her daughter's legs than in actually giving her daughter an opportunity to be physically fit and participate in a sport that she enjoys.

That kind of ignorance plays out millions of times a day across our country and around the world, as parents who lack good information on the benefits of sports and physical fitness make poor decisions about the activities of their children. These poor parenting decisions negatively impact the potential of those children for the rest of their lives.

Afraid to risk losing at a sport

Other parents say they don't want their children participating in sports where there are losers. They want everyone to be a winner, and they're afraid to have their child ever lose a game, miss an award or appear as a loser.

This attitude is based on some kind of bizarre overprotection syndrome, I suppose. In the real world, there are winners and losers. There are consequences for doing a poor job, whether it's in sports, business, real estate, personal relationships or anything else that you choose to pursue.

It's essential that children learn early on that the investment and dedication they put into some effort will pay off in terms of winning versus losing, or in terms of being awarded the gold medal instead of the bronze medal.

Interestingly, not everybody has to be a winner to gain benefits from physical activities. In fact, all that's required is participation. You could come in last place on the track team every single time and yet still be way ahead of the other children who don't exercise at all. You could be the worst free-throw shooter in basketball and still derive physical, mental and *nervous system* benefits from playing that sport.

Exercises boost intelligence and mood

Along those lines, a lot of parents don't realize that children who participate in physical activity have healthier brains and nervous systems. They are far less likely to ever be diagnosed with *depression*, Attention Deficit Disorder or any other so-called mental disorder. Children who participate in sports are all around healthier mentally, physically, emotionally and socially. Some of those benefits come from the training itself and the chemical changes that take place in the brain in response to such training, but other benefits are derived from simply receiving the sunlight and fresh air.

I've frequently talked about natural sunlight and the tremendous benefits of exposing your skin to sensible levels of ultraviolet radiation. Those benefits include the prevention of various cancers, depression, osteoporosis, diabetes and the enhanced absorption of *calcium*, which makes stronger bones. If you want your child to have strong bones, then he or she needs to get some sunshine and physical activity, along with decent nutrition that includes calcium and magnesium. Organized sports are a great way to expose your child to these elements so that he or she can develop strong bones. (And that's why sports involvement actually reduces the risk of injury overall.)

Sports are worth the time, effort and cost

Getting back to physical education, I believe that involvement in sports or regular physical activities is one of the greatest gifts any parent can give their child. So parents, even if it costs you money, even if it's an inconvenience to pick up your child after school or take them to soccer practice, do it. It is worth it for the future of that child, not only for their physical health but also for their mental health. Whatever money and effort you put into sports today will be more than made up for in the future by your child's lack of medical bills and prescription medications, thanks to the fact that he or she is far healthier than other children who participated in no physical activity.

Be an example of physical fitness

What about children who say they don't want to participate in any physical activity? Should you force them to do it? Well, to answer that question, let me pose another question: What are you, the parent, doing with your level of physical activity?

Children will mimic parents. If you smoke *cigarettes*, they're likely to smoke *cigarettes*. If you do drugs, they're likely to do drugs, and if you avoid physical exercise and sit on the couch for six hours a day watching television, guess what? They're going to end up doing something similar. For them, it might be playing video games on the Xbox instead of watching TV, but its still time spent sitting, doing nothing physical.

As a parent, you need to be the example. You need to get off your own butt and start engaging in physical activity if you want to encourage your child to do the same thing.

Many obese adults have obese children; it's not genes, it's called parental modeling

Some misinformed doctors say *obesity* is genetic because they look at parents and their children, and they draw the incorrect conclusion that, because both are obese, it must be genetic.

The truth is, they're both obese because the parent refuses to exercise, and the child mimics the parent. Plus, they both follow the same obesity-promoting diet. It has nothing to do with genes and everything to do with something called parental modeling.

Children will model their behavior on those around them, especially those in positions of authority, which, of course, includes parents. If you want your child to be physically active, the most important thing you can do is set an example. If you refuse to be physically active, and yet you demand that they participate in sports, you're sending an incongruent message, which is, "Do what I say, not what I do." It's just like parents who smoke cigarettes and then punish their child for taking up smoking. It's an incongruent message, and it confuses children. It makes them frustrated, angry or rebellious, and chances are that your efforts to get them involved in physical exercise programs are going to fail unless you set an example first.

So find a way to work on a mini-trampoline in your own living room, do jumping jacks, take walks around the block, go swimming or biking, or play Frisbee golf. When you stay active, you're going to create an environment in which your child is far more likely to be interested in physical exercise.

Don't send a short kid to the high jump

Finally, I have one last bit of advice for parents looking at getting their children involved in physical exercise or sports programs: Look at your child's body, and take a minute to assess what he or she might good be at. If you have a son who is short and stocky, he's built to be good at boxing, not the high jump. If he's tall and lanky, he might be much better as a distance runner on the track team. If he has incredible upper body strength, he might be great at football, but if he has a weak upper body but strong lower body, he might be a great sprinter, or he might be really good at soccer.

If he has incredible cardiovascular endurance, he might excel at soccer or basketball. If he's tall, basketball is an obvious choice. The same things hold true for younger girls as well. If your daughter has long legs and is in good cardiovascular shape, she'd be good at soccer or basketball. If she is a fast runner, she'd be great at

track. If she is very thin and tall, she might be a great distance runner. Great flexibility and core strength lends itself to gymnastics or dancing. If she's stocky, there's always the shot put on the women's track team!

Look at your children's bodies and compare those bodies with professional athletes who are good at particular sports. You will notice that each professional athlete has a specific body proportion. Great cyclists, for example, tend to look very similar in terms of lower body strength versus upper body strength, leg length and so on. Great football players also have particular body proportions based on their field positions. Wide receivers are usually tall and thin with great cardiovascular endurance. Fullbacks are usually short, stocky and possess impressive leg strength combined with lightning-fast speed.

Body proportions and strengths make each child more suitable for particular activities. As a parent, it's a great idea to help assess the strengths of your child and steer them toward the sports for which they are best suited. If they're in the wrong sport -- let's say there's a really short child attempting to play basketball, for example -- then they could get discouraged very easily, whereas that same short child could do an outstanding job in gymnastics, for example.

In other words, don't try to fit a square peg in a round hole. We all are given a body, and we have to make the best of it. That means that no matter what our body size or shape, there are some sports and activities that we're going to be poor at, and there are others that we're more suited for and in which we can excel, and those are the ones that I hope you will guide your children toward. If you make the wrong choice, or if your child happens to be interested in a sport for which he or she is not well-suited, don't discourage them; let them play anyway.

Do everything you can to keep them active. Maybe they'll play for one semester or one year, and they'll decide to change sports on their own. Maybe they want to do baseball instead of track, or perhaps they want to study martial arts outside the school or they want to go to a gymnastics camp. Any of these things will be greatly beneficial to the health of your child in the long-term.

Remember, one of the greatest gifts you can give to your children is getting them involved in sports programs or physical exercise programs. Just remember to keep it fun, keep it safe and set the best example yourself.

And what is about academics? Obviously academics are important, but health must be the higher priority in my opinion. What good is a brain stuffed full of math and science facts if the heart can't pump oxygen to it? You can create the best test-taker in the world by cramming a child full of facts and formulas, but if he's obese and can't climb a flight of stairs without running out of breath, chances are that child will die of a heart attack before age 45. And then all that academic achievement is lost (because dead brains don't think very well).

Want to know where I learned self discipline and the rewards of hard work? I ran track for four years in high school. And all my trainers and teachers taught me more about life than any academic teacher. I am healthy today because of the habits I learned (and eventually rediscovered) running in circles around a football field.

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**A TACTILE APPROACH - DESCRIBES SOME TEACHING
TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED WITH SOME
OF THE CHILDREN WHERE THEY SEEMED RESISTANT
TO EXPLORING THINGS BY TOUCH**

**TEHNICA DE FACILITARE A EXPLORĂRII SENZORIALE
PENTRU COPIII CU DISFUNȚII**

Abstract: *According to this subject-A TACTILE APPROACH- some of the children showed signs of tactile defensiveness, where they seemed resistant to exploring things by touch. Because the children differed widely in their disabilities and stages of development, we need to provide a learning situation in which the children could participate at their appropriate level. An underlying aim of all these activities was to bring variety and an element of fun to the children's learning experience.*

Key words: *Tactile approach, techniques, communication skills*

Because the children differed widely in their disabilities and stages of development, we needed to provide a learning situation in which the children could participate at their appropriate level. I have noticed in my psychotherapeutic approach of the children with special needs, that quite often they showed themselves to oppose the natural exploring reality by using senses. According to this subject, the present investigation offers a proper technique that allows the sensorial exploration of reality. Some of the children showed signs of tactile defensiveness, where they seemed resistant to exploring things by touch. Tactile defensiveness in our children not only prohibited effective exploration of the environment and therefore

learning, but in children who actively resisted their hands being manipulated to form signs it severely inhibited the development of formal communication skills. It was with these problems specifically in mind that we devised a tactile programme using soft, 'messy' materials such as jelly, shaving foam, treacle, new custard and semolina, in an activity which formed an integral part of the children's daily routine.

Because the children differed widely in their disabilities and stages of development, we needed to provide a learning situation in which the children could participate at their appropriate level. For example it also provided an opportunity for the physically handicapped child to practice manipulation skills in a novel and exiting medium. An additional aim for all the children involved was to help them develop sequencing and a broad concept of 'time'. To this end the activity took the form of a 'tactile calendar', each day being marked by a different texture: Monday-shaving foam, Wednesday-custard, Friday-treacle etc. To provide additional cues and establish a routine for the sessions a day-naming song preceded the tactile work.

Two of the advantages in using mainly food stuffs were felt to be, firstly, that they are harmless if eaten by the child, and secondly the very nature of material made impossible for the child to avoid some degree of exploration once it was in contact with the hands.

In summary, the programme aimed at incorporating several curriculum areas in one activity, at the same time allowing the individual child a degree of freedom to work at his or her own pace. The responses of the children were therefore diverse and in some cases unexpected.

For one child, shaving foam was the only texture he would initially tolerate; beginning by rubbing the material between fingers and thumb and then, when confidence and interest grew, smearing it over wrists and face. Gradually the other textures came to be accepted in the same tentative way. Over a period of a few months the clenched fists and tense posture adopted in anticipation of the activity disappeared, to be replaced by Shammou actively searching the table for the dough, custard, or treacle which would be placed there. Outside of the activity the tension in his hands began to fade,

enabling adults to use tactile signings effectively with him. In addition his exploration and enjoyment of these textures began to generalise to his play and manipulation of objects. A marked progression was observed from the mouthing of smooth plastic toys, to using fingers to explore an increasing variety of objects and textured surfaces. This first became apparent when, immediately following a session playing with treacle, he was observed to be independently exploring the texture of small objects by rolling them between his palms and over the back of his hands.

While for one child the opportunity to play with these materials removed a significant barrier and provided an incentive for further spontaneous discovery, with other children progress was much slower or took different forms. It was many months, for example, before one child had the confidence independently to touch the materials placed before him, but the expressions of displeasure were gradually replaced by smiles, giggles and a cautious interest in the activity.

An extension to this programme was an activity which can be described as a 'jelly bath'. A tub or small pudding pot would be half-filled with brightly-coloured strongly-flavoured jelly, thus providing total sensory experience through textures taste, smell and colour, involving the whole body. For the children who were ready to participate in this activity it proved to be as exciting and enjoyable way of promoting body awareness.

An underlying aim of all these activities was to bring variety and an element of fun to the children's learning experience. Enjoyment was indeed a common factor in eventually, even the most tactually defensive children.

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**VISUAL AND VERBAL IN THE WRITER'S PORTRAIT
FROM "DANIEL MARTIN" BY JOHN FOWLES**

**VIZUALUL ȘI VERBALUL ÎN PORTRETIZĂRILE
SCRITORILOR ENGLEZI –
DE LA "DANIEL MARTIN" LA JOHN FOWLES**

Abstract; *This article aims at showing how Fowles's special relationship with the visual art is used to express his own idea of the author and the creative process. It points to the writer's fascination with the visual art of The Pre-Raphaelites and Fowles's confided feeling of a sharp sense of personal identity with Rossetti. Starting from the premise that the novel could be read as an autobiographical book, I have advanced the supposition that Fowles uses Rembrandt's portrait as a miss's en abysm for his own portrait in the novel. Showing similarities in the two artists' way of discovering themselves in their own art, the analysis highlights the elements of the emphasis of Rembrandt's "Self-Portrait" in the end of "Daniel Martin" which are significant for a certain conception of life and art in which knowledge and feeling, and a humanistic approach find artistic expression in both Rembrandt's and Fowles's art.*

Key words: *visual, emphasis, Rembrandt, verbal, whole sight.*

Fowles entered the world of the novel in the 1960s, a time of a growing tension between the verbal and the visual, which was acutely perceived by the creative eye of the writer. In his essay "I write, therefore I am" he identified a "faute de mieux" hanging over the novel, when all novelists under forty were writing cinematically, as a "tedious translating of an unmade and never-to-be-made film into words." (8) Analyzing his dreams in details, he noticed that he

repeatedly recalled “purely cinematic effects”: panning shots, close shots, tracking, jump cuts. He recognized in himself the cinematic mode of imagining, typical to all his generation, but “too deep to eradicate.” (ibid.) Even if he discusses the impact of the cinema as negative, he shows he as being preoccupied by strives of cinema and photography to inscribe themselves in the tradition of visual representation.

“The image” that Fowles challenges with his emphatic descriptions being aware that he is challenged by it at the same time has always had a special significance with Fowles. When David asks Breasley “how was it that the girls admired his memory for paintings” he explains: “Never forgot a good picture in my life, David [. . .] The names, yes. But what’s a name. Bit of fiddle in the corner. That’s all. [. . .] The image survives; is all that matters.” (76) Typical for a painter as it should be, it is significant for Fowles as well. The numerous references to paintings, his descriptions of the mental images as “myth poetic stills,” his interest in photography and cinema indicate not only his familiarity with visual arts but also his special relationship with the verbal and the visual which in the “still-vast domain” of the novel displays a surprisingly subtle contest which shows the writer in his strong command of the “word.”

Fowles speaks about his mental images as “myth poetic stills” floating into his mind and very often ignored. When they stop coming to him he recalls them to see if they really are the doors to new worlds. (Wormholes, 14) Such an image was that of the woman “standing at the end of a deserted quay and staring out to sea,” that inspired “The French Lieutenant’s Woman,” The door to the world of “Daniel Martin” was again an image of a woman, who was standing weeping in the desert. In the “Prologue” of “A Maggot” he confides that for some years before its writing, “a small group of travellers, faceless, without apparent motive, went into his mind towards an event which kept obstinately into his unconscious. The riders never progressed to any destination, but simply rode along a skyline, like a sequence of looped film in a movie projector; or like a single line of verse, the last remnant of a lost myth” (1)

Fowles defines his own artistic credo through the art of a painter, Henry Breasley, the protagonist of “The Ebony Tower”, his main interest being to show how parody marks the intersection of invention and critique and offers an important mode for coming to terms with the art of the past. Thematically, painting is involved not only in “The Ebony Tower” but also in “The Collector,” and “The French Lieutenant’s Woman,” “in which the art of “The Pre-Raphaelites” is one of the most important intertexture. In an interview, Fowles speaks about Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites’ special significance for him, and about his feeling of a very sharp sense of almost personal identity with Rossetti, “something about his slightly neurotic look.” (Baker, 14) So anxiously fascinated with, and challenged by the visual it seems impossible for Fowles not to have been attracted by the doubleness of Rossetti’s works. Almost all Rossetti’s literary production is influenced by pictorial sources-his own and those of other artists, and accordingly, his pictorial subjects were almost always inspired by literary sources. His sonnets “physically” accompany his own paintings, by invading the canvas and the frame, featuring Rossetti’s double talent and his dedication to emphasis. Mazzara interprets Rossetti’s frequent use of emphasis, both in his poetic compositions and his correspondence, as “the artist’s need to neutralize the “power” of the image, to define itself beyond any possibility of interpretation.” (1) Fowles’s sharp sense of almost personal identity to Rossetti” may allude to a mutual feeling of the everlasting contest between the visual and the verbal.

There is no wonder that in the end of “Daniel Martin” the protagonist finds a certain correlative of his quest for the “whole sight” in a painter’s sight, in Rembrandt’s “Self-Portrait” from the art gallery in Kenwood House. Commenting on Park’s interpretation that the sentence from the beginning of “Daniel Martin”, “Whole sight, or all the rest is desolation,” prioritizes the integration of one’s past into one’s present, Wilson launches another: “the novel may also be looked at as a quest for Daniel to develop the “whole sight” in his approach to other living beings and the natural world.” (107) Mc Sweeney claims that “Daniel Martin” is “fundamentally a novel of self-expression whose principal

subjects are the artist's personal quest and the workings of his imaginative processes." (34) Daniel's reflections on writing, his split between the verbal and the visual, between reality and fiction, his oscillation between different modes of representation and his retreat in the sacred combed resonate with Fowles's own concerns as a writer.

Onega points to some similarities between the kind of art Daniel is interested in and Fowles's own art. For Daniel art should be capable of reproducing not only the external world accurately but also and more important, of expressing the reality that lies not only in, but also behind the images. She argues that Daniel is not advocating a return to classical realism, but he is advocating for a recovery of the transcendental function of art "restoring to it the capacity to suggest the complex nature of the 'real' reality that lies hidden behind and beyond the material world." (12) She interprets Daniel Martin's parodist rewriting of Descartes' "Cogito ergo sum" as "I create, I am, all the rest is dream, though concrete and executed" (DM, 236) as representing Fowles's own credo that art is still a superior form of knowledge, "capable of conferring meaning on human existence and of making man godlike, conscious though he may be that there is no metaphysical reality beyond or beneath the textual reality created by art." (ibid.)

My supposition that Rembrandt's self-portrait described in the end of the novel may function as *miss's en abysm* for the writer's portrait has been encouraged by Fowles himself who speaks about "Daniel Martin" as a personal book. Moreover, he seems to invite reading it in this way since, in the novel, he refers to Restif de la Bretonne's "Monsieur Nicholas" as "a romanced autobiography" (DM, 291), and his "bonne vaux" alludes to Daniel's places of retreat and works as a metaphor for the workings of his creative mind. We may say that the "romanced autobiography" becomes an emblem not only for Daniel's novel but also for Fowles's "Daniel Martin." (ibid.) Within such an interpretation, Daniel's confrontation with a visual work of art, Rembrandt's self-portrait, may offer interesting clues for the writer's idea of the author and the creating process.

During his lifetime, Rembrandt sketched his own face thousands of times. He created a legacy of sixty self-portraits that chronicles his turbulent life. Art historians have interpreted Rembrandt's self-portraits as "autobiography in paint" in which the artist engaged in a personal dialogue to acquire self-knowledge. Fowles's statement: "I write fiction very much to discover myself through texts-more precisely during the process of writing them" (Forward, 9), resonates with Rembrandt's habit of painting himself. After 1652, when he was an acclaimed painter at the height of his powers, he no longer enhanced his image with finery, instead he painted himself wearing dark working clothes that insured that his face was the centre of attention, and more than ever he seemed contemplating his mortality.

In the novel, it is obvious that the self-portrait Daniel is looking at is that one from 1661, because Daniel enters Kenwood House that is known to host the "Self-Portrait with Two Circles." The painting shows Rembrandt standing in his studio, palette and brushes in hand wearing a white cap and dark clothes. The face is worked up in details with richly varied flesh tints merging into one another which make it appear lifelike. The torso and his clothing, the palette, brush, and maulstick are demarked in a few swift, bold strokes of thin colours. Osmond, on whose description I have just laid upon in evoking the portrait, writes that behind him, apparently on the wall there are "portions of two perfectly drawn circles" but she does not comment upon them. However, they seem to have appealed to the viewers' imagination advancing many explanations for this curious background feature. One plausible argument links the circle to a theory of art, namely the ability to draw a circle freehand as evidence of consummate artistic skill. Because of the closed form, the circle has always been associated with perfection and eternity, and therefore ideal as a symbol of artistic excellence.

When Daniel enters the gallery he walks around, not really looking at anything until by chance he stands before the portrait. He sees in the face of the "sad old man" both the power of his talent and the loneliness of this genius:

The supreme nobility of such an art, the plebeian simplicity of such sadness; an immortal, a morose old Dutchman: the deepest inner

loneliness, the being on trivial public show; a date beneath a frame, a presentness beyond all time fashion, language; a puffed face, a pair of rheumy eyes, and a profound and unassuageable vision. ” (Daniel Martin, 628)

The elements Daniel uses in his interpretation of the Dutchman’s portrait seem to complement each other as halves of a whole.

He feels dwarfed “in his century, his personal being, his own art”, but in an almost epiphany moment he understands “the distances he had to return. ” After a farewell to many things, it seemed a frightening coincidence to have encountered the “formidable sentinel to his way back. ” (DM, 629) He discerns that “he could see only one consolation in those remorseless and aloof Dutch eyes. It is not finally a matter of skill and knowledge, of intellect; of good luck or bad, but *choosing and learning to feel.* ” (ibid.) (my emphasis) Thus, he discovers in the Dutchman’s eyes not only a union between an advanced knowledge of the world and a deep feeling for life, but also a spiritual marriage between true compassion and will. In the last paragraph of the novel, at the end of the day when he has viewed Rembrandt’s portrait Daniel tells Jane that he has decided on the last sentence of the novel he will write: which the narrator suggests he has made his last sentence the first: “Whole sight or all the rest is desolation”.

The circular form of the novel makes it impossible not to consider the two portions of perfectly drawn circles on the wall, behind Rembrandt’s figure in the painting. Rembrandt’s portrait shows him a master of exuding quiet command and confidence in his field but with those two separate portions of circles on each side of his body, we may speculate they allude to the impossibility of attaining artistic perfection. His artistic excellence seems to lie in his striving toward perfection, toward the whole circle. Is it a coincidence that Fowles makes the reader identifies which self-portrait Dan is looking at by giving its location? Why has he chosen this one among so many others? Is it by other criterion that he alludes to a circular form?

Discussing certain correspondences between Daniel and Fowles, (their age, same view on film industry, their generation, photography, Zen philosophy, their interest in orchids, Englishness

versus Britishness in Robin Hood) Brandt observes that these superficial affinities are in Daniel’s terms sort of “distracter behaviour, ” and the novel invites speculations about deeper affinities. (9) Taking Daniel’s visit to the art gallery as distracter behaviour, we may look for affinities between Fowles and Rembrandt. As Fowles retreats himself in the *bonne vaux* of his fiction for self-exploration in the same way Rembrandt retreats in his painting for self-discovery. Kelly notes that for Rembrandt “the self-portrait became an outlet for feelings and ideas concerning the nature of human existence “ (Kelly, 13)

Fowles’s interest in catching the right feeling, his characters’ quest of their selves not only through knowledge but also through feelings and emotions resonate with what Rembrandt in a letter to Huyghens explained what he sought to achieve in art: “the greatest and the most natural movement, translated from the ” *meeste ende di naetureelste beweegelijkheid.* ” (The word “*beweegelijkheid*” is also argued to mean “emotion” or “motive”) (Hughes, 6) In “The Nature of Nature” Fowles writes “I certainly know that I see literature far more as an expression of feeling conveyed through poetry, drama and fiction than any sort of serious scientific statement about reality. I seem closest to a clever octopus, a mere-to us humans-feeler. ” (Wormholes, 409)

The most significant affinity between the painter and the writer is, in my opinion, the way they absorb the tradition giving it the measure of their vision and talent. Rembrandt’s theatrical employment of light and shadow derived from Caravaggio but he adapted it for his personal means. His empathy for the human condition and the dramatic and lively presentation of subjects were in contrast with the rigid formality that his contemporaries often displayed. In both painting and printmaking he exhibited a complete knowledge of classical iconography which he moulded to fit the requirements of his own experience. Fowles’s relationship with the tradition of the novel has been often discussed as influence, parody, intertextuality. Both his fiction and nonfictions show his strong links to such writers as Hardy, Defoe, Lawrence. He writes in one of his essays: “To what extent am I being a coward by writing inside the old tradition? To what extent am I being panicked into

vanguards? Writing about the 1867 doesn't lessen the stress; it increases it, since so much of the subject matter must of its historical nature be "traditional". There are apparent parallels in other arts: Stravinsky's eighteenth century remanding, Picasso and Francis Bacon's use of Velasquez" (Wormholes, 18)

Not only does Fowles show himself in full command of the word in the contest between the verbal and the visual with his emphasis of Rembrandt's portrait, but he also points to his own approach to life and art in which knowledge and feelings and a humanist approach are of utmost importance in getting the "whole sight."

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THE SCHOOL-FAMILY-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP IN STEP BY STEP EDUCATION

PARTENERIATUL ȘCOALĂ- FAMILIE ÎN ALTERNATIVA STEP BY STEP

Abstract: *The educational partnership represents a priority of the strategies leading towards the development of education and teaching in Romania. The step by step program stresses the responsibility and cooperation between school and parents in order to ensure the progress of each child in every field of development, disregarding the cultural family level. An efficient relationship between school and family implies efficient means of communication between parents and school, various ways of implying the parents in order to become more effective.*

Key words: *The step by step, partnership, alternative*

The partnership, a necessity

In the context of a society, which is changing, where there are transformations in the appearance and content at the level of all subsystems, the education took upon itself a new perspective regarding to the way it works. According to this, the educational partnership represents a priority of the strategies oriented to the development of education in Romania.

At the level of each rural or urban community that includes school units, the true translation the partnership begins with the building of a partnered group, including different categories of the community. The efficiency of such a group is given by the promotion of some common values: the assurance of equal chances in education, the refreshment of the civic spirit and of the

communitarian mentalities, the dialogue promotion, the open communication, and the encouragement of initiative and of practice, the development of statutory collaboration of discipline. School has to assume the promoter and facilitator role of the educational partnership.

There also exist obstacles which prevent parents' engagement in school partnership: the lack of instruction and of free time.

The partnership in step by step

The “step by step” program has confidence in parents' responsibility and collaboration with school: in order to assure each child's success in all fields of development. No matter the family cultural level, when parents are partners in their child's education.

The results cause the performance, a better school attendance, the decrease of the abandonment rate and the delinquency drawback. The children are conscious of their parents' implication in their life, they get confidence in themselves.

They benefit from the positive and friendly relation between family and school. The children understand the message that the grown-ups are important and that they take care of them. As a teacher who teaches a “step by step” class, I know that an efficient school-family relation can be realized, mainly in two ways: a bilateral, clear and conscious communication and various means of implication. The efficient communication assures mutual confidence. At the beginning of the real partnership with parents. The teacher things at what she can learn from them about their children. She looks at them as they are her closest consulting people, regarding the children.

Listening attentively the child's parent, the teacher establishes an open-relation with mutual support. To know how to listen means to create the premises of collaboration. The listening process has got four parts: the listening, the interpretation, the evaluation and the answer. Through active listening, the messages are better understood. We work hard to be friendly, relaxed, impressed and to show expressivity.

Parents - voluntaries

A friendly school creates the climate of all parents' implication, representing the assurance of the fundamental needs and of the self security for each child, as well as the elaboration of the organizing and financial support. In this way parents manage to act as volunteers in social life. Some of the volunteer- parents' tasks are:

- Coordinators of some specific events (parents help the development of a project at the class level, e. g. the evaluation of the thematic study)
- Participant at mending and improvements (e. g. mending doors, and windows, planting trees in the schoolyard)
- Helper in scientific and artistic activities (internet materials-thematic study, festival properties)
- Supervisor, together with the teacher on the playground or in activity centres (led the group to have lunch, kept a watch upon the building centre).
- Trip organizer (Timisoara, Macea, Bears' Cave) or visit-organizer (The Disposal Centre, The Tropical House, I. S. J. U., The Airport, the transport was assured by personal cars)
- Collector of funds (the tax for lunch, the classroom and school fund, organized courses-computer study, drama).

Parents are invited to take part effectively at lessons, using an anticipated schedule according to the collaboration with the teacher. Parents' presence in the classroom is in fact natural, neither festive nor disturbing. If the parents have the feeling that they are implied in educational act, they will appreciate the efforts for teaching-learning made by the teacher. There are real activities for home which can be suggested to the parents to help the children to learn:

- To read together with the child, to go to the library, to find right authors and books. If one of the parents spends his spare time reading together with his child, it means that he encourages the child, and this means an essential aspect in his formation.

- To use the television wisely, establishing some hours for watching TV, to help him to find right channels, to select them, to watch together and to discuss about what they have seen.
- To keep a connection with school, to know all the time what the child is learning, what his homework is and how to do it. To go to school to talk to the teacher, not to wait for the problems to appear.
- To praise the children to appreciate their effort. They have to cultivate a warm atmosphere at home. Parents play the main part in the influence of the child's trust and motivation in order to become a successful person. Speaking about honesty, self trust, responsibility, the parents help their children to decide themselves to adopt the best solutions. To take part in the education of your own child means according to the opinion of a teacher who teaches in "step by step system" means to ask everyday your child: "How was at school today?"

The lectures with parents

In "step by step" program, the lectures with parents are regularly organized, with the aim of a permanent communication regarding each child's progress. The first meeting with the children's parents takes place in March or April. Its aim is the mutual way of being familiar and that of the election of the class committee (represented by parents) which has to coordinate the activity that guarantees the work in the class.

The next meeting, before the beginning of the school year has as an aim the assurance of necessary writing materials to the whole class, it tells to the parents the objectives for the school year which begins.

It is usually applied a questionnaire through which are asked information about the children.

Questionnaire

1. Child's name and surname.
2. Parents' name and surname
3. Parent's job and the place where they work
4. What age did the child attend kindergarten at?

5. What does the child expect to learn during this school year?
6. Which of the child's activities would you like to know?
7. Are there any experiences and events from your child's life which we have to know?
8. Which is the most important event that you are proud of as a parent regarding your child?
9. What is his favourite activities and games?
10. What does your child do when she/he is upset?
11. Which is the best method to calm him down?
12. What methods do you use when he makes mistakes?
13. What else do you want us to know about your child?
14. How would you like to be involved in class and school life in this school year?

The two lectures that take place during the school year ought to be very well prepared. I, personally, using the evaluation tests given at the end of a teaching unit, draw up the school report for each pupil, mentioning the level of the objectives which the student got on each subject (as it follows).

School report

Pupil _____ Data _____
Reading _____

Monday Reading	Summary	Notebook appearance	Readings mentioned on the slip	Readings from the holiday

Reading – Writing

Reading rhythm	Answering questions	Enuntiations With new words	Story in writing	Dictation Self-dictation	Verb	Noun
Fb B S						

Mathematics

Counting Additions and subtractions Multiplications

Writing numbers predecessor	Counting Writing Roman figure	Add with, Associate, Problems, Diminish with compare	In writing, Product of 3 factors, Concepts, Problems

Science

Terminology	Stages of life cycles	Mentioning the causes	Explanations (applied on the environment)	Statements motivation	Establishing the true value	Notebook appearance

History

Selecting answers	Crosswords	Name the institution	Writing a text	Establishing truth value	Answer of the questions	Explanations	Aspect

Geography

Fill in the gaps	Establishing the Cardinal points	Multiple choice (the correct answer)	Imagine a dialogue	The name of groups from the images

Civic Education

The truth value of statements	Describe a relation using the images	Drawing up a note	Selecting some right words	Imagine a dialogue	The name of groups from the images

Physical Education

Equipment	Speed running on 25 m	Discipline	Force

The lectures are announced in time, the place is prepared, the materials that are to be used will be provided.

The lecture with parents

The lecture agenda:

- a). General considerations regarding the 6 year old pupil
- b). Considerations regarding the group from I B step by step
- c). Discipline, the premise of an efficient learning
- d). Collaboration teacher-parent for providing learning

The 6-7 year old student

- A difficult school period
- The period of getting familiar, of evaluation, which are premises for the future work
- Teachers' effort to know each child's individuality begins in the first school day
- 1. Under the temperamental aspect
- 2. Under the cognitive-intellectual
- 3. The trust of making the group
- 4. Why wasn't the class a group?
- 5. The compatibility teacher-pupil (energetic behaviour) it is a reality which can not be ignored.
- 6. The belonging to the group, solves the child's socialization as a social being who obeys some rules.

In his book "The Psychology of Ages", Emil Verza shows us that the psycho-affective maturation implies:

- The subordination of personal interests to those of the group interests
- To have respect for some rules
- A stressed affective neutrality (the child is no longer in the family where all his wishes are accomplished)
- Some emotional reactions that were uncontrolled in the past, are now under control (laughing, crying, screaming).

The way, each child behaves shows:

- The level of affective maturation and the level of socialization
- The way in which some educational methods in the family and in the kindergarten

The class characterization:

- 16 boys and 10 girls, so more boys than girls
- According to their temperament, most of them are choleric and melancholy
- According to motivation: extrinsic motivation doubled by the affective one
- Affective-volitional: spoiled children
- Attention-weak power of concentration
- Unique child 16 from 26
- Emotional reactions: unrestrained
- According to their attitude: they consider that they are allowed to do everything.

The step by step system is very permissive. The methodological standards foresee:

- Discussions and explanations
- The reviews of the rules until they will know them
- The bad facts will be discussed
- Stimulating those who obey the established rules through praises, encouragement (the class mirror)
- The demand to leave the group and to come back when they are ready to listen.

Discipline- the condition of a good learning:

- It puts the bases of the character (Cicero: The character without intelligence can do much, but intelligence without character can not do anything")
- The undisciplined students don't finish their tasks
- They do not hear what is explained
- They disturb those who want to listen to, so there is only a step till the failure.

Parents can help at discipline:

- The children belong to another generation than we belong to, and they are no more babies
- Their parents represent security, protection and they are taken into account by their children.

The classroom mirror - the correspondence with parents.

The note from the end of the week had correspondence with parents.

Parent-job – Ioan Dacian Dolean – the chapter “Efficient communication” is recommended:

- What does it mean, with examples
- The initiative of communication, from both sides
- The necessity to listen to the other
- The positive communication as a result of a positive thinking.

Mistakes in communication:

- Permanent threatening
- Name calling
- Accusing
- Permanent reproach
- Voice rising
- Humbling experience

The step by step program considers very important the regular communication between parents and school. There are other ways used both by parents and by school such as:

- Monthly bulletins - that inform parents regarding the activities in which children are involved
- Meeting at the end of the school day when the children go back home-daily information about children’s activities
- The use of books in common-books that are considered to be useful in parent’s education (eg. Parenting - group discussion)
- Festivals and celebrations-bring together children, parents and teachers. They are organized on special historical and communitarian events (e. g. School day), holidays like the 8th of March, 400 or 500 school days
- Going together to the church for confession in Advent and Lent.

The efficient and permanent communication is in the benefit of all. Thus, the children have the opportunity to see that the important adults from their life work together having the same aim; they become more confident and like to see the link between family and school.

Project of partnership with General School “C. Miklosi”, Covasant

The first stage of the project took place with the teacher who had decided to start such a partnership. Then they organized and planned the school and outer-school activities, enlarging its participative character. Drawing families in this project was a very important fact (as sponsors). It was taken into consideration the fact that there are differences between a family from a town and one from a village. It is known that in the country there is a society of inter-cognition, where everybody has a global perception and a functional one of the other’s personality. Inside the society from the town a person knows other people, but only some of the aspects regarding to them. The examining of opinions is a feature of mass society. For establishing contacts with people belonging to a mass society, we have to express opinions. There were dialogues with members belonging to the families from Covasant; they took part to the picnic organized when the visit took place.

Then the attention was focalized on the statute got by the pupil who is in the project, the way he is perceived by the other and he will perceive. We also try to see the advantages of such an exchange: trips, visits, friendship relations new acquaintances. They visited the school building, there were didactic activities, and the two places were visited. In Covasant they visited the mayoralty, a monument, a printing workshop. In Arad they visited the Airport, the Nunnery from Gai district, I. S. J. U. The activities had strong link with everyday life. The children had the opportunity to discuss, they changed their address, and they played together.

The activity was evaluated in a portfolio containing photographs which made evident the mentioned activity, compositions and drawings illustrating scenes from the visits we had organized. All the materials were used to write the classroom magazine called “Friendship”.

This partnership had as an aim a better understanding of other personalities, different from the teaching group from school and being familiar with our own culture.

The step by step classroom where we work has on its foundation a project of a partnership being financed extra-budgetary. The project was drawn up for four years. The project has as an aim to get funds to assure the class functioning (about 1000 RON). Through it we were able to assure the furniture and the necessary writing materials (we managed to have a small library both for students and teachers).

To spread out the project we have to involve parents in it all the time. The extra-curriculum project having as a title: "Every man-plant a tree" is another aspect of the relation school-community, and it had the aim to persuade parents to collaborate in a democratic spirit, to act as members of a large team or of a family.

The step by step classes are a large unitary family, where teachers, children, parents all work hard for a common aim, the children's benefit.

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THE SIX THINKING / REASONING HATS (METHOD APPLIED TO THE TEXT)

CELE ȘASE PĂLĂRII GÂNDITOARE METODĂ APLICATĂ PE TEXT

Abstract: *One of the interactive techniques which stimulate the participants' creativity is "The Thinking /Reasoning Hats Method". It is based on role-play activities depending on the colour of the hat chosen.*

Key words: *method, thinking/reasoning, imagination, emotions*

The Goat and the Snake
by Petre Ispirescu

What does this technique consist of?

The greatest request of modern education is that of ensuring a diverse methodology which involves combining the learning activities and independent work with activities which involve cooperation and interactive learning. The group work generates a catchy way of behaving and a competitive effort.

The six thinking/reasoning hats are each of a different colour: white, red, yellow, green, black and blue. The group members choose the hats by drawing lots and cuts. It is the colour of the hat which defines the role.

The white hat:

- It is neutre.
- It concentrates on information, images and clear facts.
- It stays under the sign of objective thinking.

The red hat:

- It involves imagination and feelings.
- It stands for the emotional perspective of the activity.
- It frees emotions.

The yellow hat:

- It offers a positive and constructive perspective on the situation

- Yellow symbolizes the sun light and its glowing
- It's the optimistic thinking a logical base

The green hat:

- It expresses the new ideas thus stimulating creative thinking.

- It represents the fresh green colour of the grass, of vegetation, of plenty.

- It is the symbol of fertility of new idea production.

The black hat:

- It express prudence, care, warning, and judging
- It offers a dark perspective, a sad one for the situation being discussed.

- It stands for pessimistic thinking with critical aspects.

The blue hat:

- It expresses control over the thinking process.
- It watches over and guides the well being of the activity.
- It stands for coordination

The participants must be aware of what each colour signifies and they must represent their symbolic hat by thinking from the perspective of its colour.

*How does a person who wears a hat act?***The white hat:**

The person wearing the white hat must provide information when it is required. He does not offer interpretation or opinions. He concentrates strictly on the problem being discussed and tells facts exactly. The person with the white hat is disciplined and direct. White indicates neutrality.

The red hat:

This hat recognizes emotion and feelings as being integrated parts of thinking. The red hat allows the thinker, to explore the other participants' feeling by asking their opinion from an emotional, affective point of view. They do not have to justify neither why they have certain feelings, no to find logical explanation for them.

The yellow hat:

It is the symbol of positive thinking, constructive thinking, of optimism. It expresses hope and, taking into account the benefits, the value of the information and facts given. It symbolizes creative thinking. It is used for reaching to new concepts, new variants, new possibilities. It requires an effort for creation.

The green hat:

It symbolizes the creative thinking. It's used to get to new concepts, new alternatives, new possibilities. It requires creative effort.

The black hat:

It is the warning-hat "the charger". The thinker with this hat points out what is wrong, which the mistakes are.

The blue hat:

It is the hat responsible with the control over the approaches. The thinker with the blue hat draws the conclusions and watches over the obedience of the rules.

What are the advantages of the “Thinking Hats Method”?

- it stimulates the creativity of the participants, collective and individual thinking.
- it develops the participants social abilities of cooperation and mutual tolerance, respect for each other.
- It encourages and trains the ability of communicating thoughts.

- develops the competences of both linguistical and logical intelligence
 - encourages students to take a look at the concept from different points of view
 - it is an easily to use technique and it can be applied to different subjects
 - “the thinking hats” technique is used to convince the students to change their thinking perspective, to take into consideration other points of view, too

What does the teaching act involve if this method is used?

The activity takes place during the Romanian Language classes – 4th grade – the support text used being “The goat and the snake” by Petre Ispirescu and the objectives being all of the above mentioned aspects in the paragraph dealing with the advantages of this technique.

The development

The students will be organized into teams, each group working under the sign of a hat. These ones have been previously made out of coloured cardboards in the Home Economics classes. A single big hat can be used for the whole team or different smaller hats can be used for all the members.

Each of the six groups democratically chooses a leader who takes part in casting the lots for the chosen colour. The children will get accustomed with the symbol they are going to represent and the type of behaviour they will have to adopt.

After having individually read the text (or following a frontal pattern) and after solving some question-answers in order to be aware of the contest, the students will have to fill in the work sheets. For each group the work sheet will contain the items corresponding to the symbol of the colour, as it follows:

The white hats group:

1. Fill in the text (a sum up for the reading) using the information previously given in the text.
2. Divide the text into fragments and decide upon the main ideas of the text.

The red hats group:

1. Find the characteristics of the goat and those of the snake.
2. Write what you like and what you dislike about the behaviour of the two characters.

The yellow hats group:

1. Find the opposites for: enmity, lie, cunningness, danger.
2. Write some advice you would give to the goat.

The green hat group:

1. Make up sentences to illustrate the two different meanings of the word “right”
2. Imagine another ending for the story.

The black hats group:

1. Explain why you think the snake was evil.
2. Ennumerate the mistakes the goat made.

The blue hats group:

1. Specify which is the message of the text.
 2. Write some sayings that are appropriate for the story you read.
- During the team work the proposer monitorizes the whole development of the action, leads the teams as far as the items are concerned and gives advice for the manner of working.

Afterwards there is the top moment when each team presents its work through the voice of the chosen leader who comes in front of the class with the hat on his head and presents orally how they have solved out their tasks. Simultaneously, the rest of the students will have to fill in, onto another work sheet, the solving of one of the presented items (the most representative one for the symbol of the group) the proposer having to put it down on the blackboard, too.

This way, in the end, each student will have on this second work sheet one item from the other group's work that is a written sum up of the whole activity (this will be on the blackboard, too).

Although the presentation is done orally, interactivity can also be felt at this moment, the audience having the possibility to cut in, agreeing or disagreeing with the things said thorough additions or appreciations (clapping hand).

In the end students will also be awarded symbolic prizes, not only verbal appreciations.

What do we keep in mind?

We have to mention that "The Thinking Hats Method" is best to be applied to texts such as "conflict" or "problem solving" in different contexts and during different classes. It is more accessible to older students who have developed reading abilities, who know how to deal with a text working in groups. It takes a lot of time when preparing it and also when being applied.

To conclude with, we can say that this technique, along with its formative valences, also has a spectacular side that has the power to stimulate, to thrill, to start competitiveness and all of these are arguments that favor its practice in class.

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HOW DO WE PROJECT LESSONS THAT PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CRITICAL THINKING?

CUM PROIECTĂM ACTIVITATEA DIDACTICĂ PENTRU A DEZVOLTA ELEVILOR GÂNDIREA CRITICĂ?

Abstract: *Our article trys to answer to the following question: How does this lesson develop the critical thinking of the students? The answer takes into account what opportunities can offer this lesson through the learning activities proposed, so that the students can investigate their knowledge individually or in group, give personalized answers, well motivated to the proposed problems, debate what they have learnt, apply and use the obtained knowledge to solve new problems.*

Key words: *evocation, realising the sense, reflection, interactive methods/ strategies*

Planning and projecting lessons in order to form and develop the spirit of a critical thinking are divided in three stages:

1. Activities before the beginning of the lesson;
2. Activities during the lesson;
3. Activities after the end of the lesson.

1. BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF THE LESSON

1. The main aspects refer to:

a) motivation, value and utility of the lesson:

This aspect is following the question: *How does this lesson develop the critical thinking of the students?*

The answer takes into account what opportunities can offer this lesson through the learning activities proposed, so that the

students can investigate their knowledge individually or in group, give personalized answers, well motivated to the proposed problems, debate what they have learnt, apply and use the obtained knowledge to solve new problems.

In order to have the maximum valuability and utility of the lesson we consider the following aspects:

-What information can be discovered by the students and not given by the teacher?

-How can we select the scientific content of a lesson to offer the pupils the possibility to give a variety of answers?

-Which aspects of the lesson claim different performing in order to allow the pupils to express their agreement or disagreement?

-How can we approach the problem from an interdisciplinary point of view?

-How can contribute this lesson to the developing of some abilities like: investigation, analyses and evaluation, debate and reaching a common point of view?

-What aspects of the topic invite the pupils to continue the investigations after the end of the lesson?

b) lesson aims

When we project the lesson we consider *what knowledge can be assimilated and what will do the students with that knowledge.*

The aims that we claim must accomplish the following conditions:

-to describe behaviors noticed and measured;

-to be demonstrative (pupils can prove what they know and what they can do after the learning process);

- to practice higher processes of thinking;

To practice the processes of critical thinking, the aims must be project in order to put the student in the following situations:

-to find the relevance of the lesson theme for themselves;

- to recall examples from their own experience which are related with the ideas of the lesson;

-to compare two or more ideas referring at the same problem;

-to bring strong arguments in order to sustain their point of view;

-to adopt their own position, based on those arguments;

-to decide what it is important to remember from the taught theme;

-to create and follow another way of approaching the problems, different points of view during the lesson;

-to change parts from the lesson and to evaluate the consequences;

c) preliminary conditions, necessary for an efficient proceed of the lesson

This aspect refers to what the students should know in order to solve the given tasks, what knowledge they have to use when they learn something new by their own efforts, during the lesson, and what qualities, abilities of thinking and learning they should practice in the lesson. In other words, we must pay attention at the previous knowledge of the students, because the new ones will be build on them and also at those work techniques which the students are familiarized with (an ordinary example: we can not ask the students to solve a task if they have not worked before like that or we can not prepare for study texts if they do not know to read).

d) the evaluation of the knowledge and capacities learned

An efficient projection of a lesson must consider the establishing of the methods and ways of evaluation so that the teacher can be sure that the students have learned what they had to learn. This is what should establish through the aims of the lesson.

The aspects submitted to the evaluation are:

- the main ideas of the content, the knowledge that the students have to assimilate during the lesson and how much they have understood them.

- the possibilities to use these knowledge in the future, to prevent the becoming of “a passive luggage”, what the student must know at the end of the lesson; (what processes of thinking we expect to practice, how we know if they practice them well, what strategies of learning they use and if they use them in a correct way).

e) the management of material resources and time

If the necessary materials can be established exactly and prepared in time, the time prediction is hard to realize because various factors influence the length of an activity(the particularities of the students' age, their motivation for the learning process, the work rhythm, the variety of the debated ideas , daily mood, the work methods, attention, the accessibility of the content).In time , using these methods regularly, the teachers will be able to appreciate better

the time that they need, especially if they work with the same students.

2. THE LESSON

To project a lesson means to write its script and to think it in the three stages: *evocation, realizing the sense and reflection.*

Projecting the stage of evocation vises the following aspects:

- collecting the attention and the curiosity of the pupils;
- to focus the attention on a theme, on the lesson topic
- to determine the pupils to remember some previous knowledge, referring at the given theme, which are necessary to build new achievements;
- to encourage the pupils to ask questions which activate their thinking;

In the evocation stage teachers can use methods and techniques in order to determine the pupils to remember the necessary knowledge, to ask questions above the theme, to become curious about.

These methods can be:

- BRAINSTORMING
- BRAINWRITING
- PHILIPS 6/6
- THE BUNCH
- KEY WORDS, GIVEN BEFORE
- THE INTERVIEW
- I KNOW/I WANT TO KNOW/I HAVE LEARNED
- THE TREE OF IDEAS
- PHOTOLANGUAGE

Projecting the stage of *realizing the sense* vises:

- the content which will be explored and the ways of its investigation;
- the activities realized by the pupils, to understand and to attribute personal senses to the new contents;

In this stage, teachers can use methods and techniques in order to make the pupils to explore, to search, to discuss, to debate, to understand very well the content of the lesson:

- SINELG
- DOUBLE DIARY
- TEACHING, MUTUAL LEARNING
- READING AND REZUMING THE CONTENT IN PAIRS
- THE MOZAIC
- THE CUBE
- STUDY GUIDES
- PUZZLE
- SUCCESSION OF EVENTS
- FOUR SQUARES
- STAR EXPLOSION
- TGT- TEAM, GAMES, TOURNAMENTS
- VENN DIAGRAM

Projecting the stage of *reflection* vises the way in which the students use what they have studied, adapt the new content at their own life experience, and express their attitudes and extent their knowledge.

In this stage, teachers can use:

- THE VALUE LINE (PRO / AGAINST)
- THE THINKING HATS
- FRISCO
- THE DIAMOND WITH NINE FACES
- THE PYRAMID
- THE HOROSCOPE
- THE GALERY TOUR
- LET ME THE LAST WORD
- THE REVISED BUNCH
- THE FIGURE MAP
- THE CONCEPT MAP
- QUINTET
- POSTER
- DIAGRAM OF CAUSES AND EFFECT

There are many other methods and techniques that were not mentioned here but they can be successfully used as team or individually work during the three stages, in order to form and develop the students' critical thinking.

3. AFTER THE END OF THE LESSON

It follows activities to extend and to strengthen the knowledge and the abilities achieved. These activities vise to lead the students to other supplementary knowledge, meant to answer the questions raised during the lesson or to activities of investigation out of the classroom. The extension activities are important because they force the pupil to use his knowledge in other contexts, to practice his abilities in new investigations and to develop independently his ideas received from the lesson.

In order to give an example of this kind of lessons and a suggestion of how can be chosen and used the mentioned methods during the three stages, we offer two models of projecting a lesson. Even though these examples are for primary school, the methods and the plan can be used to other classes.

DIDACTIC MEASURE

TEACHER: SZAJAK SORINA

CURRICULAR ARIA: MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

SUBJECT: KNOWING THE ENVIRONMENT

LESSON UNIT: LIVELY WORLD-PLANTS AND ANIMALS

LESSON TOPIC: VISIT AT THE ZOO

CLASS: I

MOTIVATION:

Through this activity the pupils will systematized and will apply their knowledge regarding the wild animals:

- they will learn to extract themselves essential information regarding a given theme and to express their own opinion about what they have learned;
- they will get use to work in groups.

LESSON AIMS:

1.3.-to enumerate specific characteristics of some creatures from the near environment;

2.1.-to use a scientific language when they describe some creatures, phenomenon from the environment.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES:

-to fill in the columns of the scheme with what they have known and would like to know about the lion ;(1.3.)

- to detach the detail elements from the read text ;(2.1)

-to complete the last column of the scheme with the new information ;(1.3)

-to analyze their and their classmates work;(2.1)

PRELIMINARY CONDITIONS:

Until this age, the majority of the pupils have visited the ZOO. After this experience, the children are able to enumerate and to describe a few animals, which they liked.

EVALUATION:

--to fill correctly in the table with new knowledge about the lion;

- to formulate some critical appreciations about what they have studied;

RESOURCES:

-the time needed for the stages of the new lesson: 40 min.

-materials: the blackboard, individual worksheets, the animals' encyclopedia, team worksheets.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES:-conversation, description, explanation, exercise, brainstorming, I know/ I want to know/I have learned,6/3/5, the gallery tour, group work, pair work.

SUCCESSION OF ACTIVITIES:

EVOCATION (20 min)

1) Connections with previous knowledge:

Pupils answer the questions:

-Who has ever visited the ZOO?

-What animals have you seen there?

-Describe the animal that you like most.

2) Each pupil will receive a piece of paper A4, divided in three columns:

I kno	I	I hav

The same diagram will be realized also on the blackboard. Using the brainstorming (the pupils say all the ideas that cross their mind about the lion), the teacher will complete the first column on the blackboard “I know”, and the pupils on their papers. After they have all the information for the first column, the pupils were asked to think for 2-3 min. and to say what they would want to know about the lion. The second column “I want to know” will be completed in with questions about the lion’s life, age, habitual activities, etc.

REALISING THE SENSE (15 MIN)

Teacher reads from the animals’ encyclopedia the text about the lion and shows the pupils the images. New information was detached and it is written in the third column:” I have learned”.

The teacher wants to find answers for the second column questions. If there are questions without answer in the encyclopedia, the teacher or other classmates will give the answer. The pupils will write the extra information on their slips.

REFLECTION (5 MIN)

Applying the method 6/3/5, the classroom will be divided in groups of 6, which will complete the slip that they received with 3 ideas, in 5 min.

SLIP 1: What quality of the lion do you appreciate?

SLIP 2: What quality of the lioness do you appreciate?

SLIP 3: What do you think about the lion’s way of life?

SLIP 4: Do you consider that this animal needs protection from the people? Why?

EXTENTION (10 MIN)

The activity ends with “the gallery tour”, the 4 slips will be exposed on the blackboard. They will be analyzed by the pupils from the other groups. (The appreciations will be made orally because the children are only seven years old, but elder pupils write their opinions on that paper).

Supplementary material: the text “Lion” from “The animals’ encyclopedia” or other books.

DIDACTIC MEASURE

THEACHER: LILIANA DANIELA DAVID

CLASS: I

CURRICULAR ARIA: LANGUAGE AND COMUNICATION

DISCIPLINE: ROMANIAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

LESSON UNIT: 4 “The gardens are blossoming”

LESSON TOPIC: “ THE LAZY BUMBLE BEE”

MOTIVATION: This poem offers educational skills that must be identified and turned to good account to model the pupils’ civil behavior.

It helps to form and to develop the pupils’ capacity to express correctly in oral/written form.

The learning/teaching process takes place in cooperation with the pupils so that the children will be able to participate and involve in finding solutions or solving some tasks.

The theme, the materials and the methods used offer the students the possibility to express in a personal manner their own thoughts, opinions or feelings regarding the subject and facilitate the detaching of the idea that *hardworking people* wins the *lazy ones*.

ANTICIPATED CONDITIONS

The text has important connections with the text studied in a previous class “Ghemotoc”-which presented another infirmity-to be a midget creature, the pupils understood the causes and the effects of shortness upon them and upon the others around them.

Students must know:

- the Romanian alphabet in order to read and to understand the text;

- that every person has qualities and defects;
- Students must show that they are able to:
- make simple sentences but eloquent pro and against in order to solve some problems;
 - work in groups;
 - be aware of the learning effort.

AIMS;

- to use their personal experience to express their opinions, thoughts related to a concept;
- to read in their own manner a text;
- to detach the main information from a studied text;
- to make logical sentences orally and write them correctly;
 - to show initiative for oral communication; to motivate a personal opinion;
- to work individually, in groups, showing interest for the interlocutor (attention, tolerance, respect)

EVALUATION:

Must contain:

- the selected answers to the questions;
- review by turns.

Resources and the time management

1. Methods and processes: conversation, brainstorming, mutual teaching, Venn diagram, review by rotation, dials, gallery tour, role-play, exercise.
2. Material resources: the text from the book, work slips, A3 paper, markers, scotch, ant and bumble bee suits, colors.
3. Time resources: 50 minutes.

DIDACTIC SCENARIO

I. EVOCATION

Individual brainstorming, than in groups: teacher gives the theme:

What is the meaning of the word *lazy*?

Write everything that cross your mind related to this word.

Important is to write as much as you can in the next 5 min, even if it

is correct or not. Write everything you know or think you know. Let your imagination free!

Children show what they have written.

II. REALIZING THE SENSE

Children are asked to read the text: read for friends, in silence, for dragons (louder).

Mutual teaching

Pupils will form groups of 4-5. The text is divided in fragments (how many members has the group).

During the activity, the pupils follow the steps that every team has them written on the slip:

- a) read the fragment for the rest of the group (first pupil);
- b) ask a question referring at the paragraph content, having as aim the profound understanding of it (second pupil);
- c) clarify some aspects which are difficult to understand (third pupil);
- d) say the main idea of the paragraph (forth pupil).

Pupils work like this until the end of the text but they change the tasks to each paragraph, so that each child reads, asks questions, clarifies aspects and says the main idea.

Teacher helps them if they find unknown words.

The Venn diagram is prepared on the blackboard.

The pupils are now divided in 3 groups and they have to:

- first group thinks about the specific qualities/ defects of the bumble bee and write them in the left circle;
- the second group thinks about the qualities/defects of the ant and write them in the right circle;
- the third group thinks about what have in common the two insects and write in the middle;

Teacher and pupils analyze the answers.

III REFLECTION:

Review by turn

Children are divided in 5 groups. There are prepared papers with questions and many answers.

Examples:

1. The characters are:

- an ant
- a bumble bee
- a fly

2. The action takes place:

- at ant's hill
- in the orchard
- on the path

3. The ant:

- is looking for food
- is going for a walk
- is carrying a hard thing in its back

4. The bumblebee complains that:

- it is very hungry
- it would work, but it does not have what to do
- it does not have what to eat
- it would go away
- it would borrow from the ant

5. The ant suggests:

- to go with it at the ant-hill
- to carry a burden
- to pay for its work

6. The bumblebee swears that:

- it does not know what to do
- it can not work
- it must return at the bee-hive

c) Every question belong to a team . The question is read, than the members of the team analyze the possible answers and circle the correct one.

d) At the signal, the groups pass at the next question. The procedure is repeated until the groups reach the first question again.

e) The answers are analyzed, the pupils sustain their answers; appreciations are made.

EVALUATION

Each pupil gets a worksheet. A big square is divided in four equal squares. Each square contains a task. Pupils work individually for 5 min to solve them.

1. What letters have you seen in the text?
2. Draw what you can see in your mind when you read the poem!
3. What do you learn from this lesson?
4. Find an other end to this story!

Each paper will be put on the blackboard, seen and analyzed orally.

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THE FORMATIVE ROLE OF THE ROLE PLAY TO GET READY CHILDREN FOR SCHOOL

ROLUL FORMATIV AL JOCURILOR CU ROL ÎN PREGĂTIREA COPILOR PENTRU ȘCOALĂ

Abstract: *Playing, learning in school as well as working represent human activities which go together, throughout one's lifetime, yet still having the main role in different stages of human life. Role play is one of the most important activities which are placed before learning different subjects in school.*

Key words: *play role, work, learn, language.*

Lucian Blaga - the great poet and philosopher-synthesized in few words, the dominant and also favorite activity of kindergarten age, and kindergarten period by saying: "the child laughs: playing is my wisdom and my love".

The overwhelming importance of playing activities in child's life doubtlessly won't be enough emphasized. The role and the place of playing in the instructive method system was, and stiles, well, established by the great majority of world's educators.

By entering elementary school, playing remains a second place, first place being occupied' by school training. This passage is not abrupt, but successively, these a longer period of time is needed. There is not a sudden change between the two forms of activity-playing and learning-, these two are harmoniously melted together into are unitary whole and by this process the qualitative leap from one stage to the other takes place smoothly, without being hindered by any obstacles.

Didactic games have a well-defined place within early educational institutions curriculum. The main characteristic of didactic game is that it must unify certain elements specific to the playing activity with elements which are specific to the school training. The main aim of didactic games is to help children assimilate or consolidate knowledge from a certain domain; the game represents the bright package which is meant to pleasantly attract children towards that certain activity; it must be underlined the fact that, unlike what we generally understand by playing, the didactic game includes a certain didactic task, certain rules and certain specific elements.

We certainly have to remember all the time that the training and receptive finality of didactic game represent a new stage in children preparing, preparation for school period.

A profound importance in this process is reserved to didactic games which aimed speaking skills development. It is widely known that many specific elements work together throughout psychic development process especially to the development of language skills, one of the most important of these elements being represented by the family. From the point of view of educational value which the family imprints to the child's skills, there may appear sensible differences. These differences may lost till the beginning of school period, mainly to those children who don't attend kindergarten classes, yet the possibility of speech difficulties or speech faultless, fact which emphasizes the necessity of enriching kindergarten children language.

This way the didactic game, as well as other means of speaking development, may bring a very important contribution in the following aspects-of high importance in the process training children for the following school period-.

1. The clear and correct spelling, pronunciation of all the sounds which form words.

2. The improvement of some of the sounds and, or, words. The classification and exploration of the important notions and activities in the kindergarten and also in the school are training activity.

3. The improving of the vocabulary with new terms which have to be introduced in children's vocabulary. The didactic games which aim the development of children's speaking skills widely contribute

to the development of hearing skills and also to the phonetic hearing. These games offer the possibility to the kindergarten teacher to easily find the faultless speech of the child, as the child manifests himself/herself/.

The kindergarten curriculum allows the kindergarten teachers to choose from a various range of funny games through which the cognitive and educative aims may be acquired.

DIDACTIC PROJECT

Level:beginner

No of students:30

Time:30'

Grade:4th

Textbook: World Class,Longman

Module:Spies

Lesson:Followingpeople

Aims for the teacher

-to make sure the pupils have any necessary background knowledge or experience;

-to give SS practice in understanding written sentences;

-to arouse the pupil's interest and curiosity.

Communicative functions: describing pictures ,expressing preferences;

Skills: reading,listening,writing,

Materials: activity notebook,cassette,tape recorder.

Procedure

1 Warm up

ACTIVITY I

Ready for English

Aims-To warm SS up.

Procedure time interaction.

Chatting inEnglish at the beginning of the lesson,T creates an English language atmosphere,establishing contact between her andSsto feel relax.

2 Checking the previous knowledge

ACTIVITY 2

-Eliciting

Aim-To correct important errors as they occur,

Checking homework

3 Presentation

ACTIVITY 3

- Pre-listening

Aims-To involve class by focusing SS'attention on present continuous structures.

Controlled oral practice-activity is a good opportunity for the teacher to revise knowledge about Present Tense Continuous.

4 Practice

ACTIVITY 4

- While –speaking listening

Aims- To give SS practice in understanding listening and in written sentences

Listening exercise- Find the differences

ACTIVITY 5

Post-reading

Aims – To give SS the opportunity to use language in private, face-to –face interaction.

Writing exercise

SS write sentences about the people in the picture.

5.Production

ACTIVITY 6

Puzzle

Aims- to develop SS ability to communicate freely.

Freer writing practice

Puzzle- group work

Discover the owners

6. Assigning homework

ACTIVITY 7

Assigning homework

Aims- to maintain SS "language skills ability.

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PRESCHOOL EDUCATION – AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN MOULDING THE CHILD’S EXISTENCE AND BEHAVIOUR

EDUCAȚIA PREȘCOLARĂ-UN IMPORTANT FACTOR ÎN MODELAREA PERSONALITĂȚII

Abstract: *A decisive role in moulding the child’s existence and his/hers behaviour is represented by preschool education, which, added to the influences of family and society on the child at this age, forms a certain type of individual who is able to understand the environment, to master it and to adapt to it. This reality will gradually add to the child’s maturation, which is, an obvious maturation in comparison to the child who does not attend kindergarten.*

Key words: *organized education, socializing, mounding, evolution.*

The period of starting to attend kindergarten at the age of three is the period when the preschool education which lasts over three or four years and has an important role in socializing. During this stage the main focus is on the child’s gaining autonomy, on physical and psychometric development, on communication and initiation in reading and writing skills, on stimulating curiosity, on forming the ability of gathering information and of solving simple problems.

A lot has been said about the obligatory character of the preschool educational system and also about having a modern western education, in the sense of restyling social phenomena. What needs to be mentioned here is the fact that, no matter which the official decisions about the preschool education system or the

parents' decision of integrating the child in such an educational system may be, preschool education has an important role in moulding the child's existence and behaviors. The child who attends kindergarten proves to have a psycho-social development that is clearly superior to the child who does not attend any form of education. The educational reform has imposed a new perspective on the place and the role of preschool education in the educational system as a whole, and also a new approach to the kindergarten – primary school relationship, thus determining a profitable collaboration between the teachers in the kindergarten and those at primary school level.

Preschool educational aims are oriented towards moulding and speeding up the process of forming certain abilities which outline the child's personality, taking into account both individual characteristics and characteristics specific to the age. Thus, these aims tend to enlarge the child's knowledge of the world and to prepare him/her for starting school.

Intellectual education, as an integrated component of the child's harmonious development, gains a special importance in kindergarten because it is now when the child begins to know the world, to adapt to living conditions and this is done by establishing adequate reactions to external and internal stimuli. The process of controlled learning, mainly through games that rely on the child's intense curiosity and tendency of imitating, helps the gradual development of the intellect and it offers the possibility to express the thoughts through language.

At the stage of preschool education controlled learning mingles with spontaneous learning or acquisition, and both forms impel the development of intelligence and socializing. The content of learning is broad and it is strictly connected to the psychical and social side of personality, being sustained by action, handling things, playing, practical and manual activity. Gradually, towards the end of kindergarten, the child passes from the stage of actions, of doing to the stage of talking, thus the process of learning gains a specific character by focusing on assimilating and systematizing knowledge. This type of organized education is thought to take place in two stages. The first stage is realized during the first two

classes of the kindergarten, and the latter is the stage of preparing for school. This type of education contributes, alongside the parents' contribution, to forming the child's personality and his/her personal characteristics.

As a conclusion, we may say that preschool education has an immense role as it aims developing the child's personality through its organized and scientifically made form. The child's personality is developed taking into consideration his/her characteristics and needs, Preschool education also tends to prepare the child for school and learning while it respects his/her need for playing. The educational influences are shown through family, education, adults, and society as a whole.

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BOOKS REVIEWS

RECENZII

**PSICHOPELAGOGY OF EXCELENCE, IDENTIFICATION
AND EDUCATION OF GIFTED CHILDREN
(Author GABRIELA KELEMEN)**

**PSIHOPELAGOGIA EXCELENȚEI, IDENTIFICAREA ȘI
EDUCAREA COPIILOR SUPRADOTAȚI
(Autor GABRIELA KELEMEN)**

REPORT I.

Mrs. Gabriela Kelemen has presented to the academic community an ideas-packed scholarly work, well-structured and written in an elevated style.

The topicality of her scholarly preoccupations and of the subject tackled is supported by, at least, the following elements:

- gifted children meet with difficulties in mass educational activity;
- the educational policies in Romania as concerns the gifted are supported by the Law regarding the education of gifted and high performance capable children (2006);
- the society has responsibilities as regards the cultivation, assertion and protection of the capital represented by potential human excellence.

The topic tackled is thoroughly founded scientifically. The authoress has studied and turned to account many referential works in the domain, has presented correctly and detachedly the contributions of well-known authors, has committed herself to discussions on many theoretical controversies and, in full awareness, has delimited her own research.

Well-acquainted with the theoretical contributions to the problem of the gifted, Mrs. Gabriela Kelemen has shown a balanced attitude, assuming that the problem of the gifted presupposes considering two aspects: their identification, on one hand, their support and assertion, on the other:” Gifted children need two things: to come to terms with their condition and to have all conditions created for them to develop their exceptional

potentialities”.

The authoress’ contributions are numerous and important; we mention some of them:

- identification and analytical and critical presentation of more than 10 models for the differentiated and personalized training of the gifted and of several strategies for the development of the educational opportunities for the gifted in extracurricular contexts;
- working out of a personalized action plan for each gifted child, function of the discipline for which that child has shown interest; the program developed is based on three elements: enrichment of the curriculum, differentiation/individualization of training in heterogeneous level classes and mentoring outside the classroom;
- implementation of the didactic intervention model in the very school environment of the class to which the group of subjects under experiment belongs, with a rigorous management of the program;
- demonstration of the validity of the three dimensions proposed as differentiation criteria for the gifted: general abilities, creativity and special abilities;
- defining the competences of the teaching staff involved in the activity with the gifted and of the standard of excellence;
- designing and validating an observation grid and other research instruments which should allow the study of indicators leading to a multifactor identification, as trustworthy as possible; on this basis , awareness was obtained of both the limitations and the possibilities for refining the instruments used.

The basic idea is that the methods and instruments used do not differ essentially from those used in psycho diagnostic practice in general, except that the emphasis is laid on specificity and on the manner of combination/interaction of the various structural components.

The researches carried out by Mrs. Gabriela Kelemen have definite implications for the development of educational programs that may lead to taking correct decisions regarding gifted pupils and the continuing training of the teaching staff. There are enough arguments for supporting the value of the researches carried out and for the applying, in the future, too, of the intervention and psycho pedagogical assistance program experimented.

The results obtained in the course of the research-action carried out are processed by means of adequate statistical techniques, carefully interpreted and richly illustrated graphically, all these leading to conclusions that strengthen the principal position adopted by Mrs. Gabriela Kelemen: "the training programs for the gifted presuppose pedagogically coherent actions, adapted and developed in the interest domain of each gifted child, of capital importance being both the training and the attitude of the teaching staff".

**Prof. Steliana TOMA, Ph. D., DPPD,
Civil Engineering Technical University, Bucharest**

REPORT II.

We find ourselves before a work based on intellectual effort, on theoretical and pragmatic investigation endeavors that are not only ample and complex but also daring, even risky. These endeavors are of great interest and responsibility, considering, on one hand, the imperative need for enriching the literature dedicated to the psycho pedagogy of the gifted and, on the other, the necessity for Romania to reach international standards, so as to be successfully competitive in the context of global economy.

The operational wording of the title (. . .) articulates a multitude of aspects and theoretical and practical implications concerning the gifted, the very approach to two complementary endeavors-identification and education of gifted children and, implicitly, the structuring of the paper in chapters being not a succession of distinct subtopics but a chain of sequences and operations characterized by an easily noticeable coherence and congruence.

Before any comment, the authoress sets herself to achieve an absolutely necessary terminological delimitation, considering the multitude of psycho pedagogical terms correlative to the problematic discussed-Chapter I-a plea for the idea that the gifted, although having a huge potential, cannot develop wholly without a specialized educational system because, being intellectually more advanced, they can learn very much and quickly, studying the problems in their profundity and complexity, getting ahead of, both their colleagues of the same age, and the curriculum, which has been worked out for a mean level in common education. Their a synchronic development renders them sensitive to both global or local problems that they strongly feel emotionally, and to the solution of these problems. We appreciate the fact that, in this chapter, the definition of giftedness includes-considering the common social standard-outstanding psycho-physical-intellectual capacities, scientifically, artistically oriented towards leadership or management, the environment, or kinesthetic ones, etc, and another independent variable, that is, creativity.

Chapter II upholds the idea that identification of high potential children must represent an integral part of the educational process and will be achieved in conformity with internationally accepted paradigms, by mixed teams consisting of specialists in the field: psychologists, instructors, and teachers. One of the most important ways of identification of genuine values is the permanent organization of creative activities, open to all socio-economic groups, without any restrictions, monitored by specialists and observers from among the gifted.

Chapter II deals with the pedagogy of giftedness, managing to offer a comprehensive image, because:

- a number of modern educational paradigms are turned to account-such as the paradigm of active and interactive instruction, the paradigm of differentiated and personalized instruction;
- the need for achieving curricular adaptation is upheld;
- a pragmatic perspective is offered upon the necessary strategic endeavors.

We appreciate the discussion on the initial and continuing training of teaching staff for differentiated instruction of the gifted, with its two component systems-initial training and continuing training.

As a conclusive corollary of the theoretical-conceptual actions, the authoress proposes and describes, in Chapter IV, a comprehensive and personalized program for the education of the gifted, rigorously designed.

As concerns the experimental activities described-Chapters V, VI and VII-, we mention the following strengths of the work:

-The prerequisites formulated are well argument.

-The general and the specific aims are pertinent, correctly and operationally formulated.

-The pragmatic methodological perspective is considerably present, even thoroughly explicated: the documentary stage-carefully designed and achieved, is based on pertinently built and validated instruments.

The experimental intervention itself constitutes the subtopic of

Chapter VI and has the following methodological coordinates:

The aim and the hypotheses of the work are well formulated.

- ✓ The independent and the dependent variables have been correctly established and show a systemic view.
- ✓ The building of the samples of subjects and of content has been done in conformity with the specific norms.
- ✓ Observance of the well-known stages of a pedagogical research, as well as the fact that the results have been detailed and analyzed by means of a rigorous statistical-mathematical apparatus.
- ✓ Turning to account of qualitative analyses in close connection with the quantitative ones, with a view to testing the hypotheses of the research and the formulation of augmented conclusions relating to the results obtained in the experimental and the control groups, which allowed validation of the two hypotheses.

Apart from the intrinsic value of the work-also given by the multitude of illustrated examples, of analyses and case studies-it also has a larger social extra-technical significance: it comes to uphold, with solid arguments, the need for facilitating, in high ability children, some creative tendencies, all in the service of humanity, as is the entire process of these children's education. This, we consider, is the educational message and the main quality of this doctoral thesis- assembling, within a coherent discourse, applied to the domain of educational sciences, of activities, actions, sequences, operations and techniques which can be turned to account in the complex activities of identification and education of gifted children and which guarantee the latter's subsequent evolution. .

**Prof. Mușata BOCOȘ, Ph. D.,
„Babes-Bolyai” University, Cluj-Napoca**

REPORT III.

The work under analysis here is focused on the topic of identification and education of gifted children and youths. A topic is really, of great current and major interest. All the more charged with human and social satisfaction as it appears after a period in which gifted children were a poorly explored category. It is a work that appears in a period when an acute need for rebuilding and asserting powerful creative elite, a stimulator of national progress in all domains of social-human activity is deeply felt. The argumentation on which the author's considerations are based follows a serious and convincing scientific analysis. We, consequently, applaud her initiative, which proves daring and eagerness in approaching one of the most delicate and up-to-date psycho pedagogical problems.

The first part of the work describes, synthetically, the result of the exploratory study of a rich and topical varied referential bibliographical material, in Romanian and in foreign languages. Within the context of this overview are subjected to critical analysis and creatively turned to account, data, ideas, trends and lines of thought, older and newer, which are trying to configure the special psychological profile of the gifted as well as the multiple modalities that can be used in identifying giftedness in children and youths.

Obviously, there is large room assigned to the problematic of educating gifted children. In this context, data and methodologies inspired from approaches, experience and experiments known so far in various countries and in Romania are turned to account such as, for example, those focusing on programs based on differentiation and individualization/personalization, study acceleration programs, setting up of special schools and classes, training of teaching staff in view of commitment to the education of the gifted a. s. o. Achieving, thus, a brief overview and turning to account various ideas, theories, practices and psycho pedagogical and sociological views in the domain, the authoress has outlined the theoretical framework needed for placing her research on a modern, advanced route, in conception and methodology.

Essentially, attention is directed to seeking for and finding an efficient strategy for the education of the gifted. An investigation activity that finds its substantiation in the working out and application of a personalized program for the training of this category of children and a program designed

to stimulate the development of potentialities of pre-school and school children. In the first phase, considered to be a pre-condition for passing to the working out and testing of the experimental program of education, the candidate had performed an investigation meant at determining the condition of the standard of giftedness of children in the school area in which she was going to locate her investigation of the auxiliary curricular materials.

The analysis of the contributions the mentor can make to the setting up of a psychosocial climate, compatible with the psychological profile of the gifted, has been thoroughly made. In the final part we become aware of the rigorous, sequential and correlation manner in which the analysis of the qualitative quantity of the data recorded within the experiment is achieved.

In conclusion, our opinion is that, taken globally, the preset work is impressive as regards its high scholarly standard attained and its deep reflection. Also, as regards the promotion of an advanced psycho pedagogical conception concerning the approach to the problem specific to the identification and, particularly, the education of gifted children. Special mention should go to the innovating ideas and procedures, the elements of novelty, many of them showing originality, skillfully integrated into the personalized program for the training of the gifted, a program worked out on rigorously scientific and efficiency foundations, experimentally proven. Notable contributions have been made regarding the structure, content, educational strategies that confer coherence and validity to the program presented. We do feel satisfaction at the thought that the researches carried out will constitute an encouraging support in the current activity of promoting excellence in our educational system, an impetus to the new research in the domain. All these attest to the candidate's very good scholarly, psycho pedagogical training and genuine capacities of a researcher, splendid prospects for subsequent self-assertion.

The second phase is dedicated to the experimental research proper. This time the authoress' attention focuses on the working out and application of the educational program proposed. Actually, it is a hypothetical program, which becomes the very hypothesis of the research. And which, in essence, sets into a causality relation, as independent variable, the impact of an aggregate of educational strategies, adapted, individualized, personalized, upon the development of the ability potentialities of the gifted, taken as a dependent variable.

The objectives are also announced with clarity and precision. Once these

theoretical prerequisites and directions of the research have been outlined, the development of the experimental pedagogical design and its actual application assume clear and accurate contours, the setting in an optimum relation of the main components involved in the unfolding and success of the research being achieved.

We most particularly appreciate the exigency with which the experimental program was designed, along three main components: enriched curriculum differentiated and individualized instruction and the off-class mentor.

The determination of the enriched curriculum considers the commitment of the experienced trainer teachers, competence and positive attitude in improvement of syllabi, integration into the latter of formal, non-formal and informal content. Adjustment of teaching strategies, as well as enrichment of the curriculum has also been considered.

Prof. Ioan CERGHIT, *Ph. D.*
University of Bucharest

RECOMMENDATION

INSTRUCTIONS FOR AUTHORS

Journal “**Educatia Plus**”, published by “Aurel Vlaicu” University of Arad, is issued four times a year on the 25th of October and februar. That journal is in course of evaluation by the National Council of Scientific Research in Higher Education From category on B+ – journals that have the potential for becoming internationally accredited Code CNCSIS 3. D. Psychology and Pedagogy.

Starting with 2008, the Journal publishes only scientific articles on humanities issues, according to the scientific field Arts & Humanities Thomson Scientific, belonging to Institute for Information Science in Philadelphia (ISI), – Thomson Scientific SUA, consisting of: Humanities- multiple disciplines; Literature; Language and linguistics; Art; Religion; Education and Educational research; Reviews.

Authorship

The authorship must be based on substantial contribution to:

- a) Structuring and writing the article, or acquisition, analysis and interpretation of data;
- b) Article drafting and critical revision to achieve a highly intellectual content;
- c) Final approval of the version to be published.

All conditions in (a), (b), and (c) must be fulfilled by each author. To participate only for the purpose of obtaining funds or data collection does not justify the authorship. Also each author is required to assume public responsibility for the article.

Manuscript on Presentation

Copyright of the article belongs to the review and cannot be sent partially to be published by other reviews without the approval of the editorial staff. The review does not publish articles issued by other national or international reviews.

The text of the article will be written in Romanian or English with a summary of ten lines in English as Word 97, Windows 98 document or further alternatives, maximum of twelve pages, including drawings, tables and bibliography in Times New Roman Font,

single spacing. The title of the article and the key words will be written both in Romanian and English.

The manuscript will consist of:

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- title, Font 12 Aldine, centered;
- first name and surname of the authors, place (s)of work in full name, not abbreviated address (es), and the e-mail of the contact person, Font 11, Aldine, centered.
- summary in English maximum ten lines, Font 11 Italic justified; in the case that the text is written entirely in English the summary will be written in both English and Romanian
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