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Problems of Language Education in Pre-School Children

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Abstract

In Albania, work on shaping a good communicative competence is unfortunately not starting in the preschool cycle. Even the legal framework for this cycle leaves much to be desired. It gives more importance to other study cycles, such as primary, ninth grade, high school and university. In this paper we will first deal with the description of the real situation of language competence in the age group of pre-school children, to see then how much the so-called legal framework has been met for this cycle and how the objectives set up by it have been fulfilled. After that, we are going to set out some important milestones regarding the teaching of the Albanian language, which should be taken into account in the law on preschool education and then propose their implementation successfully based on strategies and methods practiced earlier from developed countries.All this will be done by taking into account some conclusions of certain language disciplines regarding the children's ability and language capacity, shaping the basics of their communicative competence which are very important for good language education in this age group.

Keywords: preschool cycle, real situation, legal framework, suggestions, improvements.

Introduction

A good language education should always take into account all kinds of linguistic variation. *Psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, ethnolinguistic, pragmatic or stylistic* aspects are very important aspects for the development of the language competence by children of different age groups. Although Chomsky's findings are already known, he, besides, as a common part of our biological heritage, rarely calls language as a unique human kind of property ... which interferes decisively with thought, action, and social links. (Chomsky, 2007, p. 2)

Sociolinguistics requires language recognition throughout its *diatomic, diastratic, diaphatic, diamatic* dimension. It is already known how rich and varied it appears in these perspectives ... Its "free" variation is conditioned by these important factors from which they originate and from diverse variations of language variants (Berruto, 1994).All of these should be taken into account in the didactics of a language.

Styles of use, variety of spoken registers, cultural differences by different communities, the role of all fluxes, visible or invisible, whether they are, require support from a good education and in our case from good teaching and learning of the Albanian language. On the other hand, to respond to these challenges, but also to problems with the standard languages today, where everything goes in the course of globalization, the didactic language models applied to both teachers and students should not be raised on the basis of what is included in the traditional linguistics, but in those must be felt the interaction of all the aforementioned disciplines.

Considering the sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, pragmatic view ... etc the language or the viewpoints of other disciplines, students understand that the greatness of what we call language goes beyond: it is not merely a part of human being, but it must serve this being throughout life.

As such, the language poses to the scholars and the people themselves difficult tasks related to maintenance, development, proper adaptation with generations, to the context in which they live (economic, political, social and cultural) etc. All of this is done so that in our everyday life, the language will represent us dignitously, adapting to our requirements, situations, circumstances, written and unwritten rules in order to properly cultivate its functions ...

All of this shows that language is one of the most important challenges of today's education. If it comes to developing countries, this challenge is many times more difficult because of the fact that these countries are still destabilized. So if we were to refer to Çomsky's assertion that *"ordinary discourse does not repeat the same things, but produces new language forms, so ordinary language use is free ..."* we would say that in these places, in accordance with their social contexts, with the phrase "ordinary discourse" are also implied unmanaged language uses which are difficult to respect a target or limit and go to an unusual linguistic anomaly. These are also part of the regular lecture too, but if language is subject to the pressure of language rules that derive from the precise policies a country designs, then they do not have longevity and pass on the wastage. For this reason, the alarm signal must be heard in the early stages of language preparation. That is why we started our research in the preschool cycle.

Objectives of the Paper

How and how much is the Albanian language learned in the preschool cycle? Did language preparation ever exceed linguistic knowledge? What is the result of the linguistic knowledge acquisition in increasing the language capacity and practical language skills?

All these are questions that rightly disturb every researcher. In Albania this concern is much greater, as the answers do not speak for satisfactory results in this regard. Below we will present facts and arguments that will first inform us of the real situation in which we are and then convince us of the reality in which our education system is located. It is obviously a matter of highlighting the unquestionable importance of a language learning base that should start with the pre-school cycle, which will follow, in coherence with the next cycles of study. Our primary objective is to improve the current results in the future.

Results

The real situation of language competence in pre-school children.

Before explaining the real situation of language competence in the pre-school cycle, let us first recall some data regarding competence. The term *competence* in language literature was introduced by Chomsky (Chomsky, 1965; according to Robins, 1997). Specifically, he shares in *competence* and *performance*. Of course, this division has been done either in continuity or as a response to Saussure's earlier division (Saussure, 1916), in *inner and outer linguistics*. The division of *competence* and *performance* will advance further with the division, *microlinguistic* and *macrolinguistics* from Lyons(Lyons, 1977) and so on… (Hernc3adndez Campoi, www.ja.scribd.com) .

For speech psychology, when talking about good language competence we mean a phonological competence, morphological competence, syntax competence, semantic competence, pragmatic competence, textual, lexical, discourse, etc. (Marini, 2001).

Language competence models expanded due to the basic assumptions of transformational generational linguistics (Chomsky, 1957) which insisted that:

- discourse is a competence, a system of rules and mechanisms in the mind of the one speaking and the one who understands

- there are some universal linguistic principles rooted in the genetic inheritance of our beings.

- The linguistic task is to build formal models that can describe these rules, mechanisms or principles

Language competence models conceptualized the syntax as the basic mechanism of speech and attributed each phrase or sentence to two syntax structures: one superficial (directly accessible) and the other deep (which is more abstractly explained by transformation rules)(www.treccani.it)

In sociolinguistics the term *linguistic competence* corresponds to the term *communicative competence* (Hymes, 1966; according to Shkurtaj, 2009, p. 269), and sociolinguists go even further by calling it the lecturing competence or sociolinguistic competence. (Holmes, 2015, p. 516)

For the sake of truth in this paper, we have always had this example of competency-forming because having the skills and the linguistic capacity means first of all having a good communicative competence.

To Shkurtaj having language competence means having a knowledge and practical use, having creative skills through language units both in spoken and written form; knowing and using language codes and sub-codes; to have good linguistic and non linguistic communication; your written and spoken discourse is up to you. (Shkurtaj, 2009, p. 269-271).

Naturally, to achieve all this, work should start from the preschool cycle. But, what is the real state of communicating competence of children of this age group and what is specifically observed at this stage?

Ifwe describe their competence, we will certainly describe their unformed competence and, for the sake of truth, in this paper we are seriously considering such a thing, since we think this is the time to put it in the right way, in order to model it best for the future.

First, at this stage, it is noticed that the greatest contribution to the modeling of competence is provided by the child himself, as he feels deeply within himself the need for accurate communication and argument for this is the fact that whenever we speak to children with the language babies, they get angry. The child feels and suffers the lack of a full vocabulary like the one of the most adults. At this point, the so-called *baby-talk* phenomenon helps us to somehow shape the children's language properly and enrich it.

Baby-talk tells how we should behave linguistically with young children, as their speech is not only modeled, but also needs to be modeled. It is unconsciously modeled, so naturally and must be thoroughly modeled by adults in a professional way. For the latter, parents together with pre-school teachers should be the first providers in this regard, thus the first contributors to the formation of the basis of their communicative competence, but unfortunately, this does not happen properly either in our kindergartens, neither with parents, nor with adults (Troplini, 2017).

In the language of children is also evident linguistic variation by social class. From our observations, it is clear what Chomsky claims, (...) *the difference between a rich and stimulating environment and a poor environment can be essential both in language acquisition and physical growth, or more precisely in some aspects of physical growth, being capturing the language, just one of these aspects. Skills that are part of our common genetic wealth can flourish or be restricted and suppressed under the conditions they have for their growth* (Chomsky, 2007, p. 135).

Children's language is also influenced by another important factor such as *imitation*. Regarding this feature, in their spoken language is evident the dialect variation.

From the collected data on the ground it is noticed that their language is initially modeled according to dialect models with which the child is in constant contact. Wilkins does not question the pedagogical importance of language varieties (Wilkins, 1983, p.147).A factor that significantly affects children's speech is the life experience they have. For example, dialect variation is more apparent in children of rural origin and less visible in children of the same origin but living in urban areas. The most noticeable this variation is in children belonging to the top dialect of Geg and less visible is in the children of the Tosk top dialect (for the fact that the latter was lucky to choose and get the size of a prestigious speech). The same logic is followed if we do an analysis that goes even further into the dialectal subdivisions.

Of course, the model that your child lends faster is that of the family. We think this is quite apparent in our social and family context (we do not exclude other similar family contexts in the world, but are not motivated equally). Regarding this, our children, in addition to their family language, maternal dialect, or grandparents (if the mother works and lives in the community) are good simulators of the friend's or companion dialect if he is a guest of host community, teacher's dialect also, in case of trainee teachers who do not speak the standard well, but also vice versa. There are children who, although originally from the country's most remote rural areas, are able to speak the standard language standard due to the hard work of the teacher to promote awareness of the correct and accurate mother language or the fact that the teacher himself speaks the exact standard. These are the phenomena we face in our context.

Another example of imitation is the imitation of sophisticated adult language. In our everyday language there is the phrase "this child speaks great words". Thus, in the kindergartens, children who speak with "great words" like their parents or adults surrounding them. It is understood that such a luck is a favor that have only children whose parents are educated and enjoy some status in society. However, an ordinary child in the impossibility of such imitation (of sophisticated words) mimics words and common expressions from adults.

Another model that we can see through examples is the imitation of the media language, mostly of cartoons, not excluding advertising, various advertising slogans, special musical refrain for the child's ear ... etc. Of course, it is another matter if

we need to measure how much the degree of these imitations reaches. For now, we can only be satisfied with the fact that imitations are greater in children spending more time in front of the television, the computers and the phones.

After dealing with these examples, it is clear that the child to reach his goal becomes more and more conformist with the group or adult person. A typical example embodied in this age is *the field of abnormal morphology* addressed by many sociolinguists. We must say that in all the examples discussed above, the phenomenon of socialization is evident.

Regarding children's speech there are some issues that need to be taken seriously in our context, such as the phenomenon of discrimination or linguistic prejudice.

In our kindergartens we have children who do not speak properly, babies who stutter, children who do not know well Albanian, children who come from the most remote variations, children from uneducated parents, and so on ...; children with poor material well-being, children from divorced parents etc. Nevertheless, all adults need to understand well that the child is the wisest being of this world. Here we are faced with a phenomenon that we have often called linguistic discrimination, but we all know it derives from the social phenomenon of discrimination. Thus, in the struggle against linguistic prejudice, unwilling to contribute to the prevention of racial, ethnic prejudices, etc., and vice versa, through linguistic prejudice, we may unintentionally encourage the opposite. It is unforgivable when the teacher even unpremeditated, become the source of these discriminations. The teacher should be very attentive to how he or she behaves with the children, even when he does a compliment to dress (which has recently become fashionable to us), because unwittingly he insults what is not so beautiful for certain reasons. But this is just an example ... Teachers should be attentive to the gender differences we have noted in this age group, perhaps through the selection of colors, dress, selection of same sex partners to play etc. All of these are also reflected in the language, because language is also an activity, even a specialized activity (Malinowski, 1923; according to Hudson, 2002, p. 127).

All of these have serious consequences that affect the child's growth. Sometimes they have become a cause for the appearance of pathological diseases. Thus, we have discovered some instances of stuttering just because of the psychological violence exercised by the teachers or by the presence of a sister or brother of the family better than oneself.

The teacher should be very attentive in identifying pathological diseases such as aphasia, dyslexia, dysgraphy, etc.(Cacciari, 2011, p. 278-293). These and other phenomena are easy to avoid with professionalism, but in order to achieve professionalism, work has to be done in many ways, which we will consider a little bit.

Let's go back to the linguistic aspect again. How should we strive for laying the first bases of a good communicative competence in coherence with the following education, in view of its continuous improvement?

Unfortunately, as we will see below in the discussion phase, strategies, programs, methods and objectives have not helped us so far; the teachers themselves should do so, but they not having a properly guide, surely have failed in many aspects that are very important. Consequently, the child has come to primary school with a lingering language deficit. The first grade of the elementary school where the rigorous learning of the ABC book begins and then reading, continues to be a major disaster for children and in their mind is compared to a kind of drudgery where all that starts is experienced with many difficulties.

How can the teaching of Albanian language in our kindergartens be improved?

It has long been confirmed that in order to satisfactorily develop the expressive and linguistic capacities of students in schools, it is important for teachers and people of culture to summon together and unite to this goal all their knowledge about linguistic reality, it is understood for the useful part that serves the didactic goals (Soravia, 1980).

Positive attitudes during the learning process should be a priority of the teacher so that student outcomes serve the future and challenge any need to communicate.

In this age group, during the design of the curriculum, when designing the methods to be used for their implementation, when designing the daily objectives to be achieved during the Albanian language classes, planning this lesson, and to provide coherence with other lines of study, teachers should consider:

Language act factors that are very important at this stage of development. The child should not know the theoretical factors, but must practically understand when this act is accomplished and when it is not. The child at this stage needs to understand

whether the message of what he says is realized or not; the linguistic act remains as such or is carried out in a communication act. The child should select the right situation or context to say something. He should be able to connect through a chain of coherence several communication acts. But first of all, the teacher at this stage needs to have clear the method he should use in order to achieve this goal. He has to understand how successful a student is to successfully engage in a discourse, who is more capable and who does not. How can they work to improve them in this regard? If we have done so, we have achieved two of the most important goals such as *"To get a student to hear stories and to participate in conversations with ever-growing attention"* or *"To participate and to have an initiative to discuss in the learning environment not only with peers, but also with older adults "* but above all, the teacher has contributed to the teaching of conversational rules.

Every teacher should ask himself to the very questions that Chomsky had about the cognitive ability of language such as: What is the system of recognition of every child within this age group? What's in their mind? (Such questions are raised by having the fact that some of the knowledge and the way of understanding is genetically born.) We must understand, "says Chomsky, how and how much children understand, how they hear, read, interpret, produce ... etc. (Chomsky, 2007, p. 3).

In this way the teacher connects very well the *psychological* aspect with the *linguistic* one, so the line of thinking with the communication line.

So some data in the field of psycholinguistics are quite valuable. Some Chomsky values regarding language acquisition in children would help many specialists and drafters of the methods to be used.

Learning the language, he says, is not exactly what the child does; it is something that happens to the child who is placed in a suitable environment, much as the baby's body grows and breeds in a predetermined way, when provided with adequate nutrition and influence of the environment. This does not mean that the nature of the environment is not about this issue. The environment defines the way in which the parameters of universal grammar are configured, thus giving different languages... (Chomsky, 2007, p. 134).

Psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics - ethnolinguistics, pragmalinguistics, etc., come to the aid of didactics. To avoid problems related to these areas, we should orient our children towards a common Albanian. As we pointed out above, children are in constant socialization process. This means that they are confronted with ready-made models, family and society around them, in neighborhoods, villages, cities, kindergartens, etc. These models can be even quadruptedly wrong. So it is necessary to work hard with the children of this age group to inject love for mother language and to form the responsibility to speak and write as accurately as possible.

Teachers need to work hard on this cycle with some typical orthography rules. Mainly with rules related to the words they have chosen to write or read. But first, it is required to increase the teacher's responsibility to themselves to properly learn some orthography rules. Teachers are therefore not allowed to write spelling mistakes that children will write while learning languages such as: Shqipëri (Albania), atdhe (homeland), shqiptar (Albanian), flamur (flag) etc.

Language competence models conceptualized the syntax as the basic mechanism of discourse and attributed every phrase or sentence two syntax structures: one superficial (directly accessible) and the other deep (which is more abstractly explained by transformation rules), (www.treccani.it),

So, teachers should practice their children in formulating sentences, expanding them, or simplifying them. This would greatly help them properly appropriate their mother language.

Teachers should work with children during Albanian language classes, especially for distinguishing between two language codes: restricted code and extended code. Children always tend to speak with a truncated code, while teachers should contribute to a more elaborate language code. In this way, teachers contribute to enriching the vocabulary of children and not only, but they also increase their agility of speaking (this is not the only way).

Bernstein clearly recognized that children from rich layers have a richer syntax and semantic vocabulary than poorer children. Then with the children of these layers, more work should be done to fulfill this linguistic deficit.

With the child, work must be done in all respects. The teacher should also intervene when the child fills his sentences without criteria. He needs to understand the right lines of good communication. So it's a norm for all the kids. Those who do not meet this norm, without doubt, will carry this deficit even in the future.

Teachers should apply the *baby-talk* method to children. *Baby- talk* is able to control the behavior of children and maintain interaction with them (Wells and Robinson, 1982; according to Shkurtaj, 2009, p. 95). We are facing a "*special registry*" that an adult is best to use deliberately, adapting to a small interlocutor, or more specifically to adequately respond to the child's immaturity (Shkurtaj, 2009, p. 95).

The method we must pursue is well expressed through Cross's citation that *such a speaker has two levels of complexity, much closer to that of the child so that he can process and understand the meaning; the other, something in advance in its syntactic features, so that the child can understand the message, as well as gather the reactions between his specific mode of expression and the most elaborate version proposed to him* (Cross, 1977; according to Shkurtaj, 2009, p. 96).

Parents, teachers or "adults" contribute occasionally to improve all levels of language in the child's speech, but this is always done to the appropriate extent according to their age, intellect ... etc. After this day-to-day use of language, children undoubtedly earn from most adults, a great deal of linguistic wealth at the syntax and semantic level, and are therefore more likely to develop speech quickly and properly shape the communicative competence.

Teachers should instill children of the value of their mother language. Indeed, language is a means of communication that serves people, but through language we are identified. Language is part of our national identity. So let's not just teach children the rules, but teach them the value of language; not to teach the children only the presence of two top dialects (or sub-divisions), but to teach them the value of the dialect of origin. By doing this, by learning everything from the base, it is difficult for them to move towards the pre-integration of the host communities by deliberately abandoning the values of the country they are coming from, as is commonly the case with immigrants.

Teachers should teach children the rules of good behaviour. During this process, the child needs to separate two different realities, standard language and dialect of origin. Children need to learn to have respect for both of these varieties by cultivating the basics of bilingualism early on. This issue should be treated with great care and in the same way even if we are dealing with minority children.

The teacher should make it possible for the child to understand the infinitely creative aspect of the language. The cognitive system of language in young children is incomplete and consequently it needs to be modeled properly. Chomsky says *learning (something of a person) should not be compared to bottled water, but rather to the process of helping a flower to grow in its own way* (Chomsky, 2007, p.173).

We have come to the conclusion following the observations we have made mainly in the city of Durres (a city very close to the capital and considered a center of development), and then, following Shkodra (a developed city that belongs to the north of Albania) , and finally Vlora (one of the developed southern cities of Albania) (it is understood that the term development here is used based on the comparison we make with other cities). During this process we have reviewed their annual work and focused mainly on teaching Albanian language.

If all these points are not taken into account in the design of language methods and moreover, if the latter did not exist, then teachers would find it difficult to properly form the children's communication competence. This is also why we find today a superficial work in our kindergartens, where the mechanical teaching of knowledge is prevalent rather than logical. Learning through the practice or the slogan of the Ministry responsible for education "Learn by doing" so far has not been achieved.

This is noticed in how it works to increase the level of conversation; in how it works to strengthen awareness of mother language; in working on fixing some typical spelling rules (for example in important words that teachers and students use everyday, such as: *Albania*, *homeland, carrot, beetroot*, etc.). It is noticed that teachers do not possess the right knowledge about how to work for the daily enrichment of the child's vocabulary; how can they work to introduce new concepts every day; how to proceed in formulating sentences by passing from simple sentences into extended sentences and vice versa; or in the proper imprint of ethical rules of conduct, etc. (it is noticed that the teachers have focused solely on the embedding of some *"magical words"* such as: *good morning, goodbye, thank you* etc. and this results in a mechanical one, because from a test that was made to children during summer holidays, in most cases, they are not used by them). The letter can not be taught without learning its value, or the word without learning the meaning further, the sentence without understanding and constructing it nicely, the rules of conversation without understanding the essence of the conversation ... etc.

Discussions

Other factors responsible for the real state of competence

Despite the slogans of the ministry responsible for education which have always been present and persisted in the practical training of the individual, and consequently in the formation of a good communicative competence, in reality, this effort has remained simply in letters and resembles drafted laws quite straightforward, but never implemented.

As for language education, attention has been focused more than ever on acquiring knowledge rather than on their practical training. In the 9-year cycle, much is done in terms of language knowledge and the learning outcomes have been relatively good in this regard. But on the other hand, the fruits of a tedious job for both teachers and students are likely to be seen only for a short period of time, specifically during the time of acquisition of the knowledge of that cycle and this is done only in certain angles that are directly related to the assimilation of language knowledge. Their language competence has no strength to be transformed into capacity and communicative competence. This work crowned with this cycle of studies is very tedious and hard-pressed for the fact that its beginnings are in the primary cycle (Troplini, 2015, p. 99, 171).

However, to reach a conclusion on the causes of the real situation of the language competence of children in the pre-school cycle, it is quite difficult to take into account many other factors such as:

Differences in the individual language behavior of each child, depend among other things, on the social variability of each of the parents or other family members with whom the child lives. This includes parents age, education, ethnicity, economic background, religious differences, family, etc.

Another important factor is the early development of the child as a process, so the physical development, motor development, emotional development, social development, the ability of each child to write, read, speak, listen, cognitive development the development of a learning mechanism, etc.

Another factor can be related to the kindergartens and programs they follow. State kindergartens are unified in this regard (although this does not mean that everything is correct), while private kindergartens often come out of state programs by introducing second language acquisition or by using more sophisticated methods in order to increase interest.

The difference can also be seen between rural and urban kindergartens of the same city or between the kindergartens of urban areas of different cities and so on. So the unification of programs cannot avoid differences as these factors obviously find their reflection in the language of children. Even if we borrow similar programs from developed countries, they could fail if they don't fit the context, as countries do not enjoy the same development and, consequently, the same cultural and mental emancipation.

Panorama of Albanian education in pre-school and language learning

As mentioned above, the way of caring for a child after childbirth varies depending on many factors, both on an individual and social level. This means that even though the child's healthy growth is in the center of attention in all respects, certain contexts that are inextricably linked to economic development or emancipation of societies, significantly affect the way children grow within these communities.

And if we were to deepen this argument, the development and emancipation of a society reflects on the development of relevant institutions such as nursery, kindergartens or schools with which the child faces immediately after the family. The latter have a great responsibility because they must adhere to a common pattern that children have to follow to practice, but in these circumstances, this is a tough job. However, we have referred to a general average by describing those phenomena and concerns that are observed in all our kindergartens, referring to the Albanian context described above, and subsequently to generalizations regarding the linguistic development of this age group.

Pre-school education programs have been developed by the Education Development Institute (IZHA). Although there are some attempts to change with the new Albanian Law on Education (2015), which is published in the official journal only in 2018, the pre-school curriculum has so far implemented the long-standing program designed by IZHA. We briefly summarize what this program is, and then analyze the changes that are expected to take place in the future.

The curriculum area for the language is the same for three age groups (3-4 years, 4-5 years, 5-6 years). It consists of:

1. Language Development, 2. Mathematical Development, 3. Social and Personal Development, 4. Artistic Education, 5. Physical and Health Education.

Linguistic development curricula are also the same, with only one distinction in the age group 5-6, including handwriting. They consist of: Language for communication, Thinking language, The bound between sound and letters, Reading, Writing, handwriting (only for 5-6 years), (IZHA, 2007).

Although attempting to change objectives is noticed, it is also apparent that this program is not different for different age groups. The curriculum area is the same, the curriculum lines are the same, with a change for the age group 5-6 who should start practicing in writing.

To understand more, follow the program in more detail (IZHA, 2015-2018), so, with the linguistic formation by lines, objectives and concepts.

Here too we see the same thing: the difference between objectives by age groups is small. The objectives are almost the same, with only some changes in the elaboration (so in form and not in content). In the age group 5-6, it is noticed that just a point on the lines is added, such as intonation to the communication line *(Uses the intonation, clear communication rhythm, which is understandable to others or Use different intonation, structuring his sentences and ideas when he speaks.)* The concept of the Intonation has also been added, which is the *Intonation*, although it should be said that there are many flaws in this, both in the definition of concepts and in the way the difference between age groups is make it negligible.

To be clear, we take as an example only the first objective and the concept in the first line (communication) according to three age groups. Thus we have:

3-4 years old

Ask simple questions- The objective (the goal);

Question - Concept.

4-5 years old

Use and guide simple questions- Objective;

Question - Concept.

5-6 years old:

Use often sentences and simple questions through gestures- Objective;

Question - Concept.

In order not to extend too much, the same thing happens with other points according to the lines or the other lines as a whole.

Problems also arise in how are designed the objectives that, among other things, have to be achieved during linguistic development. So ambiguous appear to be objectives such as: The student *should answer with simple sentences when asked, Speak in short sentences, Keep a written material in hands pretending to read it,* etc. (3-4 years). And, for the sake of truth, every objective needs to be improved, since specifically these examples we have just quoted (that are few, but we are not quoting other examples) are not goals as the child at the age of 3-4 years has opted for the tendency to speak in short and incomplete sentences, while we must find a way to help those to form clear and complete sentences contributing to the enrichment of their vocabulary. The child at this age if he is read regularly by the parent and the teacher, keeps the book in hand and pretends to be reading, but to do so we must contribute to the reading to the children, because they can do so even mechanically and that's invalid.

All these phenomena and other things (mentioned but not being detailed) come as a result of the fact that teachers prepare the lesson based solely on the objectives of the programs, lesson plans, above all, to the respective lesson planning diaries designed by the teachers themselves, as all that is offered above for this stage of teaching is inadequate and sometimes quite unclear.

Conclusions

After these analyzes, we have come to the conclusion that this stage of schooling has not been taken so seriously as to the learning of children for the following reasons:

There are no proper methods that help teachers achieve the goals for this age group. Even though some kind of mock-up from a foreign project or a current publishing house has been made to improve any program or publication of any method, it should be said that nothing has been implemented.

Language development is not seen enough in harmony with other lines. Such a thing is mentioned, but the concept of interaction that is undisputable is understood by the template and fails to be decoded properly by teachers. Whether it comes to race, religious beliefs or ethnic groups, it is understood that all these are reflected in language, so there is linguistic diversity, but we can also fight the phenomenon through the struggle we make against language peculiarities or some kind of discrimination. The texts of this cycle should be designed as such in order to be coherent with each other but also with the programs or standards to be achieved.

The new changes expected to be implemented are inadequate. In 2015, were published the *Development and Learning Standards for Children of 3-6 years* (IZHA, 2015), where awareness of learning in this cycle is discussed, a new approach to competency learning, models and incentives that serve to encourage children to achieve these standards for the role of the game in promoting and gaining new knowledge or exploration through it; for developing skills that show curiosity and creativity; for the great expectations of children and the high potential that they have.

There is some kind of improvement in the standards to be achieved, especially in the indicators that help in achieving these many standards, and we can say that they also help to improve the respective objectives, but everything is expected so that the teacher can do it on his own initiative, as long as the methods or texts are missing; as long as the educational level has dropped in recent decades (it is in critical condition); or the teacher's deficit is deepening.

There is no clarity of what is required in the programs, and above all, there is no unique method which can explain to the teacher how to break down each point and implement them.

In the *Curriculum framework of pre-school education* (IZHA, 2015), although such concepts as *open society, globalization, or the concept of lifelong learning competences, or the socio-cultural context,* have been introduced etc (which obviously must be included), all others do not have any noticeable difference to what was previously drafted. For this reason, I think the problem does not lie in the proper design of strategies, standards, curricula, programs etc. but in ensuring the ways for their implementation. It's just like discovering the disease and not knowing how to determine the right course of treatment.

Another factor why this schooling stage is not taken seriously, we think it has to do with the fact that this stage of education is not legally required to attend.

However, something is moving (2015-2018), and such a thing belongs to the future, but the problem is the same: if everything written is not accompanied by specific trainings and clear methods for the teacher, it is difficult to apply by them (as has happened in these 27 years of post-dictatorship) and then we will go back to the start, as we discover and discover that we always have started the wrong way.

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Innovative Development of Education Strategy in Russian Federation: Experience of "Future Skills" School Graduates Formation by City Organizations' Network Interaction

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the strategy of innovative Moscow education development and the priority directions of the state education policy. According to modern research, a universal map of key drivers and Megatrends of education development in Russia and the whole world has been compiled. The generalized map of «future skills» with the author's interpretation is given. Implementing the elements of educational strategy into personal practice author introduces in detail the system of career guidance in secondary school, which contains such elements as: the matrix of a graduate school competencies, network partnership, open urban educational space. The author also describes his own experience of the network partnership system organization at building individual development trajectories for students of 14-17 to form the skills of the future and ensure comprehensive development. The practical recommendations and analysis of emerging issues are given. The author raises issues on the content of modern education, pre-profile and profile training and students' readiness for self-realization and life in the society of the modern metropolis.

Keywords: strategy of education development, "future skills", key competences, network interaction, global trends, career guidance, professional tests, management of educational systems.

Introduction

«The future is uncertain and alternative in principle»

Modern researchers, experts and managers in the system of educational relations have no doubt that the education system must change. It's due to ongoing global changes, increasing the gap between the learning outcomes of modern graduates and the requirements for the sets of competencies of present and future employees. Such problems remain important: a high degree of schoolchildren' anxiety accompanying the choice of "professional life path", one profession "for the whole life" under the pressure of conservative teachers and parents (who grew up in an outdated paradigm); graduates' dissatisfaction of their profession choice, neurotic conditions, negative emotions associated with the opportunity to make a wrong choice.

The existing forms of career guidance, designed to help students with professional self-determination, create a certain paradox: higher awareness - the higher the anxiety in the rapidly growing world. Thereupon, the main achievement of the secondary school, according to the author, is the willingness and desire to get the lifelong learning with the cognitive interest as a sustainable need to develop and expand your knowledge.

Based on the many years' researchers, European scientists describe the future world with the abbreviation VUCA, which means: Volatility, Uncertainly, Complexity, Ambiguity (Bennett, Lemoine, 2014). According to The WorldSkills Russia and Global Educational Futures development groups, who are engaged in forecasting the future professions image and selection of appropriate competencies, changes in educational systems will occur under the influence of global trends.

1. Technological trends:

digitalization (Internet of things, Big data, artificial intelligence);

automation and robotization (cyber-physical systems, automation of cognitive and physical labor);

2. Social trends:

demographic changes (increase in life expectancy and the age of the active working population, reduction young people amount in working age; change the women role and the model of childhood);

network community formation (networking, meaningful consumption, gamification);

3. Techno-social trends:

globalization (economy, knowledge, technology);

ecologization (education for sustainable development (Ursul, A., Ursul, T., 2013).

All positions are influenced by a single megatrend - exponential acceleration of the changes' rate.

In this context, groups of critically needed for future success skills are emerging. Partnership for the 21st century skills, Center for Curriculum Redesign, SKOLKOVO scientists and others tried to determine a list of basic 21st century skills: concentration and attention management; emotional intelligence; digital literacy; creativity; ecological thinking; cross-culture; self-education (Davies, Fidler, Gorbis, 2011).

According to these researchers, there is an objective need to find a new approach to building a model of skills. Instead of hard skills and soft skills are proposed to consider the contextual (specialized), cross contextual and existential skills. Contextual skills are required to perform work functions in specific professional areas and exist with these functions and operations. With the change of technology, or in the case of replacing human labor on the labor of the machine, highly specialized skills gradually disappear. Cross-context skills have a longer life cycle and can be used in various fields. It is the basis of effective human activity. As existential skills are used by a person throughout life in various contexts, improved and transformed. For example, willpower, goal-setting, reflection. Their relevance increases with age.

It is obvious that a fundamentally new result cannot be obtained on the basis of the traditional approach (Fadle, Bialik, Trilling, 2016). So, there is a problem of approaches, forms and methods of teaching and the educational process organization revision. Today, however, there is a predominance of the last century values in educational systems: one education for life, long staying as a one organization' employee, unification, the monotony operations, linearity in education and work. The challenges of the 21st century require a fundamental change in the educational paradigm towards the development of creativity, planning activities, implement multidirectional projects, manage human, information and material resources. The skills' obsolescence is faster than an education receiving. The educational paradigm should turn to the student' personality even more than it has been postulated since the beginning of the era of humanism development to reveal the unique potential of everyone. This is hampered by the implementation of standard tasks, the prohibition or limiting initiatives, a strong separation of various educational institutions, which does not contribute to understanding the education as a single ecosystem. But there is a certain progress in this direction. Educational organizations are gradually becoming a place open to different age groups and people with special needs, comfortable for family stay. There is a tendency to transfer schools and universities to the status of basic platform or «attachment points», serving as the starting point of an individualized educational route. Part of the educational content is placed on the e-learning platforms, freeing up time for the practice. The most important change is teachers' role change and understanding the plurality of knowledge sources, awareness of the need for continuous education.

Let us turn to the data of the non-profit independent group of researchers Institute for the Future for the University of Phoenix Research Institute and Apollo Research Institute in California. The developers identify 6 key «drivers of change» that will determine the future education system development:

1. Extreme longevity. The number of the working-age population over 60 is increasing. Career and educational track approaches should also change.

2. Rise of smart machines and systems. What can be done by people only? Where is man's place in the world of machines?

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3. Computing world: big data and its processing methods create the basis for the formation of special thinking – thinking based on data analysis in decision-making (data-based decisions); the use of big data for scientific development forecasting (design outcomes).

4. New media ecology: text-based media are being transformed under the increasing influence of infographics and other visual communication media.

5. Super-structed organizations: organizations are restructured according to the laws of game design, neuroscience and happiness psychology, forming new management model.

6. Globally connected world: open space sets a new ethics of interaction.

It can be noted that the key drivers of development set as an objective imperative the lifelong learning principle. In accordance with the above directions, the researchers derive 10 key competencies that ensure the success of human self-realization in various fields:

1. Sense making. There will be a demand for innovative, creative thinking, unique ideas, «new meanings».

2. Computational thinking will be needed for big data interpreting and creating abstract models in the imagination.

3. Social intelligence, as the ability to effectively interact and build communication with other people based on developed emotional intelligence.

4. Novel and adaptive thinking, as the ability to find creative solutions to non-standard tasks and respond to permanent situational changes. In Russian Federation a separate direction in the higher education system is developing. It's called the theory and practice of innovation management, pedagogical innovation.

5. New media literacy. When the information becomes too much, there is a need for critical thinking, analysis skills and creating new content with visual dominant.

6. Cross-cultural competency, as the ability not only to interact with representatives of other cultures, but also to understand the characteristics of different cultures and to cultivate a tolerant attitude to them. It is important to understand that cross-cultural literacy is required not only for travel or work abroad, but also will be necessary for almost everyone who will be part of the large planetary super-structural organizations.

7. Transdisciplinarity. Solving modern practical problems requires competence in various subject areas

8. Design mindset or creative thinking, the ability to transform reality in accordance with the desired result.

9. Virtual collaboration. Working in super-structural organizations will allow companies to combine employees located in different countries and continents to solve similar problems.

10. Cognitive load management as the ability to cope with the flow of information, differentiate tasks, plan activities and reduce cognitive load through specially designed techniques (Luksha, Ninenko, Loshkareva, Smagin, Sudakov, 2017).

Systematizing the different researches' results, the author attempted to classify the key trends and future skills, and a number of other factors that affect the modern education system.

The education system in Russia is developing under the influence of the requirements of the Federal state educational standard (FSES), social demand from parents (legal representatives) and students themselves, who have expectations different from the characteristic expectations of previous generations. Large companies also have the requirements for the competence of graduates

Scheme 1 shows three groups of key trends or « drivers of change» among the factors influencing the modern education system:

1. Social trends. The age and sex composition of the working-age population is changing. The proportion of workers aged 65 and above is increasing. The data are mixed among young people. Some of them tend to start building their careers earlier, take an active part in government projects, develop as volunteers, looking for business connections. Others, in a situation of variability and instability, do not seek to start working.

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Media ecology as a special science studies special types of communication (not only the subjects' interaction, but also the communication component of objects and environments).

2. Technological trends. There is a process of wide automation and robotization, which raises issues about the man' place in the world of machines and the «new» interaction ethics with the systems of «artificial intelligence».

3. Geopolitical trends reflect the current desire to create open systems and raise the range of problems associated with cross-culture, mobility, world corporations' work.

All these processes are influenced by the General mega-trend - acceleration. In an attempt to answer the question of what skills will help to become successful, the researchers offer a set of key competencies that, in their opinion, will solve the problems of mobility, flexibility and adaptability, which can also be summarized and lead to a single scheme (Scheme 2).

The need to ensure the country competitiveness on the international scene poses an obvious problem of the human capital formation, which has all the above characteristics and such competencies that would allow it to adapt to new requirements in the future.

The content of the report made at the 37th session of The United Nations General Conference of Sustainable Development «Medium–term strategy: 2014-2021» emphasizes the need for cooperation and achieving synergies in the joint scientists' research and overcome isolation and programs' fragmentation ("Medium-term strategy: 2014-2021", 2014). An interesting position is the priority of staff rotation, specialists' decentralization and focus on the regions' needs. In Russia mechanisms of personnel rotation and updating of teams, creation of network communities are being implemented. The motivation for constant improvement and creativity makes the «effective employment contract», which establishes incentives and criteria for the quality of work.

A major step towards international cooperation in improving the education systems and shaping the image of the future was the research by international company the Boston Consulting Group (BCG), which also includes Russian analysts. The company conducted large-scale interviews with representatives of top management of the world's largest companies, as well as Russian employers. One of the research directions was to identify employers' expectations regarding future employees and their requirements in the context of priority areas of the companies' development. The starting point is a gradual orientation to the «knowledge economy», where people with high cognitive abilities, developed abstract and design thinking, the ability to act in conditions of constant change both working independently and in working groups can successfully act. At the same time, Russia has a low share of employment in high-tech industries, which is due to the total lag the education system from the real practical problems (Pellegrino, Hilton, 2012).

Realizing the importance of high educational results for the prosperity of the country, Russia starts to discuss new long-term strategy of education development, determining the mission, key priorities and directions. For the first time, the development of the Strategy was entrusted not only to experts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, but also to "practitioners", those people who daily solve the urgent problems of training and education – teachers and principals, as well as parties directly interested in the level of training of future specialists - potential employers, large companies, businessmen.

Planning Russia's socio-economic development strategy in 2024-2035, the Higher School of Economics - National Research University and the center for strategic research presented a report on 12 solutions for new education, understanding that the education sector will become the backbone of the future technological market ("12 solutions for new education", 2018).

«According to the Global Human Capital report – 2017 (Stefanova Ratcheva, Riordan, Takahashi, Thompson, Toscani, Vijay, … 2017), Russia has a very high 4th place in the world in terms of human capital (measured mainly through the coverage rates for different levels of formal education), but only 42-e a place in the parameters of the real use of skills and involvement in lifelong learning. At the same time, Russia occupies 89th place in the world in such important indicator for economic growth as «availability of qualified specialists». The real impact of formally high education level on economic growth and its sustainability is very small. The reason is seen in the permanent lack of funding, so the system can exist, but not develop.

In a Message on March 1, 2018, the President of Russian Federation announced the need to increase funding for the education system. «All the proposed scenarios of financing the education system development suggest the digital

transformation of education and the widespread use of public-private partnership (hereinafter – PPP). There is practically no alternative to these tools: the results similar to digital education can be obtained on a traditional basis only by doubling the education budget to 7% of GDP. In turn, the PPP will allow to "move" part of the budget expenditures for the period 2024-2030 and to get the modern infrastructure of schools in 2020-2022.

In Russia, there is also a problem as the lack of a system for identifying and supporting talents in the field of high technology, design and sciences from non-school program. Less than 40% of high school graduates, 20% of college graduates and 50% of University graduates had experience of project activities and social practice».

Researchers offer 12 projects, which will help to solve these problems.

1. Support for early development by patronage care for 0-3 children (persons with disabilities up to 6 years). The work of specialists, based on early detection and correction of development risks, will reduce the percentage of children with a low degree of readiness to study at school.

2. «School of the digital age» includes new digital educational development and methodical complexes, which provide individualization, objectification of the achievements assessment and reducing non-pedagogical load; educational games and simulators' implementation.

3. The modern material education infrastructure is the implementation of the environmental approach in education. The school becomes an educational, cultural and sports center for children and adults.

4. Equal educational opportunities and success of everyone: preparation for school programs for preschool age children; targeted assistance to low-income families; reduction of inequality of educational opportunities

5. New technological education in school and secondary vocational education: the educational programs content modernization; creation of workshops, network forms of education, the creation of youth innovative and technical creativity centers and their integration, new forms of assessment.

6. Development and support talents: specialized high-tech camps and schools; grant and scholarship support.

7. The lifelong learning system launch.

8. Universities as centers of innovation in regions: specialists decentralization, regions financing, support of innovative development.

9. Fundamental research in higher education, global universities, the Russian Academy of Sciences: the universities conclusion to the international arena and the international projects implementation, support graduate students.

10. Increasing global competitiveness through the export of professional education: the development of international exchange programs for undergraduates and graduate students; open educational platforms creation; modern educational environment formation.

11. Modern content of school education: updating the content of educational programs and methods.

12. Personnel for the development of education: updating the principles of human resources development.

These projects are certainly within the competence of the Russian Federation Government. However, it is possible to set the task of finding practical mechanisms and conditions for projects implementation to the teachers.

At the moment, a wide public discussion on the strategy of Moscow education development for the period up to 2025, which was called «Strategy 2025», has been initiated in Moscow. As a result of a number of strategic sessions in Moscow schools, four main development directions were formulated and proposed to the General public, which can become the basis of the strategy of education development in Russia:

1. System of personalized educational trajectories in open groups. It is an opportunity to make flexible curricula based on the needs and interests of each student, as well as to give the opportunity to engage in subject training at various sites of the city (schools, resource centers, universities, colleges, youth creativity centers, etc.).

2. Distributed assessment in the system of talents – assessment of students ' achievements in various fields with subsequent offset as an incentive to continuous multi-faceted development. It can be subject and metasubject Olympiads and competitions, achievements in the field of sports, culture and art. All so-called «digital footprints» will be the components of a single open portfolio. Such system removes the school's monopoly on the graduate evaluation.

3. City as school. Moscow is a space of unlimited opportunities for the development of talents, and the teacher - navigator in it. It is important to note that the programs proposed by the city, which are implemented in organizations of different levels and directions, can and should be integrated into the class-oriented system. The school becomes a basic organization for attaching students on a territorial basis and storing their personal documents.

4. «Urban school» - the principle of a single map of micro-district resources existence, which allows you to get quality education in all directions without need for long daily trips.

These central ideas are supplemented, transformed and developed by pedagogical collectives. Here are the main proposals made during the discussions, and recorded in the articles and reporting documents.

The future of education is seen in the large-scale cooperation of various organizations to create an open educational environment, to expand students ' ideas about different professional environments, life and work in modern society. Network partnership, as a form of such interaction of organizations, creates conditions for joint activities, joint project management, development of human, innovative, technical, material potential.

Together with industrial organizations, business structures, educational institutions, it is possible to build a system of advanced offers based on the target model of future competencies, to include employers in the system of early professional training. An interesting practice is the conclusion of deferred employment contracts with a delayed start date. Employers offer students to solve cases. Technology parks and universities provide technical support to implement project solutions. The best intellectual solutions are rewarded, and children who have shown special talent are invited to the enterprise. Under the terms of this agreement, the child undertakes to enter the University in the chosen specialty, and the company guarantees him practices' organization and subsequent employment, but with a number of conditions for the quality of knowledge and competencies.

For the system's work, the following aspects need to be introduced: single open score-rating system for educational and non-educational results evaluation; offsetting results from different organizations. All data should be entered in the student's virtual record book, open to employers and universities.

On the basis of Moscow state school № 1028 level system of the Federal standard requirements implementation through a three-stage system of networking is tested.

The interests and opinions of all stakeholders are constantly monitored. These parties are the pedagogical community, parents, students, employers (figure 3).

At the same time, educational activities are being carried out, which include a specially organized lecture for the parent community not only with comprehensive information about the changes that are taking place in the region in the context of education and subsequent employment, but also answers to all questions. For students organized meetings with representatives of various professions (project «100 questions to a professional»), universities make interactive role playing games and quests about professions. The pedagogical community also needs constant updating of its knowledge. Maximum clarity and openness is also achieved through information support, which is provided by timely notification of upcoming events, sending lecture materials, «feedback» publication after the events. The described mechanisms can be represented in figure 3.

The result of the regular work is the competence maps and maps of partners' resource capabilities, which allow to choose the conditions for any competencies development. Let us consider the "classical" profiles' example: physical and mathematical, chemical and biological profiles.

By analyzing the programs of primary vocational education and the first stage of higher professional education, as well as based on the Federal standard requirements, you can make a detailed list of competencies that are formed in colleges and universities during the first year. The second source of material for competence maps is the interview partners about 'portrait of the University entrant', as well as companies-employers about changes and new activities.

The second aspect of the analysis and the second component of competence maps is the type of educational event, within which one or another competence can be formed to a greater or lesser extent. By comparing the capabilities of partners, as well as significant competencies for each profile, you can build a trajectory of participation in educational events for them. Thus, digital competence, team time-management and communication competence are most effectively formed in the process of «hackathons» and «designathons». The deepening of subject skills and knowledge implementing with participation in the work in the university fabrication factory. If we talk about the chemical and biological profile, the students who choose this profile in order to prepare for admission to the medical University, can get the required skills and initial professional knowledge in the process of volunteering within the all-Russian movement «Volunteers-physicians», working in the city clinics. The map of partners' resource opportunities allows making the detailed list of ways of receiving new knowledge, abilities and skills and also formation of competences in specific types of activity.

The level system of work organization and creation the environmental conditions for obtaining practical experience in the primary classes contribute to implementation of the Federal standards requirements (figure 4). The processes in urban resource centers are adapted for similar events, actions, projects at school. One of these areas of work is the school volunteer center, which contains the same areas of work that are available to urban volunteers who have personal volunteer books and take part in urban projects. Work in the school volunteer center is available to students from 4th grade (9-11 years old). Upon reaching the age of 14, students receive city personal volunteer books.

As part of the volunteer center, students get acquainted with the world of professions. Starting from the 8th grade (in some projects – from the 7th grade) students are involved in such new formats of interaction as hackathon, designathon, work in fabrication laboratory, etc. At the same time, potential employers offer real production tasks, watching the progress of the solution searching. The most successful can be invited by these companies for internships and other events, as well as receive directions to the target admission to the profile University. In addition, participants gain new knowledge, practical experience, as well as understanding of the specifics of activities in a particular professional area.

It is assumed that by the end of the 9th grade graduates will form an idea of the possible trajectories of building future educational and professional activities, one of the options of which is to study in specialized classes. Scheme 5 shows the system of interaction at the indicated levels. To satisfy the demands in career guidance, volunteer activities, primary professionalization, a system of relationships is organized through the special projects and programs implementation.

An example of three-way interaction is the interaction of Moscow state school № 1028, National University of Science and Technology «MISIS» and Aviation complex named after S.V. Ilyushin (provides career guidance for students to carry out targeted recruitment in the universities in the appropriate direction). NUST MISIS provides ample opportunities to deepen their knowledge in the laboratories of Fab lab, educates teachers who teach specialized disciplines and elective courses to ensure training of applicants that meets the requirements of the employer.

The diagram 6 shows another example of the development trajectory organization for students of information-technology profile. The first «profile» event is participation in the stages of the all-Russian and Moscow schoolchildren Olympiad and mentors assignment to prepare for Junior Skills Russia and World Skills Championships. The students are then distributed to the partner universities. Short courses are specially organized by the partners for training. The head teacher selects the events corresponding to the profile. By the end of the year, a team of students with the highest motivation is formed, which continues its development in project activities (Maker Fire Moscow, Designathon). At the end of the year there is a summing up of the work and the formation of the plan-program for the next academic year.

As a result, the following requirements of the standard are implemented:

1. Creation of special conditions. Network partners under the agreement on scientific and methodological cooperation offer to use their resource capabilities, both in terms of equipment and in terms of laboratory and other specialized facilities, which can significantly expand the subject and metasubject skills, as well as to form an idea of the working and scientific activities.

2. Self-organization and planning. The implementation of own projects, actions and programs, including voluntary ones, contributes to the development self-organization skills, effective time management and planning of its activities and the project team activities.

3. Problem solving and goal setting in group and individual work and skills of applying the knowledge in practice.

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4. Orientation in the scientific and professional world. Staying in specialized laboratories, resource centers and production allows you to get acquainted with the real problems that are solved by professionals in various fields.

5. The primary professionalization. Existing state projects allow students to obtain primary professional knowledge and skills.

6. Scientific creativity. A large number of scientific research and projects competitions for students allow making a contribution to their personal portfolio, to receive a grant, to attract the attention of a potential employer and to build a unique trajectory of professional development.

7. Social portrait of a graduate and a citizen.

These skills groups formation with network interaction is a managed process. We can identified the following aspects:

1. Determination the map of resource opportunities that are formed on the basis of the school resource capabilities, opportunities and proposed programs from partner organizations, content infrastructure of the district, urban educational projects and programs and their classification by areas (high technology, medicine and health, biology and chemistry, psychology and pedagogy, patriotic education, etc.).

 2. Definition of target groups: students with special needs (gifted and persons with disabilities), students from specialized and pre-profile classes; students with high abilities and interest in certain types of educational activities.

3. Establish a process for working with each target group.

4. Collection of statistical data on the results of the work and the formation of interrelated databases.

Let us dwell on the key stages of work with target groups of students.

1. Professional testing and analysis of personal characteristics with the involvement of school psychological service and partner organizations.

2. Formation the individualized cloud of professions.

3. Discussion of an individual request and search for optimal solutions that satisfy the development in the chosen direction.

4. Resources selection on the basis of existing maps of resource opportunities.

5. Building a trajectory for a certain period in accordance with the task.

6. Tutor support and navigation in the urban environment.

7. Joint analysis of results and trajectory correction.

Content aspect of work with some categories of students:

«profiled tests»;

help in choice of field of study in 8th and 9th grades and help in changing the profile in 10-11th grades;

selection of additional education resources (including outside school);

profile events selection;

mentoring, scientific guidance;

preparation and participation for educational events;

psychological support.

It is also important to work with 7-11th grades and parents to get acquainted with the following areas:

excursion work - Universities, Colleges, employers, trades and etc;

educational forum;

city event navigation;

projects of Moscow state school № 1028 - «Parents' club», «100 questions to the professional», «Day of profile school»

professional volunteering («Volunteers-physicians», etc.)

Tables of key events in the areas help to visually trace what events have a decisive influence on the various skills formation. You can create individual trajectories for groups or individual students using the tables (table 1).

The tables allow to structure the «annual event plan» of various partner organizations, as well as city structures and to rank these events depending on the impact on the formation of individual competencies (table 1, the color of the cell reflects this characteristic). The tables are used in the preparation of the annual plan of activities, planning work with specialized classes, can be used by administrative staff, subject teachers, class teachers.

Within the framework of the development of network partnership, another project is being implemented at the School - «Day of profile school». «Day of profile school» opens the entrance to all interested residents of the district - students and their parents. Approximate age of participants: school students aged 13-18 (7-11th grades).

The purpose of this event is to promote the students' career guidance and formation the ideas about different professions, forecasts about the future professions. All School's partners are invited to the «Day of profile school».

There are three possible events directions or the «Day of profile school»:

1. Information and consultation platforms: each educational institution has the right to bring visual aids to present its educational programs and training areas, subject Olympiads and etc.

2. Practical master classes related to different professions.

3. Educational lectures for parents, especially about the modern education system.

The difference of this event is the system of motivation for students developed in School. Each participant receives a «labor book» with the event's program. If the student has successfully passed the master class, he gets a special sticker, called «quality mark». Getting 5 marks gives the opportunity to get the assessment «excellent» to any subject on the student's choice, so it is important students learn something new for themselves attending master-classes, lectures or trainings.

As a rule, the declared master-classes are repeated during the day with a certain time interval. In order to avoid time mismatch, usually the duration for all master classes is 30 minutes, and they are held in parallel.

Other projects implemented within the School are also aimed to the future skills formation. Thus, at present, a project of intercultural interaction is being implemented and designed to solve some problems of learning a foreign language in a secondary school, as well as to form students' motivation to study it. This project involves the creation of conditions for intercultural communication with a native speaker through the organization of a teleconference. School foreign partners, high level students could be a «native speaker». The second subject of communication is 10-11th grades student, 8-9th grades motivated children, capable and willing to practice communication skills, as well as 4-7th grades, showing high ability to master a foreign language and participating the project as listeners or subjects of communication in order to support and develop interest in the subject as a whole.

The meta-substantive results of the project include: working with large amounts of information skills, digital literacy development and the ability to work in an information environment, planning activities and organization of educational cooperation, results presentation. As for personal results, we can note the improvement of the following skills: self-development, formation of educational motivation and cognitive interest, the ability to work in a team, effective time management, setting goals and achieving them, as well as tolerance towards representatives of their own and foreign cultures.

To implement the Distributed assessment in the system of talents strategy Moscow state school № 1028 introduced a system of student's record-books and score-rating system of achievements accounting and evaluation. The system doesn't involve the transition to the rating plan in assessing the academic results and doesn't replacing the traditional 5-point assessment system. Student's record book - a document reflecting his academic performance, educational achievements, participation in social, sports, cultural, creative, volunteer and other activities in the form of rating. Record book allows you

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to increase motivation for the regular work, stimulates cognitive activity, makes an element of competition, allows you to make decisions on various encouragement forms.

The structure of the record book: the title page; subject results; additional education; research and project work; performances and competitive work; cultural and creative activities; volunteering and social practice; minor Academy of Sciences; excursion and educational activities; the final evaluation of the activities.

The projects «School Cup» and «Class Cup» are tested as the system of motivation and encouragement for high achievements element. The school Cup in the team competition is awarded to the class that scored the highest rating score on the sum of the rating points of all students in the class. The school Cup in the individual competition is awarded to the student who scored the highest personal rating score in the school. Class Cup is awarded to the student who scored the highest personal rating score in the class. The appendix to the Cup is a certificate indicating the final score. Penalty points are awarded to students for violations of the Charter of the school: disciplinary violations, appearance that does not comply with the Charter.

The modern education system has many difficulties. This is due to the requirements of the participants of educational relations, the increasing requirements of reality, includes robotics, automation, the disappearance of old professions and the emergence of new professions and entire groups of specialties. There are issues not only of interpersonal interaction, but also of interaction with «smart machines and systems». Experiencing the influence of global trends, the education system should make timely changes that would provide both a level of fundamental training and other tumors that give graduates the opportunity to find their place in the «new complex world». The space of a modern metropolis contains unlimited resources that can be used in the educational process under the guidance of a competent tutor.

Realizing the importance of human capital for the competitiveness of the country, Russian Federation has initiated the wide discussion process of the innovative development educational strategy, where the main role plays the opinion of the «practitioners» - teachers, principals, employers, business structures. Based on international studies it becomes possible to form maps of future skills, change the content in educational programs and curricula, use new formats of education. The emphasis is on the network interaction with partners, joint creation of programs. Education is becoming open and accessible.

Moscow state school № 1028 practical experience in the formation of graduates' future skills shows a positive presented projects result. There is a high interest of students to new activities, the development of modern technologies, high adaptation to new forms of work. There is an active inclusion of students in the process of drawing up flexible individual training plans, management decisions, school self-government. The experience gained during the implementation of projects can be supplemented with new ideas and adjusted depending on the conditions of the educational organization and further development needs.

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Figure 1: Factors affecting the modern education system
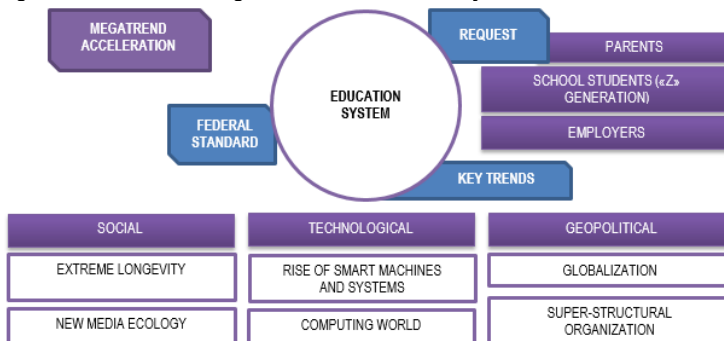
Figure 2: Groups of key competencies of the XXI century («future skills»)

Figure 3: Main directions of work in the organization of network interaction system in the school complex

KEY DIRECTIONS OF WORK

METHODOLOGICAL SUPPORT	ENLIGHTENMENT	INFORMATION SUPPORT
RESOURCE MAPS	STUDENTS	OFFICIAL SITE
EDUCATION	PARENTS	SOCIAL NETWORK
EVENT CARD	TEACHER	DISTRIBUTION

UNIVERSITIES | STUDENTS

EMPLOYERS | PARENTS

MONITORING

SOCIAL PARTNERS | RESOURCE CENTER

EMPLOYERS | UNIVERSITIES

in terms of social inquiry

in terms of resources
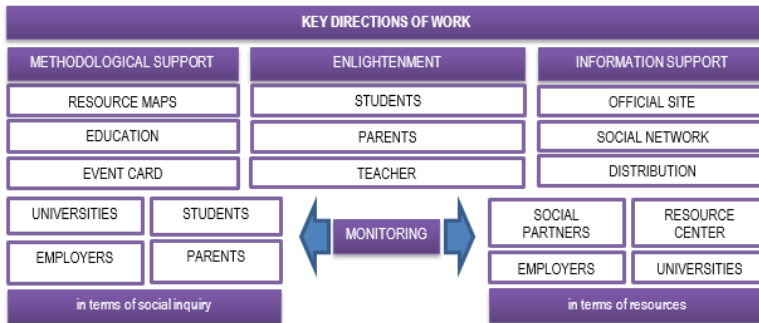
Figure 4: Level system for creating conditions for implementation of GEF requirements

SCHOOL

UNIVERSITY RESOURCE CENTER

RESOURCE CENTER EMPLOYERS

UNIVERSITY

LEVEL I (4-7TH GRADES): COMMITMENT TO IMPORTANT SOCIAL AND WORK ACTIVITIES

LEVEL II (8TH GRADES) PROFESSIONAL SAMPLE (URBAN VOLUNTEERING AND FAMILIARITY WITH THE PROFESSION)

LEVEL III (9-11TH GRADES): SOLUTION OF PRACTICAL

SCHOOL VOLUNTEER CENTER

CITY OF EDUCATION
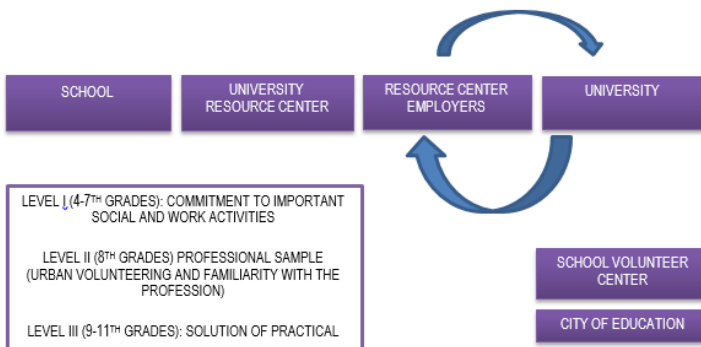
Figure 5: System interaction network of partners, projects and programs in Moscow state school № 1028

THE CAREER GUIDANCE SYSTEM

VOLUNTEER CENTRE

THE SECTION «PROFESSIONAL VOLUNTEERING»

THE WORK OF THE SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS IN DIRECTIONS

WORK WITH THE SCHOOL OCCUPATIONS IN THE VOLUNTEERS ACTIVITIES

NETWORK INTERACTION

THE SECTOR OF SOCIAL DESIGN «CHANGE!»

UNIVERSITY

EMPLOYER

RESOURCE CENTERS

SOCIAL PARTNERS

SCHOOL. COLLEGE

PROJECT ACTIVITY

PROFILE EDUCATION

PROJECT WORKS COMPETITIONS

MATH VERTICAL PROJECT MEDICAL, ENGINEERING, ACADEMIC, SPORT CLASS AT THE MOSCOW SCHOOL

Table 1: Urban educational opportunities in the formation of the «future skills»

PROFILE	FUTURE SKILLS			«THE PROFILE RESOURCE»
Socio-economic profile				Project of intercultural communication with foreign partners
				«School of human rights defenders» project
				Thematic competitions in the universities
Chemical and biological profile				Volunteer centre
				Training in special laboratories (engineering, medical class)
				«Learning without borders» project
Profile of information technology («mathematics-Informatics»)				International competition of children's engineering teams
				Thematic programs of pre-professional training in universities and colleges-partners (including training for Junior skills, «Ready for life, study and work» project)
				City projects («Mathematical vertical»)
				Training in special laboratories (engineering, medical class)
Universal profile				Lessons in specialized laboratories, centers of youth scientific creativity
				«Proectoriya», «Factories for children»

Developing Pupils' Language in Primary School Based on Technology

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the level of language difficulties for children in primary school and to open teachers to use virtual methods in teaching through technology. The participants in this study were 122 Romanian teachers with different levels of experience. The method used was a questionnaire created by ourselves to which we applied the Cronbach alpha index to measure the fidelity of each item. The questionnaire aimed at identifying the sources of speech difficulties, teaching methods used by teachers, and teachers' perceptions about the use of technology and its effectiveness in relieving language difficulties. The results of this research were introduced into statistical interpretation programs to confirm the hypotheses, the data obtained confirmed the use of teaching methods by teachers and their opening to the combination of technology in didactic activity.

Keywords: language, technology, digital learning, virtual reality

Introduction

Theoretical foundation

In the new era of information technology, thinking and communication are crucial for students to master world class knowledge and contribute towards the building of a modern and progressive society. Pupils, developing their communication skills, can have personal and professional achievements; can become successful people; can shine in social life; can reach emotional, social and economic maturity (Ngang, Nair, Prachak, 2014).

The development of language is closely related to the child's early relationships and experiences (Van Scoter, 2008). The importance of playing at an early age and the familiarization of children with everything that involves digital technology, these games being the one that gives the uniqueness of building reading and writing skills for each child (Toki, Pange, 2010). Using speech technology contributes to building educational environments, improving the quality of speech therapy, so digital technology and resources can be considered tools for change and innovation in speech therapy. (Tezci, 2009). Massaro and Light (2004) helped to improve language articulation by using a computer-animated speaker (Baldi). Another example is SpeechKit, a multimedia program that can be used by speech therapists to support people with associated communication difficulties (Calder, 2008)

An important aspect for the efficiency of speech therapy is the use of intelligent diagnostics and therapies, a viable alternative to traditional approaches and aimed at increasing the efficiency of speech therapy (Popovici, Buică and Velican, 2010). The language as a vital part of children's development provides opportunities for learning, for communicating and building relationships with others as well as for enabling children to make sense of the world around them (Brock, Rankin, 2008). It is well recognized that interacting with more qualified speakers, providing a rich home and school environment and engage in interactive book reading are important activities to support the development of the language preschool age children (Berk, 2013).

Research studies in language area for students indicate that technological development is very important and effective in learning the language. The technology, internet and some computer games could promote language positively if they are used correctly. Gee (1996) mentions sociocognitive approach gives language learners chances to interact in an authentic social context. Internet can provide sociocognitive approach through authentic tasks and project based studies. Online games can support and improve various vocabulary fields and also give valuable language feedback. (Pensky, 2002)

Technology makes a positive effect not only on social life but also on education. Since technology becomes increasingly prevalent within educational settings, there emerges an expectation for educators to utilize digital tools to support classroom teaching and learning. However, the rapidly changing technological innovations about the education make it harder for the teachers (Kingsley, 2007). Technology changes so fast that it is almost impossible to follow for the teachers. Nonetheless, although most teachers throughout the world still use chalk and blackboard, technological devices are used frequently in language developement classrooms all over the world to provide supplementary practice in the language development. The digital society we live in, also referred to as the information society, is driven by information and communication technologies which allow people to produce and share data unboundedly (Webster, 2006 in Panisoara et al., 2017).

Virtual learning is an excellent method of targeting learners who are not able to participate the formal class sessions in an educational institution due to the priorities of work, home, or some regulation limitations. However, distance education has also another aspect which is emerging in new colleges where education authorities encounter shortage of school members for offering specialized courses. (Bidaki, Semnani, 2013)

The definition ,,virtual reality'' nowadays is used very actively not only in the sphere of computer techniques as by representatives of different fields of man's vital activity. The process of training mainly seems to be virtual and may be apprehended like interaction of virtual spaces, and people in this case fulfill a function of bearers or like a process of coping and appropriating strange virtual spaces. The role of virtual reality in professional activity of a teacher of technology is analyzed through relativity of professional activity space as a main sign, distinguishing it from space and it displaying in functional, valuable and emotional spheres. (Akhmetov, Faizrakhmanov, Faizrakhmanova, 2015)

Research Design

II.1. Purpose of the research:

Identifying the language difficulties of pupils in primary classes, and the methods used. by teachers to diminish them. Technology can provide many opportunities to achieve this goal.

II.2. Research objectives:

- Define the language difficulties encountered by teachers among the students and measure the impact on learning and socialization in schooling;

Find the best solutions, where digital resources can have a certain degree of efficiency;

Establish the role of teacher in preventing, identifying and remedying these difficulties.

II.3. Hypotheses

There is a high level of language difficulties encountered in pupils in primary classes.

Teachers in primary classes apply interactive teaching methods so that children's speech problems are ameliorated.

There is a high degree of teachers' openness to the use of technology in activities.

II.4. Research Method: Several specialists have built a questionnaire in a launched survey among teachers with different level of experience in teaching and speech development.

II.5. The sample consisted of 122 teachers whose teaching experience ranges between 1-3 (57%), 3-5(33%) 10 (7%), and over 10 years (3%).
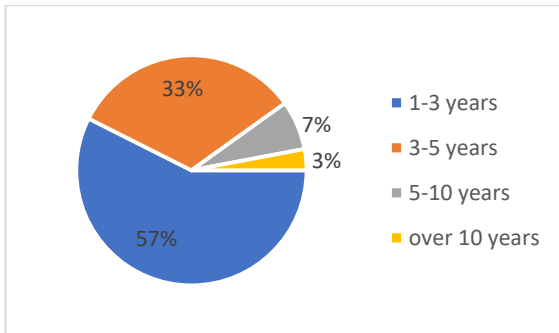
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Figure 1. Teaching experience

Results

The language development is important at any age. The age of small schooling is branded by a remarkable potential. If it is not activated, the losses are high and the recoveries are partial for all these children.

Typology, sources and frequency of speech difficulties -   Recently, teachers observed there has been an increase in the number of pupils who have communication difficulties. In our research, 90% noticed this reality, particularly visible at school, where pupils' performance is conditioned by language issues. Oral and written expression are significant aspects of school success, defined as a child's ability to meet school requirements. Language is also a practical tool, to which educators and parents must equally contribute. The following reasons refer to the fact that the specialists do not get involved enough (7%) and that the therapy, psychological or logopedic, has quite high costs in our country (10%). School absences does not appear to be a frequent source, showing the child's participation rate in school activities is high. This behavior can be specific to urban school. In some cases (4%), teachers do not show enough interest in language education or teaching-learning methods used actually in school are inadequate. A few teachers mentioned, in free answers, that students spend all their free time in front of the computer.
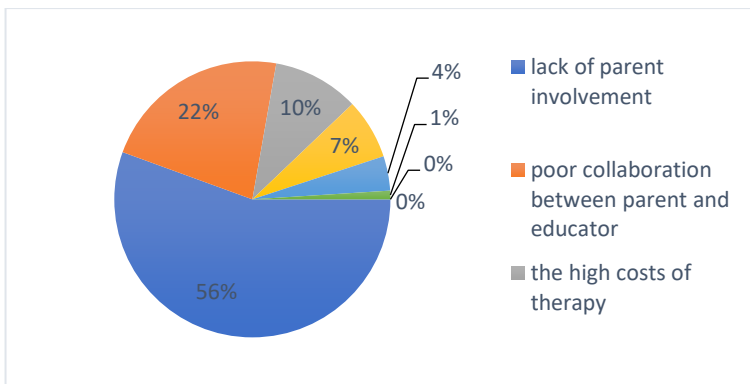

Figure 2. Language difficulties sources

For the majority of respondents, over 80%, many disorders were diagnosed by the specialist. In their grading, were mentioned (see figure 3):
1. substitutions, omissions, letter inversions;
2. alteration of different sound;
3. difficulties in reading-writing;
4. inadequate tempo, rhythm, fluency of language;
5. hearing impairment;

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6. unsettling the reading process;
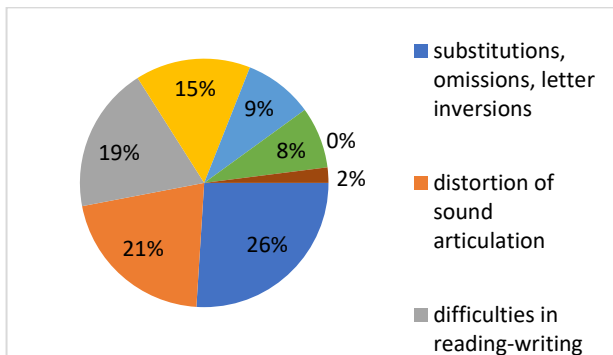7. articulatory immaturity such as dyslalia.

Figure 3. Diagnosed disorders

For those that mentioned a disorder (47, 7%), there is a specific form of manifestation, in a medium and easy stage. Only 4% of teachers have experienced a serious form of language disorder, accompanied by additional medical complications.

The language development methods - Usually, teachers practice in primary school a large number of methods and techniques, language training tools and forms, and textbooks for lessons design and application. Although the differences between these resources are small, the most useful methods for developing language at school are (see figure 4)
1. conversation-based methods - 21%
2. games- 18%
3. reading - 18%
4. methods of group communication -17%
5. creative methods – 15%
6. narrative stories 11%
7. reading-writing

The conversation techniques make the speech easy or difficult, in order to understand and fix words in individual vocabulary. Words must be integrated in into a system of relationships. Besides conversation, a popular form of developing pupils' language is the game. By content, language learning games can be ways: to form a correct pronunciation and phonematic hearing; for enhancing the active and passive vocabulary of children.

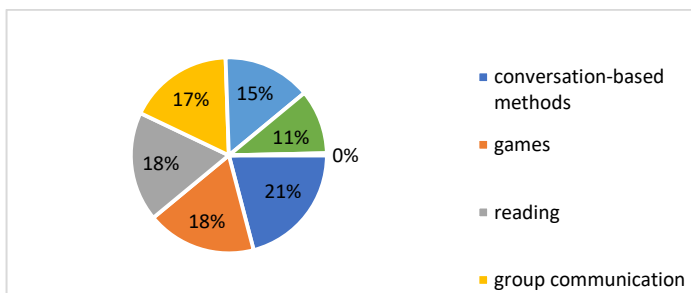Figure 4. Learning methods

The technology usage - In relation to the teachers' opinion on the efficiency of technology in language education, their answers reflect a moderate attitude. Over a half of respondents (51%) show a neutral attitude. 26% and 17% consider that technology would be very useful in language learning activities (see figure 5). The open attitude of the teaching staff for the

use of technology in educational instructive activity represents a an element that leads us to a high degree of progress and efficiency.

Group Statistics	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
questionnaire	122	46.0714	5.33831	.51853

Table 1. Descriptive statistics
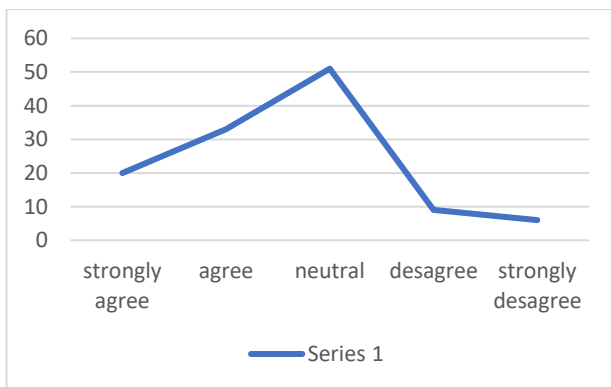
Figure 5. Teachers' opinion on the efficiency of technology

The questioned teachers were asked to give an example of an efficient virtual method for language development. As we see below (see figure 6), next methods have a various choice: interactive games (46%); audition (20%); digital lecture (16%); electronic exercises (10%); electronic testing (5%); virtual simulation (3%).
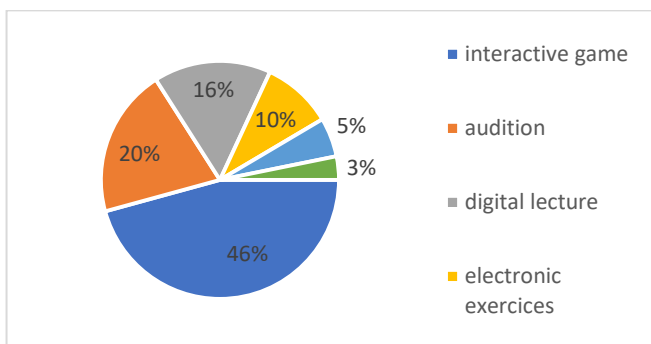
Figure 6. Virtual methods

Interactive games create a good motivation for communication and develop children's initiative, attention, imagination, and creativity. Digital language learning applications have an obviously adaptive potential: feedback immediate alert signaling, analysis and offering multiple alternatives, selective responses, possibilities to individualize the language development methods.

Conclusions

The teachers seem to be dissatisfied with communication with family in the case of children with language difficulties. School-family partnership is poorly represented in many situations. Technology is an appropriate means of helping to remediate some difficulties of speech, but this is not a unique, miraculous solution. The option for digital resources is at a neutral level. This is not a surprising conclusion, considering that Romanian teachers need many resources to use technology at its real potential. At this moment, there is a lack of resources. Speech difficulties are important aspects of student learning. They have a relationship of mutual conditioning. The teacher has the responsibility to create a good framework of communication situations, more or less formal, based on clear objectives, included in a coherent program. This also implies prevention, diagnosis and improvement. For this, technology can be an effective resource.

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Inclusive Education in Bangladesh: Digging Deeper into Educational Prospects of Children with Disabilities in Bangladesh

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Abstract

This paper explores multiple dimensions of inclusive education in Bangladesh's targeted schools. It compares the educational performance of children with disabilities to children without disabilities analysing their participation, retention and school completion rates. Through quantitative and qualitative analysis, it tries to explore the existing inclusive education practices at school level for quality and learning. The study uses community resource mapping, open-ended interviews, field observations, a quality assessment framework and literature review as the main research tools. The study found that at the primary level while significant number of children with disabilities enrol, their participation gradually decreases in the upper classes. In the targeted schools, enrolment of children with disabilities was at 35% in grade 1, which reduced to 31.5% in grade 2, further to 25% in grade 3 and to as low as 8.5% in grade 4, demonstrating a consistent decline in participation rates (σ±11.7). Thus it became clear that significant number of children with disabilities were unsuccessful to get promoted to the next grade or got dropped out every year from the schools. The study findings also suggest that despite the drop outs, teachers in the targeted schools found the enthusiasm and responsiveness of children with disabilities highly positive.

Keywords: inclusive education, children with disabilities, educational performance, quality education, learning environment

Introduction

Since Salamanca Declaration, globally there has been a major shift from segregated modes of education towards inclusion. The values of inclusive education would ensure welcoming environment in schools, free from the effects of negative forms of discrimination based on gender, culture, ethnicity, disability, religion or socio-economic backgrounds have gained growing recognition (UNESCO, 1994). However, it is still a long way to go before educationists worldwide can claim to have embedded inclusiveness systematically and consistently across the vast spectrum of education. It has been found that teachers in particular feel less confident and motivated to include children with disabilities in their teaching and pedagogical delivery (Forlin, C. et al., 2009). The importance and effectiveness of child centred, customized teaching-learning approaches are yet to be fully conceived and materialized.

In Bangladesh children with disabilities have traditionally been among the most marginalized group of children. The impact on their educational development is often severe and vastly hampers their growth potential. A recent study found that, of an estimated 1.6 million children with disabilities of primary school age, only 4% have access to education. In areas where there were disability-related interventions exist, 18% had this access. Of this group 48% were enrolled in formal education, 23% in privately run integrated schools, 15% in special education, 5% in inclusive education programs and 9% in various other types of education. It also found that the proportion of students with disabilities in school decreased with age, falling from 44% among children aged 6 to 10 to just 15% among adolescents aged 16 to 18 years, indicating high dropout rates (Directorate of Primary Education DPE, 2002).

Currently the number of children with special needs enrolled in DPE managed schools grew faster than the Government of Bangladesh sector program Primary Education Development Program II (PEDP II) targets for all types and in particular for

children with physical disabilities and eyesight problems. There was a striking 50% increase in the numbers of special needs children between 2005 and 2011. The enrolment trend gradually declined from 2012 and stands at 76,522 in 2014. The reason might be the teachers were not properly trained in recognizing the children with special needs before 2012 (DPE, 2015). However, it is not clear to what extent the trend indicated growing enrolment or simply better identification of students with disabilities. There is a need to continue to enhance regular data collection methods to ensure children with disabilities are counted in order to argue for appropriate resource allocation for inclusive education. Despite significant progress in access to primary education, 4 million school going age children including children with disabilities are still out of school in Bangladesh (BBS, 2014). This indicates that the ensuring Right to Education to all children is still a multi-fold challenge in the education system of Bangladesh.

Considering this context, education team of Save the Children in Bangladesh felt the need for an explorative research to assess the present educational status of children with disabilities in the targeted areas of an inclusive education project: Holistic approach towards Promotion of Inclusive Education(HOPE). It is being implementing in Belkuchi, Karimganj and Savar Upazilas of Sirajganj, Kishoreganj and Dhaka districts of Bangladesh respectively. The project is working with 45 government primary schools (15 per Upazila) as well as 6 Unions in these areas. The key objective of this project is to reduce the discrimination against the children with disabilities in the education system and improve quality of education for all children through inclusive education approaches. The research question was twofold:

what is the performance of children with disabilities in targeted schools in comparison to other children (Peers), particularly in terms of retention, participation, and completion, and

what are the existing inclusive education approaches and practices in the targeted school in terms of learning environment, materials and methodologies?

The Context of Inclusive Education

As per the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 the new target for all developing countries is to develop an equitable, inclusive and quality education system for all children by the year 2030 (UNDP, 2015). All countries throughout the world including Bangladesh are attempting to address the inequalities and barriers in access and quality of education through inclusive education reforms. Different international policy reform initiatives such as Education For All (EFA) 1990, the Salamanca Declaration (UNESCO, 1994), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (UN, 2008); the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities have influenced different national policies in Bangladesh, for instance, the National Plan of Action Phase II (NPA II) 2003-2015 (MoPME, 2003), National Education Policy 2010 (MoE, 2010) and interventions that include the Second Primary Education Development Program (PEDP 2), PEDP 3 in the primary education sector and the Teaching Quality Improvement (TQI-SEP) in the secondary education sector. Specifically, the National Education Policy 2010 (MoE, 2010) has made systematic attempts to integrate children with disabilities in the mainstream schools and conduct training for at least one teacher from each school on how to teach children with disabilities. These initiatives are some of the milestones of the Government of Bangladesh's intention to enact the principles of improving learning for all students.

In an inclusive education setting, it is very important to cherish learners' diversity recognizing their unique educational needs. It focuses both on the quantity and quality of the education system. Conceptually, inclusive education means improving whole school environment to ensure presence, participation and achievement of all children with an aim of achieving quality education for all learners (Ainscow, 2005). Many educationalists (e.g. Ainscow, 2005) opined that the broader objective of inclusive education is to achieve equity and social justice for all citizens in every aspect of life. Ainscow (2005) defines inclusive education as, *"The process of addressing barriers to the presence, participation and achievement of pupils in local neighbourhood schools"*. The guideline prepared by the UNESCO (2009) based on the International Conference on Education (ICE) 2008 described Inclusive Education as a *"process aimed to offering quality education for all while respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of the students and communities, eliminating all forms of discrimination" (p. 18).*

Hence, it is clear from reviewing different definitions of inclusive education that the values of inclusive education are to include all children into education in a meaningful way. It is also important to note that inclusion does not mean just enrolling children into schools; rather it demands full and equal participation as well as completion of a quality education cycle by all children. Long term policy reform initiatives need to be taken into account to understand how the policies promoted the

concept of inclusive education over the years. Based on the globally accepted concept of inclusive education, the Government of Bangladesh has developed the functional definition of inclusive education through the PEDP 3 documents which is as follows:

"Inclusive Education is an approach to improve the education system by limiting and removing barriers to learning and acknowledging individual children's needs and potential. The goal of this approach is to make a significant impact on the educational opportunities of those: who attend school but who for different reasons do not achieve adequately and those who are not attending school but who could attend if families, communities, schools and education systems were more responsive to their requirements" (Ahuja & Ibrahim, 2006, p. 6).

Save the Children has a strong policy position in this regard and defines inclusive education as "one dimension of a rights based quality education which emphasizes equity in access and participation, and responds positively to the individual learning needs and competencies of all children". Together with development community and other stakeholders, it actively works to ensure that every child, irrespective of gender, language, ability, religion, nationality or other characteristics, is supported to meaningfully participate and learn alongside his/her peers, and develop to his/her full potential' (SC, 2014). The success of an inclusive education intervention largely depends on teachers because they are to play the most crucial role in classroom practice (Jerlinder et al, 2010). A number of studies suggest that teachers also develop negative attitudes towards students with children with disabilities and they are less likely to accept any changes in their pedagogical practices (Barnyak & Paquette, 2010); Malak, 2013).

Shedding light on the broader exclusion context in Bangladesh, a major education player Campaign for Advancement of Mass & Popular Education (CAMPE)in 2011 reported that large percentage of children with disabilities are still out of mainstream education. The rate of enrolment among these children is very low to begin with and further compromised by lack of adaptive ability within the school environment, no or low scopes of personal assistance, absence of accessible transportation, inaccessible infrastructure and environment, negative attitude of the family, teachers and community. Most of the children with disabilities initially enrolled do not complete their primary education due to reasons like lack of public transportation, inaccessible transportation, absence of trained teachers, absence of accessible disability friendly toilet in schools, inaccessible school environment, negative attitude of parents, teachers and bullying by peer children and no or low implication of the existing policy related to education of children with disabilities. Research also show that specialized training for teaching students with learning disabilities can help educators and teachers feel more capable and become effective while teaching students with disabilities (Kosko & Wilkins, 2009). However, Munir and Islam (2005) reviewed the Bangladesh's primary level pre-service teacher training curriculum and reported that the curriculum lacks inclusive education related materials. Additionally, another evaluative study on the state of inclusive education in Bangladesh conducted by Ahuja and Ibrahim in 2006, reported that the pre-service teacher training program was not supportive enough for the primary school teachers to be confident and competent for inclusive classrooms.

For children with disabilities some special learning materials are required. Special needs learning materials include speech and language development, social and emotional skills, motor skills, sensory awareness, tactile awareness, visual discrimination, core skills and professional resources. In the mainstream schools these resources are not available to facilitate special need children and it makes the any learning very difficult and challenging (Kawser, U., Ahmed, M., Ahmed, M. 2016).

There have been few studies looking at the academic achievement of regular education students in an inclusive classroom setting with special education students. The overwhelming majority of the research is qualitative in nature and focused on successful instructional strategies for inclusive settings. Robert Scott Spence (2010) examined the effects of inclusion on the academic achievement of regular students. The academic performance of regular education students placed in an inclusive setting with children with disabilities was compared to the academic performance of regular education students not placed in an inclusive setting. No significant difference was found in the performance. Similarly Sermier Dessemontet R. Bless G. (2013) examined the impact of children including children with intellectual disability (ID) in general education classrooms with support on the academic achievement of their low-, average-, and high-achieving peers without disability and found that there are no significant differences in the progress of the low- average, or high-achieving pupils from classrooms with or without inclusion. In terms of educational achievement in inclusive settings, there is no significance difference in the academic performance of regular education students placed in an inclusive setting with children with disabilities compare to students who are in non-inclusive settings.

Materials and Methods

Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected, considered and analysed to explore the present scenario of educational progress of children with disabilities in Government Primary Schools (GPS) of 3 Upazila (Savar, Belkuchi and Karimganj) of 3 districts (Dhaka, Sirajganj and Kishoreganj). Community Resource Mapping (CRM), Parents Opinion Survey (POS), Semi-structured interview, Focus Group Discussions (FGD), literature review, and Quality Learning Environment (QLE) assessment tool have been conducted to collect data from different stakeholders. This study has been accompanied in the Save the Children HOPE project areas Belkuchi, Savar and Karimganj Upazila. Total 45 schools were selected, 15 GPS from each Upazila. In line with the aims of the study, 45 schools and their catchment areas were the population of this study where CRM have been drawn initially. As per CRM data a total of 400 parent's opinion survey was conducted to explore the present situation of children's educational rights.

To explore quality learning environment of schools a Quality Learning Environment (QLE) assessment has been done in 45 GPS. In basic education of the QLE, four guiding principles are generated that reflects the conditions under which children are most likely to thrive and learn. The guiding principles for QLE are:

Guiding Principle One: Save the Children – supported education programs meet the emotional and psychological needs of children.

Guiding Principle Two: Save the Children–supported programs are protective of children's physical wellbeing.

Guiding Principle Three: Save the Children – supported programs encourage and support active engagement for learners, child centred teaching, and improved learning outcomes of all the learners.

Guiding Principle Four: In Save the Children – supported education programs, parents and local communities are actively involved in planning, decision-making and actions to improve education.

In QLE Assessment tool according to the guideline there are different indicators which are measured by 4 rating scales. The following definitions have been followed for scoring:

Score	Description/Meaning
1 = Indicator is not at all achieved.	There is no evidence that any effort have been made to achieve the monitoring indicator
2 = Indicator is partially achieved	Some efforts to achieve the monitoring indicator are observed, although they are not enough to achieve the indicator. Some additional work is required to ensure the indicator to be achieved
3 = Indicator is achieved	There is consistent evidence that the monitoring indicator has successfully reached the learning environment
4 = Indicator is exceeded	There is direct and consistent evidence that level 3 has been achieved and that the indicator has exceeded education project/program level expectation or objectives. There is evidence that a variety of method is used to go beyond the minimum expectation set by the education project/program and ensures an exceptionally high/excellent level of quality during implementation
Not Applicable (NA)	NA used if the project or program activities do not specifically target the activities described by an item. For example, if the project does not deal with program refurbishment or construction, the data collector can score NA to items that do not deal with a program or learning site's physical environment.

However, to compare the learning outcomes of children with and without disabilities annual performance data has been collected from 15 schools (5 from each Upazila). In total 191 children were selected for data collection who are currently studying in grade one to four, learner performance measuring tools have been used to collect annual performance data of respective children. There were six schools (two schools from each Upazila) selected purposively to conduct FGDs and semi-structured interviews for triangulation of data. FGD was conducted with parents and students and semi-structured interviews were conducted with Upazila Education Officers, Assistant Upazila Education Officers, Head Teachers, Assistant

Teachers, Union Parishad Chairman/ members, Partner Organization Officials and School Management Committees (SMCs).

Results and Discussion

This section includes the data analysis and findings from quality learning environment assessment, learner's performance measurement, community resource mapping, parent's opinion survey and FDGs. Before presenting details findings a summary of demographic information is presented:

Demographic Information

The demographic information is derived from the Parents Opinion Survey data followed by Community Resource Mapping (CRM) findings. From three Upazilas, a total of 400 out of school children including children with disabilities were found through community resource mapping. Parent's opinion Survey was conducted with the parents of these 400 children. It is also analysed that 278 children are out of school and among them 112 are children with disabilities. On the other hand, in total 156 are dropped out from the schools which includes both children with and without disabilities. Most of the children are aged between 9 to 14 years and 63.5% are male. Among the respondents, 41.50% are aged between 26 to 35 years. Moreover, 64% of them are female, 96.25% are Muslim, 40.75% are illiterate, 31.75% have level of education below grade V and 94% have level of education below Grade X, 54% have family member between 5 to 7, 71% families monthly average income below 5000 Taka (below USD 2 per day).

Learning outcome of children with disabilities in comparison with other children (Peers)

Retention

Study revealed that, though it has been said by the school authority and education officials that almost 100% child are enrolled in that areas but still a big number of children are not in school. The national enrolment rate has the same success story of having 97.94% children enrolled in the education system. However, the completion rate is 80%, leaving 20% children out of school by grade five (DPE, 2012). It has been found that, among the children with disabilities (n=234) only 52% (n=122) children are now going to schools and almost 48% (n=112) children are being out of school (figure 1). Among the identified household, 234 children with disabilities have been observed considering their visible disability or impairment.

Figure 1: Enrolment and out of school scenario of children with disabilities.

PARTICIPATION

the Assistant Teachers of Selected Schools Argued that, "We Try to Engage Students as Much as Possible in the Lessons. However, It Was Not Always Possible to Make 100% Participation in the Class as the Number of Students Are Huge". Some of the Teachers Also Mentioned that They Try to Ask Individual Questions, Give Class Work and Evaluate the Note Book, Make Groups and Ask Questions to the Group or Group Leader to Present Sometimes Based on the Topic Etc. in Classroom Children Also Participate in Classroom Management and Co-Curricular Activities. While Giving the Information

About Students' Participation in School Development and Student Voice, the Assistant Head Teacher Uttered that, "Students Seems Involved in Organising the Cultural Program and Also in Class Leadership".

in Classroom Observation, It Was Found that Most of the Students Were Participating in the Lessons and Were Actively Engaged as Well as Teachers Were Found Very Positive and Following An Interactive Teaching Methodology Through Group Work. Assistant Teachers Mentioned that, Group Work Activities Engage All the Students Even Those Who Feel Shy to Talk and Participate Visibly. Besides Group Work, Teachers Also Do Lecture Method and Use Question-Answer Method to Assess the Students. Though They Believed that It is Not Possible to Measure All the Students Learning Outcome with Only Question-Answer Method, Still According to Them, Big Classroom Size Indirectly Forces Them to Do so. Based on the QLE Data (Figure 2) It Has Been Found that, a Number of Schools of Karimganj and Savar Upazilas, Except for Belkuchi Achieved the Indicator on "Learners' Participation During Development and Implementation of Teaching and Learning Activities". It Was Also Found that Few Schools from Both Savar and Karimganj Upazila Achieved the Indicator of "Participation During Teaching and Learning Activities for Children at Risk of Marginalization", Whereas Belkuchi Upazila Could Not Achieve this Indicator at All.
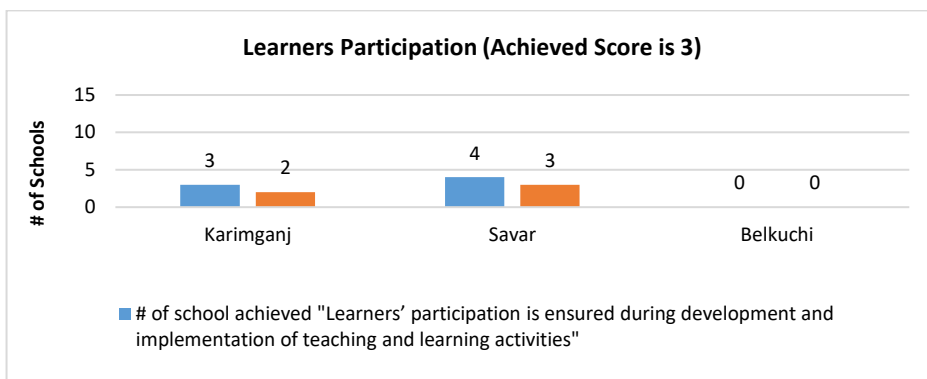

Figure 2: QLE Standard Indicator showing learners participation.

In Social and Cultural Activities, Though Children with Disabilities Who Are in School Get the Opportunities to Participate, but Their Level and Quality of Participation Remains Low. Data Revealed that, 61.44% Children with Disabilities Who Go to School, Participate to Some Extent in Sports and Cultural Activities Whereas Only 18.69% Out of School Children with Disabilities Participated in the Sports and Cultural Activities (Table 1).

Table 1: Participation of sports and cultural activity

Participating in sports and cultural activity		
Children type	Yes/No	Percentage
Child with disability in school	Yes	61.44%
	No	38.55%
Child with disability out of school	Yes	18.69%
	No	81.30%
Out of school children	Yes	34.45%
	No	65.54%

Similarly, only 10.84% children with disabilities who are in school can participate in social club activity, whereas only 0.9% children with disabilities from out of school children can participate in social/ club activity (Table 2).

Table 2: Participation of Social/club Activity

Participating in social/club activity		
Child Type	Yes/No	Percentage

Child with disability in school	Yes	13.11%
	No	86.89%
Child with disability out of school	Yes	1.7%
	No	98.03%
Out of school children	Yes	5.57%
	No	94.42%

A school going child also said that, "Soikot (name of child with disability) do not participate in the game with us. I think he should participate, but I fear, if he gets hurt".

Completion

In total 40 Children with disabilities were enrolled in 15 GPS. Among them 42.5% were girls' which is significantly less than boys (57.5%). It was also found that, among the enrolled children, 27.5% children had physical disability which is higher than others form of disability that are 22.5% children had speech impairment, 15.7% children had visual impairment, 7.5% had hearing impairment, 5% had psychosocial problems and rest 20% were in others categories.

In the school, it was observed that number of children with disabilities decreased gradually in the upper classes. Data showed that, total number of children with disabilities in the school were 35% in grade 1, 31.5% in grade 2, 25% in grade 3 and 8.5% in grade 4 (σ±11.7). So, it is clear that significant number of children with disabilities failed to be promoted next grade or dropped out every year from the schools (Figure 3). As per POS, 26% parents' shared the major reason for out of school was functional disability of the children, parent's unawareness, interested to enrol in Madrashas (Kaumi) and not accepted by the schools primarily. On the other hand, 19% parents thought that major reason of children dropped out is also similar and 8% parents addressed their economic problem as a major barriers of children drop out.
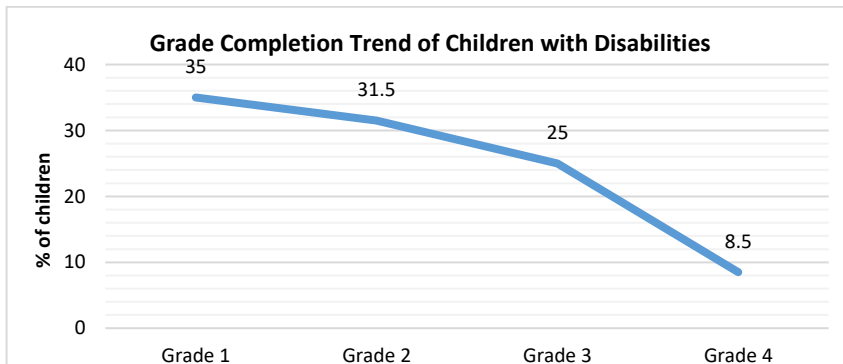

Figure-3: Grade Completion Trends of Children with disabilities.

In order to understand the performance of children with disabilities comparing to other students, grade wise performance and score in last year in Bangla, Math and English of grade 1 to 4 was analysed. It was found that performance of children without disabilities in these three subject is better than the performance of children with disabilities. Among three subjects, performance in English (σ±10.5) where 17.5% children with disabilities and 2.7% children without disabilities failed which is comparatively poor than Bangla (σ ±7.4) where 15% children with disabilities and 4.6% children without disabilities failed and in Maths (σ±6.5) 12.5% children with disabilities and 3.3% children without disabilities failed. In overall result, 15% children with disabilities were failed where only 4.6% children without disabilities failed (σ±7.4) (Figure 4). It was also found that for boys (with disability) enrolment rate is higher than girls (with disability). But girl's performance is better than boys. In the last year school final exam, overall 21.7% boys failed which is three times higher than girls (5.9%) (σ±11.1). We have found similar trends in the subjects of Bangla, English and Math; girl's performance is better than boys.

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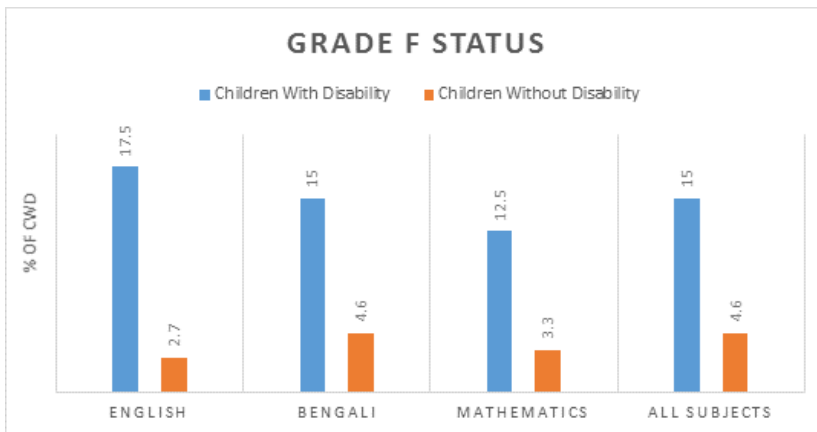January-April 2018
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Figure 4: Grade wise failed status of children with and without disabilities.

Inclusive Education Approach

Learning Environment

Considering QLE standard and inclusive, it has been analysed that the obtained score of 4 guiding principles for 45 GPS is 1.94 and 1.74 respectively out of 4 (σ±0.15). So its reveals that out of selected target schools, not a single school has achieved all guiding principles together i.e score is 3 to 4 (Table 3).

Table 3: Quality Learning Environment in the Schools

QLE Guiding Principle (Scoring: 3-4= Achieved, <3=Not Achieved)	QLE Standard Score (out of 4)	QLE Inclusive Score (out of 4)
Meet the emotional and psychological needs of learners	1.99	1.88
Protective of children's physical wellbeing	2.10	1.82
Encourage and support active engagement for learners, child cantered teaching, and improved learning outcomes of all learners	1.95	1.75
Parents and local communities are actively involved in planning, decision-making and action to improve education	1.79	1.53
Average Result	1.96	1.74

QLE data also shows that few schools of Karimganj and Savar Upazila have achieved (obtained score 3) the "accessible learning space" component of QLE inclusive indicator, while Belkuchi could not achieve it at all. On the other hand, very few schools of Savar and Belkuchi Upazila achieved the indicator on "accessible learning environment in terms of hours, locations and fees including children with disabilities" but Karimganj could not achieve it (Figure 5).
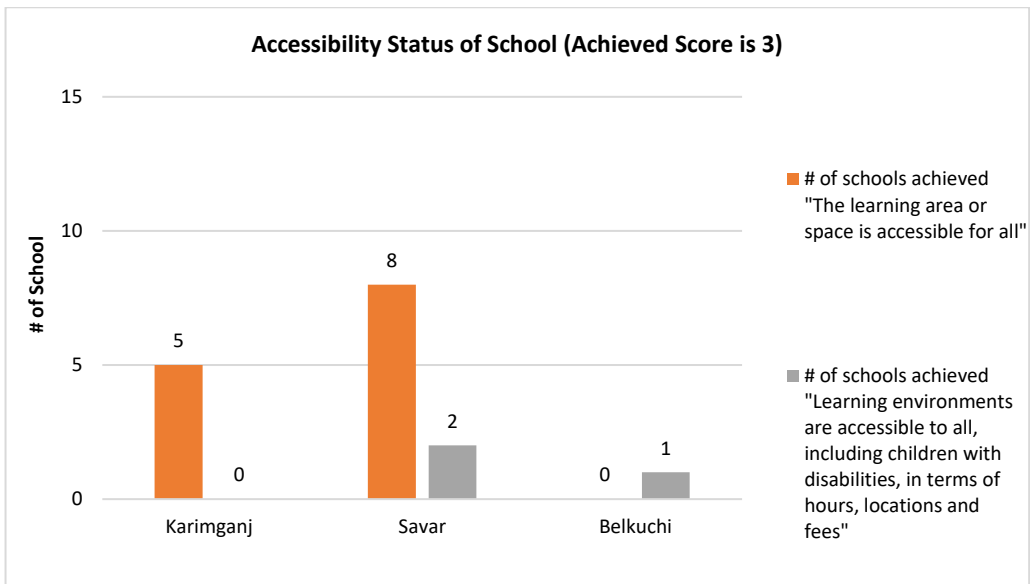
Figure 5: QLE Inclusive Indicator showing accessibility status of school.

Regarding QLE inclusive indicator, more number of schools (13) in Savar and Karimganj Upazila have achieved the indicator "Teachers are present in their classes" (μ=3) while Belkuchi Upazila having less (μ=2) than compared to that two Upazilas. However, in case of providing continuous support in relation with inclusive education to improve their practice in classroom, some schools of Savar, Belkuchi and Karimganj (only 27% out of 45 GPS) achieved the indicator. Moreover, about the indicator on "Teachers develop, follow and adapt lesson plans to the needs and abilities of learners in their classes in a systematic way" Belkuchi and Savar Upazila did not achieve the indicator (σ±0.7) at all whereas only one school of Karimganj Upazila achieved this indicator (Figure 6).
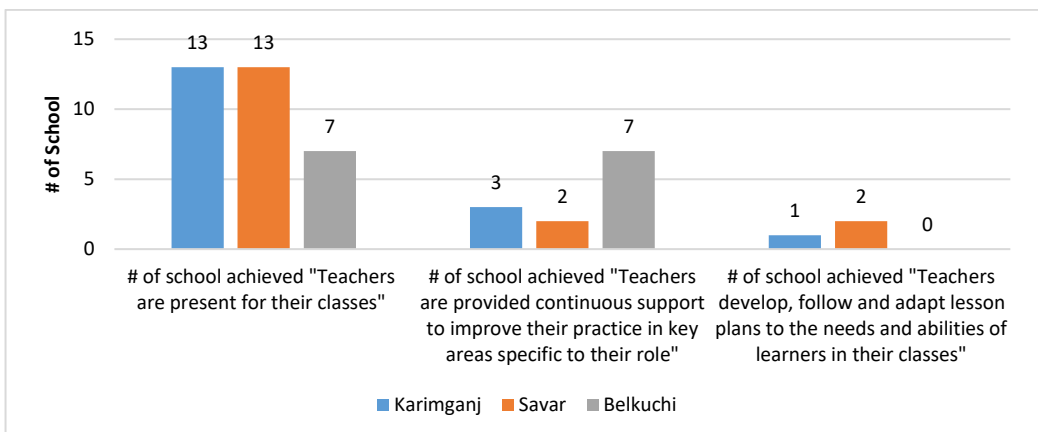
Figure 6: Teachers presence in classroom in an inclusive view.

However, observers found that despite not having lesson plans teachers were positive in engaging students in classroom activities. It has been observed that, most of the students were participating and actively engaged in classroom activities and teachers were found much positive about engaging students in activity based group work in some of the lessons. Assistant teachers echoed the same saying that, group work activity can engage all the students, even the ones who feel

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shy to converse with the teachers. Apart from group work, teachers also conduct sessions and assess the students using the lecture and the question-answer methods. Though teachers have accepted that it is not possible to measure the learning outcomes for all the students by using only the question-answer method, however, according to them, big classrooms and huge number of students forced them to do so. Teachers also accepted that, it is not possible to take proper care of the slow learners and weak performers at all the times.

Teaching Materials

It was found that, teachers use different methods of teaching and learning as well as various type of materials to make the lesson easy and interesting to the students. Teachers from all areas informed that they use real objects such as- clock, trees, leaves etc. in the lessons along with pictures, posters, charts prepared by them. In addition to ensure active participation of the students, question-answer session, peer work, group work are common ways that used by the teachers.

Teaching-Learning Methodologies

As a part of teaching learning process, the lesson plan is one of the most important components in the teaching-learning which assists a teacher to get impactful preparation for a lesson. Few government officials informed that, all the teachers are asked to share their lesson plans beforehand but, data revealed that, the majority of the teachers do not follow any lesson plan. Few teachers bring written lesson plans and conduct their session according to the plan while many other prepare their lesson without following the formal lesson plan structure.

It has been found that, in case of using mother tongue in the classroom only 3 schools of Savar (μ=2) and Karimganj Upazila (μ=1) achieved the indicator, whereas there is no data or that no concrete evidence of teachers using mother tongue in Belkuchi Upazila. On the other hand, all the 3 Upazilas somehow achieved the QLE indicator of "Teachers ask individual questions and interact with the learner" for 1 to 5 schools (6% to 33% of 15 GPS) while 2 to 5 schools (13% to 33% of 15 GPS) of Karimganj and Savar Upazila respectively achieved the indicator of "Teachers use some form of informal or formal learning assessment either on an on-going basis or at specified times during the school year" while no schools in Belkuchi Upazila have achieved any results for this indicator (Figure 7).
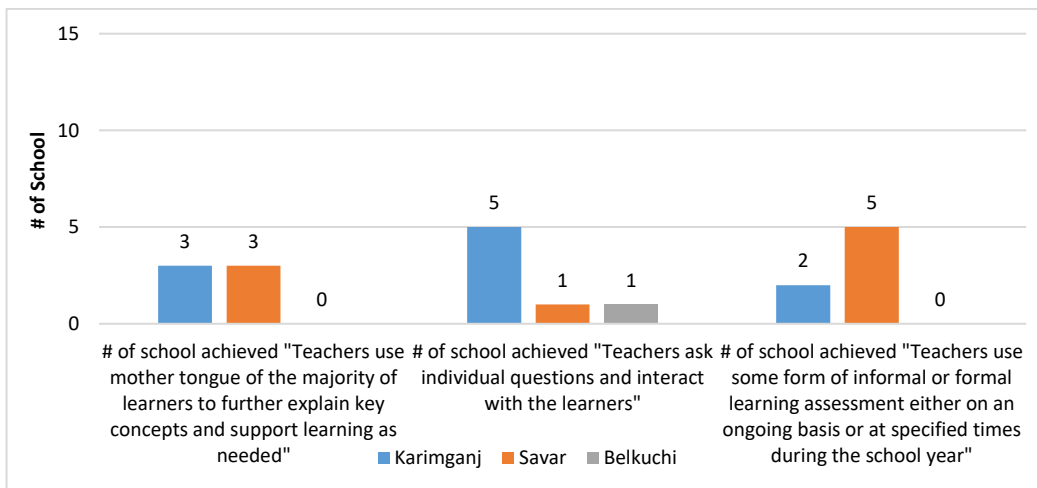
Figure 7: Teachers support to children in standard view.

It has been also analysed that, three to six schools of Karimganj and Savar Upazila have achieved results for all the indicators of deaf-mute children who can learn within a normal classroom, teachers interacting with all learners and also using different forms of learning assessment adapting to the needs of the children. Schools in Savar Upazila are comparatively doing better in case of teachers interacting well with all the learners. However, in great contrast it can be seen that no schools in Belkuchi Upazila has achieved any result in any of these indicators (Figure 8).

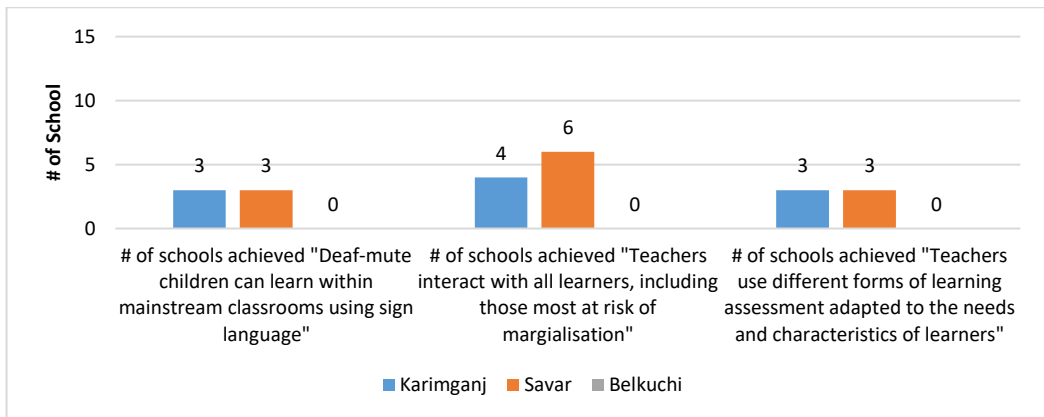Figure 8: Teachers support to children in an inclusive view.

Conclusion

To ensure the inclusion of all children in schools, it is critical to comprehend schools' attitudes towards inclusive education. While the school authorities may have a positive approach towards establishing a quality learning environment, overall infrastructural and psycho-social environments are hampering an inclusive school environment. Most of the schools have safety issues, which is the first and foremost requirement which must be met before developing a quality learning environment. The need for a boundary wall around the school premises was rightly emphasized by most of the parents and teachers interviewed. Furthermore, in some schools, other than the teaching process, the overall environment is worsened by the practice of an unfriendly code of conduct and even the use of violence against the students by the teachers. The environment is detrimental for any meaningful participation and learning by children with disabilities.

In spite of the significant achievement in primary level enrolment in schools, still a big number of children are not in schools in the targeted areas. The enrolment status of children with disabilities are 48%. In social and cultural activities, though children with disabilities who are in school get the opportunities to participate, but the participation of out of school children is very low pushing them further below the marginalization ladder. The number of children with disabilities decreased gradually in the upper classes. Teachers use different methods of teaching as well as various type of materials to make the lesson easy and interesting to the students. The lesson plan is one of the most important components in the teaching-learning which assists a teacher to get impactful preparation for a lesson. But the majority of the teachers do not follow any lesson plan. According to Nes (2000) the way in which teachers are trained in their initial education seems to have a serious role to play in the development of inclusive practices in the schools they will work at in future. In addition, Haug (2003) argues that if student teachers develop inclusive practices at university these will then be transferred later to their practice as teachers.

Despite the fact that this is a rather small sample sized assessment, it could be useful for higher education institutions and developmental organizations that try to design pre-service teachers training and professional development programmes. The authors would like to make the following points recommendations: -

Interventions need to take place for making school environment (pathway, toilet, classroom, drinking water facility, and playground) accessible and safe for all children, particularly those with disabilities.

Needs based budget should be allocated for the education section in local Government yearly budget plan as well a pro-inclusive fund utilization guideline is also required for proper utilization of the existing funds.

Comprehensive teachers training and capacity development interventions need to be made for teachers for making inclusive pedagogy a common practise.

Interventions have to consider providing technical support and guidelines to teachers for developing multi-sensory teaching/educational materials.

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Interventions need to focus on ensuring practice of pro-inclusive co-curricular activities at school level also finding practical ways to reach out to out of school children with disabilities.

Interventions have to be designed that would cover the inclusive leadership quality development training for Upazila Education Officers, Assistant Upazilla Education Officers, Upazilla Resource Centre instructors, Union Parishad Chairman.

Interventions should take place to develop a local level professional learning community of practise for solving challenges of implementation of inclusive education at local level.

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Declaration of interest statement

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of this paper.

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The Teacher, Teaching and the Learning Styles of the Students

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Abstract

The learning styles are ways or methods through which a pupil learns, perceives and understands information. The recognition of the learning styles is very important as it creates for the teachers the possibility to select the techniques and proper strategies in accordance with these styles. This study aims to highlight the importance that the style recognition has from the teacher and to evaluate the role in adopting the teaching conform them. In the study we have assessed if the selection of the techniques and strategies of teaching conform pupils' style leads to a more effective learning. The study included teachers (N=30) and pupils (N=300) from the elementary cycle of schools in the city of Tirana. The instrument used was the questionnaire for the teachers and another one for the pupils of the schools in the study. From the analysis of the data we noticed that recognizing the learning styles from the teachers helps in the realization of the more productive hours and the improvement of the quality of the school hours. Each pupil has his own way of learning. This way is taken into consideration form the teacher when he plans the activities during his teaching, in order to achieve success in each student. The teacher plays an important role in adopting the teaching methods according to the students' styles by ensuring a more effective learning. The use of information technology during class hours helps the pupils in their learning styles. Providing information to the parents for their children methods of learning is very important, as it makes the parents create the best conditions for the children to study.

Keywords: teachers, teaching, learning styles, adoption

Introduction

The learning styles are ways and methods used by the students to learn, percept and understand information. People have always talked about the learning styles since the ancient times. Aristotle stated: "Each child has specific talents and skills". He also noticed the changes in his students in the area of information obtaining and data extraction. The recognition of the learning styles from the teachers is very important, as it creates opportunities to organize the work by selecting techniques and strategies in accordance to the students' needs. Recognizing the learning styles is one of the general standards for the teachers. Standard number 6 states: "The teacher accepts and keeps in his mind the changes of the methods of the learning styles. The teacher creates for the students the possibilities and conditions for their progress". The learning styles depend on the cognitive, emotional and environmental factors and in different individuals these factors have various degrees of impact.

Some approaches on the learning styles

Learning styles are considered as complex methods (James and Gardner,1995) of information perception, the feelings and behaviors in learning situations (Marriam and Caffarela,1991), a special approach of the behaviors and opinions which relate to the learning context (Swanson, 1995). From the analyses of the learning styles are distinguished four aspects which are related to: perception (sight), cognitive knowledge (mental), feelings (affective) and views expressed through behavior (active) (Dunn & Dunn, 1993). Based on these aspects are classified four types of styles. According to Kolb the learning styles are: Divergent (open), Assimilating (adopting), Convergent, Accommodating (adoptive). Honey and Mumford based on Kolb classified these styles in: active style, reflective style, theoretical style and pragmatist style.

In the study of Demis Kunje, Elizabeth Selemani-Meke and Keiichi Ogawan in Kobe University in Japan the researchers prove that the relationship between the learning programs, teaching and learning are closely related. There are other approaches that are especially oriented in the treatment of this relationship (Kunje, Meke - Selemani & Ogawa, 2009).

Learning styles according to Kolb

Learning styles are terms through which the natural or permanent model of individual is prescribed, the way they take and perceive information. People change by the ways they study (Gardner, 1995). Kolb model refers to the theory of experimental learning where the individual uses all his cognitive skills.

Learning styles according to Gregorc

According to Anthony F. Gregorc learning styles are a set of observed behaviors or qualities, through which the mind relates to the world, and finds its way to obtain new information. These skills may change with time. He makes a certain division of the learning styles: students with a continuing real learning, students with an occasional real learning, students with a continuing abstract learning and students with an occasional abstract learning.

Learning styles according to Solomon and Felder

According to Felder & Solomon, students possess these learning styles: active, reflective, sensitive, instinctive, virtual and verbal.

Learning styles according to Dunn Dunn

According to Dunn Dunn, learning styles are a combination of many biological features which contribute in concentration, each in its own way and all together as one. According to Dunn Dunn, there are different learning styles even among the family members. Some various elements develop as a product of students' experiences and other factors too. According to Dunn Dunn, there are some factors that affect the style of learning such as:

Environment which includes elements such as sounds, noises, temperature, the way of class organization etc.. Some students like to study with the music on the surroundings, some others prefer the quietness, some the light and some warm areas, and some want the class to be organized differently.

Physiological factors, which relate to the skills to learn, desire to study, the proper time to study. Thus, some pupils find it difficult to study late hours, and some not; some prefer to study during the classroom hours.

Social preferences, which include learning with a friend, individual, in the group or with an adult;

Psychological factors which include the global/analytical learning, impulsive and reflective learning.

Methodology

This study aims to evaluate importance of recognizing the learning style from the teacher, and the way the teacher organizes its job based on this recognition, in order to increase the quality of the learning efficiency. The main goal of this study is to prove that the recognition of the learning styles from the teacher and the selection of the techniques and strategies of teaching adopted according to the learning styles, heads to a more effective learning of the pupils. We used a quantitative method of study, realized through the questionnaires of the teachers and pupils. The population of this study comprises of the teachers of some elementary and middle schools of the district of Tirana, who teach third grades and fourth grades of elementary education. The teachers sample was N=30 and the students' sample was N=300, all in the schools participant in the study.

Results and discussion

In order to get the right answers, we asked questions to the teachers and the students. In relation to the question to the teachers that "Which of the learning styles have you seen to your students" 63 % of the teachers stated the visual style, 23% stated the listening style, and 15 % stated the kinesthetic style. When we asked the students that in what learning style they feel better, 58% stated the visual style, 31% the listening style and 12% the kinesthetic style. Here is the graphic presentation of the acquired data:

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- What teachers stated for, The visual style, 63%
- What pupils stated for, The visual style, 58%
- What pupils stated for, The listening style, 31%
- What teachers stated for, The listening style, 23%
- What teachers stated for, The kinesthetic style, 15%
- What pupils stated for, The kinesthetic style, 12%

■ What teachers stated for   ■ What pupils stated for

Graphic 1: Learning style according to the teachers and the students

In relation to the question:"Do you keep in mind the learning styles of your students when you prepare the lesson planning", 65 % of the teachers stated the answer *always*, 35 % stated *sometimes*. Here is the graphic presentation of the data:

Series1, Always, 65%

Series1, Sometimes, 35%

Series1, Never, 0%
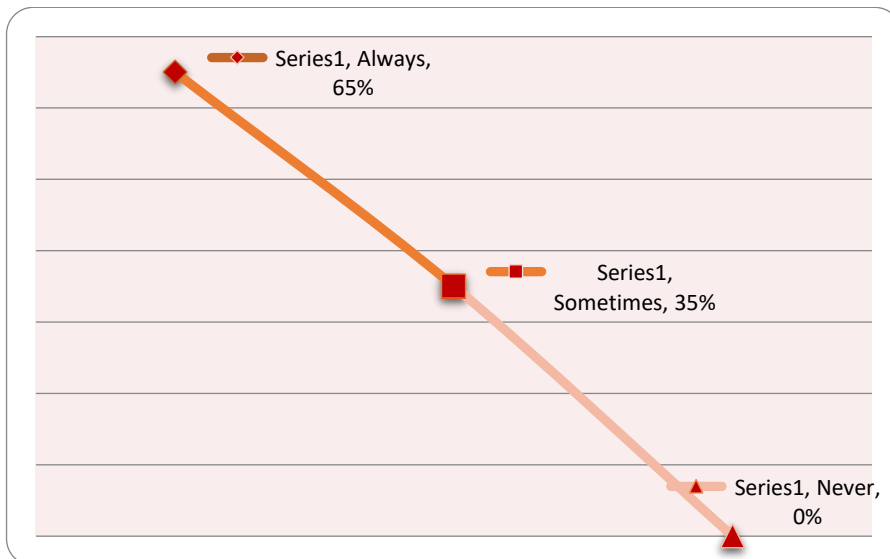
Graphic 2: Taking into consideration the learning styles during the lesson planning

The question to the teachers if "Recognizing the learning styles helps them to organize the lesson hour", 72% of the teachers stated that it *always* helps them as they consider the student learning style, 28 % stated that it helps them

sometimes as they not always take into consideration the student learning style. Here is the graphic presentation of the data:
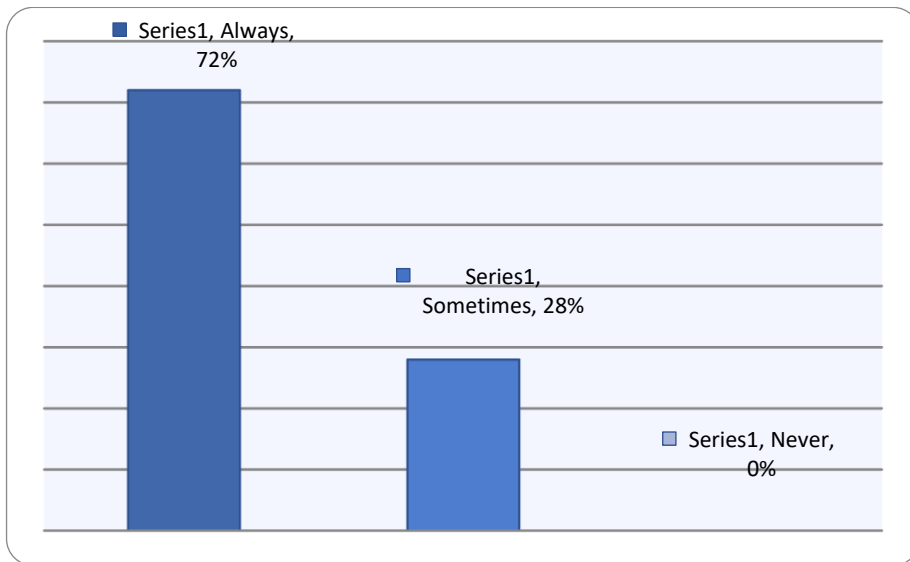
Graphic 3: Organization of the lesson process based on the learning styles of the students

In relation to the question:" Do you think that the selection of the techniques and strategies of teaching according to the styles, helps in realizing the lesson competencies", 65 % of the teachers replied *always*, 35 % *sometimes.* Here is the graphic presentation of the data:
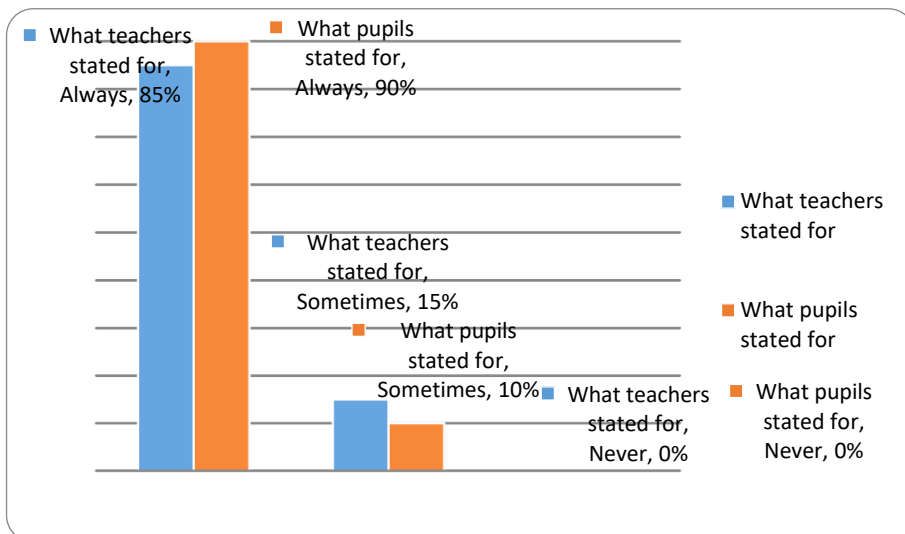
Graphic 4: The impact of the techniques and strategies in fulfilling the competencies

In relation to the question "Does the technology help the students in learning according to the styles", 75% of the teachers replied that it always helps them, 18% that is helps them sometimes, and 7 % of them think that technology does not play

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an important role in students learning according to their learning styles. Around 86% of the pupils stated that it always helps them, while 14% think that it helps them sometimes depending on the lesson techniques.

Always, What teachers stated for, 75%

Always, What pupils stated for, 86%

Sometimes, What teachers stated for, 18%

Never, What teachers stated for, 7%

Sometimes, What pupils stated for, 14%

Never, What pupils stated for, 0%

■ Always
■ Sometimes
■ Never
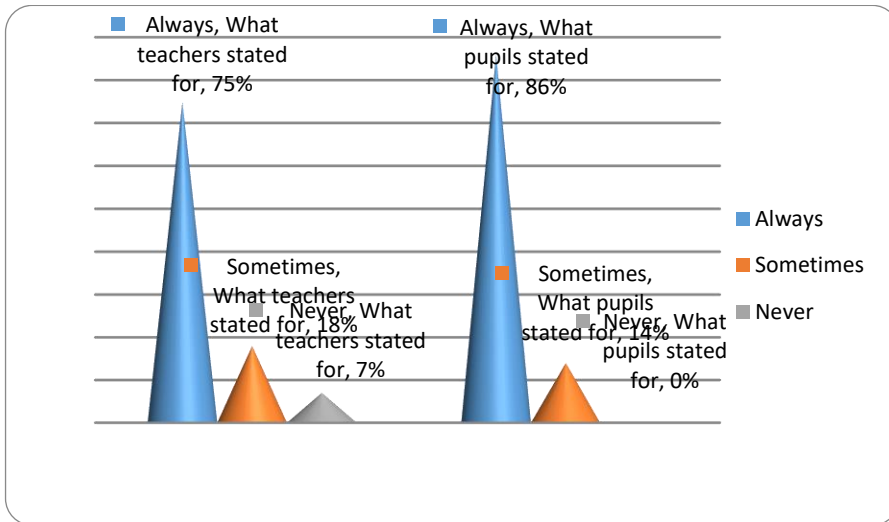
Graphic 5: The help of technology on the student learning styles

In the question "Does the information of the parents about the learning styles of their children have an impact in increasing the learning efficacy", 87% of the teachers stated that it has *a lot of* impact, 13% stated *little*. For the same question, 67% of the pupils think that informing their parents has *a lot of* impact, 23% think that is has *little* impact and 10% think that is *does not have* an impact.

What teachers stated for, has a lot of impact, 87%

What pupils stated for, has a lot of impact, 67%

What pupils stated for, has little impact, 23%

What teachers stated for, has little impact, 13%

What teachers stated for, does not have an impact, 0%

What pupils stated for, does not have an impact, 10%

■ What teachers stated for

■ What pupils stated for
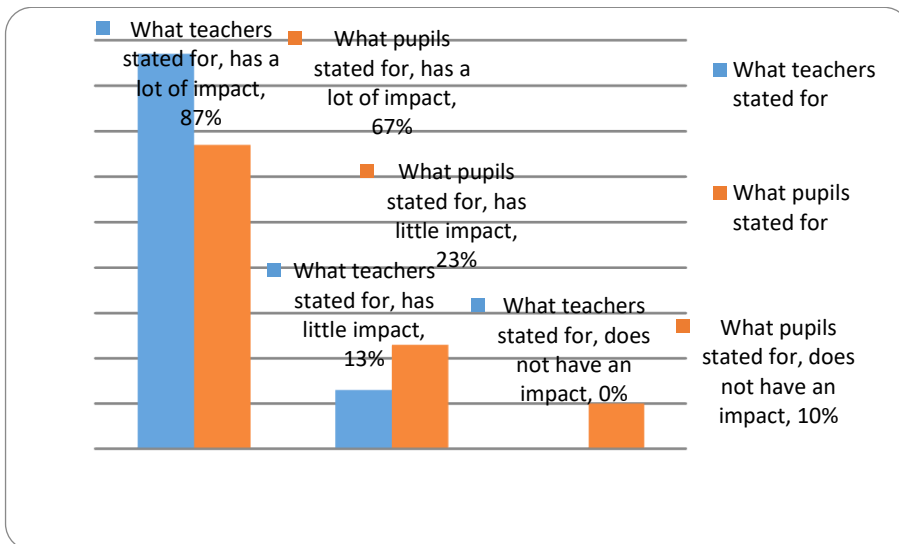
Graphic 6: Information of the parents for learning styles of their children

For the question " Is learning a product created by the pupil, the teacher or the parent", 80% of the teachers state that learning is a product created from the teacher and only 20% state that is a product created from the pupil. The exact answer would have been that learning is a product created by the pupil and is helped by the teacher.
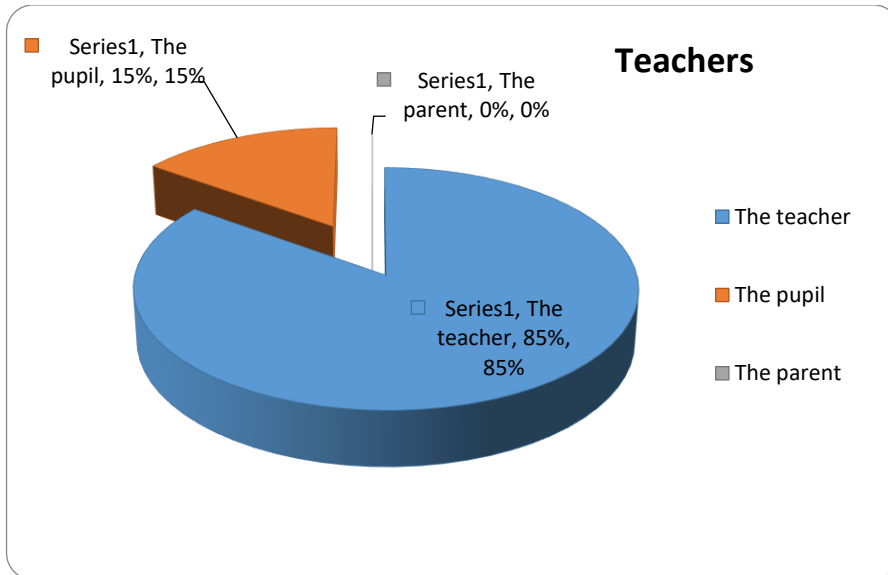
Graphic 7: Learning as a product created by the teacher, the parent or the pupil

Discussions

Referring to the answers of the teachers and the students related to the recognition of the learning styles, we notice that there are similar answers from them all, which shows that teachers know pretty well their students' learning styles. What is more obvious is that it prevails the visual style followed from the listening style. Only 65% of the teachers think they always keep in mind their pupils' learning style when they prepare the lesson plan, and 35% of them state that they only think of those occasionally.

The answers and the graphic presentations show that the lesson organization is done according to the learning styles, where 72% of the teachers state that they always keep in mind the students' learning styles in planning of the learning process and 18% state that they only sometime think of the learning styles.

The selection of the techniques and proper strategies in accordance to the learning styles has an impact on the formation of the learning competencies. This is shown clearly in the graphics presented. The study showed that the technology helps the pupils to learn according to their learning styles. This is stated from the teachers and the pupils that participated in the study.

This study showed that is very important to inform the parents for the learning styles of their children. In the interviews with some parents of the pupils included in the study, we saw that when the parents have the right information of the way their children learn, they can support them better.

Conclusions

This study is important, as it tries to see the role of teaching adaptation in student learning styles. The study revealed that the teacher plays an important role in adapting the teaching according to the learning styles, by recognizing and using the appropriate teaching methods, techniques and strategies in the lesson. Teachers should perform classroom activities such as competitions, role-play, and group work so that all students feel involved. Teachers should receive appropriate training in the use of teaching methods, by adapting them to pupils' learning needs and styles. The teacher pays attention to the

recognition of student learning styles, as it helps in the realization of learning competences. Most teachers always keep in mind the learning styles when planning the lesson plan, which creates the opportunity for better planning of the lesson hour.

Starting from the results of the schools included in the study, it should be noted the importance of each of the learning styles. Each student learns in his own way and is not like other students. This fact must be respected by the teacher, in order for each student to be helped to achieve his success. The students should be encouraged to learn according to their learning style where they feel better, but to experience other learning styles, as they do not possess a single learning style. The parents should be informed about the style of their children's learning, to have the characteristics of the learning style explained, in order to create suitable conditions for home learning.

According to the results of the answers provided by the teachers and students involved in the study, the use of technology in the classroom is also important. It directly affects the enhancement of the quality and effectiveness of the lesson hour, by strengthening the styles of learning for each student. The teacher should use organizational graphics when explains new information. Schemes help students rearrange information and make relations that they may have overlooked. The use of technology contributes to the concentration of students through the appearance of different images, through voices and understanding of phenomena.

Recognizing the learning styles of the pupils enables students to integrate into the learning process, facilitates the work of the teacher in organizing and orienting learning from the students, creating opportunities for organizing independent learning.

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Investigating the Impact of Greek EFL Teachers' Participation in Online Communities of Practice as a Means of Professional Development

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Abstract

This paper examines EFL teachers' participation in online Communities of Practice (CoPs) and its impact on their professional development. The study focuses on 50 EFL teachers who became members of CoPs using an online platform named *2gather* developed by the University of Athens in the context of a national in-service professional development project in Greece. Founded on the theory of situated learning, CoPs have been defined as "groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis" (Wenger et al., 2002). The study involved monitoring the development of four CoPs and teachers' patterns of participation using a mixed-methods approach which combined quantitative data and qualitative research of collective case studies (Dornyei, 2007) of different groups of teachers. A comparison of teachers' exposure to meaningful professional development (Franke et al., 2001) activities "before" and "after" their participation in the CoPs was carried out. In addition, results suggest the existence of statistically significant associations between the teachers' participation in online CoPs and perceived benefit and change of their beliefs and/or practices. They also highlight the specific conditions that have supported their reflection, their reported reconstruction of beliefs and practices and the reported effectiveness of their training experience in relation to their teaching practice. The findings contribute to furthering our understanding of effective implementation of online CoPs in the context of continuing professional development.

Keywords: professional development, communities of practice, teacher change, effectiveness of training.

Introduction

Teachers are required to constantly adapt their pedagogy to new theoretical approaches in order to pursue their professional development and improve their classroom practices. However, serious doubts exist about the effectiveness of traditional teacher education courses since they have been widely criticized for failing to "provide teachers with sufficient time, activities, and content necessary for increasing their knowledge and fostering meaningful changes" (Garet et al., 2001, : 920). Reforms often fail to provide effective PD that promotes perceived teacher change (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2009, Kourkouli, 2015). They usually take the form of short-term, "spray-on PD" seminars (Day & Sachs, 2004) creating thus a need for an alternative solution.

One model that has evolved as a way of supporting this paradigm change is that of professional Communities of Practice (CoPs). The premise underlying this paper is that the use of online Communities of Practice may present a real solution to the failure of current education programmes in contributing to the professional development of teachers and reported effectiveness of the training experience in relation to their teaching practice. Thus it is the intention of the present paper to investigate this potential in the Greek context.

In-service teacher education policy in Greece, under the authority of the Ministry of Education, is highly bureaucratic and centralized, not leaving any space for initiatives. Teacher training usually takes the form of non-compulsory 3-hour seminars which are carried out by School Advisors, public school teachers selected and appointed by the Ministry. Teachers do not participate either in the design or the development of their training while the broader context of training policy in Greece is characterized by lack of coherence, continuity, flexibility, failure to respond to teachers' needs (Vergidis et al, 2010) and ineffectiveness (Kourkouli, 2015). Although various efforts have been made throughout the years for a more decentralized and flexible teacher education policy, they were never implemented (Pedagogical Institute of Greece, 2009).

Since Communities of Practice constitute an innovatory form of teacher development, involvement in the ELTeachers CoPs was seen as a catalyst for Greek EFL primary school teachers towards their professional development while at the same time addressing their needs.

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to investigate the professional development of 50 Greek EFL teachers participating in four online Communities of Practice using an online platform named *2gather* developed by the University of Athens in the context of a national in-service professional development project in Greece to acquaint teachers with teaching English to young primary school learners. Firstly, it is intended to compare teachers' exposure to meaningful professional development (Franke et al., 2001) activities "before" and "after" their participation in the CoPs. Secondly, it establishes associations between the teachers' participation in online CoPs and perceived benefit and change of their beliefs and/or practices. Thirdly, it is attempted to highlight the specific conditions that have supported their reflection, their reported reconstruction of beliefs and practices and the reported effectiveness of their training experience in relation to their teaching practice.

The research was conducted within the paradigm of a mixed-methods design which combined quantitative data and crosstabulation with qualitative research of collective case studies (Dornyei, 2007) of the four ELTeachers CoPs.

The investigation of the impact of the Greek EFL teachers participation in the ELTeachers CoPs on their professional development during their first official launch (December 2014 – May 2015) contributes to furthering our understanding of effective professional development implementation. It also proves them to be an effective and sustainable catalyst for teacher learning, reformed teaching practice and reported effectiveness of the training experience in relation to teachers' teaching practice. In addition, it can serve as a springboard for other educators and possibly pave the way for a true paradigm shift in teacher education.

Literature review

Professional development of teachers

As the main purpose of the paper is to identify and describe the role of online Communities of Practice in the professional development of teachers, this chapter will begin by addressing the notion of professional development in terms of teacher learning and change. In Freeman's (1989) view, teacher education constitutes a superordinate term that encompasses both teacher training and teacher development as different strategies by which teachers are educated. Training is based on a process of direct intervention, leading to the mastery of specific knowledge and skills and is based on external criteria for assessing teachers' change. On the contrary, teacher development implies an idiosyncratic and individual process of influence encouraging some sort of increase or shift in teachers' awareness which can be non-evaluative by external criteria. Therefore, any course focusing on the education of teachers should feature elements of both training and development in order to bring about some sort of change in teachers' beliefs, attitudes and teaching practices.

Within the last decades, educational reform efforts have been directed to seek professional opportunities for teachers that will help them enhance their knowledge and develop new instructional practices (Borko, 2009). There has been a paradigm shift gathering momentum with regard to the professional development of teachers. As Moore and Barab (2002, p. 44) state "professional development is not something you receive, but something in which you participate as part of your everyday activities" since learning is a participatory process that involves "doing, becoming and belonging, not simply acquiring" (Ng & Hung, 2003, p. 62).

Investigating the extent to which the participation in PD programs manages to bring about language teachers' change, implies cognitive and behavioural change processes in teachers, whereby they get to alter aspects of their belief systems and practices as a result of a new input (Kubanyiova, 2012).

In an alternative normative-reeducative perspective of teacher change (Richardson & Placier, 2001), we are suggested to evaluate the impact of teacher education courses in terms of the teachers' understanding of the training content and its value and how this leads to the development of reformed practices. It also focuses on how and to what extent the teachers' practice changes as a result of a teacher education course. This view of teacher change places emphasis on the mental state of teachers and their concepts, since teachers' teaching practice and decision-making is largely informed by them. Thus conceptual change constitutes a major factor of teacher change also to be also taken in consideration in the present research.

Finally, the role reflection plays in enhancing teacher change is also to be addressed. Teachers cannot develop themselves unless they learn to develop their critical self and be able to reflect critically upon what they do in their classrooms (Liu &

Fisher, 2006). This shows that "learning and reflection are interrelated," as Brandt (2006, p. 42) argues, and that "reflection requires a recapturing of experience in which the person thinks about it, mulls it over, and evaluates it". In addition, it encourages them to take greater responsibility for their own professional growth and look for ways of becoming more autonomous professionally.

Therefore, in order to enhance the effectiveness of teacher education programs a number of principles are proposed for the design, organization and implementation of teacher education courses (Kourkouli 2015) such as the exploration of teachers' personal practical theories and beliefs (Levin & He, 2008) at the pre-training stage, enhancing the relevance of topics, restricted use of the lecture mode for presenting new information, emphasis on reflection, experiential elements such as micro-teaching, self and peer-observation as well as demonstration techniques, collaborative learning in pairs or groups, exploratory learning in workshops and provision of continuous follow-up support to equip trainees with the knowledge and confidence required to implement new theories in their everyday teaching practice.

Online Communities of Practice and situated learning

Online Communities of Practice (CoPs),founded on the theory of situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991), have been defined as "groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis" (Wenger et al., 2002, p.4). Social constructivist theories view learning as a process situated in a social context where knowledge is "constructed" by the participants (Kimble et al. 2008). The theory of "situated learning" is rooted in Vygotsky's cognitive theory (1978) positing that learning is embedded within an activity, context and culture. It can also be unintentional rather than deliberate. Knowledge needs to be presented in authentic contexts — settings and situations that would normally involve that knowledge. Social interaction and collaboration are essential components of situated learning — learners become involved in a "community of practice" which embodies certain beliefs and behaviors.

In Mezirow's transformative learning (1991), "critical reflection" emerges as a precondition for learning.When faced with a disorienting dilemma, people are forced to reconsider their beliefs in a way that will fit the new experience into the rest of their worldview. This often happens in the context of dialogue with other people through co-operation, peer respect and fruitful communication (Eades, 2001).

It is also suggested that deep or higher-order learning occurs through collaboration when a group develops common meaning through discussion and externalization of individual interpretations (Goodyear & Zenios, 2007).

Online Communities of Practice – a new approach in teacher education

In Communities of Practice, teachers learn through focused investigation and challenging of existing beliefs and practices. As Katz et al. (2005) suggest, fostering discussions on the theory and practice of teaching can support teachers in changing their practice through a culture of critical colleagueship (Lieberman & Mace, 2009) and reflective inquiry. In particular, teachers develop by actively reflecting on their practice, interacting and collaborating with their colleagues (Sorge & Russell, 2000) in order to solve problems encountered in their classrooms (Richardson, 1990) and make changes accordingly (Kontra, 1997).

Contrary to the inefficiency of traditional training models (Levin & He, 2008), online Communities of Practice have the added element of "facilitative" technology. They can accommodate teachers' busy schedules, can account for maximum relevance and interest factors (Bax, 1995), hold the promise of creating a path toward providing real-time, work-embedded support for teachers' ongoing learning (Dede et al, 2009), can draw on powerful resources that are not locally available and can practically reach out to everybody, even in geographically isolated areas (Fishman et al, 2013). The collective results of research studies (Hollins et al., 2004; Dunne et al., 2000; Englert & Tarrant., 1995) suggest that well-developed CoPs can have a positive impact on the professional development of teachers. Effective leadership can create a supportive learning environment by creating a shared vision, encouraging and empowering members through cooperative teams (Johnson & Johnson 1997).

Method

Methodological approach

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether teachers' involvement in the 2gather online CoPs constitutes a good source of meaningful professional development for them and which factors seem to create a more conducive environment for that. In this light, a methodological approach is needed that examines the following research questions:

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1) To what extent were teachers exposed to more meaningful professional development (Franke et al., 2001) activities "during" their participation in the CoPs compared with the ones "before" their participation?

2) To what extent is there reported reconstruction of beliefs and practices as well as reported effectiveness of their training experience in relation to their teaching practice as a result of this participation?

3) Which factors support perceived benefit and change of their beliefs and/or practices?

4) Which are the specific conditions that have supported their reflection, their reported reconstruction of beliefs and practices and the reported effectiveness of their training experience in relation to their teaching practice?

2.2 Study context

In order to gather the necessary data for the research described above, we developed our own authentic online CoPs with appointed volunteers EFL teachers working in the state primary education in Greece with real needs and everyday problems. For this purpose, we used the 2gather platform developed by the University of Athens. Through open source technologies, it combined features of Learning and Content Management Systems with those of Social Networking Services. The platform integrated the following facilities useful to a CoP: α) homepage b) discussion spaces to foster discussions through a closed forum for every CoP, c) private messages and public messages), d) member directory with a profile – avatar and a short bionote for every participant as well as their online status), e) chatrooms, f) medialibrary, g) activity streams) and h) groups and sub-groups (Karavas & Papadopoulou, 2014).

The whole project amounted to a monumental effort of setting up, publicising, piloting, organising launching as well as kick-off events, face and skype meetings, tutorial workshops as well as informing and training the School Advisors (the teacher trainers) on the innovative teacher education method, the specific platform and available tools. It lasted from April 2014 – June 2015. Each online CoP was composed of one School Advisor (Teacher Trainer) and as many volunteers- teachers working in the broader geographical area of their School Advisor's jurisdiction, sometimes a whole Prefecture. The CoP training schedule and material was based on reported teachers' needs and was given to the School Advisors as a "guidebook" for further development or, as it mostly happened, a step-by-step implementation procedure, which practically meant that it was fully adopted by the School Advisors and implemented with very little content and structure variation. School Advisors posted one monthly activity in each CoP's forum divided in two fortnight sections with strict deadlines and specific ground rules designed to multiply interaction. The first section was designed to foster reflection and practice-related integration with posts and accompanying studying or viewing material. The second section was meant to foster the development of open discussion and the connection with teachers' everyday practice through new posts, continuous provision of feedback and open interaction among the participants. We created and posted the following topics as monthly activities 1. Introductions; 2. Teaching Context; 3. Multiple Intelligences and Learning Styles; 4. Classroom Management; 5. Increasing student motivation/Developing positive student – teacher relationships; 6. Differentiated instruction; 7. Project work on lesson planning.

2.3 Participants

The research was conducted by the author of this paper, Katerina Kourkouli.[1] Following Cambridge et al.'s example (2005), we assigned the roles as follows:

1) Administrator–Leader: Katerina Kourkouli, researcher at the English Department of the University of Athens, responsible for the setting up of 4 online CoPs all over Greece, registration procedures, training modules, moderators' training, support, contact, organizing face-to-face, Skype and kick-off meetings with School Advisors and participating teachers, explaining the philosophy, publicizing the training innovation and addressing every technical or other issue that might arise.

2) Moderators: 4 state EFL School Advisors assigned their own CoP (A' Athens, Kalamata, Chalkida and Ioannina named after the capital city of the geographical region) based on their administrative jurisdiction, responsible for training, supporting, encouraging the participants and providing feedback. In fact, one of them, Chalkida CoP's School Advisor opted to acting as a supervisor with a chosen teacher of her jurisdiction acting as a Moderator/Contributor instead of her.

3) Participants: 50 EFL state school teachers working in the primary education (A' Athens CoP 16, Chalkida CoP 16, Ioannina CoP 6, Kalamata CoP 12 teachers) who consented to answer the "before" the CoP participation questionnaire

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anonymously and registered to participate in their area CoPs. They were informed that it was meant to serve as a research tool and baseline investigation[1] resulting finally in 49 EFL state school teachers working in the primary education who participated voluntarily and actively throughout the training period, in their authentic contexts, fulfilled the criteria in terms of workload and projects submitted specified by the CoP program and answered the "after" questionnaire (A' Athens CoP 16 teachers, Chalkida CoP 15 teachers, Kalamata CoP 12 teachers and Ioannina CoP 6 teachers). All 49 participants received a certificate of participation. Anonymity was guaranteed by their School Advisors and the researcher herself.

2.4 Data sources

As for the 1st research question, two questionnaires were constructed as tools for data collection and analysis administered "before" and "after" the CoP participation. The questionnaire, administered "before" the CoP participation is meant to serve as a baseline investigation of teachers' profiles, beliefs and classroom practices before their involvement in the CoPs program while the questionnaire administered "after" their CoP involvement is considered a tool for detecting reformed beliefs, attitudes, practices and change. Both questionnaires were constructed based on the study of variables that capture common experiences of groups of people. In particular, the use of the Microsoft Excel 2010 Data processing programme accounted for the descriptive nature of this research. In addition, "Chi-Square tests of independence" which allow us to look at two variables and evaluate the strength of their relationship or association with each other took place with the use of SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) (Dornyei, 2007: 228).

The sampling plan for this project involved two stages and yielded a total of 50 questionnaires from November-January 2014 (the "before" phase) and 49 questionnaires in July 2015 (the "after" phase).[2]

Instrument

Information was elicited through mainly clozed-ended item types using factual, behavioural and attitudinal questions. In effect, Part I aims to build a profile of the respondents who participate in this research, especially in the areas of teaching experience with young learners. Part II focuses on the types of training experiences teachers had been exposed to "before" and "during" their participation in the ELTeachers CoPs as well as investigation of any previous experiences with other CoPs. Finally, Part III seeks to investigate the teacher education courses themselves, both the traditional ones teachers used to participate "before" their CoP involvement and the CoP course itself. This is achieved firstly by exploring the topics covered, the presence of training practices used which are regarded conducive to teacher development as well as the specific professional development activities teachers were exposed to "before" and "during" during their CoP training. Secondly, it seeks to investigate the impact of both the traditional courses as well as the online CoP course itself. This is done through the tracing of perceived teachers' knowledge restructuring, reported change of teachers' actual teaching practices as well as perceived benefit and reported effectiveness of their training experience in relation to their teaching needs and practice "before" and "after" their participation in the CoPs. Finally, focusing exclusively on the "after" instrument, we will also highlight the specific conditions that have supported their reflection, their reported reconstruction of knowledge and practices and the reported effectiveness of their training experience in relation to their teaching practice based on crosstabulation.

Presentation and discussion of results

In this section, a detailed presentation and critical discussion of results is attempted, following the research method described and the theoretical framework delineated above.

3.1 Personal and professional data

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[1] It should be noted that at the time, November 2014 – January 2015, due to austerity measures and reforms enforced in Greece in the context of its fiscal adjustment, the competent Ministers had issued a Presidential Decree No 152/5 November 2013 published in the Govenrment Gazette Vol I/No.240/pp. 4107-4132 assigning School Advisors to conduct teachers' evaluations for the first time in years with the aim to create a potential tank for future state school teachers' dismissals. They were signed as prior actions of the Second Economic Adjustment Programme for Greece in March 2012. The total number of online CoPs under my supervision amounted to 10 CoPs for the school years of 2014-15 and 2015 – 16 and the total number of participants amounted to 147. Despite repeated reassurance and affirmation on the part of the researcher and their School Advisors that their participation in the CoPs training program would not be used for their evaluation reports, the final research participants were much fewer.

[2] The "after" questionnaires were collected in a period of widespread financial and political turmoil in Greece with banks closed and capital controls imposed.

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The majority of the respondents are female teachers (91%) teaching english to young learners of the first and second grades of primary school at a percentage of 61%. 26% of the respondents hold a postgraduate degree in English teaching with a further 10% in some other field. A small percentage of 22% report no teaching experience with young learners while almost 39% report more than three years teaching experience with the target age group. In addition, 70% report having attended some type of training course, day seminar organized by the school Advisor and the University of Athens or self-training in relation to teaching English to young learners. The vast majority (90%) had never participated in an organized Community of Practice before.

3.2 Description of training and teaching attitudes and practice "before" and "after" the participation in the online CoP

The second part of this presentation focuses on the teacher education courses themselves, in terms of the presence or absence of strategies and training procedures regarded conducive to teacher development. We will focus on decribing the types of training experiences teachers were exposed to "before" and "during" their participation in the ELTeachers CoPs as well as the impact of both the traditional courses and the online CoP course itself on their professional development.

In response to the first research question,

1)To what extent were teachers exposed to more meaningful professional development (Franke et al., 2001) activities "during" their participation in the CoPs compared with the ones "before" their participation?

as can be seen in Chart 1 below, in the traditional training seminars teachers attended "before" their CoP participation, the majority of participants were not involved in the identification and articulation of their needs (32%) compared with the reported identification of their needs at a percentage of 77% "during" the CoP course which is obviously more compatible with adult learning principles and learner-centred approaches. Concerning the training procedures employed, the methods the trainers used to provide data as well as the presence of experiential elements enhancing the effectiveness of training courses, the situation looks much more promising "during" the CoP course. More specifically, 65% report obtaining feedback to teaching practices "during" the CoP course while 24% answer positively concerning the "before" courses. Similarly, 42% report receiving follow – up training on new ideas and techniques "during" the CoP course , an astonishing 96% engaged in sharing resources and good practices with colleagues while more than 91% got involved in sharing problems with colleagues and exploring solutions with them at a percentage of 73%. Since learning is considered to be a participatory process where knowledge is "constructed" by the participants, then collaborative and exploratory learning in pairs or groups constitute major professional development activities. Learners become involved in a "community of practice" through social interaction and collaboration at greater percentages than "before" the CoP course. In addition, 94% report reflecting on practice "during the CoP" compared with a 34% "before" and 79% putting a new approach into practice. Since we have reports of involvement in reflective strategies, collaborative and cooperative environment, opportunity to stand critically towards the process experienced and practical application of new approaches, it could be suggested here that the online CoP course engages teachers in more meaningful professional development activities than the traditional courses.

Chart 1: Professional development activities used before/ during CoP
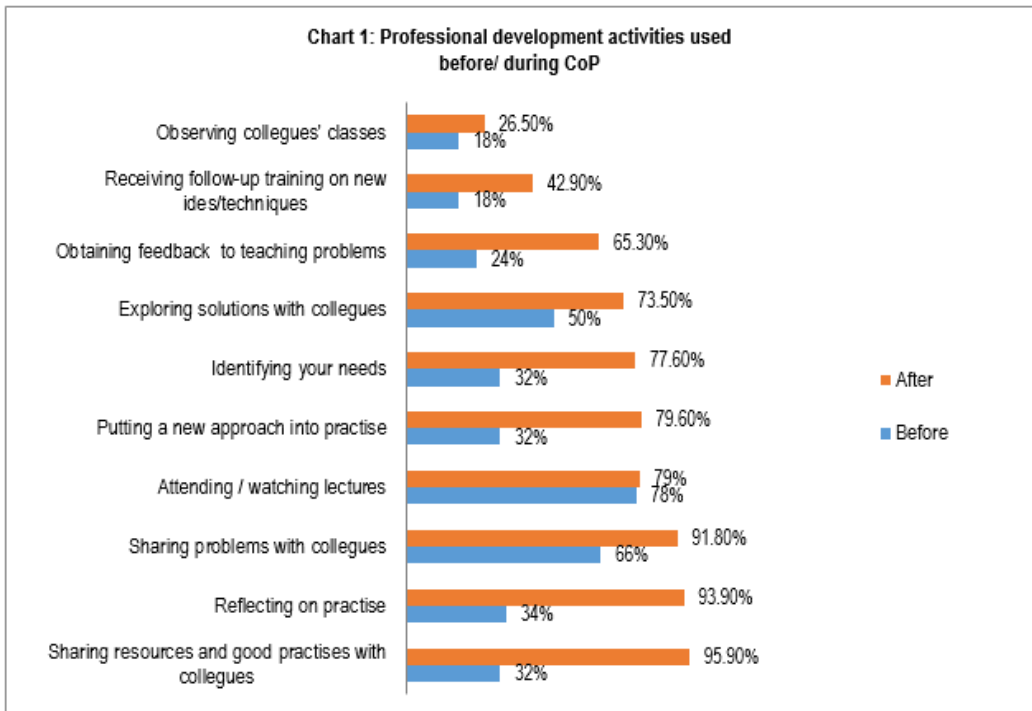
Addressing the second research question,

2) To what extent is there reported reconstruction of beliefs and practices as well as reported effectiveness of their training experience in relation to their teaching practice as a result of this participation?

Chart 2: Expected/Perceived usefulness of their involvement in CoPs for their everyday teaching practice
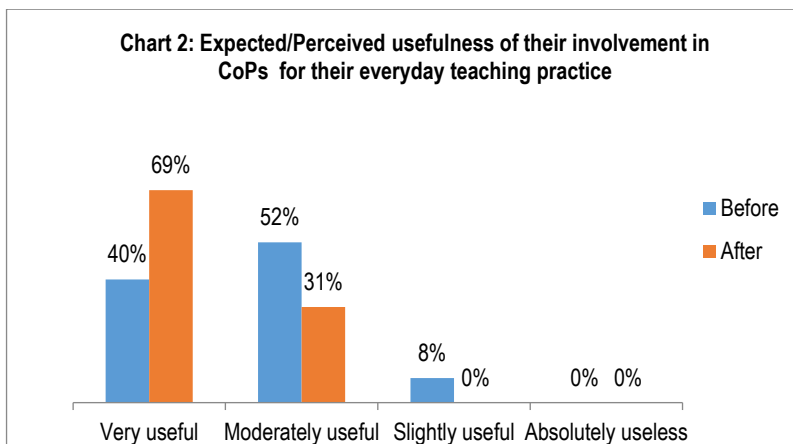
findings show that, in terms of the trainees' perception of the impact and usefulness of the CoP training course for their everday teaching practice, the majority of participants "moved" to the "very useful" category from the "moderately useful"one, having completely changed their minds on the "slightly useful" category (see Chart 2).

Findings also show (see Chart 3) a striking change of satisfaction concerning their teacher development needs. In particular, whereas 8% report a great deal of satisfaction with the traditional courses, 43% take the same stance for the CoP course. In terms of reported effectiveness of their training experience in relation to their teaching practice and perceived benefit, there is a great shift to the "a great deal" category "after" the CoP course (see Chart 4).

Chart 3: Extent to which teacher development needs have been met before/after CoP involvement (regarding everyday teaching practice)

Before / After

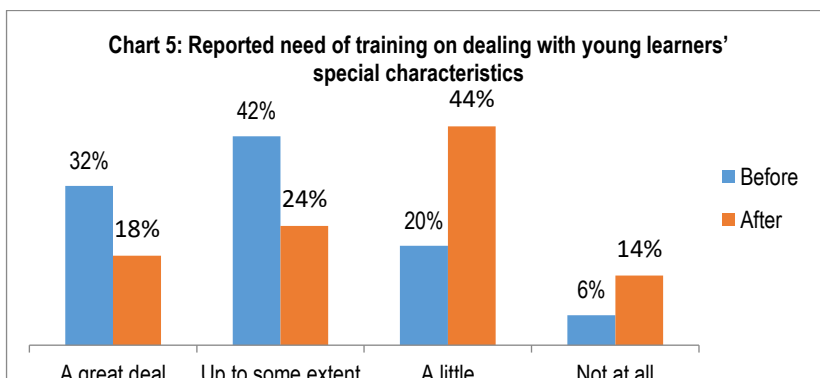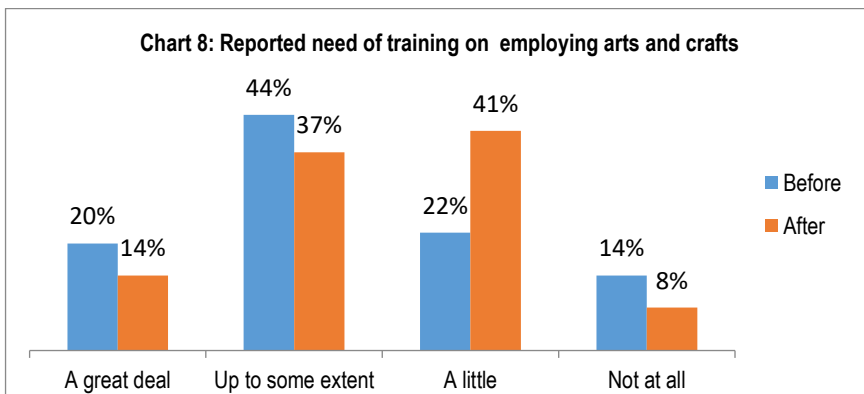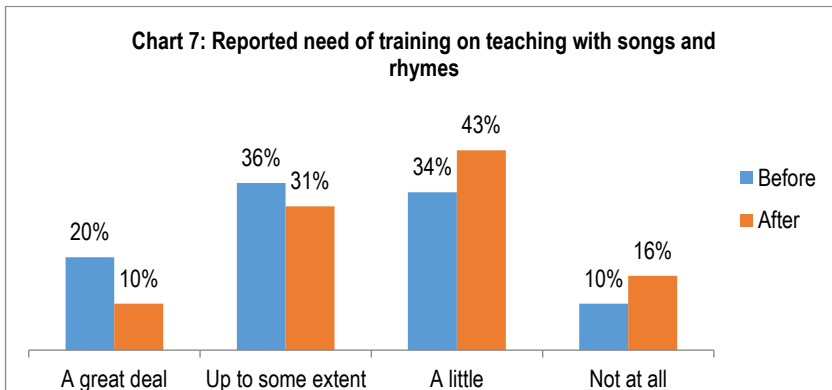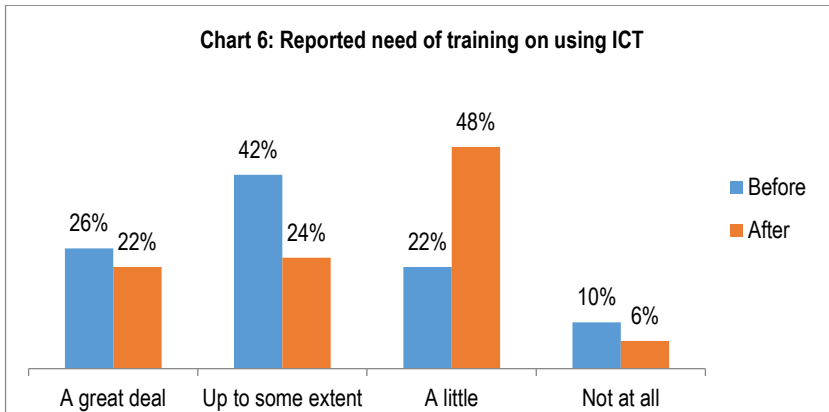|	a great deal	Up to some extent	A little	Not at all
Before	8%	60%	26%	6%
After	43%	53%	4%	0%

Chart 4: Extent to which topics discussed respond to practical needs

Before / After

	A great deal	Up to some extent	A little	Not at all
Before	8%	60%	26%	6%
After	74%	26%	0%	0%

Charts 5 – 11 below describe the reported need of training on issues and useful topics pertaining to the teachers' practical needs for the age group of young learners such as dealing with young learners' special characteristics, using ICT in the classroom, teaching with songs and rhymes, employing arts and crafts, using drama/theatrical activities, storytelling, using games in class and dealing with individual learning difficulties. Results clearly depict an increased perceived benefit as teachers seem more confident and competent to deal with the same topics "after" the CoP training.

Chart 5: Reported need of training on dealing with young learners' special characteristics

Before / After

	A great deal	Up to some extent	A little	Not at all
Before	32%	42%	20%	6%
After	18%	24%	44%	14%

Chart 6: Reported need of training on using ICT

Chart 7: Reported need of training on teaching with songs and rhymes

Chart 8: Reported need of training on employing arts and crafts

Chart 9: Reported need of training on using drama/ theatrical activities

Chart 10: Reported need of training on using storytelling

Chart 11: Reported need of training on using games in class

Chart 12: Reported need of training on dealing with individual learning difficulties

Interestingly enough, topics that constituted monthly CoP modules for discussion such as "Multiple Intelligences and Learning Styles' as well as "Differentiated instruction" could account for the striking reduction of reported difficulty with the topic in question in Chart 12 from 58% "before" to just 12% "after" the CoP course.

The opportunity for reflection because of the role it plays in enhancing teacher change and the trainees' perception of the impact the training course had on their beliefs and everyday practice is the next area of exploration. As Chart 13 shows, there is a significant increase in the number of participants responding that they have integrated examining and analysing their teaching beliefs and practices in their everyday teaching practice amounting to 61% "during" the CoP course.

Chart 13: Extent to which teaching beliefs and practices have been examined and analyzed before/ during CoP involvement
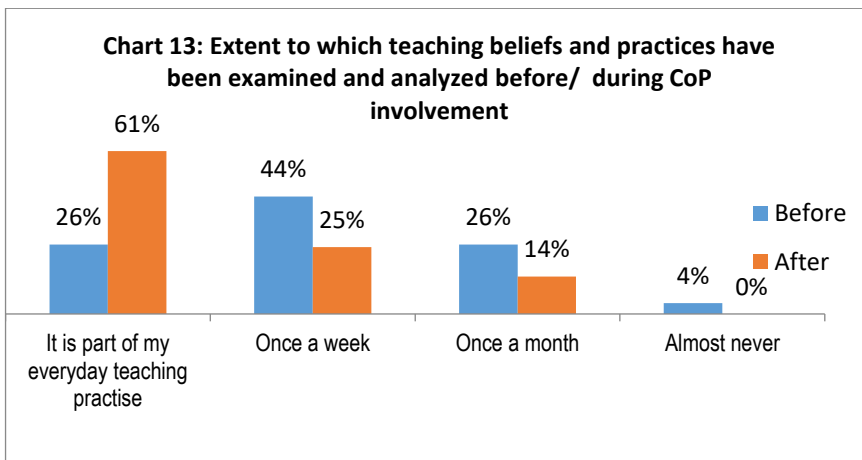
They also report employing more effective reflection practices "during" the CoP, such as keeping journals and writing reflective lesson plans compared with significantly lower percentages "before" (see Chart 14). To corroborate the previous finding, Chart 15 depicts a sharp increase in the percentage of participants responding the provision of examples of written records they kept for reflection purposes.

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Chart 14: Tools employed for reflection before/ during CoP involvement

Chart 15: Examples of written records kept for reflection
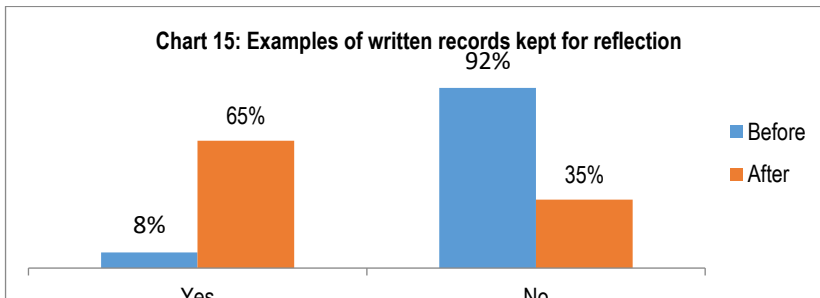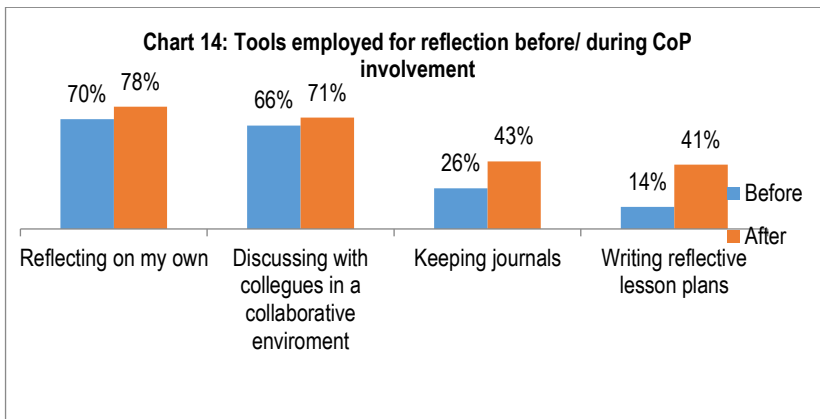
Concerning restructuring of knowledge and practices as well as reported effectiveness of their training experience in relation to their teaching practice, there is a significant increase in the percentage of respondents reporting they have integrated new ideas in their everyday teaching practice (see Chart 16) "after" the CoP course.

Chart 16: Frequency of usage of new ideas presented before/ during CoP involvement
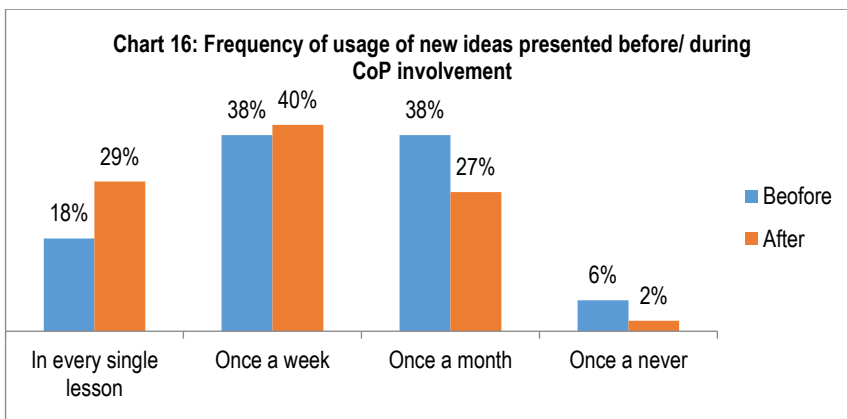
In accordance with the previous finding, fewer teachers responded that they needed more follow-up on the training they received "during" the CoP course than on the training received during traditional seminars (see Chart 17).

Chart 17: The extent to which follow-up is needed for the received training before/ during CoP
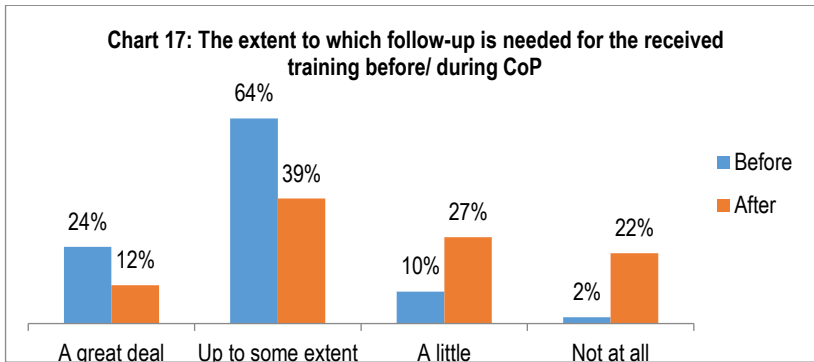
The extent to which new insights into teaching have been gained significantly increases for the "a great deal" category in the "after" sample, with a big decrease in the category of "a little", while the last category remains about the same. The CoP training program emerges as a source of meaningful professional development for this sample (see Chart 18).

Chart 18: Extent to which new insights into teaching have been gained before/ during CoP involvement
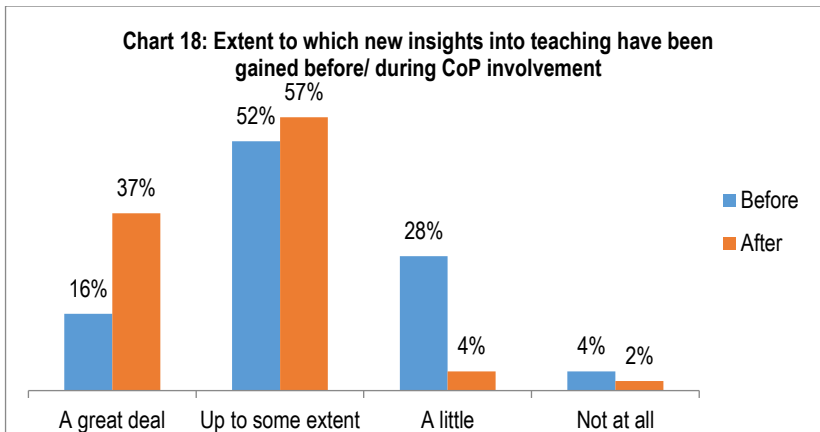
In terms of the trainees' attitude towards the CoP training experience overall, 43% of the participants report finding it very effective in relation to their everyday teaching practice compared with only 12% attributing this kind of effectiveness to the seminars they were involved in "before" (see Chart 19).

Chart 19: Effectiveness of the training experience in relation to the everyday teaching practice before/ after CoP

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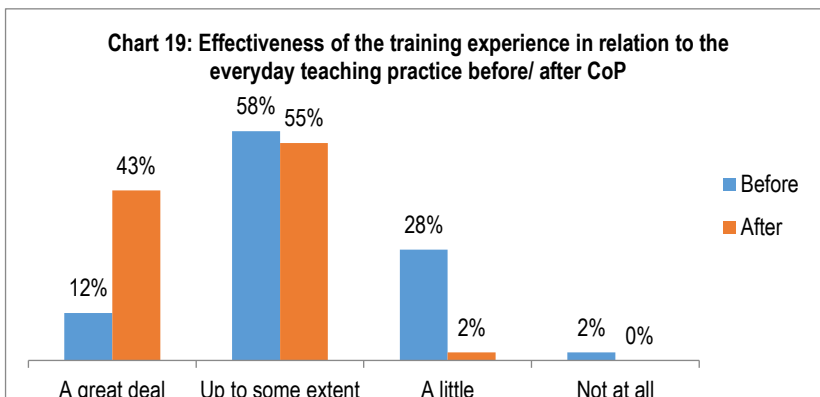
3.3 Crosstabulation of variables

The final part of this presentation responds to the existence of statistically significant associations between the teachers' participation in online CoPs and perceived benefit and change of their beliefs and/or practices. It also highlights the specific conditions that have supported their reflection, their reported reconstruction of beliefs and practices and the reported effectiveness of their training experience in relation to their teaching practice. Therefore, the whole analysis and discussion of results below refers to the "after" questionnaire. More specifically, to answer the next research questions,

3) Which factors support perceived benefit and change of their beliefs and/or practices?

and

4) Which are the specific conditions that have supported their reflection, their reported reconstruction of beliefs and practices and the reported effectiveness of their training experience in relation to their teaching practice?

we conducted analysis of data based on a crosstabulation (Chi-Square) test which allows the researcher to conduct tests of independence between the variables of the research instrument, through the significance of the Pearson Chi-square value. In particular, if the p-value of the table is significant at the 0.05 significance level, we can claim that the two variables under statistical analysis are not independent but they are statistically and significantly associated. In this light, the statistically significant index (p-value = 0,044< a=0, 05) of Table 1 below enables us to draw the conclusion that the variables examined in questions 6 and 11.2 are not independent, but they are statistically associated.

Q6 * Q11.2

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4,040[a]	1	.044		
Continuity Correction[b]	2.085	1	.149		
Likelihood Ratio	3.673	1	.055		
Fisher's Exact Test				.079	.079
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.958	1	.047		
N of Valid Cases	49				

a. 2 cells (50,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1,22.
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Table 1: Sharing problems with colleagues– Reported usefulness of Involvement

		Table 1: Question 11.2		
		Yes	No	Total
Question 6	Very useful	33(73,3%)	1	34
	Moderately useful	12	3(75,0%)	15
	Slightly useful	0	0	0
	Absolutely useless	0	0	0
	Total	45	4	49

In particular, we have found statistically significant asscociations between the professional development activity of sharing problems with colleagues and reported usefulness of involvement in the ELTeachers CoPs. As table 1 shows, 73. 3% of

the participants who got involved in sharing problems with colleagues found their participation in the online CoP very useful. The finding is in line with the relevant literature advocating the utilization of collaborative environments to promote the usefulness of the training courses for the teachers' everyday practice.

To corroborate the argument made, we found that the involvement of teachers in sharing resources and good practices with their colleagues in the context of the online CoPs and reported usefulness of their participation in the ELTeachers CoPs for their everyday teaching practice is significally associated at a percentage of 72.3% (see Table 2).

Table 2: Sharing resources and good practices with colleagues – Reported usefulness of Involvement

		Table 2: Question 11.5		
		Yes	No	Total
Question 6	Very useful	34(72,3%)	0	34
	Moderately useful	13	2(100,0%)	15
	Slightly useful	0	0	0
	Absolutely useless	0	0	0
	Total	47	2	49

As far as the perceived effectiveness of professional development activities are concerned, we used the Mann-Whitney U test Wilcoxon Rank Sum Test (see Table 3) to compare means between those who answered that they consider their participation in the ELTeachers CoPs "Very useful" and "Moderately useful" since noone answered that it is not considered useful. We can see that there is a statistically significant difference between means since as table 3 shows, those who answer they found their participation "very useful for their every day teaching practice" they order, on average, the effectiveness of obtaining feedback to teaching problems at a higher rank (4.9) than those who found their participation "moderately useful" (6.3). This fact gives evidence to the importance of the teaching presence (Garrison et al., 2010) in terms receiving feedback from either the trainer or the colleagues themselves as a factor contributing to the usefulness of the training program for the participants and supports the paradigm of a culture of critical colleagueship (Lieberman & Mace, 2009) in the context of online CoPs.

Table 3: Reported usefulness of Involvement – Obtaining feedback to teaching problems as an effective PD activity

		Table 3: Question 12.8 (mean)		
		M.O.=4,9	M.O.=6,3	Total
Question 6	Very useful	34	0	34
	Moderately useful	0	15	15
	Slightly useful	0	0	0
	Absolutely useless	0	0	0
	Total	34	15	49

(Mann-Whitney U Wilcoxon W test)

As for the specific conditions that have supported their reflection and the reported effectiveness of their training experience in relation to their teaching practice, we have found that 85.5% of the participants who kept journals as a tool to guide their reflection on their own and their peers' teaching practice report that they found their participation in the ELTeachers CoP very useful. On the contrary, those who did not keep journals do not evaluate their participation as highly as the former (57.1% see Table 4).

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Table 4: Keeping journals as a tool for reflection – Reported usefulness of Involvement

		Table 4: Question 13.3		
		Yes	No	Total
Question 6	Very useful	18(85,7%)	16(57,1%)	34
	Moderately useful	3	12	15
	Slightly useful	0	0	0
	Absolutely useless	0	0	0
	Total	21	28	49

Similarly, 81.3% of the respondents who can provide examples of their written reflective records also evaluate their participation very useful (see Table 5).

Table 5: Provision of written records for reflection– Reported usefulness of Involvement

		Table 5: Question 13c		
		Yes	No	Total
Question 6	Very useful	26(81,3%)	8(47,0%)	34
	Moderately useful	6	9	15
	Slightly useful	0	0	0
	Absolutely useless	0	0	0
	Total	32	17	49

The significance of reflective practice in the context of the online CoPs as a major professional development activity for this sample is further corroborated with the statistically significant association presented below. Frequent examination and analysis of the teaching practices emerges as a precondition not only for learning but also for the extent to which teachers perceive their participation in the ELTeachers CoPs as a source of meaningful professional development for them (see Table 6).

Table 6: Extent to which teacher development needs have been met– Examination and analysis of teaching beliefs and practices

		Table 6: Question 7				
		A great deal	Up to Some extent	A little	Not at all	Total
Question 13a	It is part of my everyday teaching practice	13(61,9%)	16(61,5%)	1	0	30
	Once a week	8(38,1%)	3(11,5%)	1	0	12
	Once a month	0	7	0	0	7
	Almost never	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	21	26	0	0	49

In the same light, another factor that enhances the reported effectiveness of their training experience in relation to their teaching practice is the provision of written records for reflection. The role written reflection plays in enhancing the reported impact of the online CoPs bears evidence here (see Table 7).

Table 7: Extent to which teacher development needs have been met – Provision of written records for reflection

		Table 7: Question 13c		
		Yes	No	Total
Question7	A great deal	19(90,5%)	2	21
	Up to Some extent	12(46,2%)	14	26
	A little	1	1	2
	Not at all	0	0	0
	Total	32	17	49

Concerning the specific conditions that have supported their reported reconstruction of beliefs and practices, examination and analysis of their teaching beliefs and practices on a daily basis constitutes a major agent of teacher development and course effectiveness as the findings show (see Table 8). In particular, the vast majority of the respondents who reflected daily on their teaching beliefs and practices were able to integrate the new knowledge received in their every single lesson (46.7%) or once a week (40%).

Table 8: Examination and analysis of teaching beliefs and practices – Frequency of usage of new ideas in class

		Table 8: Question 14				
		In Every Single lesson	Once a week	Once a month	Almost never	Total
Question 13a	It is part of my everyday teaching practice	14(46,7%)	12(40,0%)	4	0	30
	Once a week	0	9(75,0%)	3	0	12
	Once a month	0	0	6(85,7%)	1(14,3%)	7
	Almost never	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	14	21	13	1	49

Similarly, fostering discussions on the theory and practice of teaching can enhance the training course effectiveness as Table 9 shows and corroborates the relevant research findings (Lieberman & Mace, 2009). Frequent examination and analysis of the teachers' beliefs and practices through the forum discussions is considered to be an indispensable factor of the CoP course effectiveness for the 76.1% of the respondents (see Table 9).

Table 9: Reported effectiveness of training experience in relation to teaching practice – Examination and analysis of teaching beliefs and practices

Table 9: Question 17b						
		A great deal	Up to Some extent	A little	Not at all	Total
Question 13a	It is part of my everyday teaching practice	16(76,1%)	14(51,8%)	0	0	30
	Once a week	4	8	0	0	12
	Once a month	1	5	1	0	7
	Almost never	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	21	27	1	0	49

Finally, the majority of the trainees who report knowledge restructuring tend to be more positive in their attitude and evaluation of the online CoPs. More specifically 77.8% of those who report a great deal of knowledge restructuring also state that their participation in the online CoPs proved very effective for their everyday teaching practice (see Table 10).

Table 10: Gaining of new insights into teaching – Reported effectiveness of training experience in relation to teaching practice

Table 10: Question 17b						
		A great deal	Up to Some extent	A little	Not at all	Total
Question 17a	A great deal	14(77,8%)	4	0	0	18
	Up to Some extent	6	22(78,6%)	0	0	28
	A little	0	1	1	0	2
	Not at all	1	0	0	0	1
	Total	21	27	1	0	49

Conclusion

As Greek and international educational policies require teachers to constantly adapt their pedagogy to new theoretical approaches in order to pursue their professional development and improve their classroom practices, training course designers and decision makers need to provide professional opportunities for teachers that will help them enhance their knowledge and develop new instructional practices (Borko, 2009).The findings confirm the central role that online Communities of Practice can play in the teacher education area in Greece since they prove to be an effective catalyst for the meaningful professional development of teachers and deserve to be further and more widely implemented to become a sustainable one too. However, teaching and teacher training is complex and teacher professional development policies have traditionally been ineffective in inducing lasting change (Cuban, 2013). The present paper provides evidence that teachers can benefit from membership in supportive online Communities of Practice that can help them make sense of new ideas, examine their existing practice and implement new instructional practices.

The study also found that the ELTeachers CoPs engage teachers in more meaningful and effective professional development activities than the traditional methods of in-service teacher education implemented in Greece and constitute an online environment conducive to teacher development. In particular, the online CoP environment facilitates sharing resources, problems and good practices with colleagues as well as the identification of needs, reflective discussion, exploration of solutions with colleagues and obtaining of feedback through the discussion forum. In addition, the ELTeachers CoPs training was found to be very useful for the teachers' everyday practice, addressed more effectively their professional development and practical needs, engaged them in critical reflection and contributed to the reconstruction of their beliefs, knowledge and practices to a great extent. Finally the study designates specific factors associated with their

reflection, their reported reconstruction of beliefs and practices and the reported effectiveness of their training experience in relation to their teaching practice. Examination and analysis of teaching beliefs and practices, keeping journals as a tool for reflection, obtaining feedback to teaching problems and gaining of new insights into teaching are the factors that contribute to furthering our understanding of effective implementation of online CoPs in the context of continuing professional development. Further research on reform initiatives involving online CoPs can shed light on more factors associated with teacher learning, implementation of innovative teaching practices and perceived effectiveness of the training courses and potentially pave the way for a new teacher education paradigm in Greece.

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The Impact of the Albanian Folklore of Mitrush Kuteli and De Rada

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Abstract

In his work, Kuteli chose as pretexts the folkloric ballads such as ("Rozafati"), legendary heroic epos ("Gjergj Elez Alia", "Muji and Behuri", "Muji and Zanat", etc.) and the verses of De Rada ("Skanderbeg and Ballaban", "Turku rrëmbeu një arbëreshe -The Turkish grabbed an Arberesh", "The Faith of Costandin"). The presence of some poetry motives from the verses of De Rada in his work "Rhapsody of an Arberesh poem" recreated in "Ancient Albanian Stories" of Mitrush Kuteli is of a special interest not only in the area of text comparison but also in theoretical interest. The issue relates to the trans modeling of the text, concretively with the narration of the poetry. The importance of the recreation of Kuteli is increased from the fact that these works, in contrast to the narrations of J. Kastrati, Dh. S. Shuteriqi, A. Varfi, offered to the young generations of readers a code of communication that overpasses the reading challenges that come from the ancient age of the speech (the case of the verses of De Rada) or its dialect feature (case of northern folk rhapsodies). Kuteli homogenized his work with his authorship (verses) and without authorship (folk ballads). The fact that De Rada had collected the rhapsodies from the folk people themselves, did it play a facilitating role? Can a work of Kuteli be considered an "authorship of second degree" according to the concept of Gerard Genette, a recreational model? These and some other questions will be in the center of this study.

Keywords: verses, rhapsody, narration of poetry, recreation model, pretext

Introduction

In the history of world literature, maybe the foundation that has stood to the time up to today constitutes the most important area of the modern time studies, are the creation in prose, and other types of literature, all developed on the known bases of the folk culture, ballads, and known epos, which today are known as pretexts. Fraj, one of the most known scholars of the theory of modus, in his full paper "Anatomy of the Critics" has offered a wide reference foundation, apart from the holy books and folk culture, on which he thinks stands the largest part of the critical thinking, which explains the literature and its development, by renewing the different schools of study and critical thinking, since the time of Aristotle up to today.

The relation of literature, in its various types, mainly with the folk culture, classified or not, has continued up to the future for the cause of a wide recognition they offer, but also the interesting structures of communication, content rhythm and artistic-esthetic findings.

 In the history of Albanian literature, the experience of these relationships that various writers with the passing of time have created this great wealth, in the conditions of a dialogue in new and more complete circumstances, in the case of artistic literature has continued to bring us new approaches in modern prose. Perhaps Dhimiter Pasko (Mitrush Kuteli) will continue to be one of the most fascinating writers and masters of a folk creativity, whether of a rhapsodic spirit or of a ballads, fairy tale or songs of the brave, extended in time and in the genre.

Kuteli's "Ancient Albanian Stories" is one of the most specific works for interpretations being they pre-texts, intertexts textual dialogue and other elements of this relationship that is organized by this structure of communication of artistic literature. Through such an approach, Kuteli not only brought again from another view the communication of early creations, but also continued as a kind of experience the tradition that had been done by the authors of the old Albanian literature, De Rada, Fishta and others. Regarding such a case, I think Kuteli developed a new approach to modern Albanian narrative over these motives.

The direct relations with the motives as pretexts, from the culture and folk memories, kept in forms, means and other methods, form ballads, rhapsodies, songs, folklore, fairy tales, in the Albanian literature appeared in the creations of De

Rada, but as it has resulted, the author had plenty of objective obstacles, and especially for this reason it seems that Kuteli tries to create communication bridges with the well known renaissance writer, and apart from that, the De Rada model has not failed, even though Konica has kept a harsh opinion, when he states that " De Rada's books are thrown in my closet and are full of dust, as they are written with an archaic language I cannot read…"

Kuteli brought to the attention of the Albanian readers 11 full works, mainly modern Albanian prose, by touching three emblematic historic times; the time when Arbers were dying for unknown powers, the time of the Brave and the war against the ottoman invasion. In these times Kuteli rediscovers the Albanian world through the pretexts "Rozafati", "Faith of Constandin", "Gjegj Elez Alia", "Ymer Age Ulqini", "Muji and the Fairies", "Muji and Behuri", "Ajkuna cries Omerin", "The young Omeri", "Shega and Vllastari", "The turk grabs an arberesh" and "Skanderbeg and Ballaban", the most known creations, being folk stories, ballads, fairy tales, which all "reason" clearly features, characteristics and an etho-psychological reference of Albanians.

The relationship the author has with this important subject is absolutely clear, and this relationship comes as literature, as a creation and as a model, under the terms of a reinterpretation and dialogue between texts. Regarding Kultel's culture of writing and motivation, the well-known scholar Aurel Plasari has brought us a vertical and horizontal recognition and interpretation of these issues. It is possible that Bodel's approach to modernity as a relationship "... on one hand is instability, circumstance, passerby, flying, half of art, while the other hand is eternal and immutable"[1], which find wide ground in such story structures or any other kind.

Regarding this issue, especially when dealing with Kuteli[2], Plasari sees this kind of writer's relationship as a matter of the "invariant" system, whereby he sees literature as versatility, to coincide with what was slightly marked up, transforming these pre-texts into a modern story. The author writes "And to think of literature as" versatility" means to subjugate this view of all the common elements that you can grasp by recognizing various literatures in time and area, different writers within the same literature and within different literature, but also in the work of a single writer only within it[3]. Only the concept is spread, almost universally acting with the pretexts of the masterpieces of literature. Kuteli, not only constructed a kind of recognition relation with the artistic, and later to the metaphor, and philosophical perception, but also emphasized deeply in these pretexts, he brought for the first time the practice of invariant systems, that the modern literature classifies in four categories; anthropologic, theoretical-ideological, theoretical-literary and linguistic-literary.[4] The anthropologic invariant is the most functional in the practice of Kuteli, because of the cause of " the world of archetypes" which came through these pretexts, starting from the myths, legends, changed into a universal function, being of the cultural world and the Albanian world, synthesized in the functional symbolic and literal metaphor. This type of Kuteli's relationship we find because of the talent on one hand and the culture that he had obtained in other ways on the other, emphasized from the author Martin Camaj when he writes: " Kuteli comes as a literal and a culture man, as a very complex criticism. As such a man, he does not belong to any literature trend completely, but is a three day friend, wherever he stands within the models"[5]

The sources that send to this fundamental report that Kuteli set with the folk creations, as here starts the critical and scholar thinking, are reliable, rationale, as there he felt really good to discover the fantasy, talent and to create wonderful communication structures. In one study organized from Prof. Vehbi Bala, known as "The creation questionnaire"[6], Kuteli states that "the real literal foundation was given to me by my mother's fairy tales, our rich folklore I started to know since childhood"[7], and also for the "literal model", he answers "first of all our folklore" and again the folklore: heard fairy tales or the read ones".[8] As we know, Kuteli had a strong relationship with the folklore with the real meaning of the world. Wherever he went, lived, studied and worked, he worked with folklore such as collecting it and more.

[1] Ch.Baudelaiure, "Ouvres completes" Paris 1966, pg 1163,

[2] Aurel Plasari, "Kuteli between the live and dead ", published by"Apolonia", Tirana 1995, pg.20

[3] There

[4] A.Marino, "La critique des idees literraires", Bruxelels, 1979, pg.57-80,

[5] M.Camaj:"Kuteli still not known" , "Hylli I dritës", 3-4, 1994, pg.82-83,

[66] M.Kuteli, "Answer of the questionnaire of V.Bala", 1962 (manuscript.)

[7] Plasari, cited works, pg.31,

[8] There ,

This strong relation with the folklore and the folk creations from the rhapsody, ballads, fairy tales and more, not only were interpreted in the best way of the creative and writing process, put everywhere in his social circumstances, but he wonderfully preserved the oral elements, as was the narration by creating a type of illusion, that of confession.

Through a now practice, in which Kuteli put the folk creations, or the subject on which he built such a narrative structure, in a way he differently from the "roman theory"[1], the closed epos past was transformed into a open structure of communication, and literal process, but also a necessary content rhythm, even though the time period in the epos or the folk creation of this nature is very gradual, without hurrying the author shows how the hero saddles the horse"[2].

Coming into a new reality, being of the relationships, perceptions, critical thinking, esthetical-artistic construction, meaning and metaphor, which necessarily should be together in creation, requires a rational perception for the presented events. It is exactly for this reason, and the condition the pretext stands, by having new conditions, phenomena, supernatural beings, myths, the stories of this nature are consequently narration of perception. Related to such a issue, Plasari brings in memory the term " reluctance in perception" of Torodov, by explaining the causes that the extraordinary events are not happening in a wonderful environment but in another daily contest, so ordinary ,[3]that's why related to such an event Plasar says "As we read again the narrative prose of Kuteli, one of the things we learn from it is that the fantasy and pretextuality is not free[4].

The use of pretexts, naturally through the known parabole not only in the early literature but also the modern one, brings to attention and with continuous debate many issues and problems of literature in points of view, the form and content, where according to the theory of Janet should be the object of open critics, constitutive elements of works and literal game… the history of esthetical and the technical forms[5], into a process go the creations of such a nature.

"The Ancient Albanian Stories" Kuteli it is an interesting fact of trans modeling of the texts, the transformation in the structure of communication of this kind and the relation as a strong communication association with the folk ballads, heroic epos and verses of De Rada. Such practices continue to be in the world literature, even in the modern contemporary epos. The issue of deep recognition of this ancient fundamental, apart from creating a plasmatic relation between two approaches, that of pretext and literal text, it brings a new view of the anthropological and ethnographic frame, through a mediation of literature and folk, by making a reciprocal relationship, without losing the first source.

In the contrast to other philologist, folklorists, ethnologists, as it happened to Fishta before him in " Lahuta e Malesise" or Jakov Xoxa or some others, was put as a mediator through the folk subject with the Albanian reader, he gave the reader a modern prose, as a cultural narrator, Barti thinks so for the act of writing: ' *to write means … to own a tangible questioning, which the writer through a ending suspension, decides not to answer. The answer comes from each of us, by bringing the history, speech and its freedom; but as the history, speech and freedom are transformed infinitely, the answer of the world for the writer is infinite; we never stop answering what is written out of each answer; stated, emulated, and then substituted, the meaning goes, the question remains"[6],* this does not prevents us to consider the act of writing in the work "The Ancient Albanian Stories" of Kuteli and all the critical thinking and studies about it.

Kuteli naturally gives a number of reasons, such as the relativity of time and space, the temporal conception, the tracing of ancient metathecate, the testimony of a good psychological literature, the significance of the intimate state of affairs, the judgment of Plasar has a suggestion that makes important the interpretation of this creativity as a mix of reality with the subjective world[7], making it a symbolic, fantastic prose, with a synthesis, magical, but without any magical realism, as has been said in any case.

What can be said with certainty is that in a significant part of his work, Mitrush Kuteli joined the vast culture and deep knowledge of the Albanian world, in the anthropological and ethnographic area, with the master skill of writing. The narrator

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[1] *Mihail Bahtin "Issues of roman", (Epos and roman), pg.35,*

[2] *Viktor Shkollovski, there, "Time convention", pg.199,*

[3] *Tz.Tedorov "Intruduction a la literature fantastiqua", Paris 1970, pg.41,*

[4] *Plasari, cited works, pg.49,*

[5] *Zh. Janet, "Figure", "Hejza", Prishtine 1985, pg.80,*

[14] *R. Barthes, "Mythologies", Tirana 2016, pg.9*

[7] *Plasari, cited works, pg.78*

in his prose is the merger of two registers into one: there we find the folk narrator and the wise writer. This tradition started with De Rada's rhapsodies and continued as a tradition with the heroic epos created by Fishta with "*Lahuta e Malesise*"

In the theoretical approach, the evocation of the unwritten folk creations is a typical phenomenon of romanticism, but in Mitrush Kuteli this phenomena does not relate to romanticism, but to an inner creative mission of the author. He put a goal to himself, intentionally, to play the role of a mediator between the creation that traditionally passed from one generation to the other, in the form of folk stories, and now the educated man, who knows how to read and write. In this approach, Kuteli is the first that mediates the folk with literature, a transformation of one to the other. The case of symmetry that we have mentioned between the *Rhapsody of a Albanian Poem* of De Rada and the *Ancient Albanian Stories* of Kuteli is much more specific. It is well known that Faik Konica expressed his thoughts about the Poetry of De Rada: *His books I have thrown in the closet, as they are written with such an archaic language, as I cannot read. The poor De Rada, if he had gone at least six months in Albania, would have learnt Albanian much better and would have many admirers.*

We can imagine what a very limited degree of communication had the verses of De Rada for another reader, when Faik Konica, one of the most talented people of the time, also considered as the most enlightened Euro-Albanian, complained he did not understand.

There was some effort before Kuteli to build communication bridges between De Rada's work and the Albanian reader on the other side of Adriatic. At first it was Luigj Gurakuqi, later there was another effort. It is well known that in the second half of the 20th century De Rada was read in Albanian mostly by adaptations and sometimes even by literary works.

Mitrush Kuteli chose another more productive path. He did not take over the work of the philologist, such as Dhimiter Shuteriqi, Shaban Demiraj and others, but the responsibility of the recreator. If we see closely to this responsibility, we notice something very interesting; any time th elanguage becomes difficult to communicate, Kuteli has interfered with his skills of an educated writer. It is not accidental that his pretexts are from Arberesh ballads and brave eops. In the first case the obstacle came from arcahism, in the second case from dialect. Both were walls that prevented the recognition of these great corpuses of folk heritage. And is exactly Mitrush Kuteli that brings down these walls by transformation of a true literature subject.

This is exactly the difference between the prose of Kuteli and Jakov Xoxa, who relied powerfully on the folk speech, but does not recreate on the bases of folk pretexts and does not play the role of mediator from the unwriten folk materials to the educated reader.

Later on, the tradition of merging the intellectual recognition of the Albanian world with the creative talent as prose writer, similarly to Kuteli, was followed only from Dhimitër S. Shuteriqi.

This happens at a time when Gjergj Pekmezi for example who was part of the friends of society "*School of Bukuresht*" by republishing the *Albanian Bee* of Mitko, did the opposite: he took off the *Albanian Bee* one of the verses of De Rada by referring the principle of subject homogeneity, what is not folklore, should not be part of folk song collection.

In some studies of the recent times, the prose of Kuteli is compared to the magical Latin-American realization, referring the presence of magical, fantastic; the role of folk narration, the transit between the believable realities and unbelievable reality etc..

Except that magical realisation is a phenomenon that featured its characteristics at a time when Kuteli was finished with his writing, it should be recalled that his purpose was not to invent creative methods nor to experiment with folk creativity. His purpose was simply to regenerate some of the monuments of popular heritage that were at risk of being locked in very narrow circles: among the young Italo-Albanians generations and mainly in the Northern Areas of Albania, where the epic rhapsodists continued to astonish foreign researchers. In this sense we can say that Kuteli turned national what was local and threatened to remain an archival phenomenon,uplifted these two legacies from a narrow reading scale to the highest degree of communication; such skill can be recognized as one of the most important merits of his personality. With this we want to say that Kuteli's merit was not only a recreator and a mediator, but also a speech developer and rescuer of communication.

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[3] A.Marino, "La critique des idees literraires", Bruxelels, 1979, pg.57-80,

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[9] Zh. Janet, "Figure", "Hejza", Prishtine 1985, pg.80,

[10] R. Barthes, "Mythologies", Tirana 2016, pg.9

Executive Function Skills and Their Effect on the Academic Life of Students

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Abstract

Executive function skills are skills that assist individuals in achieving their objectives. They are relevant not only to academic settings, but are also of import in other areas of life. As a result of their importance, they have become the focus of many studies. Executive function skills are essential in order to be successful in academia, as well as in the professional development of the individual. From an organizational point of view, these skills are regarded to be indispensable in increasing the effectiveness of human resources. The objective of this research is the investigation of student executive function skills and the study of their impact on their academic life. The study sample consists of 165 students at the Mediterranean University of Albania. The descriptive method and quantitative research will be used in this study. The research instrument is the questionnaire, which was distributed online. The testing of the hypotheses is conducted through the use of a 95% confidence interval. The study concluded that executive function skills have a positive impact on the academic achievement of students. The executive function skills most drawn upon by students are: response inhibition, metacognition and time management. Whereas, the executive function skills that students need to further boost are: stress tolerance, task initiation and emotional control.

Keywords: student, executive function skills, academic achievement

1. Introduction

Some skills are inherent in individuals from birth, while some others can be potentially developed through the course of one's life. Executive function skills belong to the second category. They are concerned with the continuous expansion of the human mind. Executive function skills assist with the achievement of objectives, time management, working memory, creativity and beyond. Recognizing and enhancing them has an impact on the individual's academic and personal growth (Allan, Hume, Allan, Farrington, & Lonigan, 2014). Executive function skills are applicable in both school (Serpell & Esposito, 2016) and the workplace. Companies prefer employing people who possess enhanced executive function skills and work on improving them. Executive function skills are viewed as directly linked to people's success in the workplace. As a result, they are considered to be an individual's most valuable asset. Not all executive function skills can be developed similarly. Some particular skills are more developed than others. Analyzing personal strengths and weaknesses helps an individual to focus on those areas that are in need of improvement. Neglecting such issues can have negative effects in an individual's present and future. The objective of this research is the investigation of student executive function skills and the study of their impact on their academic life.

2. Literature Review

The study of the human mind is quite complex and filled with obstacles. The executive function skills research area is complex and distinct. The analysis of executive function skills adds further value to various scientific studies concerned with societal advancement. Detailed research in this field can shed light on different aspects of the functioning of the human brain.

Many scholars have conducted research on executive function skills (Duckworth, Tsukayama, & May, 2010; Dawson & Guare, 2010; Welsh, Nix, Blair, Bierman, & Nelson, 2010; Latzman, Elkovitch, Young, & Clark, 2010; Knouse, Feldman, & Blevins, 2014; Serpell & Esposito, 2016). The largest part of researchers has centered on the study of the link between executive function skills and achievements in the field of mathematics (Jacob & Parkinson, 2015).

Extant research has shown that executive function skills have a positive impact on academic achievement (Duckworth, Tsukayama, & May, 2010; Knouse, Feldman, & Blevins, 2014; Latzman, Elkovitch, Young, & Clark, 2010; Welsh, Nix, Blair, Bierman, & Nelson, 2010; Fuhs, Nesbitt, Farran, & Dong, 2014). The further enhancement of executive function skills can result in an increase of academic achievement.
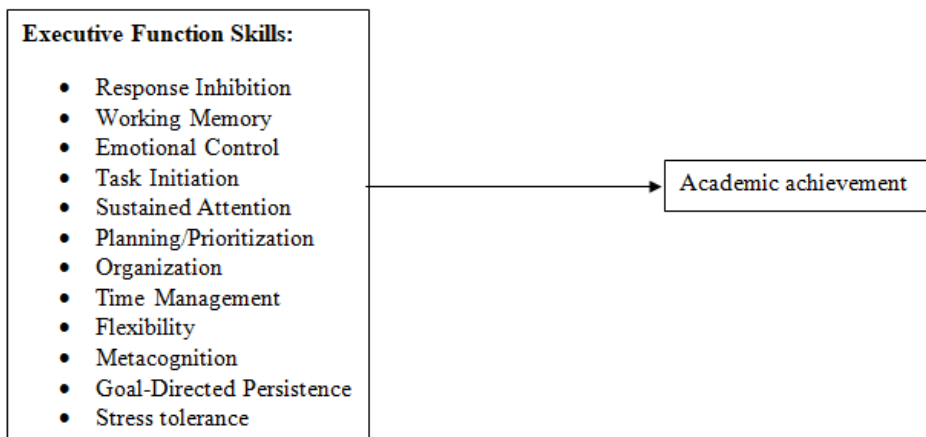
The research questions for the study are:

1. Which Executive Function Skills are most established in students?

2. Which Executive Function Skills need further improvement by students?

The research hypotheses for the study are:

• H1a: Executive function skills have an impact on the academic achievement of students (α=0.05).

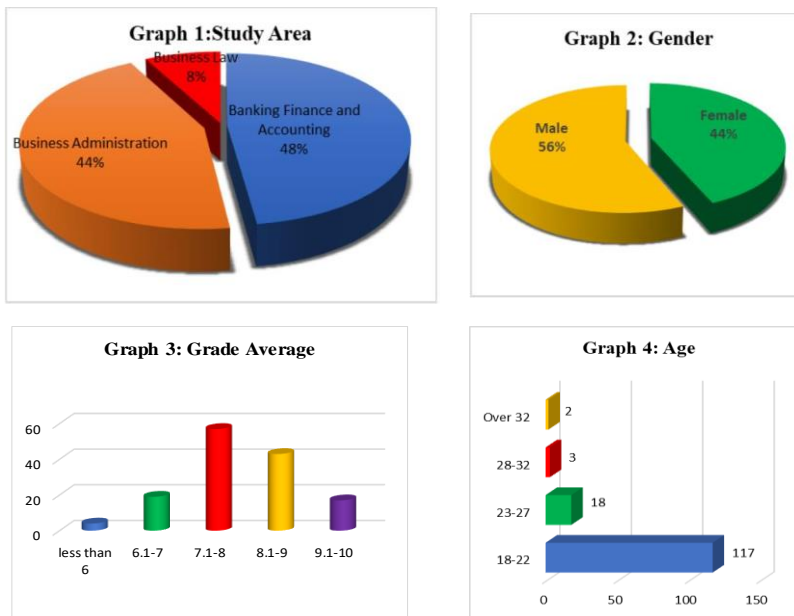• H1b: Elements of executive function skills have the same impact on the academic achievement of students (α=0.05).

The literature review generates the following conceptual model:

Executive Function Skills:

- Response Inhibition
- Working Memory
- Emotional Control
- Task Initiation
- Sustained Attention
- Planning/Prioritization
- Organization
- Time Management
- Flexibility
- Metacognition
- Goal-Directed Persistence
- Stress tolerance

→ Academic achievement

3. Methodology

This study employs quantitative research and the research instrument is the questionnaire (Dawson & Guare, 2010). The questionnaire was distributed online. The research instrument is divided into two parts. The first part contains questions on twelve elements of executive function skills (response inhibition, working memory, emotional control, task initiation, sustained attention, planning/prioritization, organization, time management, flexibility, metacognition, goal-directed persistence, stress tolerance), and the second part consists of demographic questions. Questions are evaluated according to a 7-point Likert-scale, ranging from point one: "Strongly disagree" to point seven: "Strongly agree" (Vagias, 2006). The period dusring which the questionnaire was distributed is October 2017 – January 2018. The study sample consists of 165 bachelor students at the Mediterranean University of Albania. Questionnaires valid for the purposes of analysis are 140.

The rate of response return for the questionnaires is 85%. The descriptive data of the study sample are shown in the graphs below.

Graph 1: Study Area
- Business Law 8%
- Banking Finance and Accounting 48%
- Business Administration 44%

Graph 2: Gender
- Male 56%
- Female 44%

Graph 3: Grade Average

Graph 4: Age
- Over 32: 2
- 28-32: 3
- 23-27: 18
- 18-22: 117

The software utilized in the study for conducting the analysis are JASP-0.8.5.1 and SPSS 20. Table 1 data analysis shows the value of the reliability coefficient Cronbach's α=0.856 (>0.7). This conveys the data are valid for usage in this study.

Table 1: Reliability coefficient Cronbach's α

	Cronbach's α
scale	0.856

Note. Of the observations, 165 were used, 0 were excluded list-wise, and 165 were provided.
* minimum acceptable value 0.7.

4. Empirical Analysis

Which Executive Function Skills are most established in students?

Three Executive Function Skills are most established among students: response inhibition, metacognition and time management. The element of response inhibition is most established in students. It is the ability to process thoughts before making actions, or evaluating a situation before acting. Second, metacognition is the ability think critically about a situation, which includes self-monitoring and self-evaluation in solving problems. Third, time management infers the effective management of time. Table 2 shows the analysis of the data provided.

Table 2: Most Established Executive Function Skills

	Valid	Missing	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Response Inhibition	140	0	17.05	3	21
Time Management	140	0	16.06	5	21
Metacognition	140	0	16.39	5	21

Which Executive Function Skills need further improvement by students?

Executive function skills less established in students are: stress tolerance, task initiation, and emotional control. One of the challenges students struggle most is stress management. Stress has been termed the health epidemic of the 21st century,

and needs be managed and kept under control, in order for individuals to better cope with stressful and uncertain situations. Students often encounter difficulty in meeting deadlines. They find it challenging to turn in their assignments on time. A sizable amount of introspection is required in order for them beginning to comply with their given task deadlines. Emotional control comes third as least established skill in students. Emotions have a negative impact on student performance. They need to additionally concentrate on the controlling of emotions in order to improve their academic performance.

Table 3: Least Established Executive Function Skills

	Valid	Missing	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Emotional Control	140	0	13.92	3	21
Task Initiation	140	0	13.89	5	21
Stress tolerance	140	0	8.571	3	15

H1a: Executive function skills have an impact on the academic achievement of students ($\alpha=0.05$).

Table 4 conclusions of the analysis demonstrate that executive function skills have an impact on student academic achievement. Between the two variables there exists a significant statistical positive correlation with correlation coefficient $r=0.308$ and $BF_{10}=91.02$. This study shows that the development of skills is highly important for students as they have a direct impact on their academic achievement. The analysis concludes that hypothesis H1a is supported with a confidence interval 95%. Schematically the analysis is shown in Graph 5.

Table 4: Bayesian Pearson Correlation

			r	BF_{10}
Executive Function Skills	-	Student Academic Achievement	0.308	91.02
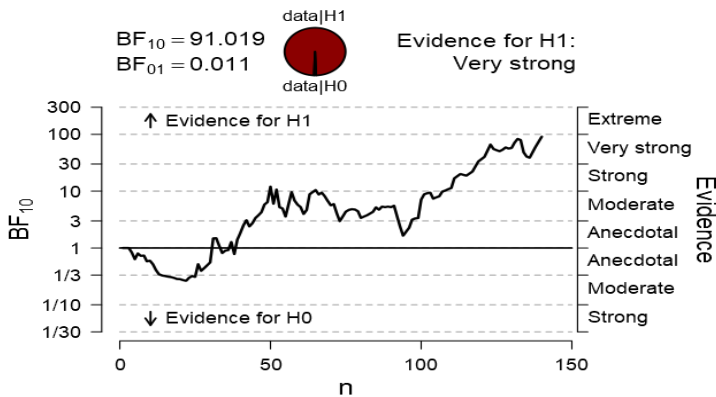
Graph 5: Executive function skills and student academic achievement

H1b: Elements of executive function skills have the same impact on the academic achievement of students ($\alpha=0.05$).

Table 5 data shows that of 12 elements of the executive function skills, only 7 have a positive impact on academic achievement. The elements that have the most impact on student academic achievement are: response inhibition, working memory, sustained attention, planning/prioritization, time management, flexibility and metacognition. The above seven elements and student academic achievement have a significant statistical correlation. While, the elements that do not have an impact on student academic achievement are: emotional control, task initiation, organization, goal-directed persistence, and stress tolerance. Of the elements that do not have an impact on student academic achievement, there exists an

insignificant statistical negative correlation between stress tolerance student academic achievement. Hypothesis H1b is rejected, since only 7 of the elements have an impact on student academic achievement. The conclusions of the analysis are presented in a more detailed manner in Table 5 and schematically in Graphs 6-17.

Table 5: Bayesian Pearson Correlation

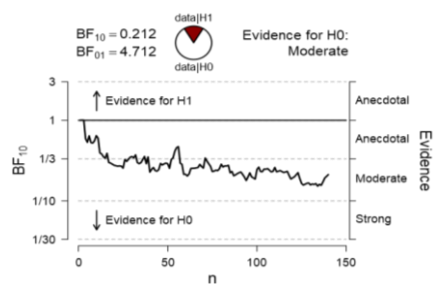|			r	BF_{10}
Response Inhibition	-	Student Academic Achievement	0.303	72.475
Working Memory	-	Student Academic Achievement	0.229	4.099
Emotional Control	-	Student Academic Achievement	0.102	0.217
Task Initiation	-	Student Academic Achievement	0.101	0.212
Sustained Attention	-	Student Academic Achievement	0.253	9.361
Planning/Prioritization	-	Student Academic Achievement	0.330	272.526
Organization	-	Student Academic Achievement	0.130	0.334
Time Management	-	Student Academic Achievement	0.185	1.134
Flexibility	-	Student Academic Achievement	0.247	7.743
Metacognition	-	Student Academic Achievement	0.263	13.627
Goal-Directed Persistence	-	Student Academic Achievement	0.102	0.214
Stress tolerance	-	Student Academic Achievement	-0.176	0.906
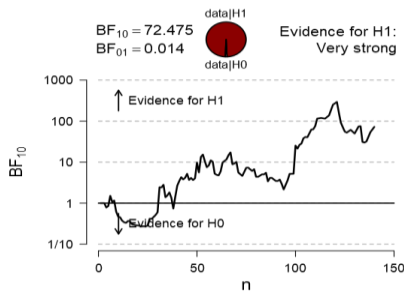
Graph 6: Response Inhibition and Student Academic Achievement
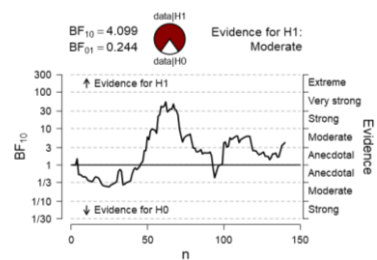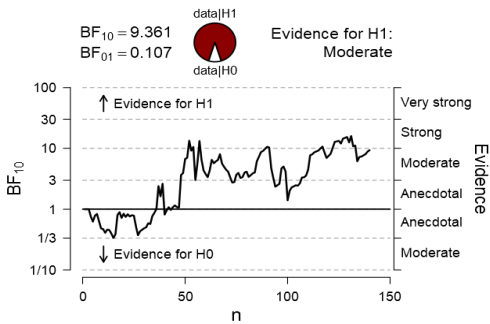

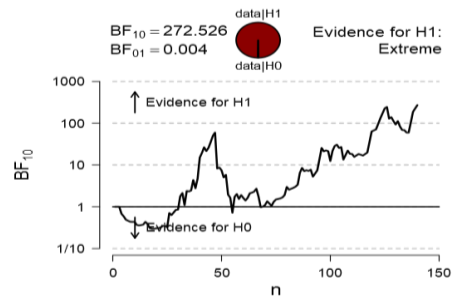**Graph 7:** Working Memory and Student Academic Achievement
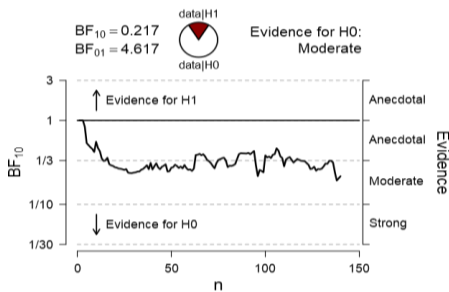
**Graph 8:** Emotional Control and Student Academic Achievement
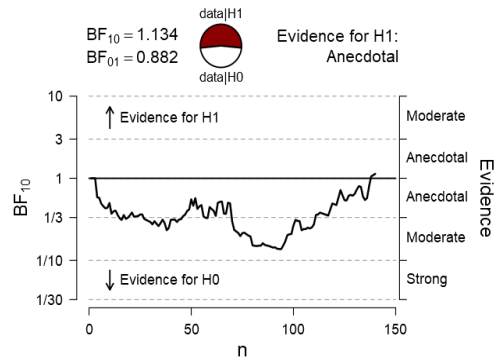

Graph 9: Task Initiation and Student Academic Achievement

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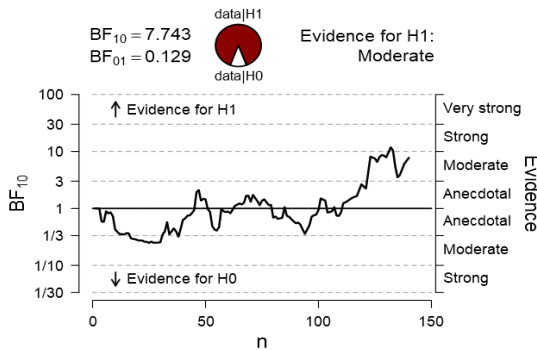**Graph 10:** Sustained Attention and Student Academic Achievement

Graph 11: Planning/Prioritization and Student Academic Achievement
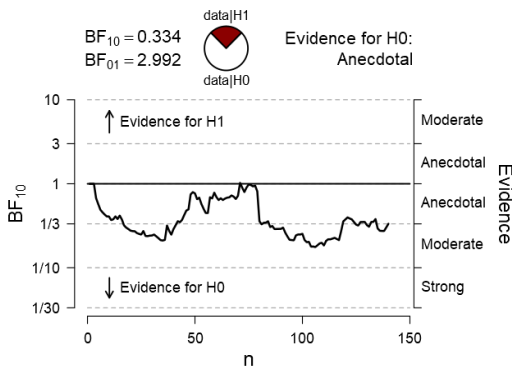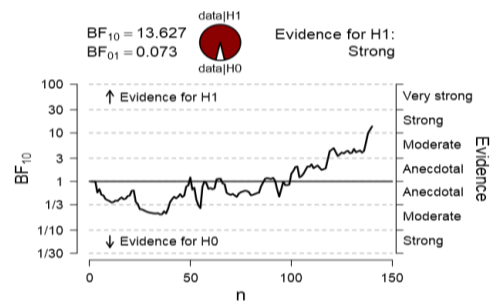

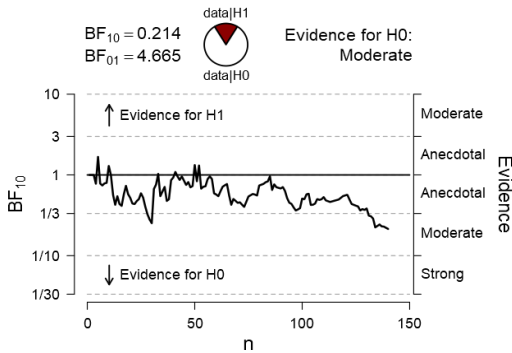**Graph 12:** Organization and Student Academic Achievement
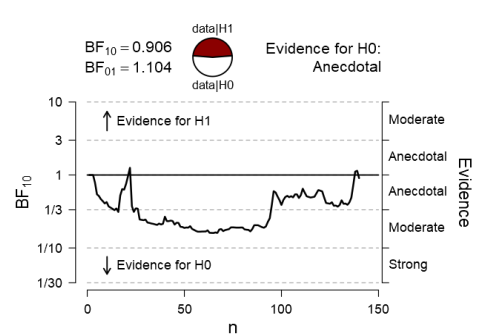

Graph 13: Time Management and Student Academic Achievement

Graph 14: Flexibility and Student Academic Achievement

Graph 15: Metacognition and Student Academic Achievement

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Graph 16: Goal-Directed Persistence and Student Academic Achievement

Graph 17: Stress tolerance and Student Academic Achievement

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Executive function skills play a definitive role in the professional and personal development of students. This study has concluded that executive function skills most established in students are: response inhibition, metacognition and time management.

While the executive function skills that necessitate improvement on the part of students are: stress tolerance, task initiation and emotional control. Analyzing their weak points assists students in further enhancing such capabilities, whilst working towards transforming them into strengths.

Executive function skills have a positive impact on student academic achievement. There exists a significant statistical correlation between them with correlation coefficient $r = 0.308$ and $BF_{10} = 91.02$. An increase of executive function skills causes an increase in academic performance. Out of 12 elements, only 7 elements: response inhibition, working memory, sustained attention, planning/prioritization, time management, flexibility and metacognition, have an impact on student academic achievement. Whereas 5 elements: emotional control, task initiation, organization, goal-directed persistence, and stress tolerance, do not have an impact on student academic achievement. The conclusions of the study are in line with those of the literature review.

Based on the study's findings, it is recommended of universities to employ such research instruments, in order to analyze, with the aim to galvanize, the most established executive function skills and those less developed among students.

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Presentation of Bilingualism in Preschools in Gjakova and Prizren

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Abstract

Through this paper it will be supported that the argument of child development can be stimulated, encouraged and accelerated through appropriate techniques for a healthy growth and development. The aim of this study is to research the impact that the teaching of two foreign languages has to do with the narrative skills of pre-school children. Also it will be discussed the global impact as an important factor for young parents in order to teach them in a slang form to their children as well. During this paper it will be presented the research which is done in the pre-school age group, by including the influence of the social and psychological system, where from this year the English Language as a foreign language has been incorporated. It will be noted that development can occur spontaneously as a result of maturity, which is the controlled growing the genetically process. Also, on the other hand, it is influenced by the appropriate practices of well-being and lifestyle that can encourage and accelerate, as well as inadequate practices and life forms that may hinder or slow it down. This paper focuses on linguistic development as a dimension of the cognitive sphere. In addition it will be precisely elaborated in the context of this combined approach between nature and welfare, by emphasizing the idea that the development of children can be stimulated, encouraged and accelerated through appropriate healthy growth techniques.

Keywords: Language, bilingualism, continuous learning, language development, adaptation techniques

1. Introduction

This paper aims to identify the difficulties in learning foreign languages in pre-school education: the scale and types of difficulties, then measure their impact on all pupils' involvement, where early childhood is the most suitable time for learning foreign languages.

The reason why focusing on bilingualism in these two cities is a result of my work in internship where we go to monitor the school's curriculum and subjects that our students have at the Faculty of Education.

We could notice the differences of the preschool children of Gjakova and Prizren.

The city of Gjakova has always been remarkable for having a very small percentage of other nationalities beside the Albanian one, as well as the presence of the Serbian community. Nevertheless, now with the global language that has included Kosovo, English language, as well as through media technology, we have seen quite a change in the city of Gjakova.

Meanwhile, the city of Prizren has always been remarkable for the multinationalism of the Turkish and Bosnian communities.

Therefore, considering these two elements and bilingual changes in preschoolers, I began to make comparisons between the two cities.

Language is used by the society to name the phenomena associated with its activity. It is constantly enriched to follow the changes and new developments. Hence, as the scholar Xh. Lloshi stated that, "a traditional purism has failed." It is known that the term "purism", (lat. "pürus"= pure, clear) should be understood as a cultural, scientific and educational movement

to preserve a language from the influence of other languages, a very current phenomenon throughout world. Such movements have taken place in several developed languages, where there have been attempts that aimed at preserving their language even with "fanaticism". Such efforts have been made in Germany since the XVII century where, for such purposes, there were established outstanding linguistic associations with scholars such as: Opic, Leibniz, etc. Purist movements can also be found in France, Germany and so on, especially against Anglicisms, particularly from the 70s of the twentieth century, with the establishment of legal grounds for the protection of the purity of language. The purity of the language in many cases relies on patriotic and national motives, where native language was rightly seen not only as a mere communication tool, but also as a primary basis for raising national awareness and source of identification.

The linguistic diversity of today's Albanian language in Kosovo should also be seen from the point of view of people's movement around the world, globalization as a liaison between states and peoples, that is to say: languages, foreign language literature, the use of which is being expanded, collaboration with joint projects, new technical, technological and electronic discoveries, etc. There are some of the reasons for the entering of different terms of fields from foreign languages in Albanian language. Another case is the use of two or more languages within a family, especially in Albanian Diaspora families, which is considered another source of interference and language transfer, which are also typical bilingual.

Bilingualism once used to be a treasure, when someone spoke two languages was something rare, and was used to be considered as a value. Today this phenomenon is very common; even it is considered that it "must definitely happen". Not only to be close to the great opportunities, such as in work, or outside of it, in school and society. Therefore, it is very important that in everyone's curriculum to appear as being known one, at least two languages, the native and a foreign one. Being bilingual, in a society that has only one official language, is a challenge that goes even beyond when it comes to knowing two or more foreign languages.

2. Preschoolers

We know that 4-5 year-old preschoolers have the characteristics of age behavior and the challenges of creating their personality. In the linguistic-communicative field development, teachers and parents should work based on several components: development through symbols, spoken language, listened language, written language, knowledge of books and signs, language intonation and learning strategies. According to scholars, the best period of learning one or more languages, in addition to what the child is most often practicing, is between 0 and 10 years old. From 12 to 20 months old, children start reproducing the sounds they hear and link them together to create the first words, even though they do not know the meaning of the words they say.

The scope of our study is defined in a particular linguistic group. The operation used in this analysis is the linguistic comparison, which is called the Contrastive Comparison of two language systems. While the data and the results achieved during the contrast analysis process can be used in research of language theory as well as in the applied[1] linguistics. Language psychologists advise working with educational methods and learning with illustrated books, DVDs, and sound recordings. However, the best solution is to hire a teacher, or send the child to language courses, so that he/she can learn correctly[2].

Language development is the process by which children can understand and communicate language during early childhood. From birth to age five, children develop language at a very fast pace. Language development phases are universal for all people. However, the age and pace with which a child can learn the language varies among children. Therefore, the language development of a child should be compared with the norms, not with another child.

Language comes to us in two forms: in the listening (receptive) and in the spoken (expressive). These two forms are applied through communication. Communication is a broader notion. Communication / Speech is the formation of oral sound patterns that we use fluently, while we speak;

✓ The receptive language is the one which gets the message, is what we "get" during a conversation.

[1]Sénéchal, M. (1997). The Differential Effect of Storybook Reading on Preschoolers' Acquisition of Expressive and Receptive Vocabulary. Journal of Child Language, 24, 123-138

[2]MASHT (2011). Standardet e zhvillimit dhe të mësuarit në fëmijërinë e hershme 0-6 vjet. http://ëëë.masht-gov.net/advCms/documents/ELDS_report_ ALB_for%20ËEB.pdf

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✓ Expressive language is the language that conveys thought, is what we "talk".

Traditional cognitive development theories are grouped into four categories[1]. Nativist approach postulates that children have an innate cognitive system, which is unfold through interactions with the world. The behaviorist approach is based on the mechanisms of associating and generalizing of stimuli to explain learning by avoiding discussions on mental representations. The third approach refers to the Piaget's constructivism and relies on the idea of complex mental representations learned through the interactions of the child with the world and the cognitive stages characterized by different forms of representations and logical actions. Another constructivist approach is Vygotsky's interactionist theory, according to which cognition is developed through the interaction of the child with the cultural and linguistic system. The more the child's vocabulary expands, the easier it becomes to learn new words. This is mainly due to the paradigm effect. This means that children can understand the pragmatic relationship between words and can quickly learn new words that fill the empty spaces in their paradigm. So as soon as the child has learned the colors: red, green, yellow, blue, black and white, they can begin to learn less common colors such as: purple, oranges or pink. Therefore, in the preschool age, vocabulary and language use are expected to develop faster and more fully, since linguistic bases have already been established. Language skills continue to improve during early childhood. Language is the result of children's ability to use symbols. As their brains develop and they gain the ability for representative thinking, children also learn and improve language skills. (Zgourides, G. (2000)). John Ston evidenced a number of determinants of language development divided into five areas that she accompanied with examples from the two main discoveries for each field:

Social: Infants understand the communicative purpose of the speaker and use this information to guide their language learning; b) the verbal environment affects language learning; *Perceptive:* Perceptual habits of the baby determine the stage of learning; b) perceptiveness is related to the learning of language forms; *Cognitive processes*: Frequency affects the degree of learning; b) collaborations between different language areas can occur when the sentence that "needs" to be expressed requires more mental resources than the child possesses; *Conceptual:* Rational terms relate to mental age; b) language skills are influenced by speech recognition; *Linguistic:* The suffixes of the verbs are helpful for the verb meaning; b) Current vocabulary affects new lessons.

In the process of language development, communication skills and literacy, educators should pay attention to some of the basic elements of speaking:

1. Phonological awareness - the ability to recognize the different voices of speech (rhythm, rhyme, recognition of similarities and differences of voices).

2. Understanding the language - the ability to understand the meaning of spoken and written language.

3. Awareness of printed materials - the ability to understand how printed material is organized and how it is used in writing and reading. Children learn that speech and writing convey thoughts and ideas.

4. Awareness of letters - awareness that there is a relationship between letters and voices.

Parents along with educators can do a lot to encourage and enrich the development of language in young children, leading to the development of language literacy and eloquence. Literacy and linguistic eloquence is an important part of the child's preparation for school, but also of the later period of life during the professional development of the personality.

3. Language Development at Pre-school Age

The assessment of children's language development to date has generally been carried out in clinical cases to identify language deficiencies, backwardness or other disorders such as aphasia. CELF Preschool-2 (Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals)[2] of the year 2006, by the authors Semel, Ëiig and Secord, is one of the clinical tests used to assess language skills in children aged 3-6 years. CELF Preschool-2 produces a thorough assessment of language, perceptive language content, expressive language content, and index scores. Another clinical tool is the Index of Narrative

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[1]*Gentner, D., & Loeëenstein, J. (2002). Relational Language and Relational Thought: The Development and Consequences. Në E. Amsel, & J. P. Byrnes, Language, Literacy, and Cognitive Development of Symbolic Communication (fv. 81-98). Neë Jersey: Laërence Erlbaum Associates.*

[2]*Semel, E., Ëiig, E. H., & Secord, Ë. (2006). Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals. San Antonio: Pearson Education*

Microstructure (INMIS) [1] prepared by Justice and her colleagues in 2006, which is used to assess the productivity and linguistic complexity of 5-12 year olds. These will then be used to compare with the results of school tests. Another tool is the Index of Narrative Complexity (INC) [2] designed by Petersen and Gillam in 2008, to be used as a monitoring tool for progress as a result of a clinical intervention. Beyond clinical aspects, there is a constant need to monitor children's language development, by educators, teachers or government education programs and campaigns. To assess the narrative skills of children in the natural development trend, Laura Justice and her colleagues in 2009 presented a language pre-school language assessment tool. A tool suitable to be used by educators and other professionals in order to evaluate language speaking skills of preschoolers in a narrative context, e.g. telling a story that is previously evaluated, if the pre-school child has already created the ability to understand, absorb and acquire[3].

4. Family Literacy Environment

The home-based family environment for child rearing is of crucial importance. Young children use all their senses, sight, touch, hearing, smell and taste as they interact with the surrounding environment and learn about it. The complexity of the family environment combined with this multi-sensory experience enables the categorization of family environments. Because of this, it is important that the dimensions of family environments have to be measured and used as development indicators in children's studies[4]. One of the most important components of a supportive environment is parental practice of reading aloud to their children from an early age. All reading activities as well as other interactive activities with children such as: telling tales, singing songs, literary games, as well as parents' beliefs and behaviors toward reading and their demographic data, constitute the Family Literacy Environment (FLM). Studies have shown that there is a positive relationship between family literacy environment and children's language skills[5]. One of their most important discoveries was finding that the amount of discussions(conversations) that took place in the family, especially social conversations, had an important link with the major changes in the child's vocabulary growth and his/her achievements. In later studies, Sénéchal explored more deeply by discovering that the rich family literacy environment and the exposure of children to books increases not only their vocabulary but also their phonological knowledge[6]. In this study, children's exposure to books did not necessarily mean that parents gave them instruction on language learning or written words. Therefore, they emphasized that children would learn to know in part the letters and texts in a passive way.

Being a polyglot or a bilingual child means his or her mental ability to speak two or more languages, despite the essential differences between languages in the field of lexicon, syntax, expression, and so on. Thus, despite the multitude of different phenomena, words, syntactic structures, rules, and different morphological traits, children are able to acquire two or rarely more languages and therefore be called poly or bilingual. These languages can be learned at different age periods and in various ways. Then they can be learned separately as well as in parallel. They can be taught at school according to previously verified curricula, in kindergartens, in families, in other areas of life, or in free forms of daily communication. Usually, under normal conditions and normal age and time, these languages can be learned naturally and without any special difficulties and of course they comprise a precious cultural asset of the child. The presence, influence and interaction of many psychosocial factors and cultures of the host country environment as well as the country of origin together with the respective diversity makes the language learning process even more complex.

It is known that if a child up to the age of 7 has not acquire any language for various reasons, then the probability of its perfect acquisition will later be lost forever. So the so-called age-sensitive phase of language acquisition is very important and justified also in terms of the preparation and biological ability of the brain for language learning, or languages and children being natural bilinguals without great sacrifices. So, the brain capacity itself enables this and in terms of receptivity where the language acquisition premise is born. Then, over time, opportunities for language acquisition will be ever smaller

[1]Justice, L. M., Boëels, R., Pence, K., & Gosse, C. (2009). A Scalable Tool for Assessing Children's Language Abilities ëithin a Narrative Context: The NAP (Narrative Assessment Protocol). Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 25, 218-234.

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[6]Sénéchal, M., LeFevre, J.-A., Thomas, E. M., & Daley, K. E. (1998). Differential Effects of Home Literacy Experiences on the Development of Oral and Ëritten Language. Reading Research Quarterly, 33, 96-116.

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and the process will be more difficult, although the awareness and personal thirst for more cultures and more languages will increase, even more in the conditions of modern life and the need for dynamic cultural intercommunication in the global dimension and in the context of globalization.

Phonology: Phonology is that aspect of language that deals with rules that govern the structure, distribution and order of speech sounds as well as syllables. Each language uses a variety of sounds or phonemes. A phoneme is a small language unit of sound that can signal a difference in meaning[1]. Phonological rules regulate the distribution and ranking of phonemes within one language. This arrangement is not the same as in a speech, which, in fact, is a mechanical action of producing phonemes. If phonological rules were missing, the distribution and ranking of phonemes would be random. The sounds are classified according to the role played by these organs of articulation. [2]

Morphology: Morphology is the branch of grammar that deals with the study of forms and inner structure of words. Words consist of one or more small units, known as morphemes. In the hierarchy of linguistic, morpheme stands a degree below the degree of the word, as its constituent element. [3] A morpheme is the smallest grammatical unit that makes sense and is bound. For example, stone, yes, snow, flowers etc. These are words composed of a morpheme: root word (or root).

Syntax: The shape or structure of a sentence is governed by syntax rules. These rules specify the words, phrases, and order of simple sentences or parts of sentences. Syntax rules also include word organization and the relationship between words, word classes, and other sentence elements. Syntax specifies which combination of words is acceptable and grammatically correct in the discourse and which is not. [4] Syntax is the science of discourse and as any science, it seeks to explain and describe. It studies and explains some word combinations of why they are regular and some are not, recognizing syntax as that part of the language that is interested in the possible conjunctions of the words and the legalities that govern these unions. (Dhima, Th. 2012).

5. Research Results

1. Gender of the child- In selecting the target group we have decided to have 25 participants, mainly parents of both genders, aiming to better study the language analysis of children and their development. This target group was surveyed in the region of Gjakova and Prizren, making our research easier, because we faced their behavior directly. Graphically it looks like this:

2. Child age- Based on the importance of the research and especially the case of the analysis, the study is oriented to age groups ranging from 4-5 years old, where more of the surveyed parents had girls, the 5-6 group is dominated by males and 6-7 years is dominated by girls.
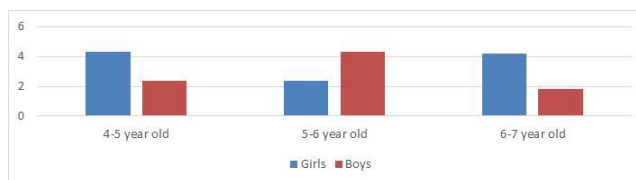
3. What language (languages) do you speak with your child? - In the question - What language do you speak to the child? They all responded that the language they speak to children is Albanian, different from the children of Gjakova, while

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[1]*Diesendruck, G. (2007). Mechanisms of Ëord Learning. Në E. Hoff, & M. Shatz, Blackëell Handbook of Language Development (fv. 257-274). Hong-Kong: Blackëell Publishing*
[2]*Beci, B. (2010). Gramatika e Gjuhës Shqipe. Tiranë: Botime EDFA.*
[3] *Memushaj, R. (2012). Hyrje në Gjuhësi. Tiranë: Toena.*
[4] *Owens, R. E. (2012). Language Development: An Introduction (bot. i 8). Neë Jersey: Pearson Education Inc*

those of Prizren said Albanian as well as a part in Turkish. However, based on the technological developments and numerous games that children play every day using telephones or other technological tools, has influenced in the acquisition of English language. Languages such as: Serbian and German were spoken by children who had contact with relatives who spoke the same language.
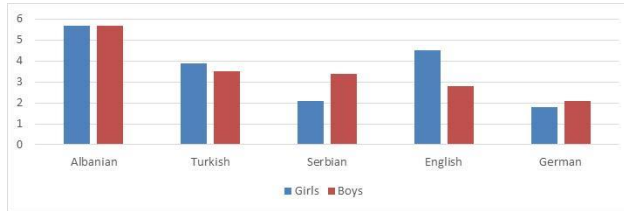
4. Is your child fluent in your mother tongue? - To this question, a small number had problems in speaking the standard language.
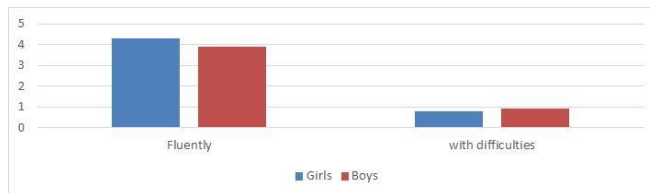

5. Does your child know any other language, if so, where did he/she learn it? - In acquiring foreign languages, an important role has played the ongoing communication with members of family, watching different TV shows, as well as playing computer games and programs.
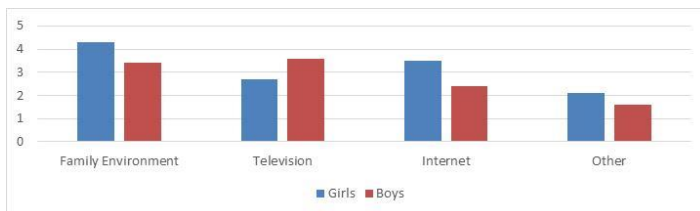

6. How does your child react when he or she listens to foreign language words? - Some participants answered that the children expressed interest in learning that new word, asking about the meaning and what that word symbolizes. Some of the children skip the word and do not express interest in understanding the essence neither concept.

7. Does your child watch cartoons in foreign language, if so, in which language?
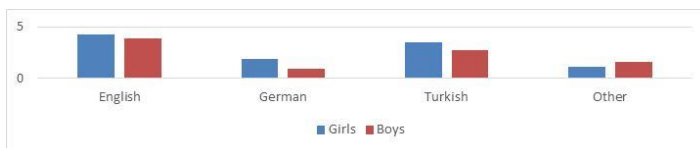
8. What are the chances that the child learns to speak fluently a foreign language?
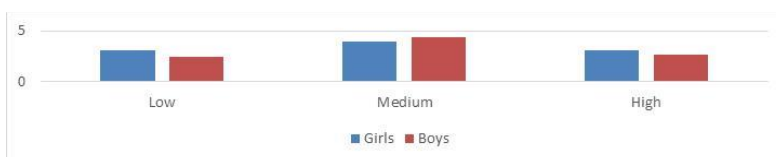
The result of this project proves the importance of the contrastive description of native language and foreign language for pedagogical purposes. Different descriptions represent elemental importance in language learning, because most of the difficulties that occur while learning a second language are actually the result of differences of the first language. Therefore, if we avoid the distinctive features of the first and second language, the remaining ones can be assumed to present the list of student's difficulties. All that we have mentioned so far suggests that contrastive analysis tries to first clarify the student's response to interference sites, as a result of the interference of the first language with the second language. Likewise, children's knowledge of their mother tongue affects second language learning. As a result, we can conclude that when the formal and semantic structures are similar between the mother tongue and the language that is the object of study, learning it is easy, and when it changes, it is understood that learning it is difficult. A child in order to be fluent in two languages, he/she should hear it often and have the opportunity to speak it. You need to read to your child stories in different languages, as an effective and fun way to stimulate language. In some communities, such learning occurs naturally if these languages are spoken as much as possible, and if the child is in contact with different family members or his/her companions who speak one of them, or both. If a parent speaks the same language and the other, a linguistic minority, it is important to create opportunities where the child is exposed to the minority language. Some factors influence the learning of the two languages and the choice of the language spoken by the child: age, time of exposure to languages, status of these languages instead of approving etc. However, regardless of the context and environment the child evolves, it is important for parents to demonstrate a sense of pride and a positive attitude toward using these languages. A parent must also remember that bilingual children remain children, above all, with their personality, needs and preferences, and can choose one language over another despite the will expressed by their relatives.

Therefore, it seems that the difficulty and facilitation of the first language is dependent on the relationship with the mother tongue, which plays an important role in this aspect. Of all that was mentioned, it is clearly seen the difficulty that presents the changing of language structure of the language that is to be learned.

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Effective Ways of Assessment Which Motivate Students Nowadays (Case Study: "Ahmet Dakli" High School, Elbasan-Albania)

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Abstract

We have all been students and we have all faced assessment, grades, exams etc. But nowadays there are different methods of assessment that teachers use. Some teachers use the traditional ones, they stay loyal to exams and grades, but others use group projects, portfolios, group discussions etc., which can be more interesting to students and they can find them easier, entertaining and motivating. The purpose of this short research paper is to investigate or examine some ways of assessment which are mostly used by teachers here in Albania, most concretely in one of Elbasan high schools, "Ahmet Dakli". Attention has been given even to the student's opinions toward the assessment that they encounter every day. So the study is further observed through questionnaires which allowed me to better arrive to the conclusion.

Keywords: Assessment, Motivation, Exams, Portfolios, Group Projects

The Main Arguments: Improvement the Teachers' Education

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Abstract

Methodology: Quality Assurance in Teacher Education in the Digital Age – Issue and Challenges.**Contribution to the field:** It is common knowledge that the quality of the work undertaken by a teacher has significant effects upon his or her students, those who pay teachers' salaries- be it through taxes or through school fees- expect value for their money. Many countries have explored several avenues for measuring the quality of work of individual teachers, educational institutions and education systems. Some institutions attempted to explore the potentials of online learning and Virtual Class rooms.Energized by an affinity towards Social Constructivist principles, the field was destined to be a source of wisdom for students.But in many educational institutions, strict quality control standards and procedural norms did not exist. So it had not been possible to effectively exploit the potential of the modern general Pedagogy. The following 6 key areas strongly recommended 1 Curriculum Design & Planning 2. Curriculum Transaction & Evaluation 3.Research Development & Extension 4. Infrastructure & Learning Resources5. Student Support & Progression 6. Management

Keywords: education,improvement, teacher

The Use of Learning Methodologies for Children Returned from Emigration

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Abstract

Purpose of the Study: The study aims to identify the problems faced by migrant children in the last three years in Albania in compulsory education classes. Our target group of studies are children returning from emigration, teachers which work with them and aims to identify problems during the process of reintegration of migrant children into in the middle high school levels, linguistic and lexical difficulties, their progress or regress, the projections in the law fortheir reintegration , the treatment realized by the teachers in the use of teaching and learning methodologies, designing a specific plan for the purpose of capacity building and giving appropriate recommendations for their involvement.**The Methodology of Research:** The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods will enable theoretical and quantitative information to be provided through observations, focus groups, questionnaires with teachers and managers of the middle high school levels, in the city of Tirana. The quantitative data will be analyzed in SPSS. Also in this study will be analyzed the previous results of the students in the country in which they lived and the actual results.**Study Results:** The findings of this study show that children of basic education (grades 1-5) are more easily accommodated in the school environment and are more engaged during the class, compared with children of lower secondary school (grades 6-9). Teachers of these institutions strive to apply a variety of forms and techniques to increase the quality of learning for those children, they claim that they are unable to build a specialized plan for children returning from emigration, as they have lacked proper specialized trainings. According to the Decision of the Council of Ministers No.461, dated 9.6.2010 On the Approval of the Strategy "On the Reintegration of Returning Albanian Citizens 2010-2015 "and its Action Plan", teachers should implement specific plans for the inclusion of these children in the PUE institutions by first making the equivalence of their schooling documents. Parents present high interest in inclusion, integration in raising the quality of children but they can not contribute in this direction. The study also highlighted some of the most common problems that migrant children present during the process of assimilation of knowledge in our schools such as: the difficulty in formal and verbal communication in Albanian language and their adaptation to the school environment, the lack of knowledge of the Albanian language of these children creates barriers and causes many shortcomings in the learning process.

Keywords: Reintegration, individualized education plan, methodology, lexical difficulties, comprehension, assimilation.