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Initial Teacher Education: Appropriate Models for a Knowledge Society?

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Abstract:

Teacher education and professional development of teachers are a crucial issue for any country, since the quality of the teaching staff is one of the main factors influencing the level of students' academic achievements. The conditions in which teachers work today are drastically different from the ones of the early 20th century, whereas the structure and organization of initial teacher education has not changed significantly. Although the course content, the duration of study, and learning and teaching strategies have changed, the main teacher training models, regardless of the differences between them, still include course content related to individual professions, course content from pedagogy and psychology, didactic and methodology training, and in-service teacher training. This paper analyses initial teacher education models with regard to the presence of the said elements and the manner in which they are distributed in the structure and organization of the study programme. On the basis of a conducted analysis, the authors conclude that there is not a single initial teacher education model which proposes a paradigm shift that would yield more successful results in comparison with other models in the preparation of teachers for work in a postmodern era. To navigate the complex social requirements, the most suitable initial teacher education model is the one which integrates different types of knowledge and skills, and produces teachers who are capable of research and reflection – a model which would allow teachers to become critical intellectuals capable of acting autonomously and competently.

Keywords: teacher, teacher education models, initial teacher education, structure, organization, study programmes

Introduction

Education and professional development of teachers¹, their initial education and training in particular, are a crucial issue for the education policy of any country which strives to raise the level of quality of its education system and make it more accessible and flexible. One of the main factors for the improvement of an education system is the quality of the teaching staff, which largely affects the level of students' academic achievements. Therefore, teachers' competences should be the main focus of education policies at all levels of formal and informal education, both in our country and globally (Diković, Piršl, 2014: 226).

It is a known fact that the efforts to identify structural and organizational requirements of a successful teacher education programme and to define the knowledge and skills which a teacher requires have been ongoing since the late 19th century, when the level, structure and duration of teacher education studies gradually started to change (Babić, Irović, Kuzma, 1999; Strugar, 1999; Vizek Vidović, 2005; Hrvatić, Piršl, 2007). However, in the past three decades, there have been very intense debates on the concept of teacher education throughout Europe (Domović, 2009: 12), which is indicative of a deeper understanding of the importance of a professional training for teachers in accordance with the challenges posed by the postmodern society. The era of intense and sudden changes created a need for more frequent revisions of curricula than was previously the case. However, such revisions are usually perceived as mere modifications of the programme structure, limited to course content and training objectives, dynamics of achieving the said objectives, and assessment of the achieved results, accompanied by innovations of teaching methods and didactic tools and the change of focus of the education

¹ In this paper, the plural form "teachers" is used instead of the singular, as it encompasses both male and female teachers.

process from teaching to learning, etc. All that, however, is not sufficient with regard to complex changes affecting the modern world, as well as Croatia. The complexity of the modern society forces all professions to face insecurity, unpredictability, risk and value conflict, which cannot be tackled by applying predefined behaviour patterns (Korthagen et al., 2001: 2-5; Schön, 1987, 2006: 31-32; Mortari, 2011: 25; Montalbetti, 2005: 50). Therefore, modern age requires not only a curricular change, but also a paradigm shift in initial teacher education (Morin, 2001: 41; Baldacci, 2009: 9-10), i.e. an overall revision of the structure and organization of teacher education studies. This implies building an extensive foundation of scientifically grounded insights on learning, teaching and research methodology, as well as empirically tested procedures which foster the learning process and high-quality use of teaching strategies, as well as the ability to reflect on personal experience and generalize and expand the acquired knowledge and insights.

One of the crucial issues of both Croatian and European education systems are the initial teacher competences. When we speak of teacher competences, it is important to define which are the key competences, since they can vary from rather broad, general competences to narrow, specific and professional ones. It is precisely because of this that the Council of Europe and the European Commission decided to define key competences as one of the most important priorities of the 21st century in which teachers will play (or already play) a crucial role in preparing students to become future European citizens and in training them for an active participation in the modern-day democratic and pluralistic society. Therefore, key competences in teacher education¹ are one of the crucial issues of the majority of European strategic documents and projects (Piršl, 2014).

The introduction of the Bologna process in both national and international education systems gave rise to certain issues, some of which are still being discussed. They are the following: Have the key competences of future teachers been redefined, and to which extent? To what extent are the key skills and knowledge from pedagogy-, psychology-, didactics- and methodology-related disciplines and professional practice present in the initial teacher education curriculum? Have theoretical and practical courses been successfully integrated and implemented in initial teacher education and training, with an appropriate balance between academic and pedagogical/psychological course content on the one side, and methodology practicum and in-service training on the other, which alternate cyclically? Which competences should be developed in future teachers? Does the initial teacher education also include the European dimension, which is reflected in teachers' readiness and competence to face new challenges?

This paper analyses initial teacher education models with regard to the presence of various elements: academic and pedagogical/psychological course content; methodology practicum and in-service training; and manners in which they are distributed in the structure and organisation of the study programme. On the basis of a conducted analysis, the authors conclude that not a single initial teacher training model proposes a paradigm shift which would yield more successful results in comparison with others in the preparation of teachers for work in the postmodern age.

Overview of the dominant initial teacher education models

From the first organised forms of teacher education until today, there has been an ongoing search for the ideal initial teacher education model which would be characterised by an optimal balance between theory and practice and their mutual dependence and connection. By observing various overviews of the dominant models of initial teacher education and training, one can often notice that certain authors have a decidedly one-sided perspective, emphasizing only theoretical or only practical aspects. Such an approach results in overemphasised dominance of either theory or practice in teacher education, which compromises their integration and balance. Namely, if teacher education is based on a single dimension, i.e. solely on the acquisition of scientific insights and theories, thereby neglecting the acquisition of pedagogical/psychological skills and vice versa, it will be insufficient for an effective and high-quality performance of teaching professionals and for a better understanding of students, their needs, learning abilities and motivation to study.

¹ Documents relating to European education policies with an emphasis on teachers' competences: Education and Training 2010 (2008) – key competences and qualifications for a successful performance of teaching professionals; Improving the Quality of Teacher Education (2007) – quality of teacher education as the crucial factor for the improvement of students' academic achievements; Tuning educational structures in Europe: Summary of Outcomes – Education (2005) – programme for converging educational structures in Europe (especially competences and learning outcomes within various fields of education); Teacher Education in Europe: An ETUCE Policy Paper (2008) – competences which teacher education studies need to develop in future teaching professionals.

The following is an overview of some of the dominant models of initial teacher education by both foreign and local authors, which advocate either the theoretical or the practical aspect of teacher education and consequently emphasize not only the importance and presence of their constituent elements (profession-related course content, pedagogical/psychological course content, didactic/methodology training, in-service training), but also the manner in which they are distributed within the structure and organization of teacher education studies.

Zeichner (1983) identifies four teacher education models. According to him, the first, behavioural model emphasizes the importance of developing specific methodical skills which are put in correlation with effective learning as the consequence of a high-quality teaching. The second model emphasizes the importance of teachers' personal development which is focused on developing stable characteristics of their identity in the course of academic training. Those are characteristics which allow everyone, regardless of their profession, to recognize their own uniqueness and continuity in all stages of life, regardless of age and experiences they lived. Although certain aspects of personality are inherent, each person changes in the course of their education and under the influence of their experience, as identity is not set in stone. In this regard, the purpose of education (*Bildung*) is to steer future teachers towards spiritual development in interaction with others, resulting in a transformation and achieving a new educational synthesis. The third model is labelled as traditional by the author, and it compares teacher education with the process of apprenticeship. According to Zeichner (1983), the fourth teacher education model is focused on research and the priority is given to research in the field of education and various other contexts in which education takes place.

According to Slovenian authors Valenčič-Zuljan and Vogrinc (2012: 113-115), teacher education can be studied from the viewpoint of the traditional or apprenticeship model, behavioural model, knowledge-based model with academic focus, and cognitive/constructivist model. The apprenticeship model focuses on the experienced teacher whom students observe and emulate during practical exercises. The emulation is largely non-critical, i.e. it is not based on an analysis of basic elements of teaching by means of the acquired pedagogical and didactic theories. The role of theory has been reduced to a minimum, while the priority is given to all practical forms of education. According to the said authors (Valenčič-Zuljan, Vogrinc, 2012), the behavioural model, which was dominant between 1965 and 1980, is characterized by a close connection between the teacher's performance and the students' achievements. Learning results were considered to depend on teaching characteristics, and research into this area has served as the basis for the development of the necessary competences for a successful teaching and training of students (future teachers), in specific methodology procedures and techniques. In the course of the methodology practicum and in-service training, students have the duty to apply theoretical knowledge so as to correlate as much as possible their practical exercises with the knowledge acquired at the faculty. The academic focus model is concerned with the education of teachers as rational and autonomous experts who primarily need to acquire sufficient theoretical knowledge of the profession they are going to teach, as well as pedagogical and psychological knowledge regarding students, planning and programming, teaching and learning methods, knowledge evaluation systems, etc. The teachers should apply the acquired knowledge in their teaching practice. The emphasis is placed on academic education, while practical forms of teaching are neglected and time-constrained. The cognitive-constructivist model is focused on teachers' and students' cognitive processes, which occur between the stimulus and the reaction and which are crucial for human behaviour. In this model, the authors give equal importance to a thorough academic and pedagogic knowledge and to the in-service teacher training which focuses on a critical observation and interpretation of pedagogical phenomena and students' active role in the interpretation and application of the observed skills of experienced teachers. The main purpose of this model is to train future teachers to reflect on their own and other people's personal experience, in order to better understand and improve their own teaching practice.

Vizek Vidović et al. (2011: 62), Striano (2001: 138), Korthagen et al. (2001: 1-5) distinguish between deductive or rationalist/technocratic models, inductive models, and integrated teacher education models.

The curriculum for the preparation and training of future teachers which is based on rationalist/technocratic model is characterized by an obvious gap between the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and development of practical skills. Students receive fragmented knowledge, partly because of numerous courses and because of the manner in which practical experience is organized, and the knowledge acquired at the university is factual and often non-critical. Furthermore, acquisition of knowledge from psychology, pedagogy, didactics, course methodologies and their corresponding underlying sciences is dominant both in terms of course content and time devoted to it, in comparison with the practical application of teaching skills which takes place during methodology practicum and in-service training. The rationalist/technocratic model (Hoyle, 1980, according to Korthagen et al., 2001: 3) is characterized by three main postulates:

theories help teachers perform more successfully;

theories need to be based on scientific research;

university professors are the ones who should select the theories to be included in the curricula for teachers.

Therefore, in-service teacher training is seen only as an opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge, without relying on the learning-from-experience principle (Carlson, 1999, Korthagen, Longhran, Russell, 2006 according to Grion, 2006). By separating theory and practice, a gap is created between knowledge provided in a higher education institution and the knowledge required in the classroom. A perpetual problem of the rationalist/technocratic approach to teacher education is the inability of beginners to apply theoretical knowledge acquired at the faculty in their teaching practice, i.e. in the classroom. According to Zeichner and Tabachnik (1981), the reasons for that should partially be sought in the fact that the concepts acquired during initial teacher education tend to be "washed out", i.e. in insufficient integration of theory and practice in the course of training of future teachers, because most students believe that pedagogical theories are not essential for the development of teaching competences (Laursen, 2007).

Zeichner and Gore (1990, according to Korthagen et al., 2001: 4) claim that the introduction of innovations in teaching remains, in most cases, the unattainable ideal of university teachers. The insufficient transfer of theory into practice is largely caused by the resistance among older teachers towards changing their teaching habits, but also by an inability to deal with individual cases by simply applying "ready-made solutions" from the pedagogical theory. Research conducted by the above-mentioned authors confirms that it is unreasonable to expect from students to be able to apply the acquired theoretical knowledge in their professional work, thus overcoming the gap between theory and practice, without a timely and effective intervention into the training of young generations of teachers which would allow the reflection on and theoretical analysis of their teaching experience.

Dissatisfaction with the amount of practical courses in initial teacher education has resulted in various measures to rectify the situation. Great Britain, England and Wales have introduced a teacher education model according to which schools themselves are largely responsible for training future teachers. It is an induction model in which a considerable portion of education takes place in schools, while only a smaller number of classes is dedicated to the acquisition of theoretical knowledge at the faculty (Korthagen et al., 2001: 11; Vizek Vidović et al., 2011: 62). In this British model, students spend two thirds of their courses in schools (Hargreaves, 2000, according to Buchberger, 2005: 203), which means that the education of future teachers is based on apprenticeship, i.e. on emulating an experienced teacher-mentor (Vizek Vidović et al., 2011: 62, Buchberger, 2005: 203). The apprenticeship model harbours a great risk: aversion towards theoretical thinking and abstraction due to an absolute reliance on practical experience. Evaluation of this model has shown that it, too, is not the right solution, because it can lead to a mechanical imitation of a more experienced teacher, which hinders the generalization of experience and application of the acquired knowledge onto new situations and educational problems, and reduces the willingness to introduce innovations (Tigchelaar, Korthagen, 2004: 666, Vizek Vidović et al., 2011: 62).

On the basis of a comprehensive research conducted in the Netherlands, Brouwer (1989, according to Korthagen et al., 2001: 4; Brouwer, Korthagen, 2005) concluded that the application of an integrated model in teacher education curriculum, in which theory and practice are alternated and integrated, is immensely important for the development of abilities to translate the acquired knowledge into practice. According to Vizek Vidović (2005: 293), the integrated model implies that the acquisition of academic knowledge should be fused with analysis from the viewpoint of the educational sciences on how curriculum should be taught in an appropriate manner to various age groups and to students with different abilities. Furthermore, this model entails training which will allow students to reflect on experience by means of theoretical insights, as well as to transfer general knowledge from the situations they experienced onto new circumstances.

On the basis of the analysis of exemplary teacher education programmes in the USA, Darling Hammond, Bransford et al. (2005: 392) claim that one of their most prominent characteristics is a good degree of integration and coherence, i.e. strong links between practical work and pedagogical theory. The fundamental ideas of such programmes are further strengthened by means of reflection in order to allow a better and deeper understanding of the learning and teaching process. The above-mentioned empirical studies have proved that a teacher education which is characterized by a coherent vision of learning and teaching and a good degree of integration of theoretical education and in-service training can exert a stronger influence on the introduction of innovations in the teaching practice of beginning teachers than one which is not.

In France, the introduction of mass education and the placement of the student at the centre of pedagogical processes has spurred research on the perception of the role of the teacher. Research has shown that teachers' professional identity has changed, and they are no longer seen only as the masters of their own specific profession, but also as experts in learning and teaching (Altet et al., 2006: 31). Numerous research studies have been developed within the Centre for Research in Education of the University of Nantes, whose goal is to define various models for initial and lifelong teacher education. Basing their work on the said research, French scholars Paquay and Wagner, 2006 (in Altet et al. 2006: 150) identified six concepts of teaching, which correspond not only to specific "typology" of teachers, but to specific initial education models as well. They are the following:

1. The teacher as a knowledgeable expert – the one who has mastered academic knowledge and can apply didactic procedures and principles acquired in theoretical courses;
2. The teacher as a skillful expert – systematically develops practical competences and participates in numerous methodological exercises aimed at automating teaching skills and abilities;
3. The teacher as a classroom actor – adopts professional behaviour patterns in the course of the teaching practice by learning from an experienced teacher-mentor, with a rather brief theoretical training;
4. The teacher as a reflective agent – autonomously builds experiential knowledge which is systematically linked with theory, thus developing the ability to reflect, which is necessary for the analysis and evaluation of practical teaching procedures and implementation of research projects for the purpose of improving classroom teaching;
5. The teacher as a social agent – is involved in collective projects (often of innovative character) and aware of the importance of social links with a broader social community;
6. The teacher as a lifelong learner – an individual who is continuously working on his/her professional development, aware of his/her own professional style and open towards dynamic changes and continuous personal development.

Each concept of teaching entails different objectives and strategies in the course of initial education, as well as differences with regard to: a) importance and duration of in-service training, b) timing of in-service training during teacher education studies, c) privileged pedagogical objectives and learning outcomes, d) privileged teaching strategies and activities, e) manners of monitoring and supervising students' work, f) manners of integrating theory with practice (Altet et al. 2006: 160).

When studying the concept of teacher education, we should analyze not only the courses which are theoretical in nature and the organization of in-service training during studies, but also all specific forms of practical work (e.g. teaching methodology practicum, classroom simulations, extra-class activities, microteaching, autonomous classroom teaching over a longer period of time, etc.), students' ability to apply the regular patterns of preparation and implementation of classroom teaching, and especially the ability to reflect on and create innovative methodologies focused on research, with a high level of creativity. However, asking students to critically reflect on their own teaching experience can lead to the use of stereotypical algorithms without a more comprehensive analysis, which is why an essential aim of teacher education curricula is to gradually develop the ability to reflect and to integrate theoretical insights and practical experience. Namely, systematic reflection on the teaching practice has numerous advantages for the development of the professional identity of teachers: it helps teachers gain a better insight into their personality, it allows critical distance and strengthens the control over one's own educational procedures, it activates the experiential learning process, fosters a deeper understanding of scientific and technical basis of the teaching practice, increases the sense of pedagogical, ethical and political responsibility, helps raise awareness about the beliefs, needs, objectives, intentions and emotions which accompany and steer the teaching practice, and encourages openness, flexibility and readiness to change.

Initial teacher education in Croatia is still dominated by the technical rational model, although numerous studies have proved its poor influence on beginners' practical performance (Laneve, 2009: 23; Schön, 2006: 18; Damiano, 2007: 38-39; Palekčić, 1998: 406). This is a model which assumes that the most economical path towards acquiring professional competence is the one in which the acquisition of theoretical knowledge about learning and teaching occurs at university, whereas the teaching skills are practiced and the acquired knowledge is applied in schools (Darling-Hammond, Bransford, 2005: 391-392; Laneve, 2009: 23; Korthagen et al., 2001: 3; Vizek Vidović et al., 2011: 62). Within this model, the curriculum for future teachers encompasses academic education, pedagogical/psychological and didactic/methodical training, and in-service teacher training. Basic or general education of teachers of lower grades of primary school encompasses the

acquisition of academic knowledge of natural and social sciences, arts, technical sciences, philosophy, communication, IT, etc. Pedagogical/psychological and didactic/methodical training implies acquisition of knowledge and development of skills from pedagogy, developmental and educational psychology, didactics and methodology of individual subjects. In-service teacher training takes place in schools-training centres for the purpose of acquiring practical teaching skills and abilities.

Within the technical rational model, and with regard to the time schedule for the acquisition of academic knowledge, knowledge of educational sciences, methodological skills and classroom practice, we can distinguish between simultaneous, successive and integrated approach. The simultaneous approach implies acquisition of academic knowledge and educational sciences from the first year of studies, but as two relatively autonomous course contents (Vizek Vidović, 2005: 293). The successive approach refers to a training in specific subjects which is followed by pedagogical/psychological and methodology training (Strugar, 1999), while the integrated approach refers to the acquisition of academic knowledge which occurs simultaneously with methodical analysis of the manners of teaching the specific course content to different age groups. However, although the integrated approach combines various didactic models and theories, stimulates the development of pedagogical competences, introduces paradigm shift and a new learning culture focused on practical performance, we should not neglect the fact that although "integrative didactics, often referred to by different names, has its place in the development of curricula and pedagogical competences, ...[integrated] approaches are not sufficiently explored, evaluated and documented" (Buljubašić-Kuzmanović, 2014: 96), and are therefore also not applied in teachers' university education.

Critical considerations on the dominant teacher education models

On the basis of the analysis of the dominant models of initial teacher education, it can be concluded that an excessively theoretical focus of rational technical teacher education programmes, their insufficient integration with practice, fragmented and incoherent courses, and a lack of a clear common concept of teaching, were the topic of numerous teacher education research studies conducted in 1980's. (Darling Hammond, Bransford et al., 2005: 391; Vizek Vidović, 2011: 67; Brouwer, Korthagen, 2005; Striano, 2001). This is further supported by numerous surveys and assessments of students and teachers. Thus, Schaefers, 2002 (according to Palekčić, 2008: 404) identifies the following disadvantages of initial teacher education:

- insufficient links with practice;
- insufficient integration of different parts of the course content;
- insufficient focus on the development of social competences;
- inadequate balance between various subject-related sciences and professional competences;
- insufficient training in course methodology and insufficient inclusion of methodologies in research;
- insufficient transparency of requirements;
- large number of individual disciplines included in the system;
- lack of actual practical work in schools.

Other authors as well have identified numerous disadvantages of the traditional initial teacher education curriculum: isolated course content from numerous scientific disciplines; memorizing and reproducing abstract academic knowledge with insufficient links with reality and professional training (Darling-Hammond, Bransford, 2005; Brouwer, Korthagen, 2005; Korthagen, Loughran, Russell, 2006, Matijević, 2009). Teacher education is also criticized for being excessively structured, normative and focused on teaching, mostly in the cognitive area, which produces passive and receptive students/future teachers. Technical training and scientific education may have been acceptable during the modern era, but it cannot serve as the basis for the work of teachers in the postmodern age. It was only in the 1990's, after the publication of Schön's (1983) book on the reflective practitioner, that it became increasingly obvious that technical and scientific competence are not sufficient to manage the complexity of a profession, which in turn lead to a crisis of professions and traditional profession-related education. Therefore, an issue which can be encountered in all debates, reports and research studies on initial teacher education is the need to establish a balance between theoretical knowledge in academic disciplines and education sciences themselves, and to develop practical professional skills (Pastuović, 1999: 493; Vizek Vidović, 2005:

193; Domović, 2009: 12; Darling-Hammond, Bransford, 2005). In other words, there can be no improvement of the formal teacher education without integration of theoretical knowledge derived from research on educational sciences with the results of analysing the teaching practice by training teachers to reflect and integrate experience and theoretical knowledge (Calvani, 2009; Korthagen et al., 2001; Mortari, 2003; Montabetti, 2005; Striano, 2001; Brouwer, Korthagen, 2005). There have been attempts to bridge the gap between the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and the development of practical skills by introducing a competence-based curriculum. The concept of competence indirectly solves the problem of integration of practical and theoretical aspects of education because professional competence is developed by means of reflection on the experience acquired through interaction with others and it fuses knowledge and skills for the purpose of solving problems in the learning and teaching process. However, there is no generally accepted theoretical framework for the selection of methodology and use of competences in planning and implementation of curricula for the development of professional competences, which hinders progress in professional training at the university. Namely, while some authors (Korthagen et al., 2001: 2; Striano, 2001: 79) believe that Competency Based Teacher Education (CBTE) should also be grouped under rationalist/technocratic models, other authors believe that the pedagogical approach which advocates the introduction of competence-based curricula is not behaviourism, but social constructivism. In this case, competence-based curricula represent the biggest ever challenge that university teachers and teachers in general have to face, as it makes their task extremely complex: to manage educational situations so as to allow students to autonomously build knowledge and develop professional skills. Therefore, the most appropriate initial teacher education model is the one which trains teachers to reflect and do research. The teacher-researcher and reflective practitioner models recognize the importance of a continuous learning process in which reflection and research skills are of utmost importance, as they strengthen autonomous and responsible professional performance. Such professional performance is reflected in the ability to integrate different types of knowledge and skills when facing difficulties and unpredictable situations in a specific educational context. In the complex working conditions of the modern-day society, teachers are required to do more than simply implement the existing teaching techniques, methods or procedures; they need to be able to think pedagogically, reflect on problems and research them, analyse students' behaviour and learning results, prepare syllabi for students with different abilities, and perform other unpredictable tasks.

However, in reality, the ideal and the realistic university education often diverge. The need to produce an emancipated and creative teacher who is capable of doing research and introducing innovations in the school system clashes with the still dominant traditional and conservative forms of higher education teaching and the current education system, which is often anchored in outdated thought and behaviour patterns (Bognar, B., Bognar, L., 2007; Vrcelj, Mušanović, 2003, Matijević, 2011). Most teacher education study programmes are still more focused on transferring and replicating knowledge than on providing learning opportunities in real-life contexts, evaluating achievements through concrete activities, and reflection and research aimed at improving the teaching process.

Despite their proclaimed autonomy, teacher education institutions have to adhere to various national standards and international recommendations and guidelines in order to ensure the acquisition of comparable competences which are required for employment (Domović, 2009: 28). In Croatia, there have been efforts to define professional standards for the teaching profession based on the European Qualifications Framework. Convergence of education systems within the European Union is a tendency towards standardization of competences, which can compromise flexibility of initial teacher education and hinder the development of the teaching profession. In other words, there is a risk of neo-bureaucratization of professional training of teachers in the context of new trends which require a strong focus on the student and give priority to the development of realistic personal competences instead of paying attention to formal qualifications. In accordance with several education policy documents on the level of the European Union¹, teacher education has to be provided on a higher academic level and needs to allow teachers to become critical intellectuals who are capable of acting autonomously and competently in the interest of their students, in adherence to the ethical standards of their profession and specific professional standards (Green paper on teacher education in Europe, 2000: 18).

For the reality of university education to correspond as much as possible to the aforementioned ideal and for it to foster scientific research and high-quality performance of higher education teachers, as well as to allow scientific insights and critical reflection of students and train them to cope with the contemporary working conditions, it is necessary to modernize

¹ The following are some of the contributions to the improvement of teacher education on the European Union level: Green paper on teacher education in Europe; Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications (2005); EC Communication - Improving the Quality of Teacher Education (2007); TUNING Educational structures in Europe

the concept of teacher education. This implies the need to modify the teacher education curriculum by introducing radical changes in the organization of the study programme, as well as by introducing various methodological strategies which will train future teachers to integrate theory and practice and to exercise professional reflection before, during and after an educational activity, as well as to develop the ability to generalize and implement the acquired knowledge.

The following should serve as the basic guidelines for the development of curricula for the preparation of teachers as crucial agents of positive changes in the education for the future:

systematic integration of theoretical and practical class teaching by means of organized alternation between theoretical education at faculties and in-service teaching practice in schools;

gradual autonomisation of future teachers in planning, organization and implementation of teaching activities, as well as in the process of generalization and dissemination of the acquired theoretical knowledge;

continuous practicing of organized reflection on the practical experiences and research on the possibilities of improving the teaching process;

development of abilities to autonomously introduce innovations into teaching.

Instead of a conclusion

On the basis of the conducted analysis, it can be concluded that not a single initial teacher education model proposes a paradigm shift which would yield more successful results in comparison with other models in the preparation of teachers for work in the post-modern era. To navigate the complex demands of the modern society, the most appropriate is the initial teacher education model which integrates different types of knowledge and skills, and produces teachers who are capable of research and reflection – a model which will allow teachers to become critical intellectuals capable of acting autonomously and competently. It is questionable whether the introduction of curricular reform in primary and secondary education will bring about a radical change of the theoretical model of initial teacher education in Croatia, seen that the upcoming reform requires competent, creative and professionally autonomous teachers. Namely, if we base our considerations on the definition of teacher competences according to the Tuning Project (2006) in which competence refers to a dynamic combination of cognitive and metacognitive skills, knowledge and understanding, interpersonal and practical skills, and ethic values, then initial teacher education should primarily focus on producing cognizant, active, critical and socially responsible teachers who will be prepared to affect complex changes and challenges in their own community and in broader society by means of appropriate and efficient methods and actions (Diković, Piršl, Antunović 2016). To what extent are we ready to modify our initial teacher training model in Croatia in the context of implementing the curricular reform by introducing and actively promoting “...(European) values: interculturalism, multiculturalism, democracy, human rights, tolerance, social justice, respect for differences, pacifism, prevention of wars and fight against crime...” (Ledić, Miočić, Turk, 2016: 28) as one of the guidelines of the European dimension in education, so that it does not remain mere ink on paper, but actually becomes a characteristic of future teachers as well as (European, global) citizens who will be capable of transferring, promoting and developing those competences in their students?

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Quality at Newly Established Private Universities: New Strategies for Leadership Management

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Abstract

Nowadays, the demand for quality in higher education is increasing. The process of massification and internalization of universities require better performance in quality of teaching, academic research and other educational related activities. In this context universities in order to be competitive and successful in market they have to rethink their strategies and to be open to new leadership management approaches. Well established universities due to their institutional culture may face some barriers when they try to make changes on their managerial strategies. In addition newly established universities have a significant chance on designing and implementing new fruitful strategies regarding students enrolment, academic activities and education management. Those strategies will contribute to enhance quality in higher education in short periods and to be more capable of overcoming new challenges. Therefore, the role of leadership management is very significant regarding designing and implementing the most appropriate strategies for their institutions. The aim of study is providing a managerial framework for leadership management of newly established universities by promoting a total quality educational approach. This study will focus on challenges of newly established universities in Albanian higher education system

Keywords: newly established university, quality, leadership management, higher education, total quality

Introduction

Today's students have more opportunities regarding selecting an appropriate university for their academic and professional development and they have the tendency to search for universities that provide a high quality of teaching, and the best student services along with affordable costs. They want to be sure when making important investment on their life such as choosing the right university for undergraduate studies. Therefore, many HEIs are developing different managerial strategies in order to increase their organizational performance and quality in education. Albania is a rapidly evolving country that witnesses a continual shift in educational needs for its society both higher education enrolments and the numbers of institutions expanded dramatically during the last decade. Rapidly growing youth education; in the period after collapse of communism 1991 increased in number of high school students. Already in the last 20 years, Albanian higher educational system was characterized by expanding, which means not only the large number of students who study at the university, but also to the opening and operation of private higher institutions. Since 2000 Albanian government has decided to start a policy of expansion in private higher education that has resulted in new universities across the country. Today, there are 14 state universities and 42 private higher institutions in Albania (APAAL, 2013). The main reasons after promoting establishment of new universities throughout the new developing countries are increasing access to higher education and to achieve a wider distribution of qualified and more educated individuals among different regions of society (Saarivirta & Consoli, 2008)

This expansion of private higher education has raised questions regarding the quality of private universities. This fact has increased the expectations of society from higher education institutions as the main institutions that have the duty to prepare the next generation for the challenges of future (Bruçaj, 2013). The aim of study is providing a managerial framework for leadership management of newly established universities by promoting a total quality educational approach. This study will focus on challenges of newly established universities in Albanian higher education system

Literature Review

Leadership as traditional concept may be considered as the process (act) of influencing the activities of an organized group in its efforts toward goal setting and goal achievement' (Stogdill, 1950). Nowadays the concept of leadership embraces a variety of approaches including transformative, charismatic and visionary leadership, which they treat leaders as 'managing meaning' rather

than goal achievement, and motivating followers through a variety of symbolic activities. According to Kotter "Leadership defines what the future should look like, aligns people with that vision, and inspires them to make it happen despite the obstacles." (Kotter, 1996). It is very important to understand the perception of university staff for leadership management responsibilities regarding positively improvement of staff working climate. In education system, leadership management is defined as "as responsible for learning outcomes and measures the improvement of quality of education".

Leadership management is seen as one of the key factors for the advancement of newly established small private higher education institutions. According to Bryman the characteristics of leadership at both departmental and institutional levels:

Providing direction

Creating a structure to support the direction

Fostering a supportive and collaborative environment

Establishing trustworthiness as a leader

Having personal integrity

Having credibility to act as a role model

Facilitating participation in decision-making; consultation

Providing communication about developments

Representing the department/institution to advance its cause(s) and networking on its behalf

Respecting existing culture while seeking to instill values through a vision for the department/institution

Protecting staff autonomy (Bryman, 2007)

The role of the leadership management in universities, is to increase the overall organizational performance by using all human resources effectively taking into consideration that newly established universities have a limited number of staff therefore recruiting and retaining the quality of staff is very important for the future of institution

Quality in higher education

The recent development on massification and internationalism of higher education have contributed significantly to raise the awareness of the main actors in this field to the importance and role that of quality in higher education has on achieving success of private universities in this competitive environment. Defining quality in the field of services is not easy but becomes even more difficult to define quality in higher education. It is very difficult to have single unique definition of quality in higher education in addition there is no universal consensus on which the best methodology regarding of implementation of quality within higher education quality can be defined in terms of perfection, excellence, and value for money, fitness to purpose, or transformation. According to some researchers the most important definitions of "quality" in higher educational system as the following (Harvey, 2005; Leckey & Neill, 2001; Mahmut Ozer, 2010; Quinn, Lemay, Larsen, & Johnson, 2009):

Quality is fulfilling and exceeding customer needs.

Quality is everyone's job.

Quality is continuous improvement.

Quality is leadership.

Quality is human resource development.

Quality is in the system.

Quality is fear reduction.

Quality is recognition and reward.

Quality is teamwork.

Quality is measurement

Establishment of internal quality system and outcomes of quality processes generally differs in the newly established universities in comparison with early developed and well-established ones.

To many researchers well established universities had difficulties regarding same changing paradigms on educational philosophy because of old culture (Youssef, 1998).

Therefore is very important to make clear the strategy which universities will follow in order to implement quality standards. It is also very important for promoting quality education at higher education institutions the way which leadership in higher education is quotient and responds to the demands and needs for organizational learning (Forest, 2002).

Therefore the role of effective leadership is considered to be the main factor regarding the promotion and implementation of quality in higher education system (Sila & Ebrahimpour, 2002)

Many studies done on perception of university staff regarding responsibilities and challenges of leadership management of universities have identified many common characteristics faced on different university environments.

The most important responsibilities and challenges of leadership management of universities according of results of those studies done on perception of academic and administrative staff are listed below (Lewis, 1994) (Owlia, 1996) (Flores-Molina, 2011; Owlia, 1996) (Sallis, 2002) (Brucaj, 2013)

Expected responsibilities of leadership management in higher education

A proactive approach to pursuing the university's mission and vision

An emphasis on a visionary and strategic approach that guides and provides focus for what the leader seeks to achieve for the institution.

Being internally focused, being well connected in the institution

Being externally focused, good partnership collaboration, implementing appropriate benchmarks examples

Being flexible in approach to leadership, in coordination with staff motivation climate

Challenges of leadership management in higher education

Offering high quality academic programs and a total quality education with limited resources

Emphasizing research and fostering the quality of teaching

Enhancing student learning experience and outcome

Achieving national ranking. Becoming a national university is the grand and long-term vision for several small private universities which were evaluated and ranked as successful universities.

Methodology

The aim of this study was to understand the styles of or approaches of leadership which are associated with effective leadership in higher education, especially at newly established Albanian private higher education institutions

For the purpose of this study, the results from a staff climate survey with 127 participants who were currently working in different newly established private universities in Albania and results from a SWOT analysis contacted by 15 private universities were analysed in order to obtain university staff perceptions of the factors that contribute to institutional total quality and effective leadership strategies that have been used to promote a high-quality education.

Study Results

Promoting a high-quality education has been a great challenge for key leaders at newly established private universities. Conclusions from staff climate survey completed by 127 individuals working as university staff pointed out that newly established small private universities are striving for quality in their work with a tendency to a focused mission, an effective strategic plan with a solid commitment.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for the most important areas which university staff see leadership as a key factor

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
organizational climate	127	4.58	.556
supervisory leadership	126	4.51	.701
staff motivation	127	4.54	.664
institutional loyalty	127	4.69	.530
Valid N (list wise)	126		

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organizational climate	127	4.58	.556
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Valid N (list wise)	126		

Table 2: The challenges of new established universities in Albania according SWOT analysis results from 15 universities

NO	Challenges	Number of universities that faced the same challenges
	We select only the challenges that were faced by four or more universities	
1	Quality of enrolled student at university	37
2	Infrastructure and campus environment problems	65
3	Scientific research	46
4	The luck of management information program	35
5	Need for academic and administrative regulations and procedure	5
6	Not enough effective academic and administrative staff	24
7	Luck of literature	35
8	Coordination problems between academic staff and administrative	6
9	New established institution, luck of organizational culture	35
10	Luck of social environments for students within campus	44
11	Compulsory engagements of academic staff with administrative duties	36
12	Centralized budget	27
13	The existence of negative perception for private universities in society	48

The findings from both interviews and staff climate results point out the importance of the following facts regarding educational leadership at newly established universities:

Providing strategic direction to university staff in order to realize the mission

Providing structure and support to realize strategic plans

Providing a supportive and collaborative environment between university staff

Establishing trustworthiness leadership atmosphere

Encouraging university staff in decision-making process

Being open to new strategies and developments

Protecting staff autonomy and integrity

Promoting academic excellence

In the heart of success to create and promote an academic context which will help individuals to fulfil their academic and professional potential relay the success of an effective leadership management. Therefore, is very important to foster collegial climate and academic autonomy in university environment in order to achieve an appropriate academic climate. Similarly, the results of study have shown that to increase the quality standards in higher education institutions it is essential for leadership management to adopt certain leadership strategies to implement total quality management philosophy in the higher educational system.

Recommendations

At newly established universities, we should change the way we think about our own education process and product. Today only institutions that meet changing consumer needs and demands will succeed." Newly established universities in order to survive in this competitive educational market of higher education should constantly focus on quality improvement. In this perspective the appropriate effective leadership strategies can make great differences in promoting and delivering a high-quality education at newly established universities

One of the key strategies regarding improvement of quality in education at newly private universities is having systematic reviews of all academic programs learning outcomes. Effective leadership management is the strongest motivations for university staff to have institutional loyalty, to be committed to academic excellence, and devoted to university mission. According to study results one of the most effective leadership styles in higher education system is servant leadership approaches. According this model a successful leader is the one who not only has the authority to make decisions and lead the university to reach it mission but also has the commitment to be a servant of the community

Newly established universities that are focused on reaching quality standards by having a clear strategy on implementation of total quality philosophy at university level have many chances to be successful due to their centralized structure of small university environment. To be successful HEI's requires a devoted leadership management who is capable of involving all academic and administrative staff of HEI's in process of implementation of quality standards

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Active and Qualitative Learning a Consequence of the Integration of Non-Formal Methods in Teaching Content and Their Implementation in the Teaching Process

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Abstract

The integration of non-formal education in formal education, in all its forms, is one of the most important issues of the global education. However, active and qualitative learning is the result of the integration of non-formal methods in teaching content and their implementation in the teaching process, as well as an important aspect where students develop their skills, permanently acquire their knowledge. Integrated non-formal methods in the teaching content would provide multiple opportunities for the students to be trained for a lifelong learning. The purpose of this paper was to increase teachers' awareness on the importance of using non-formal methods and their positive effect that this integration brings, both in their performance and in active and effective learning.

Keywords: teaching content, teaching process, non-formal methods, active learning, teacher

Introduction

Integration of non-formal methods in the teaching contents and their implementation in the teaching process is one of the aspirations of global society oriented towards the achievement of quality and effectiveness in education. So, global education focuses on the necessity of synchronizing non-formal and formal education. Such synchronization can be achieved through the integration and implementation of various non-formal methods during the learning process, thus promoting active learning where a variety of activities are involved.

If we already affirm that above all the important thing is active participation of students in teaching, if these wish for our children to think, to understand more and remember less is really honest, we should seek concrete and efficient ways for children to guide, interest and activate.

"If we already affirm that above all the important thing is active participation of students in teaching, if this wish for our children to think, to understand more and remember less is really honest, we should seek concrete and efficient ways for children to guide, interest and activate."

(Dušan Radović, "Na ostrvu pisaceg stola"(On the island's desk) quoted by Ivič,I, Pesikan, A, Antic,S(2001:17.) Active learning

According to researcher Gazibara, "Active learning as a practical activity is related to working strategies and methods in teaching". Scannapeico (1997) defines as methods of encouraging students in inclusion of higher thinking tasks like analysis, synthesis and evolution "(Gazibara,S(2018:24).

She further states that "Meyers and James (1993) emphasize that active learning can offer students the opportunity to speak and listen, read, write and reflection access to subject content through problem solving, small non-formal groups, simulation, case study, role play and various activities that requires from all the students the implementation of all what they learn "(Gazibara, S (2018: 24,25).

According to scholars, active learning encourages students to be fully involved in the learning process. "Active Learning involves the student in physical, cognitive and emotional way, while the way the learner acquires knowledge determines how much that knowledge will be useful and how long it will be permanent"(autors,Papič-Krsteska,B, Sonaj,B, Osman,E, Spaseva-Miovska,S,Leshkovska ,E ,Stojkovski,S.(2015:23) .

The teacher is the key factor in the organization and implementation of non-formal methods during the teaching process, he is the motivator, facilitator and founder of a favorable environment by acting together and exchanging valuable ideas and ideas for an active learning. By implementing non-formal methods enables students to think critically, work independently and engage in joint research work. Likewise, the teacher through non-formal methods creates a positive climate where the feeling of self-confidence, mutual trust, responsibility and motivation prevails as an important aspect in promoting active learning.

In this study, the integration of non-formal methods and their implementation into the process of learning, we determine as "an embodied body in which the soul of a child is in the body of an adult".

1. Literature Review

Numerous researchers, the integration of non-formal methods into teaching contents and their implementation during the learning process, consider being extremely important and necessary to promote active learning. They also describe it as "the main link" in achieving the goals of global education.

"Global education aims at developing learning communities in which students and educators are encouraged to work for global questions through co-operation. Global education aims to stimulate and motivate pupils and educators to approach global questions through innovative learning and pedagogy. Global education aims to challenge formal and non-formal education programs and practices by presenting their content and methodology "(Cabezudo, A and co-author (2008-2014 :20)

According to Pešič (2017), "Contemporary learning studies have shown that in a non-formal atmosphere, more they learn in qualitative way, through interaction of participants, collaborative learning through non-formal methods which provide students creative, experience and research learning". <https://www.profil-klett.hr/neformalno-obrazovanje-razine-i-modeli>

Researcher Kovačević (2012) describes the application of non-formal methods as "General work with the individual as a non-formal education method including the knowledge, skills, techniques and strategies of working with the individual who wants to advance his education more easily to work through professional perfection and to accomplish his other goals "(Kovačević (2012: 45).

Also, Kovačević, in his research " Activities of international organizations on the application of informal education in Montenegro ", about the contribution of non-formal methods in productivity and high motivation, developed with teachers ranked in two groups on the basis of their work experience from 1 -21 years of working experience and the other group over 21 years, has found that:

From the first group, 57.8% of respondents have proved that non-formal methods contribute to higher productivity and motivation for learning both to teachers and students, while 39% partially agree with it. On the other hand, from the other group of respondents with longer work experience, 25.2% fully agree, while 17.0% partially. A small number of respondents, only 9.0% of the two respondents, disagree with the defined statement, their attitude that non-formal methods have this interest both for teachers and students (Kovačević (2012:45).

Many scholars such as Kovačević (2012), Krsteska-Papić, B with co-authors (2015), Cabuzdo, A with co-authors (2008/2012), Brkanlić, S with co-authors (2012), Kristina Krištofić (2016) in their studies describe the methods of work as very important components to reach the effectiveness of teaching and learning necessary for a global education, emphasizing individual, paired work, group or team work forms, learning through discovery or debate, methods of dialogue, problem solving, collaborative learning, simulation, game, content analysis, etc.

Application of non-formal methods during the teaching and learning process should correspond to the overall goals of global education.

According to Cabuzdo, A and co-authors (2008/2012) global education consists in

- collaborative learning facilitates learning through interaction, strengthens communicative skills of participants and their reliance

- Problem-based learning ... Problem-solving learning paves the way to the active approach to teaching that is oriented in the task, student-controlled

- Dialogue-based learning, which facilitates verbal interaction of learners in order to achieve exchange of ideas "(Cabuzdo, A and co-authors, 2008-2012: 30).

The author Krištofić, K (2016) in her work "Characteristics of social forms of teaching work focused on students " describes several working methods as crucial for the development of creative, personal and social skills as well as individual, project work and action-based:

"Teaching with projects ... results in a great deal of contributions for students and thus they gain knowledge, skills and educational value, develop their ability and skills in different situations, develop research interest, develop positive relationships to work and develop creative learning with practical work .. (Cindrić and co-authors. 2016). Collaborative learning represents an active learning process in which students develop and cultivate academic and social skills by directly utilizing student interaction, individual responsibilities, and positive interdependence (Jensen, 2003).""...the individual work brings the student in close relationships with the learning contents and acting on their own develops independence, self-confidence and creative skills (De Zan, 2001) ... "(Krištofić, K, 2016: 19, 22,30).

Brkanlić, S with the co-authors (2012) describes the method of learning through the problem-solving path as a method which "enables a high level of student creativity Student and computer equally posit problematic tasks for each other, solutions are required and uninterruptedly solve different problematic situations. Learning is very interesting so knowledge gaining is permanent and in practice very easy to apply, especially in new problem situations. (Brkanlić, S (2012:172).

It is also worth mentioning the research-based method, which according to Bogнар and Matijević, (2005) "Research is a method by which students learn the reality" (Bogнар and Matijević, 2005: 283)

Based on the literature we can say that the use of non-formal methods during the teaching process is indispensable and that this way of learning leads us towards global aspirations for a quality education and lifelong learning.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Purpose of the research

The purpose of this paper was to increase the awareness of teachers on the importance of using non-formal methods and their positive effect that this integration brings, as in their performance, also in active and effective learning.

2.2 Research questions

The research includes the following questions:

- (1) Are non-formal methods integrated in the teaching content of teachers?
- (2) How much are non-formal methods implemented during the teaching process?
- (3) If you use non-formal working methods during the learning process, which methods mostly encourage active student participation?
- (4) What is the cause of non-implementation of non-formal methods during the teaching process according to teachers?

For this research we have used the quality method – the focus group, as according to many researchers the focus group enables us to better know the problematic of the study. According to Matthews, B and Ross L (2010) "Focus groups are an appropriate method for collecting data that is used when the researcher collects qualitative data on people's experiences, ideas, and understanding of people and when it has an interest in learning why they experience their social world this way." Matthews, B and Ross, L (2010: 236).

In the research study participants were the teachers of two high schools and two lower secondary schools of Gjiilan town. In the focus group there were a total of 26 teachers who attended over 100 hours of training, divided into four groups. Therefore the selection of participants was based on Matthews, B and Ross, L (2010) literature, according to whom

"participants are usually selected to participate and the group consists of people who have something in common that relates to the topic of the focus group" (Matthews, B and Ross, L (2010: 235).

3. Research results

3.1. Teachers' views on "are non-formal methods integrated in the teaching content of teachers?"

Most of the school teachers who became part of the focus groups have emphasized that they have integrated non-formal methods in their teaching content, where according to them the attendance of trainings, especially of the training "Critical Thinking, Reading and Writing" has made it possible to get acquainted with contemporary methods, how to encourage students to be an active part of the learning process and integrate these methods into teaching contents.

In two focus groups of high school teachers, 12 participating teachers emphasize that they have integrated non-formal methods in the teaching content, but they are only shown on paper and 14 low secondary school teachers emphasized that they have integrated non-formal into the teaching content.

From this we can conclude that all teachers have integrated non-formal methods in the teaching content.

3.2. Teachers' views on the question "How much are the non-formal methods implemented during the teaching process?"

Out of the focus groups of high schools it seems that very little non-formal methods are implemented during the teaching process, out of 12 teachers participating in the focus group 10 of them emphasize that they do not always use non-formal methods during the teaching process despite the fact that the teaching contents contain non-formal methods while 2 of them emphasize that they do not implement any non-formal methods. While from the focus groups of lower secondary schools it turns out that non-formal methods are applied almost in every class, so all teachers, 14 of them use different non-formal methods almost in every lesson.

Here are some teachers' perceptions:

"I rarely apply working non-formal methods during the teaching process"

"I try to apply non-formal method at least once a month during the teaching process, but according to me there is no effect because students are not interested at all"

"For each lesson I use different working methods"

"Not always, but in most cases I apply working non-formal methods, which I have included in the teaching contents"

From all of the above we can say that most teachers use non-formal working methods throughout the teaching process, while some do not apply a contemporary teaching based on different methodologies to reach an active teaching and learning.

3.3. If you use working non-formal methods during the learning process, which methods do most encourage the active participation of students?

According to the teachers, 12 of them included in the focus group, 26 of them, as the most preferred methods and which stimulate active participation of students mentioned forms of work in pairs, group or team, learning through discovery or debate and work with projects.

Two teachers emphasized that "during the implementation of the group work form the majority of the students are passive and not actively involved, noise is created so sometimes we cannot meet the foreseen learning objectives."

One of them emphasized that:

"During the learning through discovery or debate, the student is encouraged by curiosity; active participation is stimulated and creates a competitive spirit"

"Students during the project work are more committed, share ideas and thinking, communicate and act together, so they feel more motivated"

3.4. Teachers' views on the question "What is the cause of non-implementation of non-formal methods during the teaching process by teachers?"

Most of the participants in the focus group of high schools as the main cause of non-implementation of non-formal working methods see the large number of students in the classrooms, the noise during their implementation, then some also note their unwillingness to apply non-formal methods in teaching methods.

Some teachers emphasize that time is limited and more time is needed to apply non-formal methods adequately.

Other teachers emphasize that when using non-formal methods only a small number of students participate actively while most of them are passive, students do not sufficiently understand the learning content so we waste a lot of time.

According to the teachers another reason for not using non-formal methods is the negative opinion of students that through non-formal methods we do not understand the learning content enough and that they are feeling themselves enough grown up to act through non-formal methods.

12 of the teachers included in the focus group consider that the reason for not implementing non-formal methods is the space that classrooms have and inadequate working conditions.

Here are some attitudes of teachers participating in the focus group:

"I see the nonfulfillment of working non-formal methods insufficient at times, because applying non-formal methods adequately during the teaching process takes longer time"

"The main cause is the large number of students and the noise"

"Several times I tried to use different working methods during the learning process but during their implementation I noticed that not all students actively participated, a small number of students tried to get involved actively while the rest were passive and did not take seriously, for example, during the group work"

"If we encourage students to work with projects, a big number of them will act according to the guidelines, work by cooperating and the rest will not try to work, but they will ask to take the tasks from their friends"

"Pupils are not aware of the positive effects of non-formal methods in their professional and individual development, so it is necessary to organize different workshops for students."

A big number of the teachers believe that through traditional teaching, pupils better understand the teaching unit, that they are got used to this teaching and find it difficult to use new working methods.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of teachers' attitudes at both school levels, we conclude that in our schools still dominates the traditional teaching where the teacher is the subject and the students are the objects in the class. Some teachers are not yet ready to promote active teaching, they are not ready to use new methods of work that encourage students to participate actively and are not ready to adapt informal methods in their teaching method which enable interactive and collaborative learning.

However, there is a noticeable movement in this topic that the vast majority of lower secondary school teachers use working non-formal methods with students, understand the need for global education for active learning where the teaching and learning process they orientate towards the student so that students become an active part of learning and promoting their values.

Therefore there is a need to continue to work on the promotion of the use of non-formal methods that, over time, all teachers become aware of and apply new methods and forms of work during the teaching process for an active teaching and learning where students and teachers can be subject, where students need to "learn how to learn" which is a motto of contemporary learning.

It is important to note that this research is of particular interest to me and also for other teachers. Also this paper may serve for other researches because in our country there is a lack research of this nature. The purpose of this paper was to draw

attention and increase the awareness of teachers to efficiently apply non-formal methods in their educational work for a qualitative education based on the goals of global education.

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A New Paradigm in Croatian Higher Education: Non – Formal Foreign Language Learning

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Abstract

Knowledge of legal English, with English as lingua franca of international communication has become an essential precondition for communication of legal professionals worldwide. That is the reason why law students and legal professionals in Europe, especially those working in new member states of the EU, are interested in widening their knowledge in legal English within different forms of non-formal foreign language education. In this paper, the author presents a new paradigm of foreign language teaching at Croatian universities that was introduced due to recent changes in professional communication, the intensive development of IT, and growing importance of English in international context. The objective of the paper is to present examples of good practice and innovation in teaching LSP in Croatian higher education. The challenges of professional communication in the field of law are presented and discussed in the introduction of the paper. In the main part, the types of non-formal education are presented that were developed at the Faculty of Law Osijek, Croatia as a response to requirements of the EU labour market and the professional communication between lawyers. The first non-formal type of education presented in the paper is the Lifelong Learning Programme for Lawyer Linguists, and the second one the course Legal English for Civil Servants developed within the European cross-border project CATCH, organized by Croatian and Hungarian units of local and regional self-government. In the conclusion, the author discusses the achievements of the two programmes and offers her vision of the future developments in foreign language teaching at European higher education institutions.

Keywords: higher education, non-formal foreign language learning, lifelong learning, community projects

Introduction

In the Strategy for the period 2010-2020, the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, among other goals, expressed its commitment to promote lifelong learning programmes as non-formal ways of education (Strategy, 2011: 54), directed at the acquisition of additional knowledge, competences, and skills by students, academic community and wider civil community. According to the European Recognition Manual, non-formal learning is defined as "(...) learning which takes place through planned activities (in terms of learning objectives, learning time) where some form of learning support is present (e.g. a learner - teacher relationship). Very common cases of non-formal learning include in-company training, structured online learning and courses organized by civil society organizations."¹ In the past twenty years, the European Commission has been promoting both non-formal and informal learning as the evolution of what in the 1980s was called continuous training. The Commission has defined non-formal learning as a specific type of learning activity, which is structured in terms of learning objectives, learning time, and learning support, and intentional from the learners' perspective (European Commission 2001: 33). Under conditions of constant changes and developments in information technologies, which influence every sphere of human activity, informal learning is also highly recommended. "Informal learning concerns learning resulting from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and typically does not lead to certification. It may be intentional of the basis, but in most cases, it is non-intentional" (European Commission 2001: 33).

In this paper, the author aims at presenting two different programmes within non-formal ways of teaching and learning foreign languages as examples of good practice in FLT. The programmes are presented as illustrations of a new paradigm of non-formal teaching and learning in the higher education system of Croatia. The first programme presented in this paper

¹www.enicnarc.net/fileusers/8220_European%20Recognition%20Manual%20Second%20Edition%20FIN.pdf accessed on 10. December 2018, at 14:10

is the Lifelong Learning Programme for Lawyer Linguists developed at the Faculty of Law, University of Osijek, and the second is an in-company training organized in cooperation with the local Public Administration Office within a wider interregional European project. Both programmes are in line with the commitment of the Faculty of Law, University of Osijek, to provide its students and the wider local community with knowledge and skills which would help them meet the challenges of modern society. The programmes were organized by the Department of Foreign Languages of the Faculty. As the author has already presented the Lifelong Learning Programme for Lawyer Linguists and the methodological approach to its delivery in detail in previous publications (Kordić: 2015a; 2016), the Programme will be shortly presented here only as an illustration of the specific type of non-formal education at the tertiary level.

Lifelong Learning Programme as a Non-Formal Type of Foreign Language Teaching

In accordance with the Strategy of the University of Osijek and the Strategy of the Faculty of Law, the Chair of Foreign Languages of the Faculty has launched in academic year 2012/13 a non-formal education programme in the period of accession of Croatia to the EU. The programme was developed within the lifelong learning aspect of education and was titled “Lifelong Learning Programme for Lawyer Linguists”. It was launched in the first year of the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union when new employment chances have been opened to Croatian lawyers and linguists on the EU labour market. The European Personnel Selection Office of the EU Commission published on its website job announcements for lawyers, legal administrators, legal translators and a new profession: lawyer-linguists. The goal of the Programme was to equip students with new skills and abilities, which would enable them to meet the challenges of the changing economic and political environment and the requirements of the European market. That goal could be achieved by introducing a new paradigm into a traditional approach to higher education: a non-formal way of teaching practical skills focussed on European law and European legal terminology in the three working languages of the EU: English, German and French.

The programme is comprised of seven courses: Introduction to the EU Law, Introduction to the Theory of Legal Translation and Terminology, Exercises in Legal Translation – English Language, Exercises in Legal Translation – German Language, Introduction to the French Language of Law, Croatian Language for Lawyer-Linguists, and Online Translation Tools and EU Vocabulary. All the courses were allocated 22 ECTS credits. Since December 2012, the Programme has been delivered every winter semester. It has lasted for three months and encompassed altogether 160 teaching hours. As for the target group of participants, the programme was intended for senior year students of the Faculty of Law and for graduate lawyers from the wider local community. The structure of participants varied from one year to the other and included unemployed graduate lawyers, lawyers practicing law in private law firms, and young legal advisors employed in local courts. The precondition for the enrolment was that they had achieved the best possible grades in English or German as their first foreign language and acquired an A or B level in the second foreign language (either German or English), which must be proven by corresponding certificates. According to the tradition of foreign language learning in the region Slavonija and Baranja where the University of Osijek is situated, the prevailing first foreign language is English and the second German. As a rule, French is not instructed in primary and secondary schools in the region. That is the reason why French has been instructed as the third foreign language from its basics. Based on the certificates of the FL level achieved in English and German, participants have been organized in two groups according to their first foreign language and have been instructed simultaneously in two groups for Exercises in Legal Translation in the first foreign language and for Exercises in Legal Translation in the second foreign language. All other courses have been attended by all participants together. Apart from Translation Exercises in the three languages, the participants were also instructed in other contents that should be mastered by a translator of EU law texts: Introduction to EU Law, Introduction to the Theory of Legal Translation and Terminology, Online Translation Tools and EU Vocabulary and Croatian Language for Lawyer-Linguists. After passing all exams, participants obtain certificates signed by the Dean of the Faculty. All courses have been delivered by using modern teaching methods and electronic teaching tools, especially PowerPoint presentations and the Internet. Internet sources represent at the same time the main source of information and the object of instructions within the course Online Translation Tools and EU Vocabulary. In this course, computer technologies are implemented to equip participants with the ability to independently approach all the original sources, databases and documents available at the official online platforms of the EU necessary for a professional, reliable and accurate translation of EU legal texts.

Teaching English in Local Community Units - a New Type of Non-Formal Higher Education

About the CATCH Project

Cooperation with the local community in the implementation of the international (interregional) EU project CATCH represents a new aspect of non-formal foreign language teaching at the tertiary level of education in Croatia. The CATCH Project ("Cooperation between Public Administration Offices in Cross-Border Areas of Croatia and Hungary to Provide Better Services to Citizens") was developed within the Interreg V-A Project Hungary-Croatia 2014-2020, which belongs to the network of European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) programmes. The overall aim of the programmes is "contribute to the overall economic, social and territorial cohesion of the European Union by tackling issues which cross the borders between countries and regions"¹. The project was launched by the Government office of the Somogy County in Hungary with the purpose of "reinforcement and expansion of the existing co-operative networks and contributing to the establishment of a sound basis for a dynamic and lasting co-operation across the border". Managing authorities of the Programme were the Hungarian Prime Minister's Office, Budapest and the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds of the Republic of Croatia, Zagreb. The CATCH Project within this Programme was implemented in the period from 1 June 2017 to 30 September 2018. Its overall goal was fostering better bilateral relations between public administrations of the Republic of Croatia and Hungary, which was strongly supported by the Prime Minister of Hungary and the Minister of Administration of the Republic of Croatia. The Programme was initiated by the Somogy County (Hungary) as the Lead Beneficiary, and the Public Administration Offices of the Osijek-Baranja County and the Međimurje County were beneficiaries on the part of Croatia. The specific goal of the project was to facilitate administrative procedures in cross-border territories and enable both the local citizens and the citizens from both sides of the border quicker and more efficient administrative processes in their local administrative offices with the minimum of costs. Professional knowledge of civil servants was widened by exchanging experience with Hungarian colleagues, the courses in web-programming and web-design of e-documents were organized, with the aim of increasing the quality and efficiency of the civil service. In the context of better cross-border co-operation in civil service issues, the knowledge of English as lingua franca of professional communication represented an indispensable precondition. That is why a tender in the local newspaper and on the webpage of the County was published for offers by local educational institutions to develop and carry out courses in English and Hungarian. Due to a long experience of teaching Legal English in formal and non-formal types of education at the Faculty of Law Osijek, the offer of the Chair of Foreign Languages of the Faculty was accepted as the best. As a non-formal way of teaching foreign languages demanded a different approach from that in formal teaching law students in English, the following section will be focussed on presenting the steps of development of the new course, the factors that were taken into consideration in that procedure, and the methodical approach to the delivery of the course.

Teaching Standards and Pre-Teaching Activities

As the Foreign language teacher was not familiar with the target group of students, with their needs and expectations in English language and the level of their mastery of English, several pre-teaching activities had to be performed prior to developing the course. These are the following activities: collecting basic data about the target group, the needs analysis, and placement test. In accordance with the ISO standard 9000 related to quality management principles, the following principles of European quality standards had to be taken into consideration in developing the course: 1. The needs and expectations of the learners should be considered and understood, 2. The target of the course should be defined in accordance with the learners' needs and expectations, 3. The initiators (here the project holders) should be informed about the needs and interests of the learners, 4. Learner groups should be kept in systematic order, and 5. The satisfaction of the participants with the programme and the achieved goals should be measured. Accordingly, the following standards referring to the teacher's activities in his/her approach to non-formal teaching had to be considered: 1. Setting up challenging targets, 2. Creating trust and removing fears, 3. Offering reliable and decent resources for teaching, and 4. Encouraging students and recognizing their achievements².

Before collecting the necessary data on the target group and their needs in English and before developing the course, a meeting was held with the project representatives in the Public Administration Office of the County. The goals of the project were discussed, and the number of teaching hours planned for the course as well as the place and the schedule of the

¹ <http://www.huhr-cbc.com/en/about-the-programme> , accessed on 20 February 2019, at 23:18

² <https://asq.org/quality-resources/iso-9000>, accessed on March 29, 2019, at 22:10

delivery of the course have been agreed. It was agreed that the course should be delivered in an intensive course of 40 hours starting from March 2018, carried out by the dynamics of four hours twice a week. It was also agreed that in the meantime the necessary pre-teaching activities would be carried out by using electronic mail, for which purpose the e-mail addresses were exchanged with the coordinator of the Osijek team of the CATCH-Project.

Collecting Basic Data about the Target Group and the Needs Analysis

In correspondence with the coordinator, contacts were established with 35 participants- the future participants of the course. All of them were civil servants in public administration offices of the County of Osijek-Baranja. A questionnaire was created for the purpose of the needs analysis, i.e. collecting the necessary data on the needs and interests within the English language for the legal profession. The results of the questionnaire were used as a foundation for the course development. Needs analysis is generally perceived as a necessary step in any serious and responsible course development. It is a systematic collection and analysis of the target group needs, its aim being to point at the desired destination of the course and syllabus design (Hutchinson and Waters 1987: 54). In teaching foreign languages for specific purposes, the needs analysis is observed by many scholars as the necessary foundation for the development of a foreign language course in a specific professional field (Swales, 1990; Robinson, 1991; Dudley – Evans and St. John, 1998).

The questionnaire, which was produced by Sierocka and conducted in its original form in wider international research (Sierocka, Chowancova, Kordić, 2018), encompassed the following areas: 1) age, sex, and education level of the candidates; 2) the reasons for their learning Legal English; 3) attitudes about the most useful language element in learning Legal English; 4) what they wish to achieve from a Legal English course in speaking, writing, reading E[and listening skills; 5) the skills they consider most useful in their respective professional domains; 6) attitudes towards the role of grammar in teaching Legal English, and 7) legal domains that are most useful in their professional life. The questionnaire was conducted by e-mail, and served as a foundation for the course development and the teaching material development. Altogether 35 participants joined the course, while 29 answered the questionnaire. Most questions could be answered by multiple choice. The needs analysis has resulted in the following findings:

All respondents were graduate lawyers, mostly women (altogether 6 men), with an average age of 35 – 45 years.

The prevailing reason for their learning Legal English was the wish to communicate with other people in their profession (23/29), and to exchange information with colleagues from abroad (15/29).

Asked about most useful language element in learning Legal English (the choice between four elements was offered: a) grammar, b) vocabulary, c) pronunciation, d) something else), most respondents (24) have highlighted vocabulary.

As for achievements in the four language skills, in the field of *speaking* most respondents have chosen expressing opinions – agreements and disagreements (24/29) and negotiating (19/29). In *writing*, they preferred formal correspondence (23/29) and writing applications, pleadings, requests (17/29); in the field of *listening* they preferred listening for details (22/29) and listening (and understanding) public announcements, instructions, warnings, etc (19/29). In the sphere of *reading*, as most useful activities the respondents equally assessed the understanding of original English texts (finding specific information, understanding details in the text) and widening legal vocabulary based on reading authentic materials, chosen by 22 respondents each (22/29).

As the most useful skills for their profession, the respondents have chosen listening (19/29) and speaking (18/29). The writing was assessed as third in the rank of importance (13/29) and reading as least important (10/29).

The intention was also to find out whether the participants wanted a) to repeat English grammar thoroughly, b) to discuss only grammar structures frequently used in Legal English c) not to include any grammar items in the Legal English course (only one answer had to be chosen). Most respondents (20/29) were of the opinion, that the grammar structures frequently used in Legal English should be addressed in the course.

As for the legal domains that teaching within the course should be focussed on, they were ranked in the following order: 1. European law (25), 2. administrative law (23), while three branches were equally ranked in the third (3.) position: sources of law (e.g. constitutional law), contract law, and civil law (each chosen by 20 respondents).

Determining Teaching Goals and Preparing Teaching Environment and Teaching Tools

The findings of the needs analysis have shaped the scope and the direction of course development within the cross-border cooperation project of Croatian and Hungarian public administration. Due to the fact, that civil servants of the Public Administration Office of the Osijek-Baranja County were the target group of students, the course was entitled "English for Civil Servants". Based on the needs analysis results, the following directions for course development have been established and goals of the course determined:

- 1) the course should enable students to master Legal English in their professional field of public administration to be able to communicate with their colleagues and clients from Hungary (and other countries) in their respective field of professional activity;
- 2) it should enable them to learn professional vocabulary in preferred legal fields and to use it in communicating with colleagues and clients from abroad;
- 3) as participants wanted to improve their listening and speaking skills – they should be trained in listening for details and understanding public speeches, lectures, announcements, while in the field of speaking they should be trained in expressing opinions and negotiating (reading and writing were not considered very important);
- 4) the course should thematically focus on authentic texts in English in the fields of European law, administrative law, contract law, constitutional law and civil law;
- 5) the course should also contain grammar structures, especially those important for the language of law and frequently used in English legal texts.

Before developing the syllabus of the course, the teaching materials and tools to be used, the contact person of the project was contacted to get precise information on the teaching environment and teaching tools at the disposal of the Public Administration Office. It offered two suitable County halls that could serve as classrooms as well as the use of their computers and LCD projector necessary for course delivery. Before starting with course delivery, it was also necessary to write the final version of the syllabus, prepare copies of the teaching materials and handouts for attendants, prepare the electronic version of teaching materials on CD, agree with the project representatives on the dynamics of teaching and timetable, etc. It was also agreed with the project holders that all materials had to be submitted to them along with the needs analysis questionnaires, placement tests, the teacher's report upon the delivery of the course, and the contract on the course delivery within the CATCH project based on public tender.

The Development of the Course *English for Civil Servants*

Focus, Ideas, Principles, and Pedagogical Standards of Teaching

In developing the course, the pedagogical standards of communicative foreign language learning and factors of teaching are taken into consideration, especially the target learners, their specific needs, goals of the course and the specific professional context of teaching English as the language for specific purposes. This approach is founded on the principles described by Brown as modern pedagogical trends in foreign language teaching, "(...) upon which teachers can choose particular designs and techniques for teaching a foreign language in a specific context. Every learner is unique. Every teacher is unique. Every learner-teacher relationship is unique, and every context is unique" (Brown, 2006: 28). The teacher's main task is to understand those relationships and contexts and to achieve the goals resulting from the needs analysis by a communicative approach.

According to the results of the needs analysis, the course content should be focussed on the texts dealing with European law, administrative law, civil law (with some branches of law of interest like family law, property law, etc.), constitutional law, and contract law. In developing the course, the principal idea was to ensure the quality of teaching appropriate to the target group of students who were graduate lawyers with remarkable professional experience, some of them in highly ranked administrative and/or political positions. For the first meeting with the participants, the placement test was planned to establish the average knowledge level of the group, with the purpose of establishing the appropriate teaching approach and most striking weaknesses in their mastery of English language. The idea was also that the introductory lecture should

be dedicated to presenting linguistic features of the language of the law to develop the awareness of the participants of structures, phrases, grammar items and stylistic features that distinguish legalese from other technical languages. The chosen texts had to be relevant, up to date, well structured, clear and involving legal terminology and phrases from the chosen fields of law. The topics had to be interesting and discussion provoking, in which students could apply phrases and structures suitable for expressing agreements and disagreements and elaborating on their personal opinions. At least one text had to be appropriate for developing negotiating skills, and the first idea was that it could be the one concerning contracts. The focus was to be placed on speaking exercises in connection to each legal text planned in the syllabus. Presenting grammar structures, especially those frequently used in legal texts was also planned as a part of the course. Instruction had to be based on the legal text that students are familiar with and the illustrative examples had to be related to legal topics. Students' needs and interests being the principal criterion of structuring the course, an audio-visual material had to be incorporated in the teaching plan as well. As in English courses within the formal Law Studies, the HBO documentary "Hot coffee case" is used to illustrate the term *tort* in common law system, the idea was that this video material could be used in the course English for Civil Servants as well. This material could serve as an excellent example of the differences in scope, meaning, and interpretation of the concept *tort* between the common law system and the civil law system to which the Republic of Croatia belongs. By this specific HBO documentary, the problems and challenges of translating legal texts from English into Croatian and vice versa can be well illustrated. As the translation problems in the language of law have been explored by the author of this paper in several previous publications, the plan was to present the most interesting findings from her scholarly research concerning differences in legal concepts and terms in different legal systems (Kordić, 2015, 2016) within this course as well. The intention was also to put special emphasis on the examples of relative equivalence of legal terms (Sandrini, 1999) in the English and the Croatian languages of law as two languages stemming from different legal traditions and cultures.

Choice and Development of Materials

In developing teaching materials, several elements have been considered. Firstly, as the participants were graduate lawyers, most of them were familiar with the legal texts in the textbook "English for Lawyers" that was applied at Croatian law faculties in the past two decades. Although it was updated, most texts were kept for years. Because of that and the fact, that a new course should be focussed on specific legal topics chosen by participants, it was necessary to develop a completely new teaching material. Luckily, a new textbook in English for law students was in the publication procedure, so upon the agreement with the authors of the book (colleagues teaching Legal English at the Faculty of Zagreb), a few texts have been chosen from that book, shortened and adapted to the purpose of the course English for Civil Servants. Articles from the EU Newsletter, an EU journal available online, have been used as a source of the texts related to the European law and the Croatian membership in the EU. Parts of scientific articles in respective legal fields available online have been chosen and relevant chapters from the teacher's own books and papers have been excerpted and adopted. Additionally, to the purpose of learning legal terminology and phraseology in their professional fields and of dealing with problems in translating legal texts, specific chapters of laws on public administration in English language and their translation into the Croatian language have been downloaded from the official platforms of the Croatian and British Ministries of Public Administration. As mentioned in the previous section of this paper, the HBO documentary *Hot Coffee Case* was also introduced in the programme of teaching with the purpose of developing listening skills and understanding the original communication of native speakers. Grammar units were attached to each textual unit based on the PowerPoint presentations used by the teacher in her formal lectures at the faculty. Grammar units and the illustrating examples have been chosen in compliance with the needs and interests of the target group and in accordance with the predicted outcomes of the course.

Syllabus Development

Before collecting and organizing teaching materials, a draft teaching programme of the course was prepared (draft syllabus), but the limited approach to appropriate legal texts in the chosen fields of law and the copyright issue have influenced introducing slight changes in the programme. Because of that, the final version of the syllabus for the course English for Civil Servants was developed after all teaching materials had been collected and prepared (Appendix). The following step was to organize the material in 40 hours of teaching and copy them on the CD. As the first session was dedicated to presenting the course and the quick placement test with the purpose of establishing the average knowledge level in English of the students, the remaining 39 hours have been divided in 13 units of three hours. Each unit was comprised of a specific legal text from the fields of law suggested by the students, followed by oral exercises focussed on

developing speaking skills in that specific professional field, and the third hour within the session was dealing with grammar structures typical of the language of law and the corresponding exercises. Legal texts included the topics like *Accession of the Republic of Croatia to EU, EU Institutions, The Reform of Croatian Public Administration, The Local and Regional Self-Government Act, Marriage and Divorce, Private International Law, Contract, etc.*

The teaching material was organized according to the planned syllabus, printed out, and tied in a teaching manual for students, and submitted to the project representatives in the print and electronic versions. The representatives of the CATCH project have prepared copies of these materials for all participants. Handouts and online sources have also been prepared for use in specific lectures.

Course Delivery

As discernible from the syllabus, during the first meeting with participants, the results of the needs analysis were presented and the planned organization of the course according to those results was explained in detail. After that, a quick placement test was conducted as a ground for future implementation of the teaching approach that would be most appropriate for the target group, and to establishing the weaknesses in their mastery of English language that should be in focus while teaching grammar and/or legal vocabulary. The placement test, which was developed by Macmillan Inside Out editions, was downloaded from their web page¹, printed out in 35 copies and submitted to the participants for solving in 15 minutes. Due to the possibility of a quick correction and delivery of results, the results were analysed during the same introductory hour of the course. The average score was 39 points. According to The Quick Placement Test Conversion Table, the range of 30-39 points refers to the intermediate level (B1). As the scores were very close to 40 points ascribed to the upper-intermediate level, the average result was satisfactory. Several participants with the lowest score claimed to have forgotten a lot of their English knowledge as many years had passed after their graduation in law, so it was agreed that in grammar sessions tenses should be briefly repeated as well. It was also agreed that the course should be delivered in sessions of three hours twice a week. The delivery of the course started in the second week of March and was carried out in sessions of 3 hours twice a week. Teaching was organized in a way that the first hour within each session was dedicated to legal texts and introducing new terminology in the respective field, the second to implementation of new terms and phrases in oral exercises of different types and the third to review of grammar units frequently used in the English language of the law.

Apart from mastering new vocabulary and legal phraseology in the fields of European law, administrative law, family law, constitutional law and the law of contract, some units were focussed on differences between common law system and the civil law system (Conflict of Laws, The Law of Torts) and on the specific features and terminology of international law. In practicing legal terminology and phraseology, the emphasis was put on typical linguistic structures like legal phrases and idioms, phrasal verbs, legal doublets and triplets, etc. Pair work, group work, and discussions on professional topics were the prevailing types of teaching discourse focussed on developing speaking skills. Participants were also trained in using terms and phrases expressing agreements and disagreements in discussions on specific legal topics, e.g. reform of public administration in Croatia, Croatian membership in the EU, benefits of European projects, marriage and divorce, the cases of conflict of laws under the jurisdiction of Croatian courts, etc. They were also taught how to negotiate on terms and conditions in concluding contracts. As for grammar, the focus was on structures frequently used in the language of law and their application in different types of oral exercises related to relevant legal topics. The content of teaching was adjusted to the needs and preferences of the participants. This fact may be perceived as the main reason for their evident advancement in English, and for their pleasure with their own achievements at the closure of the project.

Trends and Perspectives

Modern means of communication worldwide, along with the increased intensity and various models of political, economic and educational cooperation within the European Union, have given rise to new models and types of non-formal education. This especially refers to teaching foreign languages, which has always been open to international cooperation and novelties in the teaching approach. In Croatian higher education institutions, apart from formal foreign language teaching within accredited formal studies, different kinds of non-formal education have been introduced, particularly after Croatia has become a full Member State of the European Union. This new paradigm in education has been presented here on the example of the Faculty of Law, University of Osijek. At this faculty, different models of non-formal teaching have been developed: lifelong learning programmes, international projects within Jean Monnet programmes, Erasmus + projects,

¹ <http://insideout.net/new/resources/placement-test> accessed on 28 March 2019 at 12:30

national projects financed by the Croatian Science Foundation. The Department of Foreign Languages has developed one lifelong learning programme that has been carried out since 2012 and participated in the interregional European project CATCH launched by the local Public Administration Office. Possibilities of new models of non-formal education in the field of foreign languages have not been exhausted by this. One of the novelties in developing non-formal ways of learning Legal English is the participation of our students in an international virtual Legal English course. The project called *Virtual Erasmus* has been launched in 2016 by Dr. David Best from the University of Brussels. He gathered students of the 1st and 2nd year of studies at the law faculties of Brno, Krakow, and Brussels and in the year 2018 four students from the Faculty of Law Osijek. The international team is comprised of 16 students (four from each of the four law faculties) who attend the virtual Legal English course and work together in international teams of four students on solving one legal case. Virtual cooperation by means of electronic media resulted in four essays delivered by four international teams on how to solve a specific legal case. The essays are available on the Moodle platforms of the four faculties and are currently in the assessment procedure. As new developments of informational technologies enable closer cooperation between educational institutions, teachers, and students on national and international levels, new models and programmes of non-formal education can be expected in the future.

Concluding Remarks

Rapid changes and intensive developments in IT sector and the possibilities of easier contacts and cooperation between higher education institutions worldwide have strongly influenced teaching processes. Students' learning habits are changing, their proficiency in English is improving and their expectations from foreign language courses are more demanding, so foreign language teachers are faced with new challenges and demands. Due to Croatian Membership in the EU as a conglomerate of different nations, cultures, languages and national policies, Croatian lawyers are also faced with the necessity of constant updating and refreshing their professional knowledge and skills in different lifelong learning programmes and other types of non-formal learning in the field of the legal profession. In this paper, two models of non-formal higher education carried out by the Faculty of Law Osijek have been presented. The first is the Lifelong Learning Programme for Lawyer Linguists, launched and delivered by the Department of Foreign Languages of the Faculty, and the second is the course English for Civil Servants, developed within the international cross-border project between Hungary and Croatia, in which the Faculty of Law was a contractual partner of the local Public Administration Office. New courses within the lifelong learning programme as well as the course English for Civil Servants have been developed with an overall idea of enabling all interested parties from the wider community to acquire knowledge, competences, and skills in the field of Legal English. In the EU context, communication in English as lingua franca of international communication represents an important factor of non-formal education in the legal profession. The question whether the prospect of Brexit will bring any changes in the choice of the language of political and legal cooperation within the EU is to be answered in the near future.

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Endnotes

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⁴ <http://insideout.net/new/resources/placement-test> accessed on 28 March 2019 at 12:30

Integrating Knowledge Society: A Survey Led in Three Universities

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Abstract

Knowledge is considered as a general basic principle for managing the individual's tasks and activities and for organizing society. This precious resource is so important that its acquisition is able to provide strength and wealth to its holder. The environment in which we interact now is known as 'Knowledge Society'. One can notice from this terminology that knowledge is pre-requisite for people who wish to live in this modern space. However, knowledge alone is no longer sufficient to integrate this complex society. Several other factors are now needed to integrate 'Knowledge society'. A lot of people are interested in getting a place in this new society, but they do not really know about the parameters required by 'Knowledge society'. A problem is stated and some questions are raised: What are the fundamental factors that people should acquire to be able to integrate this new complex society? Is it easy to acquire these factors? We attempted to answer these questions through a survey that we led with a sample of university teachers from three universities in the city of Constantine. We adopted the descriptive approach and used the interview as an instrument for collecting data. Significant results were obtained. The main result consisted in the acquisition of digital literacy.

Keywords: Knowledge society; complex society; prerequisite factors; integration; survey; university teachers; Constantine.

Introduction

Progress generates an unprecedented upheaval in all fields. The acquisition of information and knowledge by citizens gives new dimensions to learning and development. Technology has disseminated a variety of products that enable people to have access to information and knowledge rapidly and efficiently in a moving society. Information resources are available in a variety of shapes. Knowledge has become a valuable resource that provides strength and wealth. On the one hand, this resource helps individuals in their daily activities, and, on the other hand, it helps in organizing society. Though a lot of people endeavor to integrate this new modern knowledge society, most of them fail in achieving their goal. The reason is that a lot of people do not first make efforts to know about the parameters required by this society that can allow people to integrate this new environment. A problem is stated and some questions are raised: What are the fundamental factors that people should acquire to be able to integrate this new complex knowledge society? Is it easy to acquire these factors? We attempted to answer these questions through a survey that we led in the city of Constantine. Three universities were concerned by the survey. A sample of university teachers constituted our population of study.

Information and knowledge

Nowadays, It is not sufficient to know how to read. We should also be able to know how to use the new means of communication in order to be able to have access easily to the needed information. In this new society, our future relies on our capacities in using and exploiting our knowledge which has become pre-requisite for any progress and for any success. The writer Blanquet said: "The future belongs to those who master knowledge" (Blanquet, 1999). Libraries and information sources have become a fundamental means for all citizens. They are the main keys that help to open the doors of knowledge society (Candallot, 2005). It is hard to acquire knowledge in this new society, where information knows a real explosion. The rapid development of technology has led to the emergence of a variety of new information products and services that permit an efficient access to information. These technological products are found in all areas. They help in filtering a great quantity of information and in processing it at a very high speed.

In this economic world that is hostile to social and economic activities through the ever-increasing diversity of events and products that have to be managed. To know how to manage, we need to know how to use information and produce knowledge. It is even emphasized that the educated man is the one who "has acquired a method of research and work to be able to form an idea by himself" (Pochet, Thirion, 1999). In this frightful context, only the intelligent person armed with the right information, remains competitive (Bouderbane, 2004). Thus, the appropriation of information becomes strategic to stimulate innovation and creation, in order to anticipate competition or to contract new projects. All this must be accompanied by the mastery of the use of new technologies. Information is therefore the leverage to drive business success, performance and prosperity, when it is new and appropriately addressed so that it can act effectively when needed. This is about the transformation of this information into a useful and exploitable knowledge to follow the pace of development.

Knowledge society

The evolution of knowledge, as a product of human intelligence, generates a real mutation within society. The day-to-day work of individuals and institutions is increasingly based on access to information and knowledge. This information is so abundant, so useful that it has pushed people to develop communication networks that are forming at a blazing speed (Goulding, 2001). The introduction of ICT in this shifting society has given a new dimension to the explosion of information sources and communication systems. Men have understood that access to information is rewarding. Institutions are also experiencing growing development. They need knowledge to achieve efficiency and to be able to occupy a nice position in an increasingly complex and highly competitive environment known as knowledge society. The integration in this new society is very hard for individuals who have not acquired some specific characteristics required by knowledge society (Bouderbane, 2013). Furthermore, these individuals do not care about these requirements. Developed societies have generated knowledge societies that are able to produce knowledge, to handle it, to access to it, to produce the instruments that permit the access to this precious resource. These societies assure training and encourage their institutions to train citizens, so that they will be familiar with knowledge and understand how to learn by handling information and knowledge (Rigot, 2006).

Methodology

We led a survey at the three Universities of Constantine 1, 2 and 3. A sample of sixty (60) university teachers, randomly selected, accepted to respond to our questions in an interview that we arranged at the central university libraries. Thirty males and thirty females, in addition to twenty teachers from each university constituted our sample. We wanted, on the one hand, to identify to which extent university teacher were aware of the fundamental factors that they should acquire to be able to integrate knowledge society, and, on the other hand, to check whether it was easy for them to acquire these factors. We adopted a qualitative study. In our interview, we showed a list of ten factors (see the appendix) that may help in integrating knowledge society. We asked our respondents to select the most appropriate factors. It was possible for them to include any other factor of their choice.

The survey's results

Competence

All the respondents (100 %) selected this factor in the first position. They mentioned that competence meant having the theoretical and the practical knowledge of a specific discipline, in addition to a method of work that facilitates the pedagogical interaction with people in general and learners in particular.

Autonomy

In the second position, 54 respondents attested that they needed independence in order to integrate knowledge society explaining that teachers had to rely on themselves in any project they undertook. The new society requires individuals who are able to take decisions, to lead projects and to think independently.

Flexibility

In the third position, 50 university teachers showed the importance of flexibility. They mentioned that society is open to a variety of aspects, so teachers had to be its image. They added that they could not imagine a stubborn teacher integrating

an open environment. Several new things had to be accepted in order to be accepted by the members of knowledge society. Flexibility requires making efforts to be open – minded.

Information literate

As a fourth position, 45 respondents underlined the importance of acquiring information literacy as a basic human right in knowledge society that promoted social inclusion in it. Information literacy meant for them handling efficiently the techniques of information search (.Hinchliffe, 2005) They also mentioned that it was important for individuals to have a spirit of ethics when using and exploiting information and that they should understand that information had economic, social and legal dimensions. They added that teachers should understand the importance of making efforts to produce information, not just to consume it. They affirmed that information literacy should be acquired by all people: It could help them to integrate this new complex society (Baltz, 1998). Their social and professional position and statute would be preserved. They should know that their future relied on their capacities in using and exploiting knowledge, the source of any progress and any success. Updating our knowledge has become a constant process and getting the ability to know how to search information is learned in all disciplines; this has become a necessary universal competence (Duspaire, 2004).

Technology literate

The fifth position was taken by 45 respondents who showed the necessity of handling efficiently the techniques of information search via technological devices. They added that this competence could allow them to overcome anxiety that was felt in front of new machines, and to avoid 'techno-stress' (Van Wallace, 2013). They affirmed that the mastery of technology has become indispensable; "it has given rise to new paradigms of services and new roles for the staff" (Curran, 2006). They were convinced that when well handled, these technological instruments would become very useful: "technology changes and the better trained a staff is, the better they can handle those changes" (Childers, 2003).

Accepting change and coping with it

40 respondents took the sixth position while stressing the factor of change which became inevitable. They added that knowledge society was facing a rapid and a constant change that educators should take into account in their daily activities. They affirmed the necessity of being able to adapt yourself to the new situations, to the new changing environment, and to the modeling of human behaviors. Darwin was convinced that the species that survive were neither the strongest ones nor the most intelligent ones, but rather those that know how to adapt themselves.

Accepting life-long learning

30 university teachers selected life-long learning in the seventh position. They emphasized the factor of updating our knowledge that became a constant process. For our respondents, refusing continuous training meant to be on the margin of knowledge society. "We do not want to be excluded from the new society", they affirm. Training has become an obligation for every educator. "Training has become a necessity, not a luxury" (Childer, 2003).

To be operational

26 respondents selected in the eighth position the factor of being operational. "The new society does not accept individuals who are lazy, late or tired", they stressed. They explained that this complex society was not social or emotional. "That new environment is materialistic, harsh and concrete", they added. They concluded that knowledge society rejected individuals who were non operational or no longer able to respond to society strict orders. Either you are present when they need you or you are absent and no longer useful.

Handling foreign languages

25 university teachers opted for this factor as a ninth issue. They recognized the importance of handling at least two foreign languages in this competitive space. They added that it was very hard for individuals who use just their mother tongue to occupy a position in knowledge society. Our respondents underlined the high position of English in this new environment. "It has become a must", they said.

An individual with multiple competencies

In the tenth position, 24 university teachers mentioned the fact that being good in just one unique discipline was no longer sufficient. "Knowledge society requires individuals with several an multiple competencies", they said. They underlined the importance of mastering foreign languages, of handling technology, in addition to your expertise in your selected discipline. They added that you were able to collect knowledge about others disciplines, it would be suitable.

To be innovative

In the eleventh position, 21 respondents underlined the factor of innovation. They explained that knowledge society preferred individuals who believed in innovation, who were motivated for launching innovative projects and for creating new services. They added that these individuals had to be imaginative and ready to learn and get informed about innovation as a subject of interest. At last, they explained that they had to encourage the other people to be creative.

To care about sustainable development and environment

The twelfth position went to 12 respondents who wanted to explain that all teachers should put in their mind that society needed them, and that they had to participate in developing it in a positive way. Protecting the environment was a factor that attracted their attention. They mentioned that progress should not be anarchical, but should rather rely on preserving our natural space for the benefit of the next generations. They added that we should not accept the destruction of our environment. "Knowledge society had to endeavor for the sake of protecting nature", they affirmed.

Able to work in networks

The thirtieth position concerned 10 respondents who believed in the importance of group work. They mentioned that knowledge society required persons who were able to work collectively in projects. These persons could be separated geographically and would work on multidisciplinary projects. In this way, they thought, the results would be more satisfactory.

To accept to be visible

Five university teachers took the fortieth position and emphasized the factor related to visibility. They mentioned that knowledge society was a space of digital activities in which you could no longer feel free in your daily work. They explained that the electronic supports that we used made us visible in the digital world. They also added that our group – work outcomes and our inclusion in network activities would not remain invisible. They concluded that knowledge was shared and disseminated through open access and visibility.

General comments

Teachers who answered our questions come from a variety of disciplines that require information skills and knowledge. The respondents, in general, seem to be prepared to assume their future responsibilities in knowledge society. They underline the importance of acquiring information and technological literacy stressing the necessity of handling digital supports (Massou; Morelli, 2012). The survey shows that teachers know that they will not succeed in integrating the new complex society if they do not give importance to information and knowledge, in addition to some other specific factors discussed in the interview (Chevillote, 2005). They recognize the importance of continuous training and life-long learning in order to be independent in their activities. They also highlight the factor of flexibility which helps a lot in interacting with the other people. As competence "is a set of knowledge and behaviors" (Praderie, Plasse, 1995), teachers insist on acquiring multiple competences and on being operational all the time to avoid being on the borders of knowledge society. They show the development of networking as a new expanding method of work (Serres, 2008). They also believe in change and accept it in order to be able to cope with all that is new. Our respondents emphasize the importance of mastering foreign languages in knowledge society. Some of the university teachers mention the new living style which renders everything visible. Sustainable development and innovation have also attracted the attention of our respondents. They know that they have an outstanding mission to accomplish: they should prepare the young generation for knowledge society.

Conclusion

In the era of knowledge society, the environment has a new shape.. The comprehension of change, its assimilation and acceptance throughout the world should incite individuals to be more conscious than before, to be alert and perspicacious in order to be able to cope with change and with its impacts. We have to be present in these new spaces to be able to have a place, a position... a status. We should not be frightened by this complex environment. The handling of multiple competences, the mastery of information and communication technologies can be a suitable issue to face change and to manage it adequately. Literacy suggests understanding and the ability to adapt and increase that understanding (Childers, 2003). Learning and acquiring knowledge can cure us from ignorance, failure and distress. The developed world moves forward very rapidly, but reforms in developing countries are often very slow, and human's behavior is often inflexible. Governments should help their citizens by reducing their difficulties and anxiety when being in front of projects that require information search and technology use (Mebarki, 2003) The University has a vital and strategic mission: it should stand as a strong supporting pillar in enhancing development and innovation in all levels (Robles, 2006). Educators and authorities should reconsider the potential of information literacy that should be adopted as a global approach for educating citizens who can be able to develop their own identity in knowledge society. We should stop speaking just about food; it is high time we gave a priority to integrating this new complex society.

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Appendix

Select from the list below according to your preference and in a chronological order the factors required for integrating knowledge society:

Competence	Accepting life-long learning
To be innovative	To accept to be visible
Handling foreign languages	Able to work in networks
Flexibility	Technology literate
Information literate	Accepting change and coping with it
Autonomy	An individual with multiple competencies

Epistemic Communities to Consolidate Educational Policies in the Internal Planning of Teacher Training College

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Abstract

An Epistemic Community, as defined by Adler and Haas (1992), is a network of professionals with wide academic recognition as experts in a particular field of knowledge, whose legitimacy allows them to influence the formulation and execution of policies in that field. There are several fields of knowledge in which the influence of Epistemic Communities has been successful (International Relations, Medicine, Environmental Care, among others), but as appears in the available studies, there has been little formation of these communities in the Educational field. In the case of the Teacher Training Colleges of Mexico, this experience also seems to be null, but if we analyze the foundations and implications of the Epistemic Communities, the formation and implementation of this type of communities can be a real opportunity to overcome problems of legitimacy and concreteness of the Federal Educational Policies that for these colleges have been formulated in our country in the most recent years. The first tasks that these communities would be the understanding and discussion of the problems of these type of colleges to enunciate alternative solutions, as well as the creation of an analytical framework for the interpretation of International, National and State Educational Policies so that, in their internal work, the Teacher Training Colleges can enunciate congruently their own institutional policies and in the short or medium term can actually put into practice these policies in aspects such as Research, Educational Innovation, Professionalization of their teachers, and the effective Use of Technologies (from ICT-Information and Communication Technologies to PET- Participation and Empowerment Technologies).

Keywords: Epistemic Communities, Educational Policies, Teacher Training Colleges and Institutions.

Introduction

The purpose of the discussion established in this paper is to explore the possibilities to link the educational policies of the Teacher Training Colleges and Institutions (TTCI), as Centro de Actualización del Magisterio (CAM) de Durango, Mexico, to the reality of these, and with it, review the role that could be carried out by Epistemic Communities (EC) in this type of institutions, which could represent a key point to find -and validate- the first ways to meet the meanings, the concordance and the subsequent effective implementation, in the short or medium term, of the educational policies in the daily practice of these institutions.

Some of the first tasks that the EC could fulfill, would be the understanding and discussion of the problems of this particular type of institutions to enunciate alternative solutions, as well as the creation of an analysis framework for the interpretation of international, national and state educational policies so that, in their internal work, the TTCI can congruently enunciate their own institutional policies and that in the short or medium term, they can really put into practice this conglomeration of policies in aspects such as research, educational innovation, professionalization of their teachers and the effective use of technologies (ICT -Information and Communication Technologies-, LKT -Learning and Knowledge Technologies-, TEP -Technologies of Empowerment and Participation-).

To guide the analysis of the joint and collaborative academic work that is done in the TTCI in Mexico, such as CAM, and the possibilities and relevance of forming Epistemic Communities in them, in the first part of this paper I perform an analysis of the state in that the research tasks are perceived, in addition to the development they have had and the work currently carried out by the Academic Teams (AT, Cuerpos Académicos –CA- in Spanish) in higher education institutions, in general, and in TTCI (the various colleges and institutions of updating the teaching profession).

In the second part of this writing I would like to discuss the definitions of the Epistemic Communities, its characteristics, functions and implications, as well as the impact they have had or could have on the formulation of policies and the improvement of governmental and / or institutional conditions, according to their fields of influence.

Research and Academic Teams in Higher Education and Teacher Training Colleges and Institutions

The research practice and the integration of Academic Teams (AT), whose main task is precisely and mainly this practice, as well as the collaborative dissemination of educational knowledge, have represented one of the most difficult policies to integrate into the dynamics of Teacher Training Colleges and Institutions (TTCI). The National Regulatory Reform in Mexico of 2009 practically forced teacher educators to include collaborative research in a formal way, a function that until then was carried out almost exclusively by universities and other specialized agencies. The TTCI had traditionally dealt with teaching practice (according to programs of study and updating, in addition to the orientations of the pedagogical paradigms in force). With some exceptions, the development of research and the dissemination of knowledge were practices unrelated to the majority of teacher educators, previous experiences were reduced to the teaching of research in the courses suggested in the degree programs and the accompaniment of the students in the construction of a 'recepional document' to reach the degree, which most of the time consisted of the application of some technical tools for the recovery and systematization of the teaching experience during the period of practice (Rodríguez Lares, Soto Soto & Alvarado Cabral, 2017). These recepional documents not only had problems of format, the design was diffuse, there was confusion in the use of the tools of the paradigms and methods, therefore, many of them could not be considered as academic research because they suffered the formalities and rigor to be. The panorama has been changing in the TTCI, since they have ventured into the offer of postgraduate programs where research begins to take a relevant role in the training of teachers as researchers. Even with everything, it seems that there is an epistemological, methodological, technical and practical breach with respect to the domain that the researchers of these institutions show in these aspects with respect to their university counterparts, who produce the largest volume of research in the different areas of knowledge in high education and at certain times, even regarding the educational problem in general. Rodríguez Lares, Soto Soto & Alvarado Cabral (2017) point out that a large part of the problem for the conformation of AT in TTCI has been the incipient culture and capacity for research and in general for academic productivity and publication.

If we review the years before the National Regulatory Reform, despite the fact that TTCI have been recognized as institutions of higher education for more than two decades, we can see how practices, cultures and academic habits have changed little. The 1984 Educational Reform assigned new responsibilities to academics, however, most were not prepared to assume the new functions, mainly research tasks (Rodríguez Lares, Soto Soto & Alvarado Cabral, 2017). Organizational changes were not made, also teachers' profiles didn't change because the current entry and promotion rules were not always respected. In fact, the homologation of 1984, that gave the TTCI status of higher education schools, left the academic processes intact; Santillán Nieto (n.d.) also points out that in general, these processes, as I mentioned, have been focused on teaching and institutionally do not develop functions of research and publication with the same intensity and continuity that do other Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in the country.

The actions for the strengthening of the TTCI, in an initial stage, had a starting point in 2005, in order to improve the competitiveness of the programs and close gaps; in 2008, the external evaluation of these institutions was initiated by the Inter-Institutional Committees for the Evaluation of Higher Education (CIEES in Spanish); the administration and the programs offered by the TTCI began to participate in the Program for the Improvement of Teaching Staff (PROMEP in Spanish) in 2009; the projection was that by 2010 all public Teacher Training Colleges would be evaluated. The comprehensive Reform Program of Teacher Training Colleges 2007-2012 aimed to professionalize the teaching staff, create communities of professional practice to address the areas of mathematics, literacy, science, foreign and native languages; in addition to designing a program for teachers to receive specialized advice and enter graduate programs of quality. Advances, as pointed out by Santillán Nieto (n.d.), have been incipient in most of the areas and the quality training has simply remained a good intention. In fact, there is little information about the experience, favorable or unfavorable, in the TTCI with the creation of such communities of professional practice, it being understood that the way of working of the teaching teams remained, in the best of cases, in the collaborative work and, above all, in the work that was carried out by the teachers from the academies, with the students in the formative path Professional Practice, known as Observation and Teaching Practice, which has always been favorable but imprecise, if we limit ourselves in a timely manner to what the aforementioned reform indicated.

In this way, reviewing the various changes that have occurred in the recent years, from the curricular redesigns of the study programs and strengthening and transformation actions undertaken by the Dirección General de Estudios Superiores para Profesionales de la Educación (General Directorate of Higher Education for Education Professionals) (DGESPE), a body dependent on the Subsecretaría de Educación Superior (Subsecretariat of Higher Education) and rector of the work of the TTCI, when analyzing the main challenges that the teacher training of the 21st century enunciates in this normative entity precisely in its base document, the *Estrategia de fortalecimiento y transformación de escuelas normales (Strategy for the Strengthening and transformation of normal schools)* (SEP, 2017), where there is challenge III: “Convertir a las Escuelas Normales en Instituciones de Educación Superior orientadas a resultados y propiciar experiencias innovadoras mediante la sinergia con otras IES”¹ (p. 25); it contains as one of its specific challenges: “Aumentar y fortalecer la producción académica de las EN (Escuelas Normales), así como la difusión e intercambio de conocimiento entre éstas y otras IES”² (p. 25); thus, we can see the importance that is granted to the production and academic diffusion in the TTCI.

What is described in the previous paragraph is directly linked to the intervention areas that the Dirección General de Estudios Superiores para Profesionales de la Educación (DGESPE) marks to grant resources in support of the academic and management development of the TTCI, mainly from the *Plan de Apoyo a la Calidad Educativa y la Transformación de las Escuelas Normales (PACTEN) (Plan for Supporting Educational Quality and the Transformation of the Teacher Training Colleges)*. There are five areas of intervention, the first to be stated: “La consolidación de CA, la movilidad académica, los intercambios académicos y convenios entre IES a nivel nacional o internacional”³ (SEP, 2017, p. 66), with the first of the points mentioned, consolidation of Academic Teams (AT), “se busca integrar las funciones académicas de docencia, investigación y difusión como actividades cotidianas en las Escuelas Normales”⁴ (p. 67).

This importance that is given to the development of AT, having as essential objects the research and its publications, in Teacher Training Colleges, is reiterated in the *Guía de elaboración del PACTEN (Development Guide of PACTEN)* (SEP-DGESPE, 2016), where in congruence with the formulated in the strategy of strengthening and transformation of the TTCI, seven factors are established with very marked emphasis on the achievement of educational quality indicators. Thus, the first factor of such emphasis are Academic Teams (AT); the following are: 2. Tutoring, counseling and support programs for new students; 3. Follow-up programs for graduates; 4. National and international mobility programs; 5. Evaluation; 6. Teacher habilitation; 7. Training; and 8. Infrastructure. In the AT factor, the guide argues that what is sought is to respond to the need to strengthen the formation and consolidation of AT, to integrate them into the aforementioned academic functions: teaching, academic research and publication. Thus, it is clear that those that are normatively and primarily marked by the DGESPE, to raise significant quality indices in the TTCI, is the production and academic publication of the AT, without neglecting the work of teaching practice.

To describe more precisely the functions that AT must fulfill and what should be their desirable characteristics, it can be summarized that these are made up of a set of Associate Professors that share one or more lines of research and its objectives are mainly oriented to the generation and / or application of new knowledge (López-Velarde, n.d.). Thus, the AT would have to represent a sustenance in the institutional academic functions and with this contribute to the integration of their institutions to the Higher Education System of Mexico. In the Programa para el Desarrollo Profesional Docente (Program for the Professional Development of Teachers) (PROMEP) for universities and high schools, AT are categorized by degrees of consolidation, establishing three levels: Consolidated Academic Team (CAT), Academic Team in Consolidation (ATC) and Academic Team in Formation (ATF). The degree of consolidation of the AT is determined by the maturity of the Lines of Generation or Application of Knowledge (LGAC in Spanish), established jointly considering the common goals, where the academic products generated in relation to this line or lines constitute the evidence more consistent of the collegiate work that integrates the capacities and efforts of the AT. The aforementioned is consolidated at the moment that AT carry out applied research, or technological development and innovation in disciplinary or

¹ Convert Teacher Training Colleges into Higher Education Institutions oriented towards results and promote innovative experiences through synergy with other HEI.

² Increase and strengthen the academic production of Teacher Training Colleges, as well as the dissemination and exchange of knowledge between these and other HEI.

³ The consolidation of Academic Teams, academic mobility, academic exchanges and agreements between HEI at national or international level.

⁴ ... the aim is to integrate the academic functions of teaching, research and dissemination as daily activities in the Teacher Training Colleges.

multidisciplinary subjects and a set of academic goals and objectives. Additionally, López-Velarde points out that AT members attend, with teaching, educational innovation and intervention, educational programs related to their specialty at various levels.

In essence, the AT in the TTCl were established with the aim of fulfilling these three main criteria (Yáñez Quijada, Mungarro Matus & Figueroa López, 2014):

- Existence of common goals to generate knowledge in applied educational research and teacher training.
- Solidity and maturity of the Lines of Generation and Application of Knowledge (LGAC).
- Collegiate work in the design and application of innovative projects that generate knowledge in educational research and teacher training.

We could question here how far the TTCl have reached to meet the expectations about development of AT, at least for the case of the state of Durango, Mexico. According to PROMEP data, for January 2019, there are 6,107 AT throughout the country, of which 967 (15.8%) correspond to the area of Education, Humanities and Arts. Regarding the TTCl, at the national level there are 217 academic bodies (22.4% of the total area indicated and 3.6% of the global, very low percentage if we take into account that of 730 institutions registered in PROMEP, 260 are TTCl -35.6 % -). Of these, only two (0.9%) are Consolidated AT (from Escuela Normal de Sinaloa and Centro Regional de Formación Docente e Investigación Educativa del Estado de Chiapas), 34 (15.7%) are In Consolidation process and the rest 181 In Training (83.4%). To illustrate this data from TTCl with what happens at a global level -the total of Higher Education Institutions-, in the latter there are 1504 (24.6%) Consolidated AT, 1706 (27.9%) AT In consolidation and the rest 2897 (47.4%) In Training. I think that with these percentage differences the gap between the development of AT in HEI versus the presented in TTCl is clear. Thus, the comparison between HEI 24.6% versus TTCl 0.9% in Consolidated AT; 27.9% HEI versus 15.7% in AT In Consolidation; and 47.4% HEI versus 83.4% TTCl in AT In Training. The following table is highly illustrative:

Table 1. Comparative CA in ES and EN

	TTCl	Global HEI
Registered institutions	260 (35.6%)	730 (100%)
Amount of Academic Teams (AT)	217 (3.6%)	6107 (100%)
AT Consolidated	2 (0.9%)	1504 (24.6%)
AT In Consolidation	34 (15.7%)	1706 (27.9%)
AT In Training	181 (83.4%)	2897 (47.4%)

Source: Own construction based on PROMEP 2019 data.

In the specific case of Durango, Mexico, the data indicate that in its 5 Teacher Training Colleges and Institutions there are certified by PROMEP 11 AT (4.3% of the total of TTCl in all the country), all of this are In Training process:

- Benemérita y Centenaria Escuela Normal del Estado –ByCENED–: 3;
- Centro de Actualización del Magisterio –CAM–: 2;
- Escuela Normal Rural “J. Guadalupe Aguilera”: 5;
- Instituto de Estudios Superiores de Educación Normal “18 de Marzo” –IESEN–: 0; y
- Escuela Normal Urbana “Profr. Carlos A. Carrillo”: 1.

Here it is worth mentioning that for AT, at least in the TTCl, it has been has been requested from the national education authorities to do *Applied Research*, apparently the most desirable task in these institutions is the goal of solving a specific problem or specific educational approach (didactic, learning, of management). Few aspirations seem to be so that AT, made up of Professor Researchers, can produce *Basic Research* that seeks to achieve the purpose of obtaining and gathering information to generate a base of new knowledge that is added to the existing one.

In this way, what I have explained here serves as a framework to guide the analysis of joint and collaborative academic work done in TTCl, such as CAM Durango, and the possibilities and relevance of training Epistemic Communities in them. As we can see, the research tasks in TTCl have been entrusted as a priority to Academic Teams but then we should ask ourselves if the AT have had the expected impact on these institutions -at least quantitatively it seems that no-, besides

questioning, from the old experience that is had in TTCl of duplicity or ambiguity in the functions and attributes of individuals and work groups, if these would have the conditions to pass to the conformation of one or more Epistemic Communities (EC), which could contain, due to the previous experiences already mentioned, the interference between different work groups or, on the contrary, complementarity and support, depending on how we understand each other, as well as how we visualize the specific task and the field of influence that they would have as an academic group of researchers, professionals and / or experts.

The initial idea that I enunciate as a guide to the discussion in this paper is that it continues to require linking the Educational Policies of TTCl to the reality of these, and in that, what one or more EC could do in TTCl would be a key point to find -and validate- the first ways to meet the meanings, the concordance and the subsequent effective implementation, in the short or medium term, of these policies in the daily practice of these institutions.

In order to discuss these possibilities, I will turn to the following section to discuss the Epistemic Communities definitions, their characteristics and implications, as well as the impact they have had or could have on the formulation of policies and the improvement of governmental and / or institutional conditions according to their fields of influence.

Definition and areas of influence of the Epistemic Communities

The EC, as pointed out by Marier (2008), have been formulated as a tool to understand international relations. This theoretical emphasis is placed on how ideas are transformed into policies, in the midst of international restrictions. Thus, Haas (1992, cited by Maldonado, 2005), the first theorist who starts talking about the Epistemic Communities, defines these as networks of professionals with recognized experience and competence in a particular field. Therefore, and due to their specialized knowledge, Epistemic Communities have sufficient 'legitimacy' in the area of policies within a given field (p. 108). Maldonado (2005) adds that we use the term Epistemic Community to refer to a concrete union of individuals who share the same vision about specific problems, that is to say: an episteme (a common belief, a knowledge).

Haas (1992), in its basic approach, gives a character to the professionals that conform in networks and EC, of "professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain or issue-area" (Haas, 1992, p. 4). To this, Molina (2016) adds that with this expertise and competence, the professionals that make up the EC claim authority in this area or thematic area, based on shared political beliefs and objectives. I will analyze in later paragraphs how we can understand this *expertise* and its broad implications, since it would not be left in the simple fact of having had some practice in some area of knowledge, technology or some other vital issue that is simply raised as *experience*, as some authors translate the term into Spanish.

Although the concept of Epistemic Community comes from the field of international relations, Maldonado (2005) points out that Haas and his group developed this concept mainly on issues such as the control of nuclear weapons, the protection of the ozone layer, the formulation of free trade agreements and international aid regimes in the area of food. This breadth of influence is also noted by Loblöová (2018), who agrees that EC is a concept established from the study of international relations "but can not explain policy change at the domestic level" (p. 160). Thus, Orozco Restrepo (2016) adds, in the same sense, that these professionals who researchers and policy makers who converge and articulate in networks or interest groups, promote their vision of the world, influencing states, multilateral organizations and transnational individuals.

When we discuss the notion that is given to the concept of EC and identify and understand how it is that these networks of experts configure and redefine the policies, within the current World Order, the diverse interests and global and particular operating mechanisms of nations that make up, authors such as Molina (2016) point out that the perspective under which the degree of influence of the EC is assumed, implies that control over and through knowledge and information is an important dimension of power. For many years these groups of political power have been in the dilemma "to deal with a broader range of issues that they were traditionally accustomed to have turned to specialists to ameliorate the uncertainties and help them understand the current issues and anticipate future trends" (Haas , 1992, pp. 12-13), but with the conception and assignment of specific tasks of the EC, the decisions that the states take under their shelter nationalities are formalized and validated under the prestige that EC have in their immediate and future contexts.

In discussing the above, it would be worth highlighting the fact that the processes and the definition of policies are directly connected to certain agents and groups close to the power hierarchy and these, in turn, are subjects with particular histories and circumstances, with personal decisions, circumstantial facts and in general events that are part of the subjects' lives (Maldonado, p. 109). Although it can be seen that, regardless of whether the EC is convened for political reasons, they can

achieve their points of view and move towards objectives different from those initially envisaged by political decision makers (Haas, 1992, cited by Molina, 2016).

Consistent with previous ideas, Haas (1992) points out how modern nations have shown interest in expansion, professionalization, and a certain level of deference to the 'knowledge elite'. Löblová (2018) declares how in the past two decades "our world has become one where expert input is the norm" (p. 161). Similarly, Barry Barnes and David Edge (cited by Haas, 1992) have argued that, in modern societies, "science is near to being the source of cognitive authority: anyone who would be widely believed and trusted as an interpreter of nature needs a license from the scientific community" (p. 11). Haas concludes that many people and institutions trust the scientific community because they share the certainty that the scientific method can make public policy making more rational.

Within those possibilities of influence that the national states give with their confidence and deference to the EC, it should also be mentioned how these are feasible to institutionalize their influence and insinuate their points of view in broader international policies, by consolidating a broad level of bureaucratic power within the aforementioned national administrations and international secretariats (Haas, 1992). This is clear when we see how the work of the EC has increasingly been extended to studies on groups involved in additional problems of increasing global concern (Adler and Haas, 2009), among which mention urgent situations to attend, such as Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), deforestation, climate change and drug trafficking, among others.

Thus, to conclude this section, I can point out that the essential task that has been assigned to the EC, from various areas of knowledge, has been to undertake research programs that take into account from the beginning, the value that their ideas will have and contributions in decision making, under the understanding and establishment of patterns that contain the dialectical relationship between theory and facticity, that is, contribute to engender realities from the diffusion, permanence and adaptation to the changing environment faced by the decision makers (Orozco Restrepo, 2016).

Characteristics and functions of the Epistemic Communities

The EC has, from its conception, a *reflexivist approach*, a term that comes from the critical theory of international relations and which implies a critical vision of materialism and rationalism of the mainstream, and entails a methodological proposal about the different research programs on all in security studies, showing how they have affected the realities of States, intergovernmental organizations and transnational forces (Orozco Restrepo, 2016). The fact of establishing a reflective research program implies that it must be progressive, that is, that new discoveries on family cases of diverse areas such as security, international economic policy or the environment are generated (Adler and Haas, 2009).

This reflective approach, based on its critical vision, could also be applied to fields such as Higher Education, since the researchers who work in this field, according to El-Khawass (2000, cited by Maldonado, 2005) have had an explicit mandate to investigate and understand higher education in order to improve it. In fact, in recent years the notion of EC has begun to be used in Latin America, according to Molina (2016), to study security policies of global scope, to establish social policies promoted by international technical and financial assistance agencies, adopted and adapted by national states; and, as already mentioned, but to a lesser extent according to Molina, in studies on the role of experts in the definition of policies in Higher Education.

Maldonado (2005) refers to the seven models of use of research according to the classic planning of Carol Weiss (Nisbet, 1998, cited by Maldonado, 2005): *Linear Model* (which assumes that basic research leads to applied research, following its development and implementation); *Problem Resolution Model* (in which the research identifies the knowledge needed to direct an action); *Interactive Model* (includes researchers and decision makers in a constructive and collaborative dialogue); *Political Model* (research is used to justify a particular policy); *Tactical Model* (the need for investigation is used as an excuse to delay a decision or action); *'Illuminator' model* (where research ideas are projected and scenarios and solutions are imagined); *Intellectual Model* (the research activity broadens the horizons and increases the quality of the public debate), but clarifies that the concept of the EC can not be stay into only one of these models but at certain moments of its work and development, according to the needs and tasks assigned, can incorporate characteristics of each one or several of them.

Thus, under this approach and heterogeneous research models, the EC shares at least four aspects:

1. Certain beliefs and principles that are the basis for some of their actions,

2. Professional judgments,
3. Notions of validity, and
4. Common political agenda (Stone, 1996, cited by Maldonado, 2005).

In congruence with the previous paragraph, Haas (1992), Maldonado (2005) and others, state that EC have at least seven characteristics that define them:

- a) Common agenda under coinciding points in the research agenda.
- b) It is integrated by networks. An epistemic community is a network made up of other networks.
- c) System of shared beliefs and values.
- d) Compact size that privileges the academic prestige, the ability of the members to influence within their disciplinary field and their capacities to extend their influence and relate to important actors in the definition of policies.
- e) Give more weight to informal than formal relationships.
- f) Prestige and academic credentials as the most important capital that allows it to be distinguished from other networks or groups.
- g) Professional diversity Professional identity is not the main integrating element in an epistemic community.

Taking into account such characteristics, Adler (1992, cited by Maldonado, 2005) explicitly states that, under these premises, EC should not be confused with a profession as it crosses professional boundaries.

As I mentioned previously, the EC emerge from the field of international relations and subsequently participate in other areas of knowledge, including higher education, and its essential task is to participate in the development of national state policies and influence for its start-up. In such a way that the process to arrive at the formulation of policies, implies the following functions:

- To elucidate cause and effect relationships and provide advice on the possible outcomes of various courses of action;
- To shed light on the nature of the complex interrelationships between the problems and the chain of events that may arise both from lack of action or the institutionalization of a particular policy;
- To help define the interests of a state or factions within it; and
- To help formulate policies. (Molina, 2016).

Within this process, it is necessary to break down the moment in which the EC helps the States to identify their interests, defining and / or framing the issues of collective debate and then proposing the specific policies and identifying outstanding negotiation points (Molina , 2016); for this, it is also important that the EC exert its influence to limit the range of political controversy around a matter, the definition of the interests of States and the setting of standards (Adler and Haas, 2009).

The favorable impact of the EC in the fulfillment of such functions may occur if they are presented:

- Identification of EC membership and beliefs based on principles and causes shared by its members;
- Location of their activities and the demonstration of their influence on decision-making at different points in time;
- Identification of the credible alternative results that were executed as a result of their influence; and
- Postulates with alternative explanations for the actions of the decision makers. (Haas, 1992, cited by Molina, 2016).

Adler and Haas (2009) warn that, in order to fulfill such functions and represent an important nucleus of academic-intellectual influence in the formulation of policies, the EC should not be confused with a new hegemonic actor that acts as the origin of the political and moral direction in society. The epistemic communities are not in the business of controlling

society. The focus of these should be merely instrumental and their period of operation should be limited to the time and space that are jointly defined by their members and decision makers, starting with the problem and its solutions. As they emphatically point out: EC are neither philosophers, nor kings, nor philosophers-kings (Adler and Haas, 2009). EC do not control societies, due to their very remote scientific nature or the political or militant, but they represent an important value for them, as Haas (1992) states: "Epistemic communities need not be made of natural scientists; they can consist of social scientists or individuals from any discipline or preference who have a strong claim to a body of knowledge that is valued by society" (p. 16).

What matters is that the members of the EC, as it was already reiterated with the previous idea, are professionals respected in their own disciplines and have the capacity to influence those who compose it; but also that they must demonstrate the capacity to extend their direct or indirect influence with an always expansive pattern, eventually reaching key actors in the process of policy coordination (Adler and Haas, 2009). After all, the factors that influence the presentation of changes in the enunciation of policies based on the research carried out by the EC are: "Knowledge; causal and principled beliefs" (Haas, 1992, p. 6).

As Haas (1992) specifies, decision makers may have different incentives and reasons to consult the EC, some of them with more political motivations than others. The implication for these incentives or reasons to arise can be:

- First, following a shock of crisis, Epistemic Communities can elucidate the cause-and-effect relationships and provide advice about the likely results of various courses of action. In some cases, they can help decision makers gain a sense of who the winners and losers would be as the result of a particular action or event.
- Second, Epistemic Communities can shed light of the nature of the complex interlinkages between issues and on the chain of events that might proceed either from failure to take action or from instituting a particular policy.
- Third, Epistemic Communities can help define the self-interests of a state or factions within it. The process of elucidating the cause-and-effect relationships of problems can in fact lead to the redefinition of preconceived interests or to the identification of new interests.
- Fourth, Epistemic Communities can help formulate policies. Their role in this regard will depend on the reasons for which their advice is sought. In some cases, decision makers will seek advice to gain information which will justify or legitimate a policy that they wish to pursue for political ends. An epistemic community's efforts might thus be limited to working out the details of the policy, helping decision makers anticipate the conflicts of interest that would emerge with respect to particular points, and then building coalitions in support of the policy. (p. 15).

To conclude this section it is important to point out that, as Haas (1992) indicates, the EC ethical standards are based on its principled approach with respect to the subject in question, rather than just in a code professional. Such standards should be the support in practice to reach the degree of influence expected even in "highly certain areas of routine policymaking" (Löblová, 2018, p. 160), which then leads to a reconceptualization of the uncertainty that initially the EC is raised, an essential demand that decision makers and policy makers make to experts.

Expertise of the Epistemic Communities and the interpretation of the reality that they propose

Expertise, according to Haas (1992), is an essential characteristic of the professionals that make up the EC. As I mentioned, it can not be translated simply into 'experience' in a specific field of study, but in specific it is more related to a high level of expertise and knowledge. Before entering to discuss these implications for the professional, the Professor Researcher in the specific case of this paper, it should be noted that aspects such as leadership, management skills, effective political discourse and assertiveness are left aside, not necessarily because they are not important in the profile of this professional as part of their skills, which are regularly requested by governments and their institutions for public policymakers. As I mentioned in previous paragraphs, the characteristics of the EC and its members are very well defined but include other areas.

As Stone (1996, cited by Maldonado, 2005) mentions, it is very pertinent to nominate a network of experts to a EC, instead of the denomination 'group', since knowledge is a central aspect of power from their perspective. Recognizing the specialized knowledge they possess contributes to a more balanced analysis regarding their contribution in a field of studies (Maldonado, 2005), in which even they may have been precursors.

Haas points out (1992) that, in the second part of the 19th century, scientific rationality began to prevail over the alternative paradigms of knowledge as a model for decision making in science, "although it did not reach its peak until about fifty years later, when logical positivism and the ideas of the Vienna Circle were embraced and the entry of White-Coated professionals into the public policy process became more widespread" (p. 8). Although, as pointed out by Molina (2016), it was from the Social Sciences, in the 70s of the last century, that the role of experts and professionals in economics and social policies began to be problematized. Around that period, Molina continues, a process of profound disenchantment with the scope of science as a means to improve life in society took place, then distrust and strong criticism of the experts began to prevail. In response to these criticisms, in those years new matrices were emerging to analyze the diverse relationships between ideas, experts and policies, as well as to review the influence of expert knowledge on the configuration of political institutions and public policies and, above all, the processes that consolidate these experts as relevant social actors.

Continuing with this idea, we can emphasize the central assumption of critical approaches that indicates that professionals / experts are not only bearers of 'technical knowledge', but epistemes, paradigms, the referents they share and transmit combine elements cognitive, normative and programmatic (Molina, 2016). In a broad sense, 'knowledge', as defined by Haas (1992), is "the communicable mapping of some aspect of the reality reality by an observer in symbolic terms" (p. 21).

The English sociologist Terry Johnson (1995, cited by Molina, 2016) argues that the recognition of professional expertise derives more from the needs of legitimacy of the State itself than the esoteric knowledge and abstract knowledge that professionals develop and put into play. Thus, this author proposed as a postulate that the pre-eminence of the knowledge of experts is a condition of possibility of the modern State. In other words, the success of scientific communities, as the EC claims to be, for the construction of a social reality with universal validity, is a consequence of the official recognition of the members of these as experts. The government depends on the neutrality of expert knowledge to make governable the social reality, concludes Johnson (1995, cited by Molina, 2016).

In this triangulation with the social realities that are sought to be made 'governable' through the expert influence of the EC, it is necessary to return to the conception that Haas (1992) makes of 'episteme', as a dominant way of looking at social reality, a set of symbols and references, expectations and intentions shared by specific collections of individuals who share a vision of the world that delimits, for its members, the adequate construction of social reality. Haas suggests that networks of experts learn models and patterns of reasoning, and with this assumes, with Berger and Luckman (2001, cited by Haas, 1992), that reality is socially constructed, which implies that our concept of reality is mediated for the previous assumptions, expectations and experiences.

In this way, the EC provides consensual knowledge, but does not generate 'truth',

The epistemological impossibility of confirming access to reality means that the group responsible for articulating the dimensions of reality has great social and political influence. It can identify and represent what is of public concern, particularly in cases in which the physical manifestations of a problem are themselves unclear. (Haas, 1992, p. 23).

What the EC does to provide such consensual knowledge is to construct frameworks for analysis and interpretation based on evidence (Haas, 1992), which is what decision makers mainly require (Davies, 2012; Wilsdon, 2014; cited by Löblová, 2018). This is how effective frameworks could be formed that can ensure that problems are seen in a specific way, so that favored ideas seem common sense, and disadvantaged ideas, as unthinkable (Molina, 2016).

Conclusions: What the probable success or failure of the Epistemic Communities depends on

As I reviewed in previous sections, the epistemes that the EC builds and that could become established as dominant, based on the recognition of their expertise, contribute to explain the choice and persistence of policies, frame policies and affect their institutionalization (Molina, 2016). Dunlop (2013, cited by Molina, 2016) adds that the tasks of the EC can be successful insofar as they make their visions prevail and that they are related not only to the epistemic and institutional resources they have but also to the perspicacity policy of its members to persuade decision makers, and navigate successfully in government machinery.

Bearing in mind that the policy formulation and implementation process presents four main steps: policy innovation, dissemination, selection and persistence (Adler and Haas, 2009), one of the main factors that will influence the time that an EC maintain its influence will be the degree of consensus reached among its own members, when it loses its consensus,

its authority will decrease and the actors in charge of making political decisions will pay less attention to their advice. Other factors that will have a possible effect on the authority, influence and even permanence of the EC, are economic, political and other crises, which very likely, as a consequence, will lead the political decision makers to seek advice of new groups of experts.

This idea allows us to give an account of what the EC would require for its permanence and success in fulfilling the tasks for which they were created. As can be seen throughout this paper, the work with groups of researchers (Academic Teams) and scientific communities with influence on the formulation of policies (Epistemic Communities) has been in HEI and CCTI still not very effective. The subjects for the conformation of any of these two work teams exist; the expertise and broad knowledge, and the prestige of them is present and recognized in different ways, but it is a fact that one would have to work internally in such research groups or scientific communities, reaching a solid consensus that allow them to influence the various levels of decision makers and educational policy makers, starting with the closest, that is, at the institutional domestic level, then at the state level, and then try to do it at higher global levels.

The inicial idea that I proposed as a guide to the present writing continues in a wait-and-see channel. I believe it is feasible to link in Teacher Training Colleges and Institutions educational policies with their reality through the influence of the EC; as I said, this would be extremely favorable to find -and validate- the first ways to meet the meanings, the concordance and the subsequent effective implementation, in the short or medium term, of these policies in the daily practice of these institutions, but the experience with the Academic Temas shows that the success of these enterprises will be segmented, dependent on the internal impulse of education professionals, which in the case of the Epistemic Communities, should have a fine listening receiver, institutional or governmental, that understands the value of having these for undertake and configure new ways to enunciate their policies that become truly applicable in daily practice.

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Higher Education and Assessment of Entrepreneurial Skills by Academic Stakeholders

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Abstract

This paper is based on a national study of entrepreneurship programmes and experiences related to non-formal and informal learning processes which have taken place in higher education in order to promote entrepreneurial skills among (post) graduates. The notions of "Learning Society" and "Lifelong Education" are closely linked with the development of a new educational paradigm which aims to enhance learning opportunities and new applications of knowledge in "organizations of all types and in all spheres of life" (Gibb, 2005). Empirical findings are gathered from the research project called Link.EES (Learning, Innovation, Networks and Knowledge), focused on Entrepreneurship in Higher Education, and funded by the Operational Programme of technical Assistance (OPTA), by the European Social Fund (OPTA – ESF). The methodological design was divided into the following steps: application of an online survey on 57 academic stakeholders of the Portuguese public Higher Education Institutions (HEI); selection of 12 case studies of good practices in the institutions of higher education and subsequent analysis by conducting in-depth interviews; and, finally, development of a repertoire of best practices in entrepreneurial skills and their validation by key actors and academic stakeholders. Three goals are pursued: i) a comprehensive meaning of "entrepreneurial learning", taking into account the European concept of "entrepreneurial spirit"; ii) an increasing importance of programmes/experiences as well as infrastructures and services, related to entrepreneurial learning provided by the main academic stakeholders; iii) and finally, a crucial involvement of academic stakeholders in a collaborative effort to promote the entrepreneurship mindset in the academia. Our aim is to assess the collaborative work achieved through the direct participation of key stakeholders in entrepreneurial learning, by building a crucial repertoire of entrepreneurial skills linked to the formation, self-employment and labour market transition.

Keywords: Portugal, Higher Education, Entrepreneurial skills, Stakeholders

Introduction

The present paper aims to highlight the importance of non-formal and informal learning by building a repertoire of entrepreneurial skills, and thus contribute to the reflection regarding the added value of cooperation and collaborative work. In the last decades, the Portuguese universities have diversified their strategies to promote entrepreneurial learning through the participation of several key actors and stakeholders in their so called "third mission". Entrepreneurship programmes and experiences related to non-formal and informal learning processes are important in developing entrepreneurial skills among students and graduates. Obtaining employment is increasingly dependent, both on the potential of individuals, and even more on the ability to build solid networks of partnerships in science and innovation. Moreover, providing internships and mobility experiences, participation in various social and civic associations and initiatives for students and graduates, in order to stimulate new attitudes and behaviours towards entrepreneurship and the labour market is the key drive for a successful transition to work.

The recognition of this societal and cultural level underlining entrepreneurship education is displayed in the *Europe 2020 Strategy* and in the *European Entrepreneurship Action Plan 2020* (EC, 2006; EC, 2012a), which highlights the importance of entrepreneurship education. Additionally, major results of an important study among alumni of Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in Europe (EC, 2012b), related to the effects and impact of entrepreneurship programmes in higher education have stated that entrepreneurship education has a positive impact on the entrepreneurial mindset of young

people, on their intentions towards entrepreneurship, on their employability, and on their role both in society and in the economy (Matlay, 2009).

In addition, "learning Society", or "Lifelong Education", is closely linked with the development of a new educational paradigm that aims to enhance learning opportunities and new applications of knowledge in "organizations of all types and in all spheres of life" (Gibb, 2005). In other words, the acquisition of knowledge, skills and entrepreneurial attitudes can be fostered both in formal, and in informal and non-formal strategies. Despite that, in this paper we wish to focus only on non-formal and informal learning in an academic context, assuming that learning acquired through previous work experience, participation in social networks, and mentoring schemes, can have positive implications for the development of the entrepreneurial potential of students and graduates. Several strategies and initiatives which have taken place in the academic context, such as workshops, "ideas competitions" and training courses, are developed to enhance chances of success in the transition to the labour market, namely finding a job, pursuing a long-term career and achieving future professional potential. For this purpose, it is important to emphasise the involvement of various key actors and stakeholders (e.g. students, academics, researchers, technical staff and policy-makers), by analysing their contribution in building a repertoire of entrepreneurial skills. For the purpose of this paper, the process of building a repertoire of entrepreneurial skills by academic stakeholders is analysed regarding two specific strategies: a) improving employability of graduates in their transition to the labour market (as an employed person); identifying a business opportunity, or creating their own employment, in this case assuming the status of self-employed (either as entrepreneur or as liberal worker).

This paper has been structured in three main parts. In the first part, we wish to point out significant changes in higher education, taking into account the place and role assumed by academic stakeholders in order to foster entrepreneurial skills, and in the second, we present the research project and its objectives (main and specific ones). Some considerations regarding the methodological design will also be singled out. Finally, in the third topic, our main goal will be to present the main research findings linked to the drafting of a repertoire of entrepreneurial skills, highlighting their validation among academic stakeholders.

1. Higher Education, Stakeholders and entrepreneurial skills

The internationalisation of Higher Education has been accompanied by the need to implement a set of actions/ services whose main purpose is, most of all, to respond to the "third" mission of the university, namely the increasing transfer of knowledge and technology to society, in dialogue with the various partners or stakeholders. In fact, many "internal" academic stakeholders, as well as other "external" partners (e.g. business, trade and industry associations, local communities, NGOs) are responsible for entrepreneurship and for providing support to existing infrastructures in HEI in recent years. Some examples of these infrastructures are: offices of entrepreneurship/ integration into active life; centres of entrepreneurship, innovation centres transferring knowledge of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship clubs). Recent literature highlights a range of programmes/ experiences, as well as infrastructures and services related to entrepreneurial learning in a collaborative context involving formal, informal and non-formal strategies (Marques, 2016; Marques, et al. 2014; Marques, Moreira & Ramos, 2014; Pinho & Sá, 2013; Werquin, 2012; Ferreira, 2011; Gibb, 2002, 2005; Greene & Rice, 2002).

Therefore, the concept of stakeholding has recently come up more often, not only in management literature, but also in policy studies in general and higher education in particular (Freeman, 1984; Amaral & Magalhães, 2002; Maassen & Cloete, 2002; Neave 2002; Maric, 2013). We assume stakeholders as "third parties acting between the two main partners - the academic community and the interests of society" (Amaral, Magalhães, 2002: 16)¹. Despite controversies related to the stakeholder's approach, or the diversity of meanings and roles assigned to these "third parties", their contribution is important in innovation activities, technology transfer and business creation, specifically in fostering entrepreneurial skills (e.g., flexibility, creativity, problem solving, and dealing with uncertainty). These competences are relevant in the daily lives of young people, especially when they find themselves in the following circumstances: (a) in employment and/ or seeking to remain in the labour market as employed persons; or b) when they choose to build a professional career by

¹ Stakeholder's approach is plural and controversial regarding theoretical and ideological arguments (e.g. neo-institutionalist and neoliberal). Despite its relevance, its discussion goes beyond the objectives of this study (Amaral & Magalhães, 2002).

identifying a business opportunity or creating their own employment, in this case assuming the status of self-employed (either as entrepreneur or as liberal worker).

In this context, the HEI fulfil an important role in contemporary societies by creating strategies to confront the constant socioeconomic changes and the expectations of their citizens. In order to improve the quality of HEI, the institutions seek to comply with three stages: 1) teach and educate; 2) research and innovate; 3) transfer knowledge and serve the needs of the community. The last topic includes knowledge management, cooperation with different community entities, and questions the position that HEI hold in societal development. Therefore, the mission of HEI goes further than just teaching and researching, to reinforce their position in knowledge transfer to the labour market and in the service to the community.

For Carvalho *et al.* (2010), HEI should identically promote in their internal environment, the establishment and maintenance of an entrepreneurial ecosystem between the different stakeholders involved. These institutions should Therefore, consider three essential dimensions to promote entrepreneurship: 1) curriculum units presented in formal courses and educational backgrounds; 2) extracurricular activities at regional, national and international levels, involving various stakeholders and, seeking to enhance entrepreneurial culture; 3) structures to support entrepreneurs, to transfer knowledge to the market and to promote local/ national development initiatives.

It is in this broader context that we intend to present the main axes of problematisation of this study, namely the contribution of non-formal and informal learning in the process of transition to the labour market, the potential for developing transversal and entrepreneurial skills, and the crucial role of key actors or academic stakeholders in the dynamisation of networks and partnerships that allow the production, circulation and transfer of knowledge oriented to innovation excellence and economic and social transformation of the surrounding community.

2. Objectives and methodological design

The research study called Link.EES (Learning, Innovation, Networks and Knowledge) is focused on Entrepreneurship in Higher Education, and is funded by the Operational Programme of technical Assistance (OPTA), by the European Social Fund (OPTA – ESF). Its main goal is to set out the importance of non-formal/ informal entrepreneurial learning in the academic context. The specific objectives consisted in: 1) mapping the experiences of non-formal/ informal entrepreneurial learning undertaken from 2007 to 2013 in public higher education in Portugal; 2) characterising the graduates' profile (e.g. gender, age, social backgrounds, scientific area of study) who have participated in these experiences; 3) identifying a set of best practices in higher education; 4) presenting a repertoire of entrepreneurial skills with the direct participation of key stakeholders previously involved in all steps of the methodological design.

The methodology design has been developed in three main stages, which will be presented briefly (for more detailed information see Marques, 2016; Marques, Moreira & Ramos, 2014). In stage 1, the methodology used in the present study focused on the exhaustive search for experiments and entrepreneurial initiatives of non-formal and informal learning of Portuguese HEI through the information available on the Internet. Hence, having already identified the eligible entities, a telephone contact was made in order to develop and obtain complementary information, create links and involve stakeholders actively in the construction and development of the project. These collaborative dynamics also enabled the identification of other entities that had not been mapped through the first online review, and assess the level of involvement of the various key actors. The universe of our study comprises 57 entities that refer both to higher university education and to Portuguese polytechnic institutes, only from the public sector. An online survey was applied to this universe, and it was possible to obtain 41 stakeholders' responses (rate of 72%).

In stage 2, we selected 12 case studies of good practices of non-formal and informal entrepreneurial learning in the institutions of higher education and, consequently, analysed them by conducting in-depth interviews. Some of the most significant criteria that supported our decision included/consisted in the intentionality of illustrating the traces of originality, exemplarity and transferability potential of the "good practices" carried out at HEI level. However, in particular, we chose "good practices", taking into account the following traits: a) originality of the initiative, by highlighting new forms of innovation (technological, social and service innovation); b) exemplary "good practice" in the ability to rejuvenate traditional sectors, including added value and/ or highlighting new market niches; c) diversity of the key actor or stakeholder profile (e.g. entrepreneurship club, support office); d) cases of experiences or projects whose activities are integrated in the three phases of entrepreneurial learning: (i) awareness raising; (ii) training; (iii) mentoring and follow-up (incubators). Subsequently, semi-directive interviews were conducted to different representatives of previous selected

entities. With these in-depth interviews, two fundamental objectives were: a) to further characterise the "good practices", contemplating the main opportunities, challenges and dilemmas involved in the promotion and learning of the entrepreneurial skills systematised in stage 1; b) analyse the main collaborative dynamics, as well as the main identified bottlenecks.

In stage 3, the last step in methodological design, our intention was to build a repertoire of entrepreneurial skills and their subsequent validation by key actors and academic stakeholders who participated in the study. In order to accomplish that, we considered the entrepreneurial skills that were signalled, both in the exhaustive systematisation of stage 1, and in the case studies carried out in stage 2 (through content analysis). Based on this information, a questionnaire was designed to validate proposals for hierarchical entrepreneurial skills, taking into account their relevance to students and graduates in terms of facilitating both the transition to the labour market (as an employed person), and the creation of one's own job/ business (as a self-employed person).

The Delphi technique was chosen due to its application in an online virtual environment in order to validate the final proposal of the repertoire of entrepreneurial skills. This technique was justified in as much as it is a qualitative research tool that allows for the construction of a shared consensus of opinions from a group of specialists, in relation to a subject area or future events. This consensus represents a consolidation of the intuitive judgment of a group of experts on the assumption that collective judgment, when properly, is better than the opinion of a single individual, or even of some individuals devoid of a wide variety of expertise. To this end, three basic conditions were ensured: 1) the anonymity of the respondents; 2) the statistical representation of the distribution of results; 3) and feedback from the group responses for re-evaluation in subsequent rounds.

The application of the Delphi technique presupposes the accomplishment of at least two rounds between the stakeholders. In this study, it was possible to ensure two rounds. In the first one, the key actors responded to the proposed hierarchical questionnaire of entrepreneurial skills, and returned it in order to perform a simple statistical analysis (medians and quartiles). In the second round, the same questionnaire was sent, accompanied by the results of the responses obtained in the first round, allowing each respondent to review his/her position, if applicable.

In the next section, some results are displayed in order to point out a shared consensus on a more critical hierarchy of entrepreneurial skills.

3. Critical raking of entrepreneurial competences: a shared consensus

With the application of the Delphi technique, the process of building a repertoire of entrepreneurial skills was obtained, regarding two specific strategies: a) improving employability of graduates in their transition to the labour market (as an employed person); or by identifying a business opportunity or creating their own employment, in this case assuming the status of self-employed (entrepreneur/ entrepreneur or liberal worker). That is, the main purpose consisted in assessing the most relevant entrepreneurial skills that a student or graduate should possess to facilitate these two distinct processes of transition into labour market, according to the perspective of the academic stakeholders involved in this stage of the research.

The following characteristics should be singled out in the profile of the 41 participant stakeholders: 1) they tend to assume an organisational configuration of interface/unit of transfer of C&T (24,4%), centre/innovation and/or entrepreneurship office (24,4%), the ones that declare themselves as business incubators being residual (2,4%); 2) they are mostly micro-dimensional (73,2%), with less than 10 collaborators; 3) they are relatively young, and their start-up year of activity had a strong expression between 2001 and 2010; 4) the main services made available by these *stakeholders*, with a stronger focus, firstly on the availability of the information of grants, programmes and initiatives; and, secondly, the development of training initiatives on entrepreneurship (courses, *workshops*, *e-learning*); thirdly, the support given to the formalisation of applications to projects and the preparation of business plans; and, fourthly, the accomplishment of awareness building and information sessions (seminars and conferences). Data also reveal that, the geographic range with greater relevance among these key-actors is the local or regional (42%), followed by the national (32%). The international dimension assumes a minor relevance within the framework of the area of operation of these entities, gathering 26% of the answers.

Next, it is important to analyse, in more detail, the positioning of these stakeholders regarding a list of forty seven (47) transversal competences presented in the *online* survey developed in stage 1 of the research design, as described

earlier¹. Each of these competences was under appreciation by the questionnaire's respondents, who ranked their importance. The percentage attributed to each competence (consolidated in the weighted sum, obtained on the basis of the frequency response) substantiated the inclusion of thirty five (35) competences) and the elimination of fifteen (15) competences, whose cut-off line was below 20%. Through the *online* platform, two rounds were carried out by the *stakeholders*, thus achieving a generalised consensus around the ranking of the competences into three distinct groups namely technical, attitudinal and organizational/sociocultural one.

As regards the emphasis and systematisation of the most relevant information, the following "top 3" of entrepreneurial competences was built, differentiated between: technical competences, attitudinal competences, and organizational/sociocultural competences.

3.1. "Top 3" of technical competences

Upon analysis of table 1, the "Top 3" of *technical competences required* for the transition to the labour market, as an employed worker is as follows: 1) problem analysis and resolution, 2) oral communication skill and 3) good command of foreign languages; concerning a self-employed worker, the three most important competences are: 1) identification of opportunities, 2) planning and organisation, and 3) customer focus. The signaling of a broader set of entrepreneurial skills which facilitate the process of professional transition, in literature in general associated to employability (Vieira & Marques, 2014).

Table 1: Ranking of technical competences

Transition to the labour market		Position	Business opportunity/ own employment	
Competences	%		Competences	%
Problem analysis and resolution	65,9	1st	Identification of opportunities	82,9
Oral Communication Skills	58,5	2nd	Planning and organization	68,3
Command of foreign languages (51,2%)	51,2	3rd	Customer focus	63,4
Planning and organization	51,2	4th	Problem analysis and resolution	53,7
Mastery of the Information and communication technologies	43,9	5th	Negotiation capacity	51,2
Identification of opportunities	36,6	6th	Business awareness	51,2
Customer focus	34,1	7th	Oral communication Skills	29,3
Writing skills	22	8th	Ability to conceptualise	24,4
Negotiating ability	22	9th		
Business awareness	19,5	10th		
Ability to conceptualise	19,5	11th		

Source: Online survey with Delphi technique

3.2. "Top 3" of attitudinal competences

As for the "Top 3" of *attitudinal competences*, we can observe that the ranking proposal is diversified and presents a reinforcement of competences, mainly regarding the creation of employment/ business (Table 2). The following features may be presented, concerning the transition to the labour market as an employed worker: 1) adaptation and flexibility, 2) motivation 3) creativity and innovation; As regards the creation of self-employment/business, the entrepreneurial competences pointed out confirm the profile certified in literature: 1) creativity and innovation, 2) risk taking, and 3) initiative. In other words, there is an obvious consensus regarding the "innate profile of the entrepreneur", if we take into account that the "Top 3" includes precisely creativity and innovation, risk-taking and initiative. These are the traits that have mostly been highlighted apropos an "entrepreneurial culture".

¹ For further in-depth data on empirical findings obtained in the framework of this project, see Marques, 2016.

3.3. “Top 3” of organisational and sociocultural competences

Lastly, looking at the last group of competences with an organisational and sociocultural nature (Table 3), we may conclude that in the “Top 3” of transition to the labour market, the following are, unsurprisingly, included: teamwork, interpersonal relationship and understanding of the organisational culture, the latter being put in a prominent position within the current framework of the changes of the work organisations in world economy.

As for the “Top 3” of entrepreneurial competences, relevance given to leadership, team management and interpersonal relations is highlighted. In fact, this importance attributed to leadership is understood, since the entrepreneur will have to take on a qualitatively distinct role from the one which is perceived as teamwork. Deep down, it is about associating to leadership a vision and guidance for the development of the idea or business itself, as relevant traits towards the sustainability of such a project.

Table 2 – Ranking of attitudinal competences

Transition to the labour market		Position	business opportunity/ own employment	
Competences	%		Competences	%
Adaptation and flexibility	58,5	1st	Creativity and innovation	58,5
Motivation	51,2	2nd	Risk taking	53,7
Creativity and innovation	48,8	3rd	Initiative	51,2
Initiative	46,3	4th	Motivation	48,8
Dynamism and proactivity	46,3	5th	Autonomy	41,5
Autonomy	39	6th	Persistence	41,5
Sense of responsibility	36,6	7th	Dynamism and proactivity	36,6
Continuous learning	26,8	8th	Decision-making ability	34,1
Critical thinking	19,5	9th	Adaptation and flexibility	29,3
		10th	Resistance to stress	19,5

Source: Online survey with Delphi technique

Table 3 – Ranking of organizational and sociocultural competences

Transition to the labour market		Position	business opportunity/ own employment	
Competences	%		Competences	%
Team/ group work	82,9	1st	Leadership	82,9
Interpersonal relationship	80,5	2nd	Team management	56,1
Understanding of the organisational culture/professional environment	58,5	3rd	Interpersonal relations	51,2
Creation of bonds/networks	34,1	4th	Delegation of tasks	43,9
Conflict management	29,3	5th	Creation of bonds/networks	43,9
Living with multiculturalism/ diversity (29,3%)		6th	Knowledge of the socioeconomic context	41,5
Knowledge of the socioeconomic context	29,3	7th	Influence/persuasion	26,8
Ethical commitment	24,4	8th	Conflict management	26,8
Leadership	22	9th	Team/Group work	24,4
Delegation of tasks	22	10th	Understanding of the organisational culture/professional environment	22
Presentation of the personal image	22	11th		
Team management	19,5	12th		

Source: Online survey with Delphi technique

Final Remarks

Entrepreneurial skills are understood as competences that which enable us to support individual decisions and behaviours, so as to create or identify an opportunity of a business, or to create self-employment, especially the skills that that enable the development of the potential of action, creativity, initiative, among other aspects, in the different professional and private contexts. Therefore, the acquisition of knowledge, skills and entrepreneurial attitudes can be developed in the context of the institutionalised educational system, but it can also be encouraged in many other ways, from non-formal and informal learning strategies, such as internships and curricular mobility, participation in diverse types of social and civic associations and in organising initiatives (e.g., seminars, ideas and prizes), among others. These strategies may prove important in the process of transition to the labour market, in obtaining a job and in structuring a career by anticipating future projects. From the results obtained in this study, it is possible support the importance attributed to such initiatives in the promotion of the repertoire of entrepreneurial skills, considering our "TOP 3" of technical, attitudinal and organizational and socio-cultural skills.

Promoting awareness, mentoring and project implementation of the entrepreneurial learning process is crucial for collaborative work in a competitive world. In fact, the extensive mapping of programmes and experiences of entrepreneurial learning, carried out in the academic context, aims to support the identification of a set of good practices and a repertoire of entrepreneurial skills. Furthermore, it allow us to reflect on the added value of cooperation and collaborative work of key stakeholders, namely in transfer and knowledge circulation, network mentoring, supporting the transition to the labour market.

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Modes of Teaching and Learning of Indigenous Music Using Methods and Techniques Predicated on Traditional Music Education Practice: The Case of Bapedi Music Tradition

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Abstract

This paper takes a look at music education in Bapedi society in Sekhukhune district, Limpopo Province in South Africa as the transmission of musico-cultural manifestations from one generation to the other. The aim is to investigate the modes of transmission of indigenous Bapedi music. Music teaching and learning in Bapedi society is an integral part of cultural and religious life, and is rich in historical and philosophical issues. Traditional music knowledge system produces a better result to the teaching and learning of indigenous music in Bapedi culture. The research question of interest that emerges is: What are the modes of transmission for indigenous Bapedi music during the teaching and learning process? The primary source for data collection was oral interviews and observations. Secondary sources include theses, books and Journal articles. Performances were recorded in the form of audio-visual recordings and photographs. The results have shown that in Bapedi society, learning music through participation has been a constant practice. The transmission process involves participation, fostering of communal sense, concentration on the present moment and the use of musico-cultural formulae and cues for interactional purposes. It was concluded that in Bapedi society, creative music making and music identity are the obverse sides of the same coin, in that the former provides an arena in which the latter can be explored.

Keywords: Indigenous music, transmission, modes of teaching and learning, Bapedi society, Sekhukhune, Limpopo Province, South Africa.

Introduction

The transmission of indigenous Bapedi music can be seen as taking place through an aural-oral form of musical literacy (Lebaka 2013:57). Transmission among participants involves the transfer of knowledge and understanding between people. The article attempts to discuss, among others, the following issues, regarding the modes of teaching and learning of indigenous Bapedi music: retention of musical ideas, story-telling, participation, listening, imitation, internalization, communal undertaking, creativity, demonstration and observation, as well as mastery. It is the contention of the author of this article that music-making in the context of this study entails social participation, social – creative interactions of practicing experience, creative artistic interpretation and mastery. The process of teaching and learning of indigenous Bapedi music is a group activity, organized, direct and instructional. Through the processes of demonstration, listening, observation and internalization, communal undertaking and enculturation process becomes a reality and a success.

Participation in the transmission process of indigenous Bapedi music has been the most salient example of the traditional music education practice. Learning by listening is the principal and sometimes the most preferred mode of teaching and learning of indigenous Bapedi music. It has long been of major concern among ethnomusicologists, sociologists and educators in South Africa that indigenous music has not received the same attention as mainstream music in education (Nompula 2011:1). Nompula (2011:4) believes that “through participation in group-clapping, drumming, and music interpretation through dancing, the children’s interpretative skills are developed”. She observes that as the children are afforded an opportunity to express their musical feelings through dance, they learn rhythmic patterns by rote, memorise and internalize them. Nompula (2011:5) remarks further that “indigenous music is an oral tradition that aims to transmit culture, values, beliefs and history from generation to generation”.

The article first presents a theoretical framework, discussing the terms/theories 'praxialism' and 'transformative learning', as well as the integration of multi-dimensional aspects of traditional music education practice which is a predominant feature in the transmission process of indigenous Bapedi music. This is followed by a review of previous related studies, research design and methodology. An analysis of the modes of teaching and learning of indigenous Bapedi music using methods and techniques predicated on traditional music education practice is conducted, followed by discussion of results, and the article ends by presenting some conclusions. What will follow in the next section is a look at the theoretical framework of the study.

Theoretical Framework

This research study is based on the theory of Praxialism, as advocated by David Elliott (Elliott 1995). The study resonates well with the premises of Elliott's philosophy, namely, that 1) music education depends on the nature of music, and 2) the significance of music education depends on the significance of music in human life. The theory is relevant to this study as the study focuses on the modes of teaching and learning of indigenous Bapedi music using methods and techniques predicated on traditional music education practice. The theory is applicable to this study because it proposes for the provision of meanings and values in actual music making and music listening in specific cultural contexts. Like in this study, the transmission process of indigenous Bapedi music provides meanings and values in actual music making and music listening in specific cultural and religious contexts, and involves a high level of music expertise including music making, listening, improvisation and creative expertise. My interpretation of Elliott's music philosophy in relation to indigenous Bapedi music context is that in the Bapedi culture, the transmission of the teaching and learning of indigenous Bapedi music is understood in relation to the meanings and values evidenced in actual music making and music listening in specific cultural and religious contexts. The theory is adopted for this study because the indigenous Bapedi music philosophy and approach concur with Elliott's philosophy. Both emphasize the action of making music, rather than the artefact of a musical event in the form of a musical score. Consistent with these observations, Nzewi (2002:20) asserts that "Africa perfected paraxial music education" since Africans have always been actively involved in music making instead of "non-participatory auditory encounters with music". Furthermore, Nzewi elaborates that Praxialism allows for the integration of multi-dimensional aspects of music which is a predominant feature in the music making process of this study. According to him, the multi-dimensional aspects include among others, creative thinking, social tolerance, performance techniques, and self-discovery. The following section will explore a review of previous related studies.

Previous Related Studies

Traditional Bapedi music education practice is an integral part of the Bapedi culture and history, and largely an informal process, but informality does not necessarily imply lack of philosophy and systematic procedure in transmitting the knowledge of a music tradition of Bapedi people. A growing body of literature (Omolewa 2007; Nzewi 1999; Nompula 2011; Ramadani 2017; Mapaya 2011; Ngara 2007; Mbaegbu 2015; Joseph & Hartwig 2015; Ogunrinade 2012 and Amlor 2016) that supports this view indicates that traditional African education is an integral part of the culture and history of a local community and is passed from one generation to another by learning through various modes, which include language, music, dance, oral tradition, proverbs, myths, stories, culture, religion and elders. Omolewa (2007:598) reveals that music and dance are fundamental to the African ways of life. Ramadani (2017:249) and Mbaegbu (2015:180) emphasize the importance and usefulness of the role of music plays in everyday life. Ramadani (2017:248) cites an example of musical education as one of the main factors of cultural development and preservation of national identity.

Mapaya (2011) explored and commented extensively on the indigenous Northern Sotho music learning process. It is beyond the parameters of this study to discuss these issues in any great depth but it is considered important here to mention that Mapaya (2011:72) referred to different modes such as immersion, seclusion, imitation and intuition, drilling and coercion as the most effective modes for the transmission of indigenous African music. He recognized that as with immersion, seclusion plays an important role in focusing the initiates' attention on the training without the disturbances of everyday life (Mapaya 2011:73). In a similar vein, Nzewi (1991:53-55) points out that formal music education is found in African cultures in the form of apprenticeship systems, initiation schools, and music borrowing practices. Nzewi (1999:73) argues that music thinking, education and practice in African traditional cultures have conceptual bases, and are methodical processes. He proceeds to describe how at birth, cultural music: sensitization begins when the baby is carried and jogged to the regular pulse of music many times in a family day (Nzewi 1999:75). According to him:

A young baby carrier participates in children's music and dance activities, which basically feature stepping to the coordinating pulse, while carrying the baby. The mother or any other helper also straps the baby to the body while performing daily chores that require patterned rhythmic regularity, such as sweeping pounding, etc. Thus, the child starts being enculturated into the society's cultural rhythm as well as musical sensitization as a passive participant.

According to scholars writing from an Afrocentric perspective, in the context of Ubuntu, mutuality between the participants, a feeling of tolerance, hospitality and respect for others, their language, opinions, and conversational style is highly regarded (Mkabela 2005; Oyebade 1990; Chawane 2016; Sakuba 2008). In particular, Oyebade (1990:237) observes that Afrocentricity insists that investigation of African phenomena, be it language, history, or gender studies, must be subjected to proper research. Chawane (2016:82) echoes the very same concern when he states that "Afrocentricity is viewed as a theory just for the African diaspora". Mkabela (2005:179) concurs with Chawane (2016:82) when he writes that "the Afrocentric method suggests cultural and social immersion as opposed to scientific distance as the best approach to understand African phenomena".

Various ethnomusicologists like Adeogun (2006), Bohlman (1988), Lebaka (2017), Phibion (2012), Teffera (2006) and Mataruse (2017) have thus eloquently demonstrated that "music is itself one of the most effective mnemonic devices in oral tradition". It has also been argued by Bohlman (1988:15) that the oral transmission of folk music depends on memory and the mnemonic devices that facilitate it. Lebaka (2017:94) also indicates that "the teaching and learning process of indigenous Bapedi music reflects communal composing whereby groups of music practitioners belonging to a particular traditional dance group meet to assemble communally new compositions for specified occasions". In his view, learning music is part of the socialization process and imitation forms an important part in the transmission process (Lebaka 2017:94). To support these observations, Phibion (2012:2) postulates that in African societies, participation in music may be a voluntary activity or an obligation imposed by one's membership in a social group. Furthermore, he observes that compositions and performance techniques are learned by rote and imitation (Phibion 2012:4). According to him, music notation is far less important in nonwestern than in western culture. Consistent with these observations, Mataruse (2017:62) writes that "indigenous African music has relied entirely on an oral tradition of transmitting musical knowledge. He concurs with Phibion by stating that "African music is a cultural activity which reveals a group of people organizing and involving themselves with their own communal relationships" (Mataruse 2017:62). A brief history of the role of traditional music among East African societies by Teffera (2006:36) affirms that among traditional East African communities, music making is closely related with and recognized as a social activity that fosters and reinforces communal unity.

Research Design and Methodology

This research study is a product of a negotiated partnership which allowed some of the Bapedi people to define for themselves the degree to which they wish to make themselves available as subjects. A voluntary participation approach was adopted for this study (Bless, Smith & Kagee 2006:102). Participants were at liberty to participate or not to participate, and their decision was guaranteed to be respected. The collection of data for this study was carried out in four villages in Sekhukhune district, Limpopo Province in South Africa. These villages are predominantly Sepedi-speaking. The four research villages are Dikgageng, Dingwane, Kotsiri and Mashite. Eleven informants were assigned to answer oral questions on stipulated dates and specified times by the researcher. Most of the informants were gradually becoming advanced in years. The interviews and songs were audio recorded and practical performances were photographed.

Myers (1992:22) supports this by stating that during fieldwork the ethnomusicologist assembles primary resources: observations in field notes, recordings of music and interviews, photographs, film and video materials. Myers (1992:22) reckons that field work is a hallmark of many social sciences, including anthropology and ethnomusicology. An extensive literature searches were also undertaken in the libraries of the University of South Africa (UNISA), and University of Pretoria, Pretoria in South Africa to review the existing literature around the topic from journal articles, books and theses to gather and compare secondary data to data obtained from ethnographic fieldwork, while discussion and analysis of results were in progress.

Based on the primary aim of this study, the central question was 'What are the modes of transmission for indigenous Bapedi music during the teaching and learning process?' This led to the following sub-questions, which guided the study:

How is collective identity formed through music?

How does indigenous Bapedi music serve as the core part of Bapedi culture?

How does music affect the transmission and communication process?

The next section addresses the question: What are the modes of transmission for indigenous Bapedi music during the teaching and learning process?

Results

Analysis of the modes of teaching and learning of indigenous Bapedi music using methods and techniques predicated on traditional music education practice.

The results of observing the modes of teaching and learning of indigenous Bapedi music using methods and techniques predicated on traditional music education practice, as well as the influence of indigenous music on participants is described below. The findings of this study are viewed from four perspectives/themes. The first looks at the **'Creative Process'** (creativity, participation, composing, communal undertaking, listening, story telling and innovation); The second describes the **'Associative Process'** (imitation, collaboration, internalization, repetition, coordination, demonstration and observation); The third reflects on the **'Mastery'** (creative product, aural recall, group performance, creative imagination and communication); and the fourth provides an insight about **'Interaction of musical and choreographic form'** (retention of musical ideas, gestures and actions, improvisation, recreation and variation).

Creative Process

From the observations and interviews, it was established that in the Bapedi culture, the art of composing requires a reliable musical memory, and the repertoire is heavily indigenous (Lebaka 2017:200). During field research, it was also observed that composing was not necessarily an individual process. All participants were committed to 'creative activities' which involved the relationship between music and dance. Informal interviews indicated that the learning process is a group activity. It is both a pleasure and a recreation rather than a chore. During a personal interview with Madikedike Simon Sete (24 September 2018) at Dikgageng village, Sekhukhune district in Limpopo Province, he pointed out that "the transmission process is organized, direct and instructional". He further mentioned that Bapedi people acquire musical-artistic skill by participating appropriately in shaping contexts in which processes of music making occur and music knowledge is generated.

From the interviews, it was established that musicianship is maintained through practicing, and this is a form of continuing learning which allows Bapedi people to follow the perfection of their skills. In consonance with the above findings, Mataruse (2017:67-68) asserts that through the use of local traditional songs, music education can bring about a democratic society with individuals who have many skills among them, the skills to deal with conflict management in a peaceful manner. Using videos, it was also established that for the transmission process to be meaningful, it is necessary for the participants to be creative and understand socially the various idioms of creativity and conventions of musical presentation. The impression one gets from the interviews and informal discussions about the creative process is that creative imagination and innovation play a vital role in communal composing. The study has also revealed that the transmission process is oral memory based, and as a form of oral communication, both stories and songs play a significant role in Bapedi culture. Consistent with this finding, Joseph and Hartwig (2015:2) observe that music engagement in educational settings is a powerful medium to understand, appreciate and embrace cultures and people. An interesting observation on communal learning should be mentioned. It appears that various techniques are used during the transmission process, for example, observation approach, conscious imitation, etc. In what follows, is the associative process of the teaching and learning process of indigenous Bapedi music.

Associative Process

During my interaction with different traditional music ensembles in the Bapedi society, I have personally observed that traditional Bapedi musicians, on their own, drawing upon their creative intelligence, use improvisation, re-creation, variation, and gestures to demonstrate dancing rhythmic patterns, while other participants are observing and to make their performances and/or renditions impressive. Using videos, it was recorded that music performance acts always include demonstration and observation (**see photo 1**). Based on my experience in the Bapedi culture, the spectrum of learning experiences can range from accidental, unintentional, or reluctant forms of learning to active, intentional, involved and highly valued forms of learning.



Photo 1

Cultural festival (Dikgageng village; Sekhukhune district, Limpopo Province, 24.09.2018), Photographer: Morakeng Edward Kenneth Lebaka

The literature that has been reviewed demonstrates that in the Bapedi society, imitation forms an important part of music learning (see photo 2), and the simplest and most undifferentiated form of music learning occurs through imitation (Lebaka 2017:106). Of particular interest is the fact that participants learn through slow absorption and unconscious internalization of sounds.



Photo 2

Cultural festival (Dikgageng village; Sekhukhune district, Limpopo Province, 24.09.2018), Photographer: Morakeng Edward Kenneth Lebaka

Informal discussions have revealed that after the participants have mastered the songs, they can start dancing, and the dance is repeated innumerable times until all participants have mastered every detail. From the interviews, it was established that learning dancing involves coordination and collaboration, and different techniques are used to start, vary and stop the performance. During my field investigation in Sekhukhune district, it was further observed that repetition is the established style of performing traditional Bapedi music. Attesting to the observation above, Teffera (2006:42) writes that every music tradition possesses its own rules and concepts that will enable musicians to perform music accordingly. When it was asked whether indigenous Bapedi music serves as the core part of Bapedi culture. All participants felt that indigenous Bapedi songs establish mutual relationships as well as cementing friendships, but also communicate social and ethical

values within Bapedi culture. This question was intentionally posed to the participants in a quest to get their understanding on the relationship between music, culture and identity.

Mastery

An interesting observation on communal music-making should be mentioned. It appears that the creative music-making takes place during a process of interaction between the participants' musical experience and competence, their cultural practice and their instructions. Altogether, this forms the *affordances* in the creative situation. Results of the study showed that with musical creativity and rhythmic direction, participants build a repertoire which is characterized by cultural blend, polyrhythm, improvisation and interlocking rhythms which compel the participants to dance to the music. These observations are vividly corroborated by Ogunrinade (2012:114) who states that "traditional music knowledge system has capability for promoting music education, especially as it relates to the ways, culture and values of where it evolves".

The above evidence leads to the assumption that the formation of musical organizations encourages creativity and innovation. Nompula (2011:371) endorses this observation by stating that the creativity that is involved in improvisation is evidence that an African child is capable of composing. Comments by Nompula are noteworthy because during a personal interview with Madikedike Simon Sete (28th of September 2018) at Dingwane village, Sekhukhune district, he pointed out that musical creativity involves knowing why, when and how to shape the on-going music performance in ways that are contextually, situationally, artistically, socially and personally significant. These observations are supported by Nzewi (1999:79) who observes that traditional African wisdom and orientation to human up-bringing, advocate that knowing through practical participation and experiencing is a key educational methodology, crucial to the early education of an original-thinking individual.

Interaction of Musical and Choreographic form

Informal interviews indicated that traditionally when Bapedi people have rehearsals or performances, they sing and dance together. During the field research in the Bapedi community, I have observed that by using their ears to execute different rhythmic patterns, participants can memorize long cycles of patterns with signals, breaks, responses, etc. Based on research findings, it is evident that creative music-making involves retention of musical ideas, gestures and actions. The results have also shown that musical creativity revolves around improvisation, recreation and variation. From the above discussion, it would seem that communal music-making in the Bapedi culture is a quest for unity and integration.

Attesting to the observations above, Adeogun (2006:3-55) observes that "in Africa, actualizing music has both its communalistic and individualistic aspects". Further, Adeogun (2006:3-55) elaborates that "communalistic in the sense that the musical creation of an individual rarely belongs to him, but to the group he belongs. The above information correlates with the observation of Lebaka (2017:72), namely, that amongst Bapedi people, music is a binding force and a way of consolidating collective will. According to Makokobetše Isaac Magane (personal communication, 28 September 2018), the viewpoints of Adeogun and Lebaka are correct. According to him "songs and music are strongly linked to cultural and religious activities". Phibion (2012:2) endorses this observation by stating that traditional music performances bring individuals together and affirm communally held morals and values. Indications from the investigation suggest that intellectual understanding of music involves concept formation, understanding of musical language and engaging music thoughtfully through listening. On the basis of these findings and discussions, it is arguable that indigenous Bapedi music and oral tradition communicate within and contribute to the formation of both culture and community. Similar to my argument, Omolewa (2007:595) observes that traditional African education is always used as the information base for the community, which facilitates communication and decision-making. He further elaborates that traditional African education uses the age grade system in which those about the same age are brought together to share responsibilities, work together and to be introduced to activities that will not be burdensome for their grade (Omolewa 2007:596). When participants were asked about how music is used by individuals and different traditional dance groups to construct identity and self-perception, all interviewees were in agreement that "music in general, must be understood as a critical response to shifts of identity and plays a significant role in expressing personal and communal views on how life affects the Bapedi society". What will follow in the next section is the discussion of results.

Discussion

The results yielded thus far have shown that traditional Bapedi music education practice is an integral part of the Bapedi culture and history, which is transmitted through various modes. Such an indigenous system of holistic education involves

listening (singing & instrumental playing, aural recall, repetition); participation (listening, imitation, repetition); collaboration (improvisation, coordination, gestures); story telling (listening, oral communication, internalization); retention of musical ideas (aural recall, memorization, intent concentration); demonstration (observation, call-and-response, imitation, repetition); observation (instruction, demonstration, imitation); communal undertaking (participation, repertoire, repetition); imitation (recall and repetition), internalization (memorisation, holistic understanding and juxtaposition), creativity (soloing, leading and originality) and mastery (participants are able to use music meaningfully in different domains to further understand the tradition and the way in which it reacts within its social frameworks), methods which are an inherent and integral aspect of the socialization or enculturation process that takes place in the primary contexts of the musics (**see figure 1**).

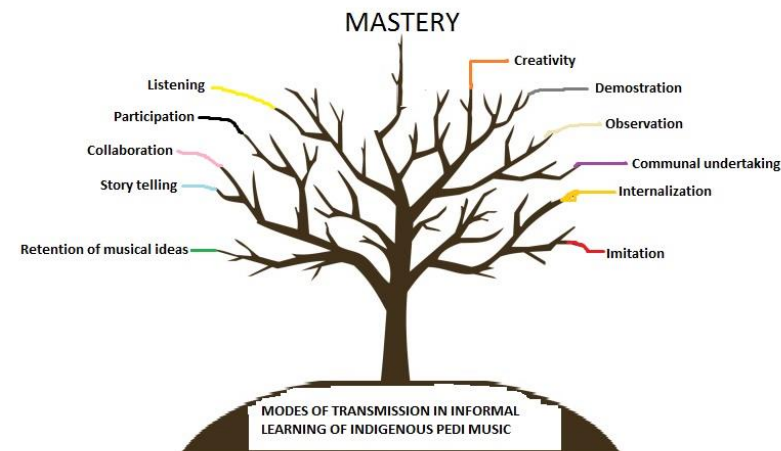


Figure 1: Modes of transmission in informal teaching and learning of Indigenous Bapedi music.

Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that traditional Bapedi music education, which is passed from generation to another, is usually by word of mouth and cultural rituals, and has to some extent been the basis for sustainable development in Indigenous Knowledge Systems. Indications from the investigation revealed that this mode of education has by and large been used as a way of acquiring lifelong learning. Informal discussions and interviews have demonstrated that traditional Bapedi music education is based on practical common sense, on teachings and experience and it is holistic.

The exposition of this study has shown that music and dance are fundamental to the Bapedi people ways of life, and culture is everything that characterises Bapedi society. The impression created during interviews and observations was that indigenous Bapedi music education practice plays a vital role in the preservation of Bapedi cultural heritage and identity.

Findings from this study further indicate that music is part of the indigenous Bapedi education process, through which its objective is to develop the abilities and skills of Bapedi people. Reviewing the results yielded thus far, it is clear that Bapedi people learn a great deal from one another whenever and wherever they interact. Attesting to the observations above, Nzewi (2005:vii) asserts that in indigenous African societies every person has a chance to experience the social, moral, health and entertainment values of music and dance on a daily basis. According to him, these values become richer if a person takes part as an active performer. He further maintains that proverbs, folktales, wise sayings and oral discussions are methods of intellectual explanation and reflect indigenous theory. Comments by Nzewi are noteworthy because during my field investigation it was found that Bapedi people regard singing as essentially a group activity, an opportunity to express their communal ethos. Similar to what obtains in Nzewi, Kaemmer (1993:156) highlights that "music often results in communication, even when people are not aware that it is taking place". Kaemmer (1993:156) however, has cogently argued that sometimes communicating through music is a way of publicly disseminating information. In view of the comments and observations made by Nzewi and Kaemmer in this study, it is evident that through enhancing communication, music is a way of building and maintaining group identity.

Conclusion

The results of this study provide evidence that music teaching and learning in Bapedi society is an integral part of cultural and religious life, and is rich in historical and philosophical issues. The data analysis has so far revealed that in Bapedi culture, learning music through participation has been a constant practice. The research unveiled that the transmission process involves participation, fostering of communal sense, concentration on the present moment and the use of musico-cultural formulae and cues for interactional purposes. This research also uncovered that indigenous Bapedi music is mastered, appreciated, felt and understood through sustained exposure to the socio-creative interactions of practical experiencing and the repertoire is heavily indigenous.

It is concluded that in Bapedi society, creative music-making and music identity are the obverse sides of the same coin, in that the former provides an arena in which the latter can be explored. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that a research study of this kind should be taken seriously for an exploration of indigenous values influencing the teaching and learning systems. This would assist in preserving Bapedi cultural heritage and identity. Targeting teacher educators would be an important part in an effort to include indigenous knowledge and ways of thinking in the curriculum of both lower and higher education.

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Grades in the Education System: A Poor Solution but at the Same Time a Necessity

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Abstract

This paper aims to provide a judgment for the assessment of the students of the pre-university and university system with grades, will be discussed for the grade as a "bad" necessity for assessing students. Grades are the results of the previous achievements achieved by students, are called evidence of a student knowledge and are an informative tool for parents to know their child's achievement. Grades can never be used as a medal for the student behavior nor as a penalty tool against them. Quantitative methods with qualitative approaches are used in the methodology of the paper. A total of 50 students and 10 teachers from the "Skënder Luarasia primary school in Tirana have been interviewed. It has been concluded that in Albania the grades system has not yet come out of fashion and it is seen as an assessment system for student achievements.

Keywords: assessment, teacher, student, grade

Introduction

Competency-based curricula that is being implemented in the pre-university education system is accompanied by a variety of documents including a class register, a personal classbook, a school certificate and the personal number of each student. The assessment of students in our country is done through a grade system which start from grade 4 (four) to 10 (tenth). This assessment has remained the same as in the old curriculum and the new curriculum.

Types of assessment under the new curriculum are as follows:

1. Continuous assessment is done by the teacher with marks or symbols that are accompanied by comments in the personal classbook or evidence.
2. The assessment test is performed not less than three tests per year, which are foreseen in the annual subject plan of the teacher.
3. The evaluation with portfolio / file is accomplished through written assignments, projects, researches, thematic works etc.
4. Periodic evaluation is performed at the end of every 3 months where the teacher evaluate students achievements based on continuous assessment, test assessment and portfolio evaluation.
5. Every end of the year the final assessment is performed based on the class register, personal classbook and school certificate. Based in the new curriculum the final assessment is calculated by means of the formula above:
 $(NVV \times 0.4) + (NTP \times 0.4) + (NVP \times 0.2) = \text{Final Score}$

Assemble these products and fill in the full number (eg. $7.7 = 8$).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The application of the grades in the educational system has been a problem for many years for all: students, teachers and parents. As noted above, the grading scale in our country is based on a ten point system. Ten (very good) being the highest and four through to one it represent the failing grades. Students aren't assessed for their behaviors or manners, but for their achievements, their academic knowledges and learning outcomes. Grades are a motivation for high achievement and a testimony for these achievements. They are also an informative tool for parents and a measure for their children academic

achievements. European countries do not apply the same grades system as in us. In an interview with "Shqip" an albanian newspaper, Prof Behar Gjoka revealed: "I recall a personal case in 1995 when I was in Denmark and the score that was given to the student was 5.36. Grade, at times, it appears as a student's interest. Now it is the interest of the student, the parents and the teachers, which means that from a simple measuring level has turned into a formal and sometimes misused level of knowledge presence or lack of knowledge.

Artan Fuga reveals that: "The grade system is out of fashion nowadays. This system applied at the Albanian schools, resembles working days that were given as a miserable reward to the former members of the agricultural cooperatives in the time of albanian totalitarian socialism".

Unfortunately, grades can be used in some cases as punishing tools. There are teachers who rely only on the power of grades to discipline their students.

Professor Behar Gjoka explains:

"In order for the school to create the chance that tomorrow we won't be as we are today, measuring the level of knowledge by summarizing the assessment into a number which in some cases represents the level of knowledge, but in a few cases represents even the level of an informal relationship. We must extinguish the cult of the grades in order to raise a new one: the cult of knowledge".

In our society even an individual's and personal assessment is done based on grades. If you get good grades, you are a good girl / boy on the contrary if you get bad grades you are a failure for the society.

Dritan Nela, an education specialist, explains: "The actual educational system does not promote meritocracy, desire for knowledge, development of skills, and the cultivation of conscience for justice. I think that before changing the shape or color of the label, it is necessary to change the prerequisites that determine the process and product of the education system."

The teachers and students at the school where the survey was conducted disagree with the opinion of the specialists. What will we see in the analysis of the findings

Internal and external factors that affect a student grade and performance are:

*Transition from primary to secondary school The move to secondary school means a number of major changes for all children. Most children will cope with these and feel accustomed to the changes by the end of the first couple of weeks. This change can affect the children's performance and grades.

* Family-related factors can play a critical role in a student's academic performance. In urban areas most working parents are too busy to care about their children's performance, causing children to lose their academic focus. Furthermore, living in poverty also can distract a child from academics because survival becomes a more immediate and pressing priority. Both of these examples include situations in which the parents are not intentionally harming a child's education, but such cases still can impact the problem. In extreme examples, if a parent or other family member is abusive, that situation easily can consume a student's attention and cause his or her academic performance to decline dramatically.

* There are some reasons for poor performance that are specific or related to the students such as bullying.

*Technology. Spending an amount of time on tablets, mobile phone scrolling through internet pages can distract children from their main priority: the school.

METHODOLOGY

"This thesis is based on the quantitative method supported and by the qualitative approach. Combining this two, quantitative and qualitative methods helps us to provide the most accurate results. The research base that we used for this study was the primary school "Skender Luarasi" which is located in Tirana. The sample of students was selected in accordance with the design of the study and the method and the type being implemented. The sample was selected with the random selection technique. A total of 50 students were interviewed at the primary school "Skënder Luarasi".

The data collection process was performed by the author of the study with the assistance of the principal of the school and teachers. The research was conducted on the basis of two quantitative research methods which includes questionnaires for

students and teachers and qualitative methods conducted through interviews with 5 female students of IX-th grade and 5 male students also from the IX-th grade.

RESULTS

In the graphics below we present the results of the questionnaires which were completed by teachers and students.

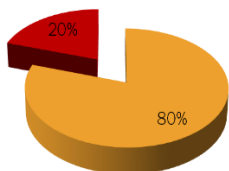
Students Questionnaire

Question nr.1.

Is the grade system valid for you?

The students gave the answer which is reflected in the following graphic.20% of 50 students responded negatively.80% of 50 students validated the grade system.

PO JO



Graphic nr.1

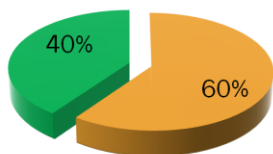
Question nr.2

Are you assessment with other forms rather than grades in your class ?

60% of the total of 50 students responded that there are other forms of assessment as well as signs and symbols and portfolio rating performed by teachers, while a small number (40%) claim that there are no other forms for their academic evaluation. This response is reflected in graphic nr.2.

2.A vlerësoheni ju me forma të tjera?

PO JO

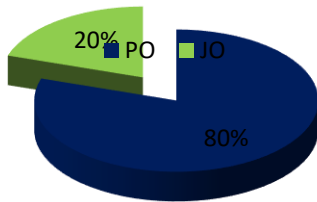


Graphic nr.2

Question nr.3

Do you think that grades system is unnecessary in the assessment of academic knowledge?

80% of respondents gave the opinion that another system should be found, while 20% of them think that the grade system is fine.

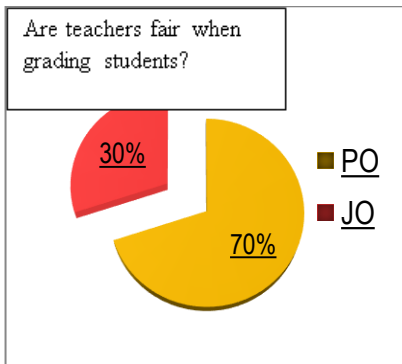


Graphic nr.3

Question nr.4

Are teachers fair when grading students?

If we see the graphic nr.4,70% of the students claim that YES they are fair and 30% of the students claim that NO.This 30% of the interviewed students believe that most of teachers fail to give grades to students that are as valid as they should.



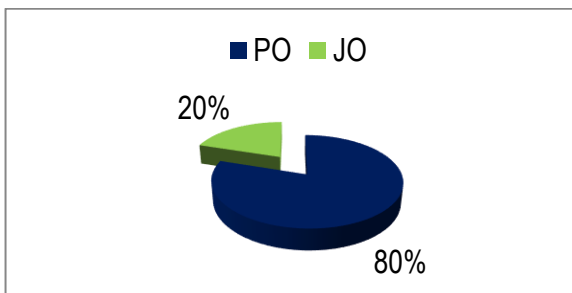
Graphic nr.4

Teachers Questionnaire

Question nr.1

Have you ever assigned grades without giving any explanation? 80% of the teachers responded with YES, and the other 20% responded that this never occurred to them.

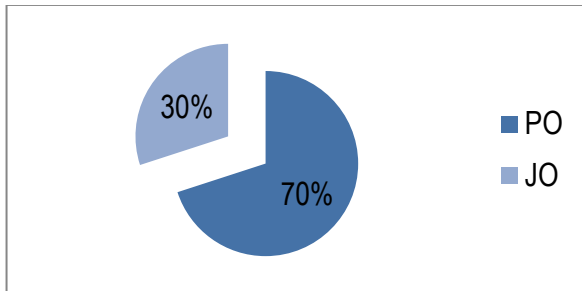
The chart below illustrates better the answer given by teachers:



Question nr.2

Do you agree with the opinion that the grade system its not efficient ?

You can find the answer in the graphic below.



Let's move onto semi-structured interviews.

5 female students of IX-th grade and 5 male students of IX-th grade participated in semi structured interviews. Their thoughts are as follows:

Are grades a reason to motivate yourself to have a highest result?

Four (4) female students agreed with the idea that grades motivated them to get the best outcomes in the lessons, while one of them thought they played no role in their motivation. Boys shared a different opinion. For none of them grades don't play any role in the motivation department. They explained that grades are not accurate measures of the student's achievement because they do not communicate the truth about the level of the students academic achievement.

Did grades serve as a motive to have an argument with the teacher?

Four of the female students responded that they never had an argument with teachers in for this topic, while the boys responded that this happens frequently.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The grade represents a combination of each student's academic knowledge, overall performance (the quality of work the student produces), and the student efforts.

Grade is a bad necessity.

Grade should be used as a reward not as a threat or penalty.

The teacher should provide guidance on the grade rating criteria in order to avoid conflicts

Teachers should be transparent in the assessment process of their students.

Teachers shouldn't judge their students when they are evaluating them.

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The Importance of the Portfolio on Students' Achievements

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Abstract

This study presents the results of a research work, which aims to highlight the importance of the portfolio on students' achievements. The study aims to validate the hypothesis that the creation of a portfolio / portfolio is one of the major factors by which the teacher appreciates the student's progress. The purpose of the paper is to analyze the student's evaluation effect through the dossier and its impact on the results of their achievements. To substantiate the hypothesis we raised the research question of research: What impact does the file have on student assessment? From the results of the distributed questionnaires, we could understand that a file should show a student's story. From the results of the research, we have come to the conclusion that students are familiar with the preparation, purpose of drafting the dossier and see it as a very good option in their final assessment. The data was obtained through questionnaires. The study was attended by 27 students studying at the secondary school "Kongresi i Manastirit "in Tirana", who attended classes VI-IX. Student subjects have been studied according to these variables: age, gender, classes that teach.

Keywords: Assessment, student, file / portfolio, teaching

1. Introduction

Students know what the goals of learning are, what are the standards they are expected to achieve and how their achievements will be assessed (what they should learn and what, how and when to evaluate them

Types of assessment are numerous such as formative assessment; summative evaluation; learning assessment (VpN); assessment of learning (ViN); Diagnostic evaluation; Assessment by tests; Continuous assessment; Daily assessment; Preliminary **assessment and dossier evaluation that** will be the important object of the work.

What is the student file...? an intentional "collection" of the student's work that shows his efforts, progress and achievements in a particular field of study. This 'collection' should include the student's participation in the selection of the contents of the dossier, selection guidelines and evaluation criteria to demonstrate the merits and testimonies of the student's self-reflection. "(Arter & Spandel, 1992 (p. 32) *SCIENTIFIC AND DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE - ULQIN, Montenegro, April 1, 2016 VIII Conference: The Role and Effectiveness of Investments in the Balkan Integration Process After the Stabilization and Association Agreement* ISSN 2337-0521 ISSN 1800-9794

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In a file can be included: Written work, research, math problems, lab reports, artwork, games, graphics, surveys, drawings, web pages, photos, audio and video tapes, tests, essays etc.

The student's file can be used in all classes in all subjects

Before we begin the process of creating the file, it is essential to determine its purpose which includes : What material will the learner collect on them? Which of the learning objectives will be evaluated through it? Will the process or product be evaluated? Is the file the best way to get the information we need?

All other decisions regarding the format, content, student reflections, and assessment tools will re-link the goal. The purpose will then determine the type of file and objects the teacher wishes to include the students as well as the criteria on which these objects will be evaluated. Objectivity clarity is key in determining how to evaluate and why the file will be used.

2. Purpose of Search

The main purpose that prompted us to deal with this problem is the new way of assessing students through the file. For IV-V class students, the continuous assessment is 45% of the weight, the 30% test weight test, while the student's portfolio represents 25% of the weight. While for class VI-IX students, the continuous and test evaluations have 40% of the weight of each of them, while the student's file accounts for 20% of the weight. The weight of the file confirms our hypothesis that the creation of the file / portfolio is one of the main factors by which the teacher appreciates the student's progress

3. Practical Findings

Theories from the theory help us to focus on and focus on finding work from the cases. Worked with the cases, these findings result to us, which contribute to establishing the hypothesis that file creation is one of the major factors by which the teacher appreciates the student's progress. Cases shed light through their content. Through the questionnaires with the students selected in the sample, it turns out that these students know why it is important to use the file; that the file is individual; she is benevolent, ie. the best works of the student were placed in it, and works that he could have corrected in the future, so it is like a diary of his good episodes

Since the file is a novelty, students will encounter natural difficulties in the first steps.

The student file is worth the teacher to add another voice to the student's final assessment. So, to set a student's annual grade, the teacher is also consulted with the student's file

Methodology

The study was attended by 27 students studying at the "Kongresi I Manastirit" secondary school and teaching in grades VI-IX.

Student subjects have been studied according to these variables: age, gender, classes that teach.

Inclusive criteria:

- Being a pupil of this school
- Inclusion of students with different ages 12-15
- Involvement of male and female students

Number of students in the study	Age	Gender	Classes that develop lessons
27 students	12-15 age	17/F----10 /M	VI-IX

Below are the data related to their age groups and gender

Table 1

Total / students	Age group	Male	Female
2 students	12 year	-----	2
5 students	12-13 year	-----	5
10 students	13-14 year	4	6
8 students	14-15 year	4	4
2 students	Over 15 year	2	-----

The students of the secondary school "Kongresi i Manastirit" were explained the purpose of the study and the content of the questionnaires. Once they have been explained for everything, then the application of the questionnaires has been carried out. Anonymity has been provided, it is made clear that completing or not the questionnaire is optional, and are not required to complete it.

To build the questionnaire, Qualtrics came to us and their distribution was done via email. The questionnaire is built with 5 questions where students give their opinions about the content of the student's file, about its scale, about the value of the file usage in their final assessment and about the subject that occupies the largest amount of jobs in that file.

Analysis and interpretation of research results

As we said earlier, 27 students of the " Kongresi i Manastirit " in the city of Tirana participated in the study. The questionnaire consisted of 5 questions and after analyzing the answers, the following data and findings were obtained:

First question. What does a folder contain? Participants in the questionnaire answered 100% and below we give some of the answers:

A folder contains all the works best rated by teachers in different subjects. In drawing, poetry creations, maps in geography
All the jobs that we like and who have received maximum evaluations from the subject teachers.

A folder contains the best works in various subjects such as drawing, reading cases, or foreign language. Selected works, ours

The second question: How important is the file for you?

Graphically presented this information looks so

nr	Answers of the question	number of responses	%
1	The student's file is part of my daily work	19	70%
2	The student's file is not part of my daily work	7	26%
3	I have not portfolio	1	4%
Total		27	100%

Question 3: Does the evaluation of the file have an important place in your final assessment of a subject? In this question, 22 of the respondents who completed the questionnaire responded that having a good file affected the final evaluation of the subject, as portfolio assessment is one of the evaluation columns, while 5 respondents responded that it did not affect and play a role in final assessment

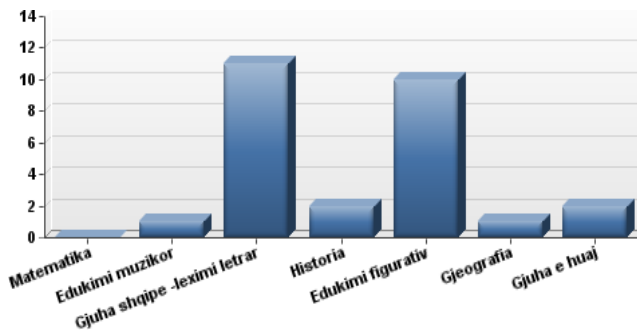
Against this question there are positive and less positive opinions and the latter should serve to draw conclusions for the future

Question 4 Is the file used as a tool to track students' progress?

A significant number of students nearly 60% of them thought that in subjects such as figurative education, literary reading or foreign language the teachers of these subjects used as a tool to follow the progress of students in these subjects and 40% of them they expressed that teachers were enthusiastic at the beginning of the file / portfolio design and then did not even deal with the fact that the students were advancing in these subjects or staging in the country.

Fifth question: 5. Ranko, which subjects have more work in your file?

There is this graphical presentation where it is read clearly and through the courier that we will present below that the subjects that "filled" the file with their works were Albanian language and literary reading, figurative education and foreign language and less subjects



Conclusions

The most interesting findings of the paper are:

- The teacher appreciates the student's progress through his file.
- Teacher evaluates the works and products realized, different individual and group presentations included in the file.
- Teacher and student jointly decide on the works to be included in the file
- The student portfolio is a kind of collection that aims to reflect the student's progress.
- It contains written assignments, photographs, recordings, etc.
- The portfolio is individual, i.e. each student holds his portfolio. Portfolio is kind, d.m.th. in which to put the best works of the student, and works that he could have corrected in the future, therefore, is like a diary of his good episodes. The learner primarily decides on how to fill his portfolio.
- Teacher guides his students on how to create a good portfolio and collaborate with them about the content of the portfolio.
- Since portfolio is a novelty, students will encounter natural difficulties in the first steps. Initially, the teacher, after clarifying the wallet, lets his students keep their will, especially by encouraging those who appear more zealous. By overcoming the initial difficulties of teachers and students, the portfolio becomes a permanent obligation.
- The student has an obligation when the teacher orders to keep the portfolio and submit it to the teacher whenever he or she requests it.
- The student portfolio is worth the teacher to add another voice to the student's final assessment. So, to set a student's annual grade, the teacher is also consulted with the student's portfolio

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