

“St. Kliment Ohridski” University  
Faculty of Education



I

J

E

T

*International Journal of Education*  
**TEACHER**

ISSN 1857-8888

vol. 18

November 2019



“St. Kliment Ohridski“ University - Bitola  
Faculty of Education - Bitola

# TEACHER

*International Journal of Education*

Bitola, 2019

**Publisher**

Faculty of Education - Bitola  
Dean prof. Dobri Petrovski, PhD.

**Executive and Editor-in-chief**

Prof. Ljupco Kevereski, PhD, North Macedonia

**Editorial Board**

Academisian Grozdanka Gojkov, Serbia  
Academisian Marjan Blazic, Slovenia  
Prof. Milan Matijevik, PhD, Croatia  
Prof. Svetlana Kurtesh, PhD, England  
Prof. Danimir Mandic, PhD, Serbia  
Prof. Danijela Kostadinovic, PhD, Serbia  
Prof. Jasmina Starc, PhD, Slovenia  
Prof. Mojca Jurišević, PhD, Slovenia  
Prof. Anton Ilica, PhD, Romania  
Prof. Eva Soradova, PhD, Slovakia  
Prof. Lazar Stošić, PhD, Serbia  
Prof. Alla Belousova, PhD, Russia  
Prof. Irina Abakumova, PhD, Russia  
Prof. Tom Jovanovski, PhD, USA  
Prof. Jove D. Talevski, PhD, North Macedonia  
Prof. Zlatko Zoglev, PhD, North Macedonia  
Prof. Dobri Petrovski, PhD, North Macedonia  
Prof. Metodija Stojanovski, PhD, North Macedonia

**Technical & Computer support**

Prof. Lazar Stošić, PhD, Serbia  
Josif Petrovski, North Macedonia

CIP - Cataloging in Publication,  
National and University Library "St. Kliment Ohridski" - Skopje.

TEACHER: Journal of the Faculty of Education - Bitola /  
[Editorial Board Acad. Grozdanka Gojkov ... ] Year XVII, No. 2 (2019) -.  
- Bitola: Faculty of Education, 2019 -. - 29 cm., 72 p.

Unspecified

**ISSN 1857- 8888 (online)**

University “St. Kliment Ohridski” - Bitola, North Macedonia  
Faculty of Education - Bitola, North Macedonia

**Address:**

Faculty of Education  
ul “Vasko karangelevski“ b.b.  
7000 Bitola, North Macedonia  
Tel/Fax. ++ 389 47 253 652; 203 385

With the opinion of the Ministry of Culture no. 07-2699/2 from 15.04.1998, for the journal "Teacher" is paid preferential tax rate. In accordance with Article 20, paragraph 8 of the VAT Law (Official Gazette 44/99), for the journal "Teacher" is paid a tax of 5%.

The journal has no commercial nature

## Contents

FRIENDSHIP PROFILES IN SCHOOL CLASSES .....	5
Ante Kolak, Ivan Markić, Mara Stojanac	
THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLOCATIONS IN ACQUIRING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE ...	15
Viktorija Petkovska, Silvana Neshkovska	
SUPPORT SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES FOR BETTER EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION .....	28
Gorica Popovska Nalevska	
WORKING WITH MATHEMATICALLY GIFTED STUDENTS IN THE INITIAL EDUCATION – PART ONE.....	35
Metodi Glavche, Katerina Anevska, Risto Malcheski	
KEY OBSTACLES AFFECTING SUCCESSFUL CLASSROOM LEARNING .....	47
Jasminka Kochoska, Biljana Gramatkovski	
THE ROLE OF THE COUNSELOR IN THE PEDAGOGICAL COUNSELING PROCESS.....	54
Blagojche Anastasov, Marija Ristevska	
THE BASIC FEATURES OF SOCIAL AND REHABILITATION PEDAGOGY IN EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL WORK.....	60
Jasminka Kochoska, Blagojche Anastasov	
OVERVIEW OF MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSES .....	67
Josif Petrovski	

## FRIENDSHIP PROFILES IN SCHOOL CLASSES\*

Ante Kolak, Ivan Markić, Mara Stojanac

University of Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of pedagogy  
*akolak@ffzg.hr, imarkic@ffzg.hr, mara.stojanac@gmail.com*

### Abstract

Relationships between peers are extremely important in school, and the lack of friendship relationships or long-term difficulties in those relationships, alongside many other, may be reflected in a pupil's success, mastering of new subject matter, and result in a negative emotional reaction. The quality and quantity of their friends affect the pupils' self-image, their self-perception, social status and success. Peer relationships with classmates may be diagnosed using the dimension of acceptance and rejection and using the dimensions of popularity and friendship. The authors of this study studied the dimension of friendship in the category of "best friend", in order to establish the variables which affect the choice of best friend. They defined the friendship relationship as a specific, mutual and two-way relationship between pupils, which is a reflection of the relationship between individuals, expressed in closeness and security.

The aim of the empirical part of the study was to establish the profile of friendship relationships within a class, in the category of "best friend" formulated in the main research question as: "What is the profile of friendship relationships in the category of best friend?" The reply to the research question was considered through the variables of assessment of the number of friends, the ease/difficulty of choice of best friend, age and differences in age, the duration of friendships, experience of breaking up with a best friend, and establishing the causes. The participants in the research were elementary school pupils. The empirical part of the study was based on a qualitative methodology, and the instrument was an interview structured as replies to the survey questions asked. The results of the research indicate the difficulties pupils have in determining the number of friends, which is mainly between 10 and 20, the ease of choice of a best friend, the formation of same-sex friends in ten-year-olds, the preference for friends of the same age, and the class as a significant factor, where the first long-term best friends are acquired.

*Key words: peer relationships, friendship quality, school class*

### 1. Introductory Thoughts

Friendships are one of the group of relationships which we value very highly in our lives (alongside marriage, love and family relationships), and are defined as close relationships. Friendship relationships in a school class are specific, mutual and two-way relationships between pupils, which are a reflection of the relationships between individuals, expressed in closeness and security. Although the number of friends may change significantly over a lifetime, the number of best friends is significantly lower and is the privilege of carefully chosen people. The period of elementary school education is the one in which the first long-lasting friendships are formed. The developmental course of a friendship from a pedagogical

---

\* Original scientific paper

point of view may be divided into three categories: friendships in early childhood (pre-school), friendships of middle childhood (elementary school), and friendships of adolescence (high school). Parker & Asher (1993) categorized the developmental course of friendships in three periods, according to age: early childhood (from 3 to 7 years), middle childhood (from 8 to 14 years) and adolescence (from 14 to 18 years). Friendships in elementary school are in the category of friendships of middle childhood and have specific characteristics. For example, pupils in the first grade of elementary school emphasize the importance of play as an important characteristic of a friend, whilst pupils in the final years of elementary school emphasize the importance of intimacy, loyalty, confidence and closeness as important characteristics of a relationship with a friend. (Turnball, Blue-Banning & Pereira, 2000). In the high school period the person is called a best friend in whom the child has the most confidence, who is prepared for cooperation, providing protection and support, and sympathy. (Berndt, 1996; according to Klarin, 2006). Some research into adults has shown the same fact: that about 20% of lasting and life-long friendships began in elementary school. (Huić & Smolčić, 2015)

The relationships between peers are extremely important in school, and the lack of friendly relationships or long-term difficulties in those relationships, alongside many other difficulties, may be reflected in the pupils' success, their mastering of new subject matter, and may result in a negative emotional reaction in a pupil. The quality and quantity of friends affect the pupils' self-image, their self-perception, social status and social success (Saenz, 2003). Research has shown that there are differences, which are relevant for social adaptation within the class, between the social characteristics of pupils who have and those who do not have friends in their class, (Trbojević & Petrović, 2014).

Bukowski & Hoza (1989; according to Klarin, 2006) stated that acceptance and friendship are the basic dimensions of peer relationships. Acceptance amongst peers is defined as the relationship status of a child within the peer group, which is determined by the degree to which the child is liked or not liked by the members of the group (Bukowski & Hoza, 1989, Ladd, 1999, according to Žic Ralić & Ljubas 2009). Peer relationships with classmates may be diagnosed using the dimension of acceptance (the degree of liking and attractiveness) and rejection (the degree of non-sympathy and not liking), and using the dimensions of popularity and friendship. School educators are most often helped in this by the use of sociometric techniques. They are also one of the most frequent ways of establishing the status of a pupil within a class, where the position of an individual in the class is defined by their degree of acceptance by the other pupils. There are different techniques for doing this, and one of the most common is the technique of nomination. The sociometric criteria are divided by some authors into general (*Who do you like most? Who do you like least?*) and situation specific (*Who would you like to sit with? Who do you most like working with?*) (Putarek & Keresteš, 2012). When establishing friendship relationships within a class, the most complete insight into friendship relationships is given by the sociometric technique which requires the pupils to evaluate their relationship with each pupil in the class using a five point Likert scale. This relationship is in a range from: *I want him to be my best friend*, through *I want him as a friend but not my best friend*, to a neutral attitude, and the status of rejection in two categories: *I do not mind that he is in my class but I don't want to have contact with him*, and *I don't want him to be in my class*. This technique emphasizes the affective component of social relationships within a class. Studying the status of a pupil in the categories of liking and disliking, several pupil statuses are differentiated, depending on the authors. So, Coie's Classification (according to Klarin, 2000.) differentiates five categories of pupils (popular, rejected, neglected, average and controversial), whilst other authors (MacDonald, 1991, Legault, 1993, Torrey & Wright, 1996) say there are four categories according to the degree

of rejection or liking by peers. So, a pupil who has a large number of negative nominations is a rejected pupil. A pupil who has a small number of positive nominations and few negative nominations is isolated. We say that pupils who have a large number of negative and positive nominations are controversial. A pupil with a large number of positive nominations is called the star pupil (Kolak, 2010).

Apart from the sociometric status of pupils within a class, it is interesting to discover which pupil characteristics affect their popularity and the decision to choose them as best friend. Research has shown that pupils choose pupils as best friends on the basis of the principle of similarity (Trbojević & Petrović, 2014). Therefore, it seems necessary and interesting to establish the profile of the desirable characteristics of pupils who become someone's best friend within a class, with respect for the facts that we do not all have the same criteria, that some make this decision easily, that some may change their mind and have the experience of disappointment and the break-up of their friendship, and that some in the class may not be able to find a best friend. There are not always enough opportunities, while the pupils are spending time together within one classroom and are in spatial closeness, for pupils to feel connected to one another in order to build a friendship. Elementary school pupils spend most of their free time with their peers. In a peer group they meet their need for intimacy, they build their self-image, they acquire social skills, and they learn to help, share and cooperate (Klarin, 2006). Hartup (1984, according to Klarin 2000), emphasizes the importance of peers in middle childhood, saying that this is a time of changes in terms of quality and quantity in pupil-pupil interaction, but also a time when peers in a pupil's life have a key place. Since pupils spend increasing amounts of time with their peers, it is very important for them to be accepted by the group (Asher & Parker, 1989). One of the important factors that affect the choice of friends within a class is sex. In terms of sex differences, the results of research mainly indicate the existence of differences, but these differences are not unambiguously confirmed. Boys prefer independence in friendship more than girls, and they are more prepared to end a friendship if they feel a loss of independence. Girls have more stable and firmer friendship relationships (they more often choose one as a best friend) (Cillessen & Rose, 2005) and have fewer friends than boys. They focus more on intimacy, emphasize feelings, exclusivity, shared activities and sincerity as important features of friendship, whilst boys are more focused on shared activities (Aukett, Ritchie & Mill, 1988; according to Berndt, 1982). Girls show a higher level of evaluation and support, helping, problem solving and intimacy in comparison to boys, which explains the differences in the organization of friendship relationships. In their friendships they are more focused on the actual relationship. In view of the fact that single-sex schools exist, which are intended for only boys (boys' schools) or only girls (girls' schools) it would be interesting to examine the experience of friendship in these schools.

## **2. The methodology of the empirical part of the study**

*The aim* of the empirical part of the study was to establish the profile of friendships within a class in the category “*best friend*”, formulated mainly in the research question which read:

*What is the profile of friendship relationships in the category of best friend?*

The reply to the research question was considered through the variables:

- assessment of the number of friends
- the ease/difficulty of choice of a best friend
- sex
- age and age differences
- the duration of friendship
- experience of break-up with the best friend and establishment of its cause.



The empirical part of the study was focused on a qualitative methodology and the instrument was a standardized interview with open-type questions, which related in structure to the research question set, with respect to the variables mentioned. The aim of the interviews was to gather data and obtain a sample of opinions from the participants in the research, on the basis of which we could find the profile of the best friend. We decided to use an interview because our aim, apart from collecting data, was to obtain opinions and discussion by the participants in the research, and their definition of situations related to the research question in their own personal way. When conducting the interviews, we were guided by the principles of creating confidence, mutual curiosity and naturalness. The standardised interview with open-type questions included the precise manner of asking the questions and their order was defined in advance. All participants were asked the questions in the same order and all participants had the same basic questions. In this way the possibility was increased of comparison of their replies, and the organization and analysis of data was facilitated. In order to reduce the weaknesses of this type of interview, that is, the standardised form of asking questions may narrow and restrict the naturalness and relevance of the questions and answers, the interview in some aspects had the character of a guided interview but the problems that arose during the interview were specified in the form of a set framework which was defined by the given and newly arisen situations. The subject of the interview was the participants' world and their relationships in the category of "best friend". The participants were also asked to interpret the significance of this category. An attempt was made to obtain open, nuanced descriptions of different aspects of friendship relationships, as well as descriptions of specific situations. We were open to new and unexpected replies, which also occurred during the interviews.

The interview consisted of the following types of questions: descriptive questions, questions about experiences, questions about behaviour, questions about emotional reactions and about their own past, and demographic questions. We were guided by ethical principles in our conduct of the interviews, where only those subjects were included in the research sample for whom the parents had given a written statement and consent to the conduct of the interview. The sample was formed on the principle of accessibility or availability for the research, which made it non-probability, non-random, convenience sampling, and it comprised twelve pupils from a single third grade class of a Zagreb elementary school, of which six were girls and six were boys. All the pupils in the sample were in the category of middle childhood (from 8 to 14 years) according to Parker & Asher (1993).

Table 1. Research sample

No.	Sex	Age	EBF	D
1.	F	10	YES	S1
2.	F	10	YES	S2
3.	F	10	YES	S3
4.	F	10	YES	S4
5.	F	10	YES	S5
6.	F	10	YES	S6
7.	M.	10	YES	S7
8.	M.	10	YES	S8
9.	M.	10	YES	S9
10.	M.	10	YES	S10
11.	M.	10	YES	S11
12.	M.	10	YES	S12

No. - the number of the subject of the research  
S - sex  
A - age  
EBF - experience of best friend  
D - designation

The analytical process of analysis of the interviews covered the phase of familiarization (learning information, listening to the audio recordings, reading the transcribed content of the interviews), the phase of identification (specific sub-categories within the categories set), the phase of indexing and coding, the tabulation phase (counting, sorting, and organization of sub-categories), and the phase of linking and interpretation.

### 3. Results and interpretation of the results

The results of this research will be presented as the replies to the research question set. Since the profile of "best friend" was considered using six categories, we will present each profile separately.

The first profile of friendship relates to the number of friends, the second to the sex of the best friend, which we presented as the sub-categories: *the same sex as me*, and *different from me*. The third profile of friendship relates to how the subjects found their best friend, which we defined through the choice of best friend and the process of arriving at the best friend. The fourth friendship profile related to the age of the best friend, which was defined in three sub-categories, and the fifth to the duration of the best friendship. The sixth profile related to the experience of a break-up of the best friendship, and establishing the reason for the break-up.

Table 2. First profile of friendship relationship - number

Subject	Category	Sub-category and frequency	
Friendship relationship profile 1	Assessment of the number of friends	up to 10,	0
		10- 20	6
		21 – 40	4
		More than 40	2

Table 2. gives an overview of the replies to the first friendship profile relating to the number of friends. The subjects were unprepared to reply to this question and were very indecisive, requiring supplementary questions. From the conversation with the participants in the interviews it is clear that it was difficult for them to define the word "friend". There were some pupils who saw all the pupils in the class as their friends, and those who were aware that friendship is a mutual relationship. The issue of number is seen in the fact that the pupils had to include friends from different settings. One category comprised friends from school, another friends from pre-school (kindergarten), and also friends in the category of family friends, neighbourhood friends, and pupils who had the experience of friends from other schools and sporting activities outside of school. The largest number of pupils had between 10 and 20 friends. Thirteen was the minimal value and 100 the maximum.

Research has shown that girls and boys have approximately the same number of "best friends" in peer groups, although girls require a higher level of intimacy in their friendship relationships (Benenson, 1990; Cairns, Perrin & Cairns, 1985; Ray, Cohen & Secrist, 1995, Erwin, 1993)

Table 3. Second profile of friendship relationship - sex

Subject	Category	Sub-category and frequency	
Friendship relationship profile 2	sex	same	12
		different	0

The second profile shows the identical response to the research question related to the variable of the sex of the best friend. The participants in the research in this sample confirmed that they all chose a best friend of the same sex as them. None of the participants in the research chose a person of the opposite sex as their best friend. The ten-year-olds, who formed this sample, decided unanimously for same-sex friendship. This is also confirmed by the research by Morgan (2003), which states that between ten and thirteen years of age the peak of segregation occurs between the sexes, and later decreases.

Table 4. Third profile of friendship relationship - difficulty of decision

Subject	Category	Sub-category and frequency	
Friendship relationship profile 3	Difficult of decision of choice of best Friend	Easy	9
		Moderate	1
		Hard	2

The choice of friends is a process which offers the possibility of choice and respects various criteria. The decision process is not simple because it is a matter of a relationship which is specific, mutual and bilateral. In view of the specific character of the choice and the different criteria of evaluation, various pleasant and unpleasant emotional reactions are possible. One of the most unpleasant is the feeling of rejection in comparison to the emotional reaction of acceptance, which falls into the category of pleasant reactions. From the examination of the participants' replies in the identification phase we created three sub-categories of replies. The first category comprised the participants who expressed that the process of choice of best friend was easy and simple.

S2 *"It was simple for me to choose my best friend"*

S12 *"It was easy for me to choose my best friend"*

The second category consisted of replies that were indecisive and those who could not define this process as either easy or difficult and the third category were those pupils who defined the process as hard.

S11 *"Hm, I have more than one best friend..."*

S1 *"Yes it was hard, but I still made the decision".*

In the friendship profile in this section, ease of choosing a best friend was dominant. It is necessary to mention that most of the best friends in this sample stemmed from the time when the pupils were seven-year-olds.

Table 5. Fourth profile of friendship relationship - age

Subject	Category	Sub-category and frequency	
Friendship relationship profile 4	Age	Younger	0
		Same age	10
		Older	2

The profile of age in the friendship relationship produced quite simple responses. Most pupils in this sample had a best friend of the same age, and they were all pupils. The only exceptions were two girls who chose an older or significantly older person as their best friend.

S4 *"My mother is my best friend"*

S6 *"My best friend is 2 and a half years older than me... she is my father's girlfriend's daughter... we are like sisters... my dad introduced us. "*

Apart from these specific answers by these two girls, age was seen to be a significant predictor of friendship. The replies to this research question indicate the need to establish family and relative relationships within the category of best friend, as well as the parental influence on the choice of friends. S4 obviously did not differentiate the relationship with parents from relationships with friends, and there is also the possibility of negative transfer of attitudes about friends which could arise under the influence of parents or the environment. This response and attitude are possibly the product of the parents' form of upbringing, with the emphasis on a friendly relationship avoiding strictness and demands, prompted by a rebellion against the parents' own parents, who used a stricter form of behaviour and upbringing. In S6 the desire is visible for the creation of closeness with a new person in her life, probably occurring as the result of her father's expectations.

Table 6. Fifth profile of friendship relationship - duration

Subject	Category	Sub-category and frequency	
Friendship relationship profile 5	duration of friendship	Long-term	1
		Medium	10
		Short-term	1

The duration of friendships is specific in view of the age of the participants in the study. Since in this category all the subjects were of the same age, this made the comparison much easier. The class was seen to be a specific factor that influences the choice of best friend, that is, the environment in which the pupils find themselves. The class was shown to be a significant predictor of the choice of friends, in view of the fact that most participants said that they met and chose or attained their best friend in the school they attend, that is, in their class. The class in this research confirmed its important and significant function in the pupils' development. It has a protective, compensatory and socializing function. The profile of the duration of friendship in this sample corresponds to the length of time of attending school - that is three years. The results indicate that the first best friends are acquired in school.

Table 7. Sixth profile of friendship relationship - experience of change

Subject	Category	Sub-category and frequency	
Friendship relationship profile 6	Experience of change of best Friend	Exists	8
		Does not exist	4

In the process of selection of friends, it is important to emphasise that there were some pupils who did not have a best friend. These pupils were not selected for this sample. It would be interesting to discover the reasons why this was so, as well as the profile of pupils who did not have a best friend. In this aspect we were interested in whether pupils had the experience of breaking up with their friends in the category of best friend. Pupils expressed this

experience descriptively, and we were able to categorize all their replies dichotomously into two groups, that is, the replies indicating the existence of this experience and those negating it.

The results showed that two-thirds of the subjects had had the experience of change, and one third had not. The experience of change in a friendship may be accompanied by strong emotional reactions which reflect their social status and, in view of the fact that classes are the places where best friends are acquired, it is very important to trace this socialization function in peer relationships in the field of school pedagogy. For that reason, we were interested in the reasons for the break-up of best friendships in the category of subjects who confirmed this experience.

Table 8. The causes of the break-up of best friendships

Subject	Category	Sub-category and frequency	
Experience of change of best Friend	Causes of break-up with best friend	Change of pre-school/school	8
		Rejection	1
		Argument	1

The causes of the break-up of best friendship were the final research question in the empirical part of this paper. From the analysis of the results we found that a decisive factor in the choice of a best friend was contact or closeness. A change in educational establishment (in our case the move from pre-school kindergarten to elementary school) was shown to be a significant factor. The pupils stated that friendships from kindergarten became less intense over the course of time due to the decreasing number of mutual interests they shared, and the decreasing amount of time they spent together. None of the subjects had a best friend from their time in kindergarten, although they had had them during their time in pre-school. In view of the fact that spatial closeness proved to be a significant predictor of friendship, a new research question arises related to spatial closeness outside of school as well, such as for example neighbours. Two pupils mentioned mutual disagreement and arguments as the cause of the break-up of their friendship, that is, problems in their relationship.

#### 4. Concluding Remarks

Alongside the limitations which inevitably arise in research of this type, in this research the profile of friendship in the category of best friend was projected very clearly. It is clear that sex was a significant predictor, where a same-sex friendship was significantly preferable in ten-year-olds. The profile of age is quite clear, where ten-year-olds mainly decide for friends of their own age. Where this was not the case, the choice was for someone older, and not younger. The number of friends is a category which did not give a clear profile, but the number of friends mentioned was mainly between 10 and 20. The differences in the replies were certainly also the result of the insufficient understanding of the concept of friendship, because it was clearly defined more widely and more narrowly within the sample in this research. The ease of making a best friend mainly depended on the individual characteristics of the person who took part in the research, but we could conclude that ten-year-olds relatively easily decide who will be their best friend. The main conclusion that stems from this research is that the class is the place where the first more long-term and true friendships are made. The duration of friendships and the experience of change also point to the class and school as significant predictors of making friends. Therefore, we may define the class not

only as the place where children acquire their best friend, but also the time from which best friendships originate. This is no wonder, if we take into account the fact that pupils spend about 7000 hours in elementary school with their class, and that teaching strategies and forms of teaching in a class have a powerful effect on the creation of social relationships in peer groups. In view of the importance of observing and studying these relationships, we point out that school pedagogues should nurture and use many techniques and procedures that help diagnose and prevent activities in the pedagogic relationship, such as sociometry and observation of relationships in peer groups.

This research opened up many new research questions. In the profile of establishing friendship relationships, the need arose to examine the existence of blood relationships between friends, and parental influence and inclusion in the choice of friends. Spatial closeness in terms of housing (e.g. neighbourhood) was shown to be an interesting factor for research. Special research interest is also aimed at inclusion in family life of the best friend, as well as the number of children in the family. It may be assumed that single children have different needs for best friends than children who grow up in families with several children. It was also found to be interesting to establish the quality and quantity of time spent with friends both in out-of-school activities and during school holidays and at weekends. Special interest is directed at research into the quality of peer relationships in terms of friendships which may be factors in care, assistance, emotional support, fun and socializing, recognition, problem solving... this will certainly be a subject of our interest and study in further research work, which requires a different methodological approach. Establishing a hierarchical structure between the dimensions offered is a research challenge, as well as answering the question relating to the description of the characteristics of an ideal friend, and a comparison of the characteristics of the best friends the subjects have.

The importance of the choice of best friend was enhanced even more by this research. For us as researchers this research enriched our experience and led to new insights into our own life experiences, which have also been confirmed by other research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007.). We conclude our considerations with a thought that ran like an invisible thread through the replies by our subjects and has its roots in a folk saying, which states that friends are the family we choose for ourselves.

## 5. Literature

1. Asher, S.R. & Parker, J.G. (1989). Significance of peer relationship problems in childhood, In: Schneider, Attili, B.H., G., Nade, J., & Weissberg, R.P. (eds.). *Social competence in developmental perspective*, Amsterdam, Kluwer Academic, 5–23.
2. Benenson, J.F. (1990). Gender differences in social networks. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 10, 472-495.
3. Berndt, T.J. (1982). The features and effects of friendship in early adolescence, *Child Development*, 53, 1447 – 1460.
4. Cairns, R.B., Perrin, J.E. & Cairns, B.D. (1985). Social cognition in early adolescence: Affiliative patterns. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 5, 339-355.
5. Cillessen, A.H.N. & Rose, A.J. (2005). Understanding popularity in the peer system, *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 14, 102 – 105.
6. Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2007). *Metode istraživanja u obrazovanju*. Zagreb: Slap.

7. Erwin P., (1993). *Friendship and peer relations in children*. Oxford, John Wiley & Sons
8. Huić, A. & Smolčić, I. (2016). Strategije održavanja prijateljstva i zadovoljstvo istospolnim prijateljstvima: efekti aktera i partnera. *Društvena istraživanja*, 25, 1, 63-83.
9. Klarin, M. (2000). *Odnosi u obitelji i s vršnjacima kao prediktori različitih aspekata prilagodbe u školi*, Zagreb, Odsjek za psihologiju Filozofskog fakulteta.
10. Klarin, M. (2006). *Razvoj djece u socijalnom kontekstu – roditelji, vršnjaci, učitelji*. Jastrebarsko, Naklada Slap.
11. Kolak, A. (2010). Sociometrijski status učenika u razrednom odjelu i školskoj hijerarhiji. *Pedagoški istraživanja*, 7(2), 243-254.
12. Legault, F. (1993), Gender differences in the Perceptions of Affiliate Networks in Primary School. <http://www.eric.ed.gov/>
13. MacDonald, C.D. (1991), Children's Awareness of their Popularity and Social Acceptability. <http://www.eric.ed.gov/>
14. Morgan, V. R. (2003). Classroom peer group acceptance and friendship: Links to self-concept and sense of school belonging in a developmental context. *Doctoral dissertation*, University of Texas, USA.
15. Parker, J.G. & Asher, S.R. (1993). Friendship and friendship quality in middle childhood: links with peer group acceptance and feeling of loneliness and social dissatisfaction. *Developmental Psychology*, 29, 4, 611 – 621.
16. Putarek, V. & Keresteš, G. (2012). Tko je popularan u ranoj adolescenciji povezanost percipirane popularnosti sa spolom i usamljenosti. *Društvena istraživanja*, 21, 4, (118), 949-968.
17. Ray, G.E., Cohen, R. & Secrist, M.E. (1995). Best friend networks of children across settings. *Child study Journal*, 25, (3), 169-187.
18. Saenz, C. (2003). Friendships of children with disabilities. *Doctoral dissertation*. Department of Special Education, Northeastern Illinois University. Chicago.
19. Torrey, G.K. & Wright, D. (1996), Peer Behaviour Ratings as Predictors of Sociometric Status. <http://www.eric.ed.gov/>
20. Trbojević, J. & Petrović, J. (2014). Socijalne karakteristike dece koja uspostavljaju prijateljske dijade. *Primjenjena psihologija, Tematski broj: Postignuća učenika*, 7, 3, 493-507.
21. Turnbull, A.P., Blue – Banning, M. & Pereira, L. (2000). Successful friendships of Hispanic children and youth with disabilities: An Exploratory study. *Mental Retardation*, 38, 2, 138 – 153.
22. Žic Ralić, A. & Ljubas, M. (2013). Prihvaćenost i prijateljstvo djece i mladih s teškoćama u razvoju. *Društvena istraživanja*, 23, 3, 435-453.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLOCATIONS IN ACQUIRING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE\*

Viktorija Petkovska, Silvana Neshkovska

"St. Kliment Ohridski" University – Bitola, Faculty of Education  
vikipetkovska@hotmail.com

### Abstract.

Second language learners very frequently rely on their native tongue, assuming that there is always a one-to-one equivalence between L1 and L2 lexical items. This results in major errors since even equivalent lexical items do not always convey the same sense in two languages mainly because of the cultural differences which are mirrored in the vocabulary of every language. Overlooking collocations and other word combinations also brings about many collocational errors which can be more disruptive than grammatical errors in communication. For most collocations there are no motivations and the same conceptual meaning can be realized by different words. This inexplicability of collocation calls for more attention on the part of both teachers and learners of English.

The aim of this paper is to research the notice given to collocations in the curriculum of EFL in the primary and secondary schools in Macedonia. More specifically, this study is devoted to the elaboration of the concept of collocations including, the definition of collocations, collocation types, the importance of collocations, as well as the exercises and space that is allocated to collocations in the modern English textbooks used in the elementary and secondary schools in our country. Apart from the analysis of a selection of English textbooks, the research is based on a tailor-made questionnaire distributed among and filled out by elementary and secondary school teachers of English who work in the Bitola region.

**Keywords:** collocations, English textbooks, primary schools, secondary schools

### Introduction

David Wilkins (1972) observed that "without grammar little can be conveyed; without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed", thus, implying that the biggest task foreign language learners face is, in fact, the vocabulary. Given that words are not used in isolation and their actual meaning depends on the context in which they occur, i.e. the way they are combined with other words, it is a must for language learners to acquire knowledge about the combinatory potential of words. In other words, in order for them to reach a native-like fluency of the language they must acquire and actively use idioms, phrases and collocations as the most frequent word combinations. Over the last few years, vocabulary teaching has attracted the attention of English teachers and theorists who argue that, without a wide range of vocabulary, grammar does not help learners much. Therefore, the necessity of teaching collocations, or which word goes with which other word(s), arose, in order to help learners acquire the language more quickly and efficiently. However, when it comes to the actual classroom practice, it seems that collocations are still given little attention.

The aim of this study is to research the notice given to collocations in the curriculum of EFL in the primary and secondary schools in Macedonia. More specifically, this study is devoted to the elaboration of the concept of collocations including, the definition of collocations,

---

\* Original scientific paper



collocation types, the importance of collocations, as well as the exercises and space that is allocated to collocations in the modern English textbooks used in the elementary and secondary schools in our country. Apart from the analysis of a selection of English textbooks, the research is based on a tailor-made questionnaire distributed among and filled out by elementary and secondary school teachers of English who work in the Bitola region.

## 1. Theoretical background

Of all word combinations (free combinations, collocations and idioms), *collocations* occupy the largest chunk of the vocabulary. This is particularly witnessed in the fact that even dictionaries provide the most common collocations of each word. Collocations are words combined in a way characteristic of a specific language (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, 1974). J. R. Firth (1968: 11) was among the first scholars to attach importance to collocations by claiming "you know a word by the company it keeps" (e.g. *strong tea, heavy drinker, by accident*, etc.).

Unlike the other word combinations, collocations are harder to recognize; there are criteria they are formed by, and different types based on the elements they are combined of, or, the strength of the relationship between them. When engaged in a conversation learners of English commonly make errors by combining nouns with wrong adjectives. This is due to the negative transfer between the first and the second language (e.g. *powerful tea* instead of *strong tea*; *strong computer* instead of *powerful computer*). However, this can be surpassed by mastering the process of combining words, which, in turn, will lead to natural sounding speech, fluent and native-like conversations.

## 2. Defining collocations

The term "collocation" is derived from the Latin word 'collocat' which means putting or placing things together. The concept of collocation has been broadly discussed, taking into account its historical background which can be traced as far back as the 18th century, when supposedly, in 1750 for the first time it was used as a linguistic term by Harris Hermes, who used it to refer to the linear constellation of words (in Palmer, 1933). It was not until the 1930s, however, that Palmer (1931: 4) used the term in a way that is reminiscent of its dominant present day use – "units of words that are more than single words".

Nowadays, however, when it comes to defining the term collocation literature abounds with various definitions, which implies that "there is no commonly accepted definition of collocation" (Pecina, 2009).

Nevertheless, what all definitions have in common is the fact that they all define collocations simply as a co-occurrence of words:

"... words combining or coming together in a way characteristic of language" (e.g. *strong tea, heavy drinker, by accident*, etc.) (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, 1974).

"... two or more words that go 'happily' or naturally with each other" (Newmark, 1988).

"... any small group of consecutive words from an utterance or text" (e.g. *yellow dreams* is an unusual collocation) (The Macquarie Dictionary, 1991)

or, as a habitual co-occurrence of words:

"... a group of words that occurs repeatedly in a language" (Benson, 1985; Carter, 1987).

"... the way that some words occur regularly whenever another word is used" (Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary, 1987).

"... the habitual co-occurrence of individual lexical items" (Crystal, 1986)

“... a habitual arrangement or conjoining of particular words”, (e.g. *green as grass; pass the buck*) (The Macquarie Dictionary, 1991).

## 2. Collocation criteria

In order to distinguish collocations from other word relations certain criteria have been established (Baker, 1992; Fernandez, 2009):

- a) **Meaning** – the meaning of a specific collocation can be predicted from the meaning of the parts it is composed of;
- b) **Word class** – the component parts of a collocation normally belong to different word class;
- c) **Range** – lexemes that belong to the core vocabulary of English are typically found in free combinations;
- d) **Fixedness** – the relationship can hold between all or several of their various forms, combined in any grammatically acceptable order (e.g. *to achieve aims, aims having been achieved, achievable aims, the achievement of an aim*);
- e) **Substitutability** – lexemes can sometimes be replaced by close synonyms (e.g. *hardened criminal* vs. *confirmed criminal*);
- f) **Additions** – the structure of collocations is sometimes altered by adding most often pre- or post- modifying words (e.g. *to meet **still** rising world demand*).
- g) **Deletions** – leaving out a word from the collocation (e.g. *I have not got the faintest (**idea**)*);
- h) **Displacement** - personal pronouns may replace the actual collocation items (e.g. *'Instead of banishing or shunning clichés, haven't we got to meet **them** imaginatively*);
- i) **Distribution** - the word order of lexemes in a collocation is relatively free, i.e. collocations can be "combined in any grammatically acceptable order".

### 2.1 Types of collocations

Determining the relationship between the words that collocations are composed of leads to the classification of collocations into different types. Collocations can be **strong** (e.g. *rancid butter, addled eggs, ulterior motives* and *harbour grudges*.), the knowledge of the meaning of the collocator in the examples above does not necessarily enable non-native users of English to associate them with the right base or headword. **Weak** collocations are ‘more predictable’ (e.g. *good boy, white shirt, white wine*, etc. (Sughair (2007))). Furthermore, Sughair (2007) in his classification of collocations distinguishes between: **open collocations**, when the headwords are open to partnership with a wide range of items (e.g. ***hit** gold/home/the hardest/the headlines/the market/the newsstand/the roof/the scene/the screen/ the shops/the stage/streets*, etc.), and **restricted collocations**, when the headword collocates with a limited and fixed number of words (e.g. ***commit** murder/crime/ embezzlement*) and **bound collocations**, when the headword is “uniquely selective” of its collocates (e.g. *to shrug one’s shoulders*).

The actual lexical structure of collocations serves as a basis for yet another very important classification of collocations. Numerous scholars and researchers have classified collocations as **lexical** and **grammatical** (Firth, 1968; Benson, 1985; Benson, et al., 1986; Ghazala, 2008; Carter, 1987; Baker 1992; Carter, 1998; Hill, 2000; etc.). **Grammatical collocations** are phrases consisting of a dominant word (noun, verb, adjective) and a preposition or grammatical structure such as an infinitive or clause; whereas **lexical collocations** are phrases that typically consist of nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs only.

Benson, Benson and Ilson (1997) in their BBI Dictionary list the grammatical collocations as follows:

- 1. Noun + preposition (e.g. *hostility between*);

2. Noun + to + infinitive (e.g. *pleasure to do it*);
3. Noun + that + clause (e.g. *an oath that he would do his duty*);
4. Preposition + noun combination (e.g. *at anchor*);
5. Adjective + preposition combination that occurs in the predicate (e.g. *angry at everyone*);
6. Predicate adjectives + to + infinitive (e.g. *it was necessary for him to work*);
7. Adjective + that + clause (e.g. *it was imperative that I be there*);
8. Nineteen English verb patterns.

Benson, Benson and Ilson (1997) also put forth seven major types of lexical collocations:

1. Verb + noun/pronoun or prepositional phrase (e.g. *set a record*);
2. Verb + noun (e.g. *squander a fortune*);
3. Adjective + noun (e.g. *pitched battle*);
4. Noun + verb (of action) (e.g. *blizzards rage*);
5. Noun + of + noun (e.g. *a bouquet of flowers*);
6. Adverb + adjective (e.g. *strictly accurate*);
7. Verb + adverb (e.g. *apologize humbly*).

### 3. Research methodology

Being concerned with the place collocations have in the process of teaching and learning EFL in our primary and secondary education, we conducted a research whose aim was to determine the frequency with which collocations are discussed or practiced in the curriculum of EFL in both elementary and secondary education as well as to inspect teachers' views on the matter.

For the purposes of the research four elementary school English textbooks (*Messages 1, Messages 2, Messages 3, PET buster*) and four secondary school English textbooks (*Close-Up, THiNK1, THiNK2 and Focus 4*) were closely analysed. Texts were closely inspected to mark out collocations, the number of exercises as well as definition and other information regarding collocations were noted. Furthermore, a tailor-made questionnaire was conducted among primary and secondary school teachers of English to investigate their position and their experiences as far as teaching collocations is concerned. The questionnaire was consisted of the following questions:

1. How important are collocations in the process of acquiring the English language?  
Please explain why!
2. Do you teach collocations explicitly, or you leave it to your students to pick them up along the way?
3. Would you say that your students use English collocations properly?
4. If yes - do they use correct collocations instinctively or perhaps that is due to their conscious and deliberate efforts to learn various collocations?
5. If no – why do they make mistakes?
6. When teaching vocabulary, do you pay more attention to teaching collocations or single words?
7. How do you usually teach collocations?
8. English textbooks used for elementary school students make no mention of collocations. Why do you think that is the case? Is it because the students' level of English or maybe the curriculum needs to be rewritten?
9. Research shows that the English textbooks intended for high school students contain some exercises on collocations, with collocations being defined and explicitly explained in the textbook used with the fourth year students. Do you think that this presentation and distribution of collocations is rightly planned and adjusted to students' age and needs?

### 3.1. Results

#### 3.2. The analysis of the primary school English textbooks

In the process of teaching English from sixth to eight grade elementary school the curriculum of EFL is based on the *Messages* (Goodey, Goodey, 2005) textbooks and in the ninth grade on *PET buster* (Dodgson, Alston, Galimberti, Graham, 2012).

The analysis of these textbooks shows that the vocabulary is presented in isolation, with the words being classified as nouns, adjective, verbs, linking words, as well as fix phrases and expressions used for greetings, introduction, expressing opinion, interests, activities etc. But there is no mention of collocations, no explanations or exercises on how they should be properly used. In the ninth grade textbook there is no specific section devoted to vocabulary although the textbook features longer texts which are rather rich in vocabulary. Once again collocations as such are not mentioned in this textbook as well. The results have shown that throughout elementary school students are not introduced to the relations that words form with each other; they learn phrases and expressions without being able to explain them, rephrase them properly or understand why certain word connections are considered an error. Thus, for instance, a text titled *Making Music* from Messages 2 (Unit 2 A slice of life, page 21) was submitted to a closer inspection in terms of the collocations it contained. A number of collocations was extracted (e.g. *make music, make CDs, have lessons, give a concert, do sports, appear on radio, appear on TV, etc.*), and then they were looked up in the *Oxford collocations dictionary for students of English* (OCD; McIntosh et al. 2009) to verify their existence. Unfortunately, no exercises or explanations for these collocations were provided in the textbook itself.

Another similar instance we found in *PET buster* (Unit 5, Healthy eating, page 35) with the text titled “*Fast Food vs Slow Food*”. The analysis of the text and the activities before and after the text in this textbook also reveal that the nine graders who happen to use this book to study English are bereaved from the opportunity to familiarize themselves with some useful collocations (e.g. *healthy options, world domination, traditional regional food, etc.*) in a clear and explicit manner.

Unfortunately, these findings only prove that the teaching of collocations in elementary school is not carried out in any systematic and planned manner. In other words, this means that teaching collocations is left entirely to the teachers. It is up to them to decide which collocations are useful and relevant enough for their students to know.

#### 3.3. The analysis of the secondary school English textbooks

The analysis of the textbook used in first, second, third and fourth year secondary school (*Close-Up, THiNK1, THiNK2* and *Focus*, respectively) yielded much more satisfactory results.

The analysis of *Close Up* (Healan, Gormley, 2011) which consists of twelve units used with first year students has shown that the vocabulary section of **every second unit** (Unit 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11) has a part dedicated to collocations. This part normally consists of two exercises titled *Collocations & Expressions*. In addition to that, at the end of the textbook, a list is provided with all collocations found in all the units. The analysis also reveals that in this textbook there are four types of collocations-related exercises:

**Type 1. Choose the collocative word that does not go with the given verb (Ex.1);**

Ex.1 (Unit 1 Family Ties, page 12)

1. get        lazy / married / divorced
2. keep      a secret / a diary / a decision
3. have      sympathy / fun of / a family
4. pay        a visit/ a compliment / an opinion
5. fall        to pieces / in the middle / in love

**Type 2. Use the given collocations to complete the sentences (Ex.2);**

Ex.2 (Unit 1 Family Ties, page 12) (three out of 10 sentences provided here)

1. I'm not ready for children now, but I'd love to have \_\_\_\_\_ in a few years
2. Shhh! You mustn't tell anyone about it! Can you keep \_\_\_\_\_?
3. I don't think I'll ever fall \_\_\_\_\_ again. My divorce was very upsetting.

**Type 3. Choose the correct explanation for a given collocation out of the two options provided (Ex.3)**

Ex. 3 Unit 3 The Wonders of Nature, page 38 (3 out of 6 sentences are given below)

1 If you bring attention to a problem you\_\_\_\_\_.

A ignore it

B tell other people about it

2 When people try to fight pollution, they\_\_\_\_\_.

A try to make more pollution

B try to make less pollution

3. In order to save energy, you have to\_\_\_\_\_.

A turn off the lights

B turn on the lights

**Type 4. Create a collocation by matching the given words (Ex.4)**

Ex.4 Unit 7 Extreme Situations, page 90:

- |         |                   |
|---------|-------------------|
| 1. keep | a) lost           |
| 2. do   | b) missing        |
| 3. get  | c) calm           |
| 4. go   | d) someone's life |
| 5. save | e) a journey      |
| 6. make | f) one's be       |

As shown in *Table 1* below, the analysis of Close-up, the textbook used for first year secondary school students, reveals that there are 10 collocation-related exercises in this textbook and the majority of them are of the second and the third type (see the types above).

	<b>Type 1</b>	<b>Type 2</b>	<b>Type 3</b>	<b>Type 4</b>
	<b>Choose a word that does not collocate</b>	<b>Use the collocation in a sentence</b>	<b>Choose the meaning of the collocation</b>	<b>Match the words to form a collocation</b>
	Page 12, Ex. A (Unit 1 Family Ties)	Page 12, Ex. B (Unit 1 Family Ties)	Page 38, Ex. B (Unit 3 The Wonders of Nature)	Page 90, Ex A, (Unit 7 Extreme Situations)
		Page 38, Ex. C (Unit 3 The	Page 64, Ex. A (Unit 5 A Place to Call	

		<i>Wonders of Nature,)</i>	<i>Home)</i>	
		Page 64, Ex. B (Unit 5 A Place to Call Home)	Page 116, Ex. B, (Unit 9 High Tech World)	
		Page 142, Ex. B, (Unit 11 Lessons to Learn)	Page 142, Ex. A, (Unit 11 Lessons to Learn)	
Total	1	4	4	1

*Table 1. Types of collocation-related exercises in Close-up*

As shown in the table, in *Close Up* (Healan, Gormley, 2011) the collocations are dealt with only by means of three types of exercises, which are based on choosing (Ex.5), recognizing (Ex.6) and using the given collocations in a sentence (Ex.7).

Ex.5 (Unit 1 Amazing people, page 17)

1. Which of this can you sign?

a) a contract                      b) an autobiography                      c) a lesson

2. Which of these can you make?

a) friends                      b) a cake                      c) homework etc.

Ex. 6 (Unit 10 “Keep healthy”, page 97)

(Match the sentences halves, then underline the illness collocation in each sentence!)

1. Our neighbor is in hospital. He had an
2. Her doctor gave her medications and she got
3. If you have problem with your eyes, make an
4. Are you sure it's a cold? Maybe you should see
5. I ate seafood for dinner. I've been feeling

- a. better
- b. a doctor
- c. appointment with a specialist soon!
- d. exercise for years now. He's not very healthy.
- e. sick all night
- f. operation two days ago.

Ex. 7 (Unit 10 “Keep healthy”, page 97)

(Complete the illness collocations from Exercise 1. Use the correct form of the verbs!)

1. I was really happy I could go to your party on Sunday. I \_\_\_\_\_ for almost a week.
2. Her knee hurts badly, and the medication she takes doesn't help. The doctor says she needs to \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ‘Hello, this is Jake Miller. Can I \_\_\_\_\_ with Dr. Thacker please?’

It is worth noting that in none of the units in this textbook are the collocations defined or explained in any concrete and explicit way.

In the textbook intended for third year secondary school students, *ThINK*, Student's book 3 (*Puchta, Stranks & Lewis-Jones, 2015*) there is no mention of collocations, and no collocation-related exercises are included either. Vocabulary is thought through discussing words in isolation, and the subject of word-relations is not handled at all.

Finally, in *Focus*, Students' book 4 (*Beata, Breysshaw, Vaughan, Sue, 2016*), the English textbook intended for fourth year secondary school students, collocations are more elaborately presented. They are defined and divided into types. Moreover, collocation-related exercises are provided which are in close correlation with the given texts, meaning the collocations in the texts are underlined, so that they can be easily observed and discussed. At the end of this textbook attached to the cover is a booklet named Word Store where additional collocation-related exercises are given. Seven out of the eight units of *FOCUS* contain at least two exercises on collocations.

The journey with collocations in this textbook starts in Unit 1 "*Do your best*" with an exercise that requires pairing verbs and nouns in order to make a collocation (Ex.8).

Ex. 8 (In pairs, make as many verb-noun collocations as you can in sixty seconds)

Verbs		Nouns
Attend drop fail		a career a course
Pass pursue skip	+	an exam a lesson
Study take		a subject university

Then, some more exercises follow with collocations being underlined in the text titled "*Do your best*" that is part of Unit 1. The instructions on page 13 where the text is further take us to page 3 of the Word Store booklet where another collocation-related exercise awaits the students (Ex.9).

Ex.9 Word Store page 3 (complete the exercise using the words given on page 13)

1. a circle of friends = \_\_\_\_\_
2. a \_\_\_\_\_ thinker = \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_ to do sth. = \_\_\_\_\_
4. have a \_\_\_\_\_ for sth. = \_\_\_\_\_
5. pay \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_ a goal = \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_ knowledge = \_\_\_\_\_

Interestingly, the selected collocations in Unit 1 are actually defined in the second unit. This practically suggests that students are first encouraged to pick up and use the collocations instinctively, and then their attention is drawn towards conscious acquiring of the exact meanings of the selected collocations.

In Unit 2 'It takes all kinds', page 44 under the section *Language in focus* which is found at the end of every unit, the following definition and explanation of the term collocation is provided:

*"Collocation is a central feature of any language. It refers to typical, natural-sounding combinations of words. For example, you can have strong feelings but not tough feelings. You might break someone's heart but not destroy someone's heart. Choosing the right collocation will make your English sound more natural."*

The definition and the explanation are followed by an exercises in which the students are familiarized with different types of collocations (Ex.10) and the concept of strength of collocations (Ex.11).

Ex.10 (Unit 2 'It takes all kinds', page 30)

(Match types of collocations 1-6 with examples a-f from the unit!)

- |                     |                               |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. adjective + noun | a) the centre of attention    |
| 2. verb + noun      | b) it's absolutely fantastic  |
| 3. noun + verb      | c) her late husband           |
| 4. noun + noun      | d) Mary was staring hard      |
| 5. verb + adverb    | e) My father proposed a toast |

Ex.11 (Unit 2 'It takes all kinds', page 30)

(Translate the examples in Exercise 1. Discuss how 'strong' each collocation is in your language!)

Stronger = few or no alternatives e.g. *the center of attention*

Weaker = some alternative e.g. *stare hard/intently/fixedly*

In the remaining units in this textbook and the Word Store booklet no other information on collocation is found. The focus is placed only on the practical use of Adjective + Noun and Verb + noun collocations as well as several topic-related collocations (e.g. collocation on employment, collocations on selling and buying, etc.) (see *Table 2* below).

<i>Adjective – noun collocations</i>	<i>Verb – noun collocations</i>	<i>Collocations on Employment</i>	<i>Collocations to do with the internet use</i>	<i>Collocations in set phrases</i>	<i>Collocations on buying and selling</i>	<i>Collocations revision</i>	<i>Total</i>
Word store, p. 7, ex. 3B	Word store, p. 9, ex. 4D	Word store, p. 11, ex. 5B	Word store, p. 15, ex. 7A	Word store, p. 15, ex. 7C	Word store, p. 9, ex. 4C	Word store, p. 15, ex. 7D	
Word store, p. 7, ex. 3C	Unit 4, p. 58, ex. 4;	Word store, p. 11, ex. 5C			Word store, p. 9, ex. 4D	Word store p. 17, ex. 8E	
Unit 3, p. 47, ex. 5						Word store, p. 3	
3	2	2	1	1	2	3	14

*Table 2. Collocations-related exercises in Focus*

These exercises are of the same type as the ones presented in Unit 1 (Unit 1 "Do your best", Ex.8, Ex.9) in the same textbook, i.e. the collocations are underlined in the given text or written in a box at the beginning of the exercise and students should just match them with the given word, or provide a sentence (once they have done the matching) (Ex.12).



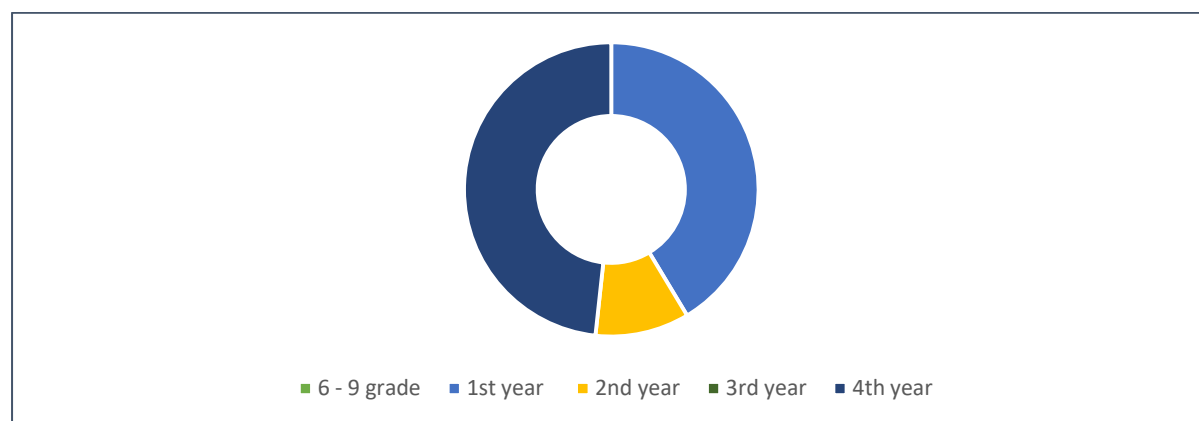
Ex.12 (Word store, page 7)  
*Adjective – noun collocations*

*area backstreets city food  
neighborhood nightlife skyline*

1. cosmopolitan/sprawling city → There are so many different cultures in London. It's the most cosmopolitan city I know.
2. dramatic/ impressive \_\_\_\_\_ → \_\_\_\_\_
3. dull/ hectic \_\_\_\_\_ → \_\_\_\_\_

To summarize, the findings obtained from the research of English textbooks intended for secondary school students, show that the students are officially introduced to the concept of collocations, the lexical division of collocations, and the notion of strong and weak collocations in the final year of their compulsory education. Nevertheless, almost all exercises via which they are expected to practice using collocations deal with only several types of collocations: adjective + noun, verb + noun, noun + noun; and no exercises on the other types of collocations such as: noun + verb, verb + adverb or adverb + adjective are included. On the plus side, the analysis shows that the texts included in the textbook used with the fourth year secondary school students feature underlined collocations, which means that instead of only matching, circling, choosing the right collocate for a given word, students can actually witness collocations being used in specific contexts.

Overall, on the basis of the research at hand, it is inevitable to conclude that collocations are completely omitted from the EFL curriculum during elementary school years. In the course of students' secondary education, collocations are dealt with in a very haphazard way and are only properly introduced to the students in the final year of their studies as shown in Graph 1 below.

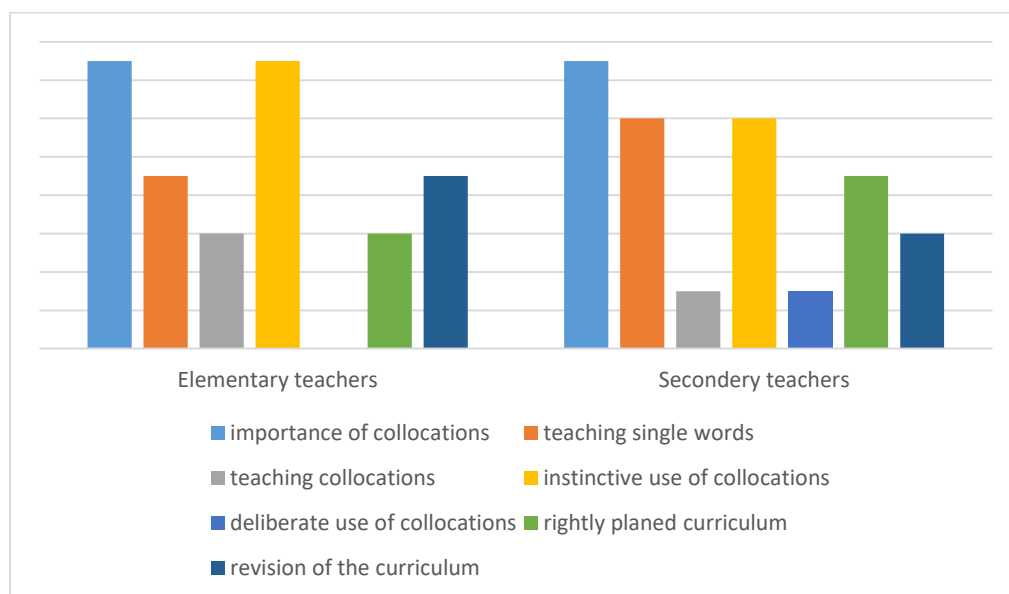


*Graph 1 Collocation-related exercises in EFL textbooks used in elementary and secondary schools*

Bearing these findings in mind, several questions arise: “Is the introduction of the concept of collocations postponed to secondary school because it is too demanding to be grasped by elementary school students?”; “Is the explicit explanation of collocations procrastinated until the final year in secondary school because it is better for students to learn collocations instinctively?”, “Should teachers of English follow the textbooks ‘blindly’ or introduce more collocation-related exercises of their own accord?”.

### 3.4 The results of the questionnaire

As depicted in Chart 2, all interviewed teachers of English from both the primary and secondary schools agree that collocations are important for acquiring EFL, enriching students' vocabulary and reaching a native-like fluency of the English language.



*Chart 2 Questionnaire results*

60% of the elementary school teachers claim that their pupils pick up collocations along the way as suggested by the curriculum. Given that there are no exercises on collocations in the textbooks they use, teachers claim that they occasionally point out the most important collocations in the texts they deal with.

All of the elementary school teachers agree that, generally speaking, their pupils use collocations properly and instinctively. However, 60% state that when it comes to vocabulary they mainly teach new words in isolation; whereas, the other 40% claim that they pay equal attention to teaching both single words and collocations.

Moreover, 40% of the elementary school teachers believe that the reason why curriculum leaves out collocations in elementary school is due to pupils' level of English, with one of them strongly emphasizing that there is no need for the pupils to know how the word combinations they use are called. 60% of the teacher think that collocations should be introduced in elementary school because students even at that level know the difference between adjectives, nouns, verbs and their potential to combine with other words.

Finally, according to some of the interviewed elementary school teachers with longer teaching experience behind them, not all English textbooks overlook collocations as the ones they are currently using. In other words, previously they have used other textbooks which covered collocations in a more systematic way and which did not place the issue of teaching collocations entirely in the teachers' hands.

On the other hand, only 20% of secondary school teachers of English that took part in this survey claim that students use collocations through conscious and deliberate effort. The remaining 80% think students use collocations instinctively. However, they all agree that to some extend students use collocations properly and the mistakes they make are due to the

negative transfer, lack of interest in learning foreign language or simply not paying enough attention.

Only 20 % of the secondary school professors claim that they pay equal attention to both single words and collocations when teaching vocabulary. The other 80% claim that they pay more attention to single words as that is how the program is designed and work with those collocations only when they are mentioned in the texts and the exercises given in the textbooks they are using.

According to the opinion of 60% of the interviewed secondary school teachers only B2 level students and those at higher levels are expected to learn/use collocation effectively. Consequently, they believe that the layout of collocations starting from primary school and all the way through secondary school, is rightly planned although some improvements could be made. The other 40% of the teachers strongly disagree with the way collocations are presented in English textbooks and state that the program used now is not as good as the previous ones, and that textbooks are poor in both vocabulary and definitions and should be improved in that respect.

## **Conclusion**

The aim in this paper was to inspect the importance of collocations and the notice they are given in the EFL curriculum in both primary and secondary schools in Macedonia, via the space that is allocated to collocations in the modern English textbooks and by investigating teachers opinions and experiences regarding teaching collocations.

The results gained from the teachers' questionnaire on teaching collocations clearly indicate the undeniable importance of collocations in the process of acquiring English as a foreign language. However, this finding is not in line with the treatment collocations receive in the English textbooks, since the close inspection of a selection of textbooks used in primary and secondary schools in the Bitola region, reveals a serious lack of consideration of this issue, particularly in the primary school English textbooks. Such a poor distribution of collocations in the English textbooks is definitely not in teachers' favour, since it is not always feasible for the teachers to introduce additional collocation-related exercises and fit them in the limited time frame of 40 or 45 minutes that they have at their disposal per class. Hence, even those teachers supporting the current design of the curriculum still demand some significant improvement while others even go as far as mentioning the advantages of "the former curriculum which excelled in both definition and exercises as opposed to the present one".

Since the research shows that in larger part teachers base their teaching on the helping materials there is a clear need of textbooks with better distribution of collocations, textbooks that emphasize collocations in the process of acquiring English as a foreign language, regardless of student's level.

If students get familiarized with collocations at the time when they make a comprehensible difference between nouns and verbs, adjectives and prepositions (elementary school), then, by the time they reach B2 level (fourth year of secondary school) they will start using them naturally and without the negative transfer from L1 interfering the process. However, without textbooks to support this claim extracted from the research the above mentioned theory cannot be put to practice.

In conclusion, students must acquire the English language by using textbooks that abound with both information and exercises on collocations starting from sixth grade up until fourth year of secondary school, unfortunately this is possible only if the curriculum is revised so the new design can impose this kind of textbooks selection.

## References

- Benson, Morton, Evelyn Benson, & Robert F. Ilson, (1997). *The BBI dictionary of English word combinations*, 3rd ed. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Beata, Breyslaw, Vaughan, Sue, (2016). *Focus Students' book 4*, Pearson Education Limited, Harlow, United Kingdom .
- Crystal,(1997). *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics Oxford*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, United Kingdom.
- Carter (1998). *Vocabulary: Applied Linguistics Perspectives*, London, Routledge.
- Carter (1987). *Vocabulary: Applied Linguistics Perspectives*, London: Unwin Hyman.
- Collins (1987). *English Language Dictionary*.
- Christopher, (2001) Manning and Schutze, *Foundations of Statistical Natural Language; Processing*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., United States.
- Dodgson, Alston, Galimberti, Graham, (2012). *PET buster*, ELI s.r.l., Macatera, Italy.
- Firth, J. R., & Palmer, F. R., (1968). *Selected Papers of J. R. Firth 1952-59*, California: Indiana University Press.
- Firth, John, (1968). *A synopsis of linguistic theory, 1930-1955*. In *Studies in linguistic analysis*, eds. J.R. Firth et al., 1-32. Special volume of the Philological Society. 3rd ed. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Goodey, Goodey, (2005). *Messages*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom.
- Ghazala, "Stylistics and Translation: Tracing the Style of the Holy Koran and its Implications in Islamic and Non-Islamic Translations", in *Sayyab Translation Journal (STJ)*, Vol. 1: 112 – 47, 2008.
- Healan, Gormley, (2011). *Close Up*, Cengage Learning Inc, Mason, OH, United States.
- Hill, (2000). *Revising priorities: From grammatical failure to collocational success*. In M. Lewis (Ed.), *Teaching collocation: Further development in the lexical approach*, Oxford: Oxford University Pres.
- Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, (1974). Oxford University Press, Oxford, United Kingdom.
- Palmer, Harold, (1933). *Second interim report on English collocations*, Tokyo: Kaitakusha.
- Pecina, (2009). *Lexical Association Measures Collocation Extraction*, Institute of Formal and Applied Linguistics, 4th publication in the series of *Studies in Computational and Theoretical Linguistics*; ISBN: 978-80-904175-5-7.
- Puchta, Stranks & Lewis-Jones,(2015). *ThINK, Student's book 3*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom.
- Sinclair and Renouf (1988). "A Lexical Syllabus for Language learning".

## **SUPPORT SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES FOR BETTER EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION\***

**Gorica Popovska Nalevska**

International Slavic University „Gavrilo Romanovic Derzhavin“  
Faculty of Psychology, St. Nikole – Bitola, North Macedonia  
*popovska.g@gmail.com*

### **Abstract**

Quality of life is a multidimensional concept that requires a description of several life domains and their interdependence. Particular importance for the reform process in the education of children with disabilities is the process of educational inclusion of children with disabilities in regular educational system. Educational inclusion doesn't only mean physical accommodation of children with disabilities in the basic school system, it also means inclusion in the work and life of the school. While developing the inclusion process is important, it is also important to develop adequate services that will provide team-approach in resolving problems in the basic public school system.

The main goal of this research is to identify support services for children with disabilities and their families that lead to an increase in the quality of educational inclusion. The research was carried out using a questionnaire for parents of children with different disabilities for the services that are most needed for their children in the inclusive educational process. Results of the research showed that most children with disabilities don't sufficiently exercise their rights in education and they need appropriate support services. Changing inclusive education requires multi-level reforms of the system as well as a wide range of factors and services needed: providing physical access to schools, educational / personal assistant for the student with a disability, continuing teacher education, but also education and systems for support of parents as well.

**Key word:** *children with disabilities, parents, support services, educational inclusion*

### **INTRODUCTION**

According to the latest data from the World Health Organization 15% of the population lives with some form of disability; 2 to 4% of them face significant difficulties in functioning. The inclusion of persons with disabilities in Republic of North Macedonia is the subject of several strategic documents: National Strategy for the Equalization of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2010 - 2018; National Health Strategy 2016 - 2020; Education Strategy 2016 - 2020. The ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has obliged the Republic of North Macedonia to promote, protect and ensure the full enjoyment of the human rights of persons with disabilities and to ensure that they enjoy full equality under the law at national and local level.

The term quality of life usually describes factors that influence the living conditions of society or individuals i.e. the degree of well-being of a particular person or group of people.

---

\* Original scientific paper

Quality of life is a multidimensional concept that requires a description of several life domains and their interdependence. The quality of life in a given area has an impact, to a lesser or greater extent, to other areas. Of particular importance for the reform process in the education of children with disabilities is the process of educational inclusion of children with disabilities in regular schools. Inclusion is an attempt to improve the quality of education in terms of disabilities and has been a common theme in educational reform in our country and in the world for decades (Racino, 1999). In conditions of full inclusion, students with disabilities are always educated together with students with typical development as the first and desired option while receiving appropriate support. Researches conducted in our country showed that although educational inclusion is regulated by law and certain strategic documents have been adopted, there are a number of barriers to quality educational inclusion. The schools are not adequately staffed and equipped to implement the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular primary education in addition, there is a lack of suitable and continuous trainings for the school teaching staff in working with children with disabilities, and consequently improvement of the quality of education provided to the children with disabilities. In addition, it is also necessary to make the employees more sensitive to the situation of these children and the significance of their inclusion (The Ombudsman of the Republic of Macedonia, 2016, p.50). The lack of adequate staff and technical conditions contribute to the development of a negative attitude towards the inclusive model of education. Furthermore, the lack of special educators in schools, the lack of education, training and motivation of the teaching staff, as well as lack of education for both parents of children with typical development and parents of children with disabilities. All of these factors can be considered as a barrier for quality inclusive education. (Popovska Nalevska & Popovski, 2019). Barriers for educational inclusion don't only reflect the quality of the achievements of students with disabilities but also directly affect the quality of their lives and the lives of their families. The lack of appropriate transportation to school, infrastructure accessibility, lack of educational and personal assistants, obliges parents to constantly accompany their children during classes. On the other hand, the parent or one of the them don't work because of the care of the child, which directly reflects on the socio-emotional life of the parents and on the material well-being of the family.

Families of children with disabilities are exposed to challenges of extended, sometimes lifelong, care, but they could also be the subject of discrimination and increased risk of socioeconomic difficulties that varies in different social and cultural contexts. (Hughes, 1999; Dunst, Trivette, & Hamby, 2006). In last decades, beside focus to the child needs, the services have been aimed to provide support to families, too (Turnbull, Beegle, & Stowe, 2001). The family-centered approach is based on the holistic perspective and the fact that families are unique. Therefore, it is important to adjust the services to the family's specific needs considering how the fact of having a child with disabilities influences the whole family; what should be the specific goal or impact of the service; which kind of specific support activities lead to optimal outcomes to reduce the negative and promote positive effects for the child and the family, etc. (Summers et al., 2005; Samuel, Rillotta, & Brown, 2012).

## **METHODOLOGU OF THE RESEARCH**

The **main goal** of this research is to identify support services for children with disabilities and their families that lead to an increase in the quality of educational inclusion.

## Methods and techniques of research

The research was conducted with a descriptive - analytical method that is adequate and in accordance with the nature and character of the set goals of the research. The analytical method analyzed the views and opinions of the respondents covered in the sample of the research.

The research was carried out using a questionnaire for parents of children with disabilities for the services that are most needed for their children in the inclusive education process.

## Sample of research

The sample of the research consists of 166 parents of children with different disabilities who attend regular education.

## Data processing

The data were processed quantitatively and qualitatively using the EXCEL and STATISTICS computer programs. The data were grouped according to the number of matching in certain categories and then placed in tables. The data were calculated with frequencies for which a percentage was calculated. In order to popularize certain statistics, they are represented by graphs.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Every different disability needs a proper support service. Because the research aims to identify the most common and needed support services for the education of children with disabilities, parents were asked about the type of disability their children had.



Figure 1. Type of disability

42% (69 parents) of parents answered that their children have combined handicap, 28% (46 parents) answered that their children have physical (physical) handicap, 11% (19 parents) responded that their children have sensory handicap and 12% (20 parents) didn't respond.

Results of the research show very small percent of children with disabilities were involved in preschool education. Preschool education covers children (with or without disabilities) aged 0 to 6 years, that is, until they start school. Preschool education is also regulated by the Law for Protection of Children in the Republic of North Macedonia. The law provides a clear and

precise obligation for kindergartens to provide for the care and upbringing of pre-school children and to ensure the reception of children with disabilities.

Table 1. Pre-school child care

Did your child attend:	Yes	No
Kindergarten	25%	75%
Day Care Center	14%	86%
At home with a family member	43%	57%
Another type of care	11%	89%

The majority of children with disabilities, even 43% in their preschool age, were cared exclusively at home with a family member; 25% of children attend kindergarten, 14% in Day Care Center; and 11% had another type of care. This question was followed by the question about the employment of parents.

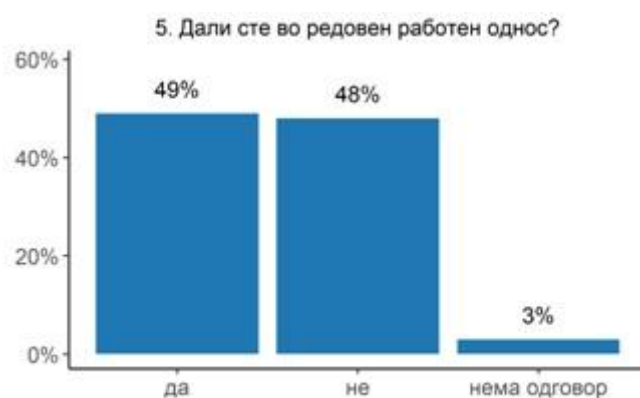


Figure 2. Employment of parents

In terms of employment, approximately half of the parents 48% (80 parents) are not employed, 49% (81 parents) are employed and 3% (5 parents) didn't respond.

With the new Law for Primary Education, the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular schools starts this school year, according to which the student with disabilities should have an educational/personal assistant. The UNDP project for personal and educational assistants for students with disabilities in elementary and secondary schools began as a pilot project five years ago, and is part of the municipal-utility work program of the Government's Operational Plan for Active Employment Measures and Services Programs on labor market. However, only a small proportion of schools and students with disabilities were involved in this project.

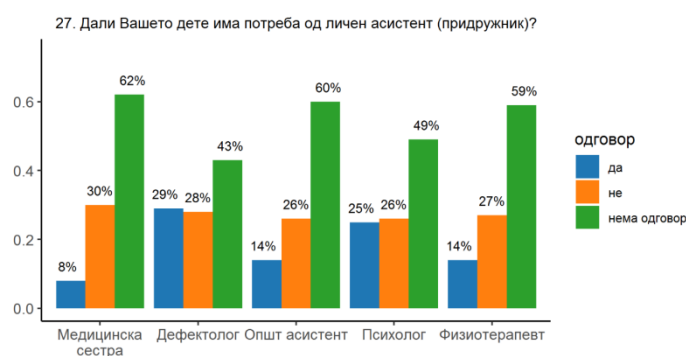


Figure 3. Need of educational/personal assistant



In the opinion of the parents, their children have a need of a personal/educational assistant from the following profiles: a special educator needs 29% of children with disabilities; psychologist for 25% of children with disabilities; physiotherapists need 14%; general assistant 14% and nurse for 8% of children with disabilities.

*Table 2. In which areas are most difficult to achieve your child's rights  
(1 is the most difficult and 5 the easiest)*

Area	1	2	3	4	5	average grade	no answer
Health	40%	15%	17%	11%	8%	2.25	10%
Education	23%	11%	13%	11%	14%	2.76	27%
Social protection	41%	17%	13%	10%	6%	2.12	13%

Archiving child's rights in the field of education - 23% gave the lowest score for the exercise of the rights in the Education; 11% of parents gave grade 2; 13% of the parents gave 3; 11% of the parents gave grade 4, and 14% gave the highest grade 5. The average grade is 2.76.

*Table 3. Necessary support services for children with disabilities and parents (1 is the lowest, 9 the highest)*

What services do you need?	average grade
Legal assistance for the exercise of certain rights	7.76
Training the child for independent living	7.54
Psychological support	7.33
Personal Assistant	7.05
Infrastructure adaptation	6.87
Support - trainings for teachers in inclusive education or parents of children with typical development	6.79
Care centers	6.68
Resource Centers	6.63
Parental support for sharing experiences	6.45
Training for parents	6.20
Educational Assistant	6.00

Respondents were asked what kind of support and services they need most (table 3) -37% answered that they most need legal assistance for exercising certain rights and rated this need with score 9. The average grade is 7.54.

20% of parents gave the highest score 9 for need of Training the child for independent living. Average grade is 7.76.

33% of the parents gave the highest score 9 for need of psychological support and the average grade was 7.33.

31% of parents gave the highest grade 9 for child's personal assistant,. The average grade is 7.05.

Adaptation of the infrastructure with the highest rating was assessed by 26% of the parents. The average grade is 6.87.

Support and training for teachers in inclusive education, but also for parents of children with typical development 28% of parents of children with disabilities rated it with the highest grade - 9, with an average grade of 6.79.

23% of parents rated the opening of foster Care centers with the highest rating. The average grade is 6.68.

26% of parents rated the need for opening Resource Centers for children with disabilities as the highest - 9. The average grade is 6.63.

27% of parents gave the highest grade 9 for Parental support and sharing experiences. The average grade for this need is 6.45.

Parent training, 23% of parents rated the highest grade - 9. The average grade is 6.20. The need for an educational assistant with the highest grade was 18% of parents and 6.00 was the average grade.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATIONS**

From the analysis of the results there are some significant conclusion and recomendations:

The percentage of children involved in preschool education is very low. This situation is primarily due to insufficient material-technical conditions for working with children with disabilities, but also due to the negative attitudes and prejudices of the educators for quality inclusion, especially in conditions when the groups of children are overcrowded.

Approximately half of the parents of children with disabilities are not employed, mostly due to their child's situation and the need for ongoing support, which directly affects the socio-emotional life of the parents and the family budget. In this regard, the state should provide parental support through greater opportunities for inclusion of children with disabilities in preschools and day care centers. During primary and secondary education the state should provide educational/personal assistants for students with disabilities, so parents will be released from accompanying their children to school. Within regular schools, there is a need for Resource Centers where students with disabilities will receive appropriate support from a professional team (special educator, psychologist, speech therapist)

Parents find it difficult to exercise their children's rights in the three areas: education, health and social care, for which they gave relatively low grades. It is necessary to support the parents as direct participants in the inclusive process of their children. To this end, it is necessary to organize trainings for parents with inclusive content. Creating Manuals for the rights and services offered in the social, health and education system.

Most of parents of children with disabilities indicated the following support systems: highest average score of 7.76 for the need for legal assistance to exercise certain rights; training of children with disabilities for independent living - 7.54; the need for psychological support is 7.33; personal assistant for their child - 7.05; support - trainings for teachers in inclusive education or training for parents of children with typical development - 6.79; need to exchange experiences with other parents - 6.45; the need to open Day care centers for children with disabilities - 6.63; infrastructure adaptation - 6.87; opening of Resource centers - 6.68; parent training - 6.20; the need for an educational assistant - 6.00.

## REFERENCES

- Dunst, C.J., Trivette, C. M., Hamby, D.W. (2006). *Family support program quality and parent, family and child benefits*. Asheville, NC: Winterberry Press.
- Dunst, C.J., Trivette, C.M., Hamby, D.W. (2007). Meta-analysis of family-centered helping practices research. *Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Research Reviews*, 13, 370–378.
- Hughes, R. (1999). An investigation of coping skills of parents of children with disabilities. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities*, 34, 271-380.
- Ministry of Education and Science. (2019). *Zakon za osnovno obrazovanie* [Law for elementary education], Skopje: Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of North Macedonia. Retrieved from <http://mon.gov.mk/images/documents/zakoni/zakon-za-osnovno-20155.pdf>
- Ministry of Social Work and Policy. (2018). Законот за заштита на децата на РМ [Law on Child Protection in the Republic of Macedonia]. Skopje: Republic of North Macedonia. Retrieved from [http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/zakoni/2018/198%202018%20ZAKON%20ZA%20ZASTITA%20NA%20DECATA%20%20%20D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%B4%D0%B8%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BD%20%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%BA%D1%81%D1%82-converted.pdf0\\_1.1.pdf](http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/zakoni/2018/198%202018%20ZAKON%20ZA%20ZASTITA%20NA%20DECATA%20%20%20D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%B4%D0%B8%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BD%20%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%BA%D1%81%D1%82-converted.pdf0_1.1.pdf)
- Ministry of Social Work and Policy. Национална стратегија за изедначување на правата на лицата со попреченост 2010 – 2018 [National Strategy for Equal Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2010 – 2018] Skopje: Republic of North Macedonia. Retrieved from <http://mtsp.gov.mk/WBStorage/Files/FINALNA%20Revidirana%20Nacionalna%20Strategija.pdf>
- Ombudsman of Republic of Macedonia. (2016). *Kon inkluzivno obrazovanie* [Towards inclusive education]. Skopje: UNICEF. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/tfymacedonia/macedonian/resources.html>
- Popovska Nalevska, G. Popovski, F. (2019). The barriers of educational inclusion of children with disabilities in the elementary education in the Republic of Macedonia, *International Journal of Research Studies in Education*, vol 8.
- Racino, J. (1999). *Policy, Program Evaluatuon and Research in Disability: Community Suport for All*. Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Press.
- Samuel, P.S., Rillotta, F., Brown, I. (2012). The development of family quality of life concepts and measures. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 56, 1–16.
- Turnbull, H.R., Beegle, G., Stowe, M.J. (2001). The core concepts of disability policy affecting families who have children with disabilities. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies* 12, 133–143.

# WORKING WITH MATHEMATICALLY GIFTED STUDENTS IN THE INITIAL EDUCATION – PART ONE\*

**Metodi Glavche**

University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius"  
Faculty of Pedagogy, Skopje  
*mglavche@gmail.com*

**Katerina Anevsk**

FON University, Skopje  
*katerina.anevska@fon.edu.mk*

**Risto Malcheski**

FON University, Skopje  
*risto.malceski@gmail.com*

## Abstract

The content that is covered in the mathematics instruction allows differentiation as early as initial education. For this purpose, it is necessary to discover and identify the mathematically gifted students and organize instruction that will provide faster advancement. Efforts have been made to develop an integral program for work with the mathematically gifted students in the initial education, i.e. students aged 7 – 9.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Modern literature has an increasing tendency to determine giftedness, creativity and talent in a precise and uniform manner. However, bearing in mind that the previously mentioned terms refer both to the general intellectual abilities, as well as the abilities related to a specific area, in modern literature we have a sort of "a confusion" in defining the terms giftedness, creativity and talent, as well as in detecting the relation among these terms. As far as the terms giftedness and creativity are concerned, we can say that the contemporary authors consider that giftedness is a more general term, which includes creativity, i.e. that creativity is only a part of giftedness. The following definitions of giftedness and creativity support this claim.

*Creativity* is an ability for divergent thinking, which leads to new solutions to a problem and creating original products.

*Giftedness* is a set of traits, based on which the individual is permanently capable of achieving exceptionally good results in one or several areas of human action. This set consists of: general and specific abilities, creativity and a combination of many individual characteristics and motivation.

Bearing in mind the previous definitions, we can say that the term gifted child is most commonly used for children, who in a productive or reproductive way, achieve above average results in one or several activities of human action, which can also, for an example, be identified as a creative contribution in one or several areas. They possess such set of characteristics or such combination of abilities for a specific type of action that allows them to constantly achieve superior results compared to other children, and for this reason the gifted

---

\* Revisional scientific paper

children are characterized by a high degree of creativity. Further on, creativity is an integral part of giftedness, meaning that the gifted individuals are more or less creative. Also, the individual can be gifted, but not highly creative, i.e. achieve great results at reproductive level (for example, reproductive painter, musician, etc.). Many authors make a distinction between the terms giftedness and talent, and this is the most common definition for the term talent.

*Talent* is related to abilities in a more specific area (mathematics, physics, dancing, music) and it is actually a disposition that needs to be developed through hard work.

In other words, talent is not only “a gift from the Gods”, i.e. it is not only a result of the inherited evolution of man, but it also includes a lot of work and continuous development of the personality. Therefore, there is distinction between giftedness and talent. More precisely, giftedness is a result of the great general intellectual abilities, whereas talent is tied to specific abilities of a narrower field. Giftedness is identified on the grounds of the already achieved above average results, whereas talent is understood as a disposition that is yet to be developed. Contrary to this, many authors consider talent as *giftedness in a specific area*, by using the following definition:

*The gifted and talented children* are the ones who achieve great results thanks to their extraordinary abilities in one or more of the following areas: general intellectual ability, specific academic ability, creative or productive reasoning, leadership ability, visual or other art.

As we can see, the last definition refers to gifted and talented children, a syntagm that is often found in modern literature, which has a goal to emphasize giftedness in specific areas, i.e. talent. This without a doubt confirms that the authors make a distinction between talent and giftedness.

Further on we are not going to do a more detailed elaboration of the previously mentioned definitions, but only stress that these definitions for giftedness and talent without a doubt indicate that giftedness and talent occur in all areas of human life. Bearing this in mind, we can say that it is practically impossible to do a complete systematization and classification of the types of giftedness and their complete demarcation. Exactly because of this, the efforts to classify the types of giftedness and talents lead to their overlapping. This is also due to the fact that the determination of the various types of giftedness and talent is most commonly done to various concepts and criteria. Bearing this in mind, here we are only going to emphasize that according to many authors who have researched giftedness and talent, that the following exist: multiple giftedness, giftedness for mathematics, giftedness for art, verbal giftedness, giftedness for leadership, etc. Bearing in mind that our goal is to develop a work program for initial education for children gifted in mathematics we need to emphasize that the complete identification of the logical-mathematical ability is not an easy thing to do, however we can say that it is the result of the simultaneous activation of: *the numeric ability, the algorithmic ability, the ability for spatial representations, the ability for understanding relations between objects and phenomena, the ability for abstract reasoning, the ability for inductive and deductive making of conclusions, as well as making conclusions based on analogy* ([10]). However, for comprehensive understanding of giftedness in this area, we need to keep in mind the development of the logical-mathematical abilities that is realized in these stages: *sensory stage, stage of specific operations, stage of formal operations, stage of understanding relations from second order, stage of understanding relations of third order,*

*stage of understanding relations of fourth order, stage of understanding problems, defining problem tasks and solving them ([10]).*

The psychomotor researches show that in the thinking process of the mathematically gifted individuals the last four of the previously listed eight stages are dominant. Further on, researches show that in children, *the stage of formal operations* is not realized before the eleventh, i.e. twelfth year of age, and that after this age, it is continuously present. Additionally, the last four stages hardly occur before adolescence, and the *stage of understanding relations of fourth order* occurs last in the development of the logical-mathematical abilities. Nonetheless, in the gifted mathematicians, informaticians, biologists, chemists, physicians and philosophers, we could very early detect some characteristics that are peculiar for the last stages in the development of the logical-mathematical abilities. As far as mathematical giftedness is concerned, it is important to stress that there are evident traits which can be noticed in the children below the age of eight and in their adolescence. This is very important and should be kept in mind when developing work programs for mathematically gifted children.

As far as work with gifted students is concerned, it is very important for the teachers to have thorough knowledge of the characteristics of the gifted children, both in preschool age and early school age, as well as school age and adolescence. This is very important for recognizing and identifying the gifted children and for developing valid instruments for recognition and identification of gifted children ([3]). We are not going to discuss these questions here because they are treated in the vast literature covering gifted students. Other important elements in the work with gifted students are the development of the gifted students and their education, matters that are analyzed in debt in existing literature, for example in [1], [2], [8], [9] and [10].

## 2. WORK PROGRAMS WITH MATHEMATICALLY GIFTED STUDENTS AGED 7-8 AND 8-9

The education of the mathematically gifted students is most commonly carried out in regular instruction in the so-called supplementary education. The supplementary education usually is realized as a section during which the students are prepared for the mathematical competitions, which most commonly come in the form of school, municipal, regional and state competitions, for students from grade IV and above.

An immediate consequence of this practice is the lack of work with the mathematically gifted students in first, second and third grade. We believe it needs to start in second grade. The reason for this opinion is the age of the students in grade I, and we believe that it does not allow us to work with them. Bearing in mind the previously stated, we are going to present integral work programs for mathematically gifted students aged 7-8 and 8-9.

Goals of the teaching program for students aged 7-8 are:

- The student is able to recognize the basic geometric bodies: cube, cuboid, sphere, cylinder, pyramid and cone, and by using cubes and cuboids assembles more complex geometric bodies,
- The student is able to assign the order of real events,

- The student learns the numbers 0 – 20 and is able to perform the operations addition and subtraction with them,
- The student learns the basic measurements for length, mass, liquids and time,
- The student is able to use coins from 1,2,5 and 10 denars, as well as banknotes from 10 and 20 denars,
- The student is able to solve elementary logical tasks,
- The student is able to learn the basic combinatory principles and combinatory configurations in a non-public form,
- The following thinking qualities are developed in the student: elasticity, pattern making, width of thinking and critical thinking,
- Efforts are made for the student to learn the following scientific methods in a non-public form: observation, comparison and experiment, and
- Efforts are made for the student to learn the different kinds of conclusion making: induction, deduction and analogy, and while so, it is important for suitable examples to be presented that will allow the student to learn that analogy based conclusion making is not always correct.

For achieving the previously mentioned goals, we believe that the following content needs to be learned:

Topic I: Numbers to 20: Counting to 20, predecessor and successor, addition and subtraction of numbers from 0 to 20, ordinal numbers, even and odd numbers, comparison of numbers, the commutative and associative law of addition, numerical expressions, solving numerical rebuses, elementary numerical sequences, solving equations and inequalities.

Topic II. Measuring length, measuring mass, measuring time, measuring liquids, measuring time and operating with coins and banknotes up to 20 denars.

Topic III. Solving word-problems: tasks with numbers and digits, tasks with activities, tasks with measurement units, tasks with time measurement, tasks with money and combined tasks.

Topic IV. Shapes in space, shapes in a plane and their relations: triangle, square, rectangle, circular, circle, cube, cuboid, sphere, cone, cylinder and pyramid. Straight line and curve, open line segment and closed line segment, point and segment. Counting circulars, triangles, squares and rectangles on a given geometric figure. Counting segments on a given figure. Drawing, i.e. finishing a symmetric figure in a square grid. Measuring segments, operations with segments and their comparison. Movement in a square grid according to a given rule.

Topic V. Logic and combinatorics: logic problems, Venn diagrams, movement along paths and in labyrinths, thought-provoking counting and distribution, drawing missing elements.

Goals of the teaching program for students aged 8-9 are:

- The student knows the numbers 0-100 and is able to perform the operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division,
- The student recognizes the terms: straight line, point, segment, broken line, triangle, square and rectangle and the elements of the previously mentioned figures,
- The student knows the derived measurement units for length, mass, liquid and time,
- The student is able to solve elementary logical tasks,

- The student is able to learn the basic combinatory principles and combinatory configurations in a non-public form,
- The following thinking qualities: elasticity, pattern making, width of thinking, rationality and critical thinking are developed in the student,
- Efforts are made for the student to learn the following scientific methods in a non-public form: observation, comparison and experiment, and
- Efforts for the student to learn the different kinds of conclusion making: induction, deduction and analogy, and while so, it is important for suitable examples to be presented that will allow the student to learn that analogy based conclusion making is not always correct.

For achieving the previously mentioned goals, we believe that the following content needs to be learned:

Topic I. Numbers to 100, counting to 100, predecessor and successor, addition and subtraction of numbers from 0 to 100, multiplication and division of numbers to 100, ordinal numbers, even and odd numbers, comparison of numbers, commutative and associative law of addition and multiplication, distributive law, numerical expressions, solving numerical rebuses, elementary sequences of numbers, solving equations and inequalities.

Topic II. Using the basic and derived measurement units for measuring length, measuring mass, measuring time, measuring liquids, measuring time and operating with coins and banknotes up to 100 denars.

Topic III. Solving word-problems: tasks with numbers and digits, tasks with activities, tasks with measurement units, tasks with time measurement, and tasks with money and combined tasks.

Topic IV. Logic and combinatorics: logic problems, Venn diagrams, interesting counting and sorting, magical figures, adding missing items, tasks with measurement and pouring liquids.

Topic V. Geometric figures: straight line, point, segment, broken line, elements of the triangle, square, rectangle, number of triangles, squares and rectangles in a complex geometric figure, measuring the length of a broken line, types of triangles according to the sides, perimeter of a triangle, square and rectangle, cube and cuboid, division of a given figure into equal figures.

### 3. TWO SYSTEMS OF TASKS FOR WORK WITH GIFTED CHILDREN AGED 7-8 AND 8-9

In order for the suggested syllabi for work with gifted students aged 7-8 i.e. 8-9 to be realized, adequate teaching aids, i.e. textbooks are necessary, accompanied by adequate compilations of tasks. The textbooks and the compilations have to contain adequately selected tasks which will be used to identify the mathematically gifted students. Such task systems have been created in the European MATHEU project for students aged 9-14 and 15-18 (see [14] – [16]), however such have not been created for students aged 7-9. This project for this kind of system tasks uses the term didactic pillar too ambitiously. Here we will present two systems of tasks, one for students aged 7-8 and another for students aged 8-9.



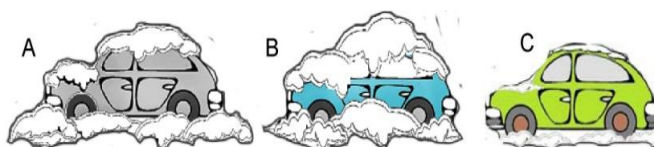
**I system of tasks. Logical problems.** This topic is very popular and covered at mathematical competitions in countries where a lot of attention is paid to the recognition, identification, and work with the mathematically gifted students. This topic is intended for students aged 7-8.

**Task 1.** Mihail's mother made a cake for his birthday and it had 7 identical candles. Each candle takes 7 minutes to burn down. How long will it take for all candles to burn down if they are all lit at the same time?

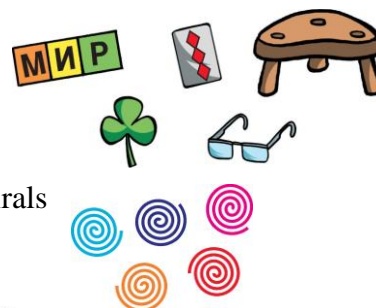
**Task 2.** When standing on one leg, Ivan weighs 20 kg. How much does Ivan weigh when he stands on both legs?

**Task 3.** Miroslav has 12 and Slavcho has 16 tennis balls. Miroslav gave Bojan some of his tennis balls. Bojan received from Slavcho as many Balls as Mirloslav has left. How many balls did Bojan receive from his two friends?

**Task 4.** On New Year's Eve it was snowing nonstop. Three cars arrived at the parking lot at different times (see the image). In which order did the cars arrive at the parking lot?



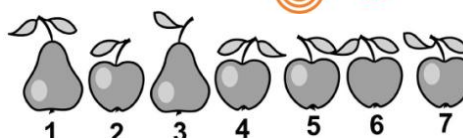
**Task 5.** In the image on the right there is a set of five objects. One of them does not belong to this group of objects. Which is the object? Why does it not belong?



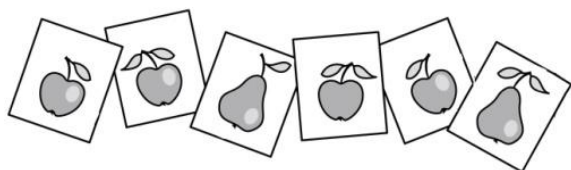
**Task 6.** There are five spirals in the image. One of the spirals should not be part of this group. Which spiral is it? Why?



**Task 7.** Angela took a photograph from the reflection of the fruits in a mirror (image on the right).



She developed a photograph of each image, but she lost one photograph (image on the left). What was in the lost photograph?



**Task 8.** Marko is in a queue to buy ice cream. In this queue there are not children next to each other. He takes a look and counts three children in front of him, and 5 behind him. How many children are in the queue?

**Task 9.** Ivan placed 13 books next to each other. The book "Alice in Wonderland" is the eighth from the left. What number is it from the right?

**Task 10.** I have three friends: Anton, Bojan and Kole. Yesterday I played with Bojan and Anton. One of them is eight, and the other is nine. Today I am playing with Anton and Kole. One of them is 10, and the other is 8. How old is each of my friends?

**Task 11.** Vera takes more time to eat her breakfast than it takes for Frosina to brush her teeth. Samoil takes as much time to brush his teeth as it takes Vera to have breakfast. Who takes longer time to brush the teeth, Samoil or Frosina?

**Task 12.** Yesterday was Mathematics Day. Tomorrow we are going to have an excursion. We are coming back from the excursion the next day – Tuesday. What day of the week was Mathematics Day on?

**Task 13.** Ivana has 12 dolls. She bought a ribbon 4 *m* long. How many times does she need to cut the ribbon to make ribbons for her and her dolls?

**Task 14.** In a shop, all candies are wrapped separately. For three packs, the buyer gets one free candy. Stefan has money to buy exactly 7 candies. Which is the greatest number of candies that Stefan can receive in this shop?

**Task 15.** Matej plays darts. He has 10 darts, and for each bull's eye he receives two new darts. He threw a total of 20 darts. How many times did he hit the bull's eye?

**Task 16.** A group of children plays with balls, ropes and rims. Each child plays only with one piece of equipment. Three children do not play with balls and ropes, 6 children do not play with rims and balls, and 7 children do not play with ropes and rims. How many children are there in the group?

**Task 17.** At a competition Angel, Borjan, Chedomir and Dobre were ranked on places one to four. Angel finished before Borjan, Chedomir finished before Dobre, and Borjan finished after Dobre. Who came third?

**Task 18.** Ivana, Vera and Frosina are the new students in the grade  $II^a$ . On the 5<sup>th</sup> of September, each of them told their parents the name of their teacher. Ivana: "Elena Petrevska", Frosina: "Magdalena Petrevska" and Vera: "Katerina Mihajlovska". It turned out that each child had correct either the name or the surname of the teacher. What is the name of the teacher?

**Task 19.** Rabbits and foxes live in the forest. The foxes lie, but the rabbits tell the truth. The rabbits are afraid of the foxes, but the foxes are not afraid of the rabbits. Animals from the same kind are not afraid of each other. Three animals played in the meadow, and sat next to each other in a circle. Each animal turned to the right and told the one sitting next to it: "I am afraid of you!" How many foxes were in this circle?

**Task 20.** Nikola, Zoran and Gjorgji ate ice cream and Nikola said: "Gjorgji ate the most ice cream". "No, I ate less ice cream than Zoran" – replied Gjorgji. "Gjorgji and I ate the same amount of ice cream" – said Zoran. Who ate the least ice cream if all three lied?

**Task 21.** Vesna, Cvetanka and Marga colored eggs – each in a different color: yellow, green and red. Vesna used neither yellow nor red. Cvetanka did not use red. Determine the color each of them used to color the eggs.

**Task 22.** Vasko, Gjorgji and Kosta drew a white triangle, a gray circle and a black square (see image). Each drew one figure. Vasko drew after Kosta and the figure is not white. Who drew which figure?



**Task 23.** The twins Teodor and Teodora simultaneously lie only on Sunday. On the other days of the week, one of them lies and the other tells the truth. Teodor said: "Today it is Sunday". Teodora replied: "Tomorrow is Sunday". Which day of the week is it?

**Task 24.** Viktor, Emil and Timotej, each brought one toy. Everyone played with a toy that was not their own. Viktor played with the car, the owner of the truck played with the excavator, and the owner of the car played with the truck. The car does not belong to Timotej. Determine the owner of each of the toys.

**Task 25.** Vasil, Gligor and Dimko raced with blue, red and yellow cars. Dimko's car finished right after the yellow car, and the red car finished after Vasil's car. Whose car and of what color finished first, if that is not Gligor's car?

**Task 26.** Three cars in the following order: yellow, red and blue started the race. The cars finished the race in the following order: X, M and A. Not a single car finished the race in the position it started the race. What is the color of each car, if A is not yellow.

**Task 27.** Vedran, Mihail and Damjan have 20 gold coins together. Vedran has more than 4 gold coins, and Mihail has less than 9 gold coins. Damjan has more gold coins than Vedran, and less gold coins than Mihail. How many gold coins does each of them have?

**Task 28.** Vlado, Nikola and Stojan are learning to calculate. Each of them has 1 or 2 balls.

Stojan said: *"Together we have at least 5 balls."*

Nikola said: *"Vlado and I have equal number of balls."*

Vlado said: *"I have more balls than Stojan."*

It has been proven that all of them are wrong. How many balls does each of them have?

**Task 29.** Angel, Borjan and Zhivko won the first three places at a mathematics competition. They said:

Angel: *I am second.*

Borjan: *Angel is first.*

Zhivko: *I won.*

We know that whoever was third told the truth. How did the students rank?

**Task 30.** Martians have 3 or 4 ears. The Martians that have 3 ears always lie, and those who have 4 ears always tell the truth. The Martians As, Bas, and Vas said:

As: *The three of us have 9 ears.*

Bas: *The three of us have 10 ears.*

Vas: *The three of us have 11 ears.*

How many ears do As, Bas and Vas have together?

**II system of tasks. Number rebuses. This is a widespread topic at the mathematical competitions and it is suitable both for work with the youngest students, and for work with students from grade VI and above. The tasks that follow are intended for work with students aged 8-9.**

**Task 1.** In the equations  $A - B = 7$  and  $B + 3 = C$  there is a number corresponding to each letter. Determine the difference  $A - C$ .

**Task 2.** Replace the letters with numbers 0-7, so as to get correct equations.

$$O \cdot L = I + M = P + I + J + A = D \cdot A$$

**Task 3.** Determine the sum of the missing numbers in the equation  $2\_ + \_5 = 72$ .

**Task 4.** In the equations bellow, different letters correspond to different numbers, and same numbers correspond to the same letters:

$$A \cdot B = E, \quad B \cdot E = \overline{AG}, \quad \overline{AB} + \overline{DG} = \overline{VB}$$

Calculate the sum  $B + V + D$ .

**Task 5.** Solve the number rebus:  $\overline{TT} + \overline{TM} = \overline{CMT}$ , in which different letters correspond to different numbers, and same numbers correspond to same letters.

**Task 6.** In the number rebus:  $K \cdot E + N + N = \overline{RU}$  same numbers correspond to same letters, and different numbers correspond to different letters. Determine the greatest possible value of the two digit number  $\overline{RU}$ .

**Task 7.** In the number rebus (see image on the right) same numbers correspond to same letters, and different numbers correspond to different letters. Determine the number  $B$ .

$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \text{ A} \\ + \text{ A } 9 \\ \hline \text{ B } 5 \end{array}$$

**Task 8.** In the number rebus (see image on the right) same numbers correspond to same letters, and different numbers correspond to different letters. Determine the number  $\overline{AM}$ .

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{ A } \text{ M} \\ + \quad \text{ M} \\ \hline \text{ M } 2 \end{array}$$

**Task 9.** In the number rebus (see image on the right) same numbers correspond to same letters, and different numbers correspond to different letters. Determine the number  $\overline{AXA}$ .

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{ A } \text{ X} \\ + \quad \text{ X} \\ \hline \text{ X } \text{ A} \end{array}$$

**Task 10.** In the equations:  $C + C = \overline{AD}$  and  $\overline{AB} + C + A = \overline{DD}$ , same numbers correspond to same letters, and different numbers correspond to different letters. Determine the number  $\overline{BB}$ .

**Task 11.** In the number rebus  $\overline{LA} + \overline{LE} = 77$  same numbers correspond to same letters, and different numbers correspond to different letters. Determine the sum  $L + A + L + E$ .

**Task 12.** In the number rebus (see image on the right) same numbers correspond to same letters, and different numbers correspond to different letters. Determine the sum.

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{ A A } 5 \\ + \quad 5 \text{ B} \\ \hline \text{ A } 9 \text{ A} \end{array}$$

**Task 13.** In the equations  $A + B - C = \overline{DE}$ ,  $A + B + C = \overline{EE}$ , same numbers correspond to same letters, and different numbers correspond to different letters. Determine the numbers  $A$  and  $B$ .

**Task 14.** In the equations  $A + B - C = \overline{EE}$ ,  $A + B + C = \overline{DE}$ , same numbers correspond to same letters, and different numbers correspond to different letters. Determine the numbers  $A$  and  $B$ .

**Task 15.** In the equation:  $T + E + M + N + O + S + I + V + A = \overline{II}$ , same numbers correspond to same letters, and different numbers correspond to different letters. Determine the number  $\overline{II}$ .

**Task 16.** In the number rebus  $A + 3 = \overline{BB}$  same numbers correspond to same letters, and different numbers correspond to different letters. Determine the sum  $A + B$ .

**Task 17.** Replace the letters with numbers, the same letters with same numbers and the different letters with different numbers, so as to get correct equations.

$$P - O = B - E = D - I = C + E = L + I$$

**Task 18.**  $A, B, C$  and  $D$  are different numbers that give the following results:  $D \cdot D = B$  and  $A + C = D$ . Calculate  $A \cdot B \cdot C \cdot D$ .

**Task 19.**  $A, B, C$  and  $D$  are different numbers that give the following results  $A + A + A = \overline{BC}$ ,  $D + D = B$ ,  $B + B = C$ . Calculate  $A + B$ .

**Task 20.** Solve the number rebus in the image on the right, in which same letters correspond to same numbers, and different letters correspond to different numbers.

$$\begin{array}{r} A X A \\ + A X \\ \hline A \\ S A X \end{array}$$

**Task 21.** In the number rebus in the image on the right, same letters correspond to same numbers, and different letters correspond to different numbers. If 0 corresponds to the

$$\begin{array}{r} B A M \\ + A M \\ \hline M A G \end{array}$$

number 0, determine the number  $\overline{BAM}$ .

**Task 22.** In the equations below, same letters correspond to same numbers, and different letters correspond to different numbers:  $\overline{CB} + B = \overline{BA}$ ,  $\overline{CB} - B = \overline{CA}$ .

Calculate  $\overline{CC} - B$ ?

**Task 23.** In the equations below, same letters correspond to same numbers, and different letters correspond to different numbers:  $\overline{BC} + \overline{BE} = \overline{CA}$ ,  $\overline{AA} + \overline{BE} = \overline{DBC}$ .

Calculate  $\overline{CB} - \overline{BA}$ ?

**Task 24.** In the number rebus  $\overline{NOS} + \overline{ROG} = 777$  same letters correspond to same numbers, and different letters correspond to different numbers. Calculate the sum:  $N + O + S + O + R + O + G$ .

**Task 25.** In the number rebus in the image on the right same letters correspond to same numbers, and different letters correspond to different numbers. If K is 3, determine the sum

$$\overline{B+A+K+L+A+V+A}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} B A \\ + K L A \\ V A \\ \hline A A A \end{array}$$

**Task 26.** In the equation below, same letters correspond to same numbers, and different letters correspond to different numbers:  $\overline{AA} + A + A = \overline{AK}$ .

What is the greatest possible value of the number  $\overline{KA}$ ?

**Task 27.** Solve the rebus:  $\overline{AAAA} + \overline{BBB} + \overline{AA} + C = 2017$ .

**Task 28.** In the number rebus, same letters correspond to same numbers, and different letters correspond to different numbers:  $\overline{AB} + A = \overline{BCC}$ .

Determine  $A + B + C$ .

$$\begin{array}{r} B \\ + A A \\ B \\ \hline C C C \end{array}$$

**Task 29.** In the equations below, same letters correspond to same numbers, and different letters correspond to different numbers:  $B + C + D = \overline{AA}$ ,  $\overline{AD} - C = \overline{EB}$ .

Which letter corresponds to the letter  $D$ ?

**Task 30.** In the equations below, same letters correspond to same numbers, and different letters correspond to different numbers:  $A \cdot \overline{BA} = \overline{BGG}$ ,  $\overline{GA} + \overline{VD} = \overline{EGA}$ ,  $\overline{VB} \cdot B = \overline{EDB}$ .

Calculate  $\overline{A+B+G}$ .

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The most appropriate differentiation in the mathematics instruction in the initial education can and should be done. In the process, we need to pay attention to the following:

- The differentiation needs to be realized by preparing special teaching syllabi, not through forms of supplementary instruction, which most commonly is carried out only during the period of preparation of the students for mathematics competitions,
- The special teaching programs for work with mathematically gifted students need to be developed for each age group, which implies for each grade, starting from grade II and onwards,
- The special syllabi need to be accompanied by adequate didactic means, i.e. by adequate textbooks and compilations of selected tasks which will also be used in the recognition and identification of mathematically gifted students, and
- The recognition and identification of the mathematically gifted students needs to be carried out according to the characteristics of the mathematically gifted students, and not according to the pre-knowledge that the children possess before starting school.

#### References

1. Đorđević, B.: *Školski oblici podrške u razvoju nadarenih učenika*, Nastava i vaspitanje, Beograd, 1990
2. Gallagher, J. J.: *Teaching the gifted children*, Boston, Allyn & Bacon, 1985
3. Heller, K. A., Feldhusen, J. F.: *Identifying and nurturing the gifted. An international perspective*, Studgard, Huber, 1986
4. Malčeski, R., Gogovska, V.: *The Role of Educational method in teaching of gifted and talented students*, The 10<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Mathematical Education, July 4-11, 2004, Copenhagen, Denmark
5. Malčeski, R., Gogovska, V.: *Using means inequality for getting structural mathematical knowledge*, Конференција за работа со надарени ученици, Русе, Бугарија, 2003
6. Malcheski, R., Malcheski, A., Anevaska, K., Glavche, M.: *The role of the elementary number theory in the work with mathematically gifted students: the capabilities and challenges*, Teacher Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 127-139, 2016
7. Polya, D.: *Mathematical Discovery*, Nauka, Moskva, 1976
8. Renzulli, J. S.: *The Triad / Revolving Door System: A Research-Based Approach to Identification and Programming for the Gifted and Talented*, *Gifted Child Quarterly*, No 4, Minnesota
9. Лесов, Х., Дойчев, С.: *Теми за класна и извънкласна работа по математика*, Регалия, София, 1995
10. Малчески, Р.: *Методика на наставата по математика (второ издание)*, Сојуз на математичари на Македонија, Скопје, 2016
11. Малчески, Р., Малческа, Ц.: *Работа со надарени ученици*, ФОН, Скопје, 2010
12. Малчески, Р.: *Математички талент П-1 (збирка задачи за второ одделение)*, во печат
13. Малчески, Р.: *Математички талент П-2 (збирка задачи за трето одделение)*, во печат

14. Кендеров, П., Гроздев, С.: *Европейския проект MATHEU: откриване, мотивиране и подкрепа на математическите таланти в европейските училища*, Математика и метаматическо образование, 33 пролетна конференция на СМБ, Боровец, 1-4 април 2004, София, 39-49, 2004
15. Гроздев, С., Кендеров, П.: *Инструментариум за откриване и подкрепа на изявени ученици по математика*, Математика и метаматическо образование, 34 пролетна конференция на СМБ, Боровец, 6-9 април 2005, София, 53-64, 2005
16. Кендеров, П., Гроздев, С.: *Диференцираното обучение по математика в европейските училища*, Математика и метаматическо образование, 35 пролетна конференция на СМБ, Боровец, 5-9 април 2006, София, 39-49, 2006



## KEY OBSTACLES AFFECTING SUCCESSFUL CLASSROOM LEARNING\*

**Jasminka Kochoska, Biljana Gramatkovski**

"St. Kliment Ohridski" University, Faculty of Education- Bitola  
*gemelli4@yahoo.com*

### **Abstract**

Creating a successful learning environment is a very complex and responsible process that is indispensable for all teachers to get involved. It provides opportunities for teachers to have rich dialogue with their students as they collectively work to create environments that produce high levels of success for all students. Sometimes it creates some difficulties for teachers as they deal with many factors related to existing school culture, cooperation with colleagues and parents, working conditions, working atmosphere in class, students' interest and their focus, motivation and dedication etc. All of these factors have a significant impact on students' learning success. In this paper we are talking about the greatest enemies of successful learning in the classroom with particular reference to some of the many significant factors for it.

**Key words:** *classroom, obstacles, teaching, students, learning*

### **1. Introduction**

Teaching is a very special job because teachers deal with many variables simultaneously. Every day they deal with students' needs and their achievements. They are also concerned with communication with parents and their colleagues and daily strive to build a successful learning environment for students. Teachers play the main role in creating the climate in the classroom as a key element in attaining students' success. This process is indispensable for student stimulation, represents one of the most important issues in educational process and it can be the main indicators which pointing at the efficiency of the learning process. The main component for expressing the subjective position of the student apprentice and the relationship between the basics factors in educational process is the student's activity. (Kochoska, 2007) The teachers also care about the environment where they work and their professional development. Yet, sometimes, they face issues that constitute a hindrance to their job. This paper examines some of the enemies of successful learning in the classroom and reasons for complicating the teaching work (Rhalmi, 2010). The following aspects are covered in that direction, and it is about problems caused by the overcrowded classroom, reasons for student's boredom, the lack of cooperation and participation in the teaching and educational process as well as poor teaching conditions. This is only part of a number of other, very important factors for the successful realization of the teaching process. For this reason, special attention should be paid so that the whole process of teaching, both in the classroom and in the school, can be arranged in conditions that allow the normal course.

---

\* Specialized paper



## 2. Overcrowded classrooms

Overcrowded classroom creates many problems for both, teachers and students in teaching-learning process. A number of researches have been conducted in order to know the effects of overcrowded classes on students' achievement but less attention has been given to identify the problems faced by teachers in overcrowded classes. Class is a group of pupil put together for the purpose of collective instructions. All the members of the class have common goals, interests, aptitudes and attainments. In a short way, we can say that class consists of homogeneous group of pupils, who will work and progress together. According to educational dictionary; "class is a group of pupils put together for the purpose of collective instruction". (Overcrowded Classroom) A classroom is said to be overcrowded in which the number of students exceed the optimum level such that it causes hindrance in the teaching-learning process. The classroom is the most important area within a school. The students spend most of their time, hopefully in an environment conducive to learning. The entire design of classroom reflects the priorities, goals, philosophy, personality and teaching style of the student. Student learning behavior can be enhanced when teachers take time to create a classroom climate in which students feel comfortable with their teachers and peers. Focusing on the effect of this very serious problem, for overcrowded classroom, one thing is very clear that teaching in such an environment, where the number of students is exceeding the acceptable limit, effective teaching is not possible. (Iqbal, 2012)

Overcrowded classrooms increase the possibilities for many educational problems. Students, in an overcrowded classroom lose interest in school and do poorly on tests. They don't get individual attention and learn badly in an unhealthy environment where the teacher feels stressed and frustrated. (Rhalmi, 2010)

### 2.1 Problems caused by the overcrowded classroom

Teaching in an overcrowded classroom can be frustrating, overwhelming and stressful. An overcrowded classroom presents challenges that can feel nearly impossible to overcome, even to the most effective teachers. Increasing class sizes is a sacrifice many schools have to make in order to keep their doors open in an era where schools are underfunded.

- *There are not enough teachers to go around.* Students perform better when the teacher is able to give one on one or small group instruction on a regular basis. As classroom size increases, this becomes increasingly difficult to do.
- *Overcrowding increases classroom discipline issues.* More students provide more opportunities for personality conflicts, tension, and general disruptive behavior. Even the best teachers find it difficult to manage an overcrowded classroom successfully and can find themselves spending more time managing their classroom than they do teaching.
- *Struggling students fall further behind.* Average and below average students will struggle even more to advance in an overcrowded classroom. These students need more direct instruction, one-on-one instructional time, and minimal distractions to maximize their learning potential.
- *Standardized test scores suffer.* While many teachers would argue that there is an overemphasis placed on test scores, the chance of successfully proving proficiency on a standardized test decreases as the number of students in the classroom increases.

- *Overcrowding leads to less access to equipment and technology.* Space is already at a premium for many schools and there often is not enough room to accommodate specialties such as science or a computer lab.
- *Lack of personal connections.* In the overcrowded classroom it is very difficult to get to know each other, and also the teacher will not have the opportunity to meet all students as personalities. (Meador, 2018)

### **3. Student's boredom in the classroom**

Boredom it's a growing problem that's competing with the curriculum and one that has given way to a breed of new technologies and educational engagement strategies that claim to evade the classroom of its presence. But a debate has emerged around whether technology is distracting students, is the school curriculum too overwhelming given our modern advancements, or is student boredom a symptom of a larger issue facing the education? (Neuwirth, 2017)

Boredom is one of the greatest enemies of successful learning. This happens, mainly, when students know what will occur next because it will be the same as what happened in the previous session and a whole string of sessions before. To avoid this deadly boredom, teachers can follow some simple tips to create a lively atmosphere in the classroom. For example, teachers need to violate their own behavior pattern, vary their teaching methods, classroom setting...etc (Rhalmi, 2010). The successful teacher should be guided by the basic principles in modeling of the teaching process, in which the active role of the student and the independent performance of the activities is significant. The teacher should be able to establish adequate interaction-communication relations with students, to use participatory, cooperative, active and experimental methods of working with students, to use various strategies, methods and procedures in teaching. This way, he will get the attention from students and will increase the opportunity for easier study of the matter and will promote accountability. Through the selection of adequate content and methods of work, students will be able to expertly and creatively come up with new solutions and new expression. (Kochoska, 2007)

#### **3.1 Most common reasons for student's boredom**

When it comes to boredom in the classroom during classes, everyone can see this in a different way from a different perspective. Someone might think that these students already know the material and can't wait to move ahead. Their need to face a new challenge simply does not happen. For others, it could be a lack of interest in the subject, but just as likely, a lack of understanding of the topic. They can easily feel lost or helpless, not knowing where to even start on a project or writing assignment. For these students, solutions might range from creating curiosity about the topic to spending additional time on the lesson, creating that level of understanding which will breed success. (Livingstone, 2015) Specifically, students become bored when they:

- have difficulty paying attention to the internal information (e.g., thoughts or feelings) or external information (e.g., environmental stimuli) required for participating in satisfying activity
- become aware of the fact that they're having difficulty paying attention
- believe that the environment is responsible for their aversive state (e.g., "this task is boring," "there is nothing to do"). (Bennett, 2013)

The student's boredom situation can be unconsciously or knowingly caused by the teacher himself during the class. The problem of boredom may arise if the teacher requires high concentration durability and a constant focus on independent work for a long time. Good teachers are observant and thus learn to know precisely when to switch gears and get their students up and moving.

Also, student boredom may occur if the teacher speaks too much and does not use any visual means during the course of the class. Using visual and auditory means can be much easier way to keep the attention of students. An experienced teacher, who can assess the situation well, should also know that it should be concrete and concise in the presentation of matter. Many teachers make their instruction more complex, more involved, more verbose, which is a major reason why students don't progress. The key point is to do exactly the opposite. The most effective teachers simplify, break down, and cut away the non-essentials, making content easier for students to grasp. (Linsin, 2012)

There are also such examples of students who on the basis of assumption and past experience of a particular subject consider it to be bored in advance. The task of the teacher in this case is to give a reason for these students to think differently. Teachers who struggle with classroom management tend to talk endlessly about behavior. They hold class meetings. They hash things out. They revisit the same tired topic over and over, much to their students' eye-rolling chagrin. Effective classroom management is about action, not just about talking. It's about doing and following through and holding students accountable. Good teaching strives for a focus and efficiency of time, movement and energy. (Linsin, 2012)

There are various sources with practical ideas, scientific projects and activities that the teacher can use in the function of preventing the occurrence of boredom among students during classes, and increasing the interest in what is being studied.

#### **4. Lack of cooperation between the subjects**

What implies effective educational work is the involvement and close cooperation between parents and teachers. There should be a model of cooperation that will bring the best possible results both from home education and from what is being taught in school. It all has an impact on student achievement, and student education as a whole. In order to achieve both goals and satisfactory results, both entities need to cooperate closely. Cooperation will be effective and productive when appropriate conditions are created. The cooperation between these subjects in the process of teaching and the participation of parents in it is essential and has several goals:

- unifying the educational influence of the school and home environment.
- cooperation in recognizing students' developmental abilities,
- raising parents' educational awareness,
- passing knowledge on the child's progress at school,
- finding out about the parents' expectations concerning school,
- creating partnership between parents and the school environment.

The organization of the school in terms of cooperation with the student families brings visible benefits. It enables a better understanding of students by teachers and parents, agreeing on the

best educational approach, giving mutual assistance and creating the right educational atmosphere at school and at home. Both factors, home and school, have an equally large impact on student education. These two groups should always be harmonized and coordinated, to work closely together in order to create appropriate conditions for the further development of students. (Programme)

In education, in general, one of the biggest problems is the cooperation between teachers. Such a situation gives poor performance at all levels. Students lose much during their education due to insufficient cooperation between teachers and their parents, but also the lack of communication between teachers, results in poor professional and personal development. (Rhalmi, 2010)

There are various ways to improve this situation in terms of communication with parents and teachers. In fact, it's a choice of the most appropriate way for the particular environment, adapted to the opportunities that suit the needs of the school and parents. Each new opportunity can help to establish the relationship between the school and the parent, thereby improving the situation of the students and their educational performance.

In terms of cooperation among the teachers, the head teacher and the school counselor must be professional, involve many aspects, be carried out on several levels, but most of all it must initialize and take advantage of co-operation between the educational institution and the parent. It is up to the teachers to establish the first contact, make it long-lasting, efficient, and resulting in better school results achieved by the students. The key point is the participation of all the subjects, involved in the educational process (teachers, students and parents), and awareness of the opportunities offered by well-organized collaboration. (Programme)

## **5. Poor teacher's working conditions**

One of the main prerequisites for providing quality education in schools is to attract, develop and retain quality and effective teachers. The role of the school in providing appropriate working conditions is also important. First and foremost, teachers need to work in a safe and comfortable work environment where there is support and motivation for quality work. The working conditions are just as important to the students as only this way of teaching can be successful. There are a number of factors that directly affect the conditions for the work of teachers including workload, compensation, school and district support for teachers' professional development, school decision making, school safety, student readiness to learn, and public respect for teachers. (Choy, 1996)

The best teachers can be crippled by bad working conditions. Bad working conditions include low salaries, lack of appropriate facilities, support, etc. Teachers need working conditions where they have adequate resources, a supportive staff, manageable class sizes and satisfactory wages to lead a healthy life. (Rhalmi, 2010)

By providing an appropriate teaching assignment, access to information, materials and technology and adequate time to work with peers on the subject, the school provides a working environment and a professional community for teachers. (Little, 1993) According to National Center for Education Statistics, there are alternative ways to conceptualize different aspects of teacher working conditions. Many factors contribute to working conditions in order to make teachers to be more effective and help their students to achieve. At the school

level, the greatest impact on working conditions are the school facilities, the relations with the community, classroom-instruction level working conditions, such as the amount of instruction support offered and time allotted for instruction planning and collaboration. Working conditions related to teacher education growth and the success of students, are directly related to teaching and classroom instruction, and that's why their importance is great. Working conditions can be taken into account from different perspectives so that they have a manageable, dynamic and rich professional context that fosters teacher learning and growth. When the schools provide a series of supports for classroom instruction as a good working environment, teachers are more sustained and effective in their work.

## Conclusion

As a conclusion, for what is stated in the paper the following can be point out: in order to avoid some of the situations that are related to the behavior of students during the course of teaching, it is necessary to place them in an active position, to be engaged in various activities, if it allows the teaching content itself. Today's education is based on participatory, cooperative, active and experienced learning methods. It is a great opportunity for the teacher to use various strategies, methods and procedures at work, aim to motivate students, increase the ability to learn things in a much simpler, easier way, and at the same time to learn in a much more interesting, more fun way. There is a large range of strategies, ideas and solutions that can contribute to the realization of the teaching and the attainment of successful learning. It is clear that on a daily basis, students also acquire experience and knowledge outside the classroom. Therefore, teachers need to find functional ways of linking content and teaching in general. The teacher can choose adequate contents and methods of work and professionally and creatively find new solutions and new expression. The school must be tailor-made for the student. (Kochoska, 2007)

The teacher should not neglect the interaction-communication relationship with the students. Successful learning in the classroom depends on the degree of mutual trust, sincerity, cooperation and partnership relations. In order to have quality teaching and to realize this picture in the classroom, changes in the behavior of all subjects participating in the educational process are necessary.

## Bibliography

- Bennett, P. W. (2013, March 2). *Boredom in the Classroom: Why are So Many Students Bored — and What Can Be Done?* Retrieved March 18, 2018, from Educhatter Lively Commentary on Canadian Education: <https://educhatter.wordpress.com/2013/03/02/boredom-in-the-classroom-why-are-so-many-students-bored-and-what-can-be-done/>
- Choy, S. P. (1996, November). *Teacher's Working Conditions* . Retrieved March 14, 2018, from National Center For Education Statistics/Findings from The Condition of Education,1996: <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs97/97371.pdf>
- DeWitt, P. (2016, December 13). *7 Keys to Building a Successful Learning Environment for Students*. Retrieved March 22, 2018, from Education Week: [https://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/finding\\_common\\_ground/2016/12/7\\_keys\\_to\\_building\\_a\\_successful\\_learning\\_environment\\_for\\_students.html](https://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/finding_common_ground/2016/12/7_keys_to_building_a_successful_learning_environment_for_students.html)

- Iqbal, P. K. (2012). Over crowded classroom: a serious problem for teachers. *Elixir International Journal* , 10162-10165.
- Kochoska, J. (2007). *Civic education and the classroom climate*. Bitola: Jasminka Kochoska.
- Linsin, M. (2012, January 28). *8 Things Teachers Do To Cause Boredom*. Retrieved March 22, 2018, from Smart Classroom Management:  
<https://www.smartclassroommanagement.com/2012/01/28/8-things-teachers-do-to-cause-boredom/>
- Livingstone, S. (2015, May 14). *Causes and Cures for Classroom Boredom*. Retrieved March 15, 2018, from Learning Liftoff: <https://www.learningliftoff.com/causes-and-cures-for-classroom-boredom/>
- Meador, D. (2018, March 12). *Solutions for Teaching in an Overcrowded Classroom*. Retrieved March 19, 2018, from ThoughtCo.: <https://www.thoughtco.com/teaching-in-an-overcrowded-classroom-3194352>
- Neuwirth, D. L. (2017, August 10). *Boredom In The Classroom: A Symptom Of A Bigger Problem In Higher Education?* Retrieved March 19, 2018, from Flipd:  
<http://blog.flipdapp.co/bored-students-and-why-students-get-bored-in-class>
- Programme, L. L. (n.d.). *Cooperation between school and parents. Supporting the educational process*. Retrieved March 15, 2018, from Schools. Władysław Szybiński in Cieszyn:  
[http://www.szybinski.cieszyn.pl/szybinski\\_new/sites/default/files/wsp%C3%B3wpraca%20z%20rodzicami%20-%20regio%20handout\\_ENGLISH\\_0.pdf](http://www.szybinski.cieszyn.pl/szybinski_new/sites/default/files/wsp%C3%B3wpraca%20z%20rodzicami%20-%20regio%20handout_ENGLISH_0.pdf)
- Rhalmi, M. (2010, October 6). *Teachers worst enemies!* Retrieved March 19, 2018, from My English Pages Reflections On New Teaching Horizons!:  
<http://www.myenglishpages.com/blog/teachers-worst-enemies/>

## **THE ROLE OF THE COUNSELOR IN THE PEDAGOGICAL COUNSELING PROCESS\***

**Blagojche Anastasov, Marija Ristevska**

“St. Kliment Ohridski” University- Bitola, Faculty of Education- Bitola  
*ablagojce@yahoo.com*

### **Abstract**

Counseling in the educational process involves knowing the general principles of student population development, but also applying an individualistic approach, since each student is a separate person. A key role in this process is played by the counselor, who should lead the counseling with students not only from the student's current, present status, but also his future. The purpose of the counselor in this process is to raise the awareness of the students about the possibility to overcome certain obstacles and barriers in their personal functioning. Whether it is individual students, student groups, or classes as a collective, counseling is focused on providing unconditional support and helping students overcome certain problems, difficulties, or simply dilemmas related to different school and life situations. The counseling should contribute to the development of self-awareness and the situations the student is going through, as well as the development of strategies that will lead to positive changes. The importance of counselor work with students with learning and behavioral problems should be emphasized, as well as work with students who have any life dilemmas or concerns about how to target and meet specific desires and needs and who need expert knowledge, honest conversation and support.

**Keywords:** *pedagogy, counseling, process, student, education*

### **1. Introduction**

In school systems in many countries, besides teaching staff, schools have engaged and expert assistants (pedagogical counselors) whose primary task is to provide expert assistance and support to the participants in the educational process in order to achieve the most successful implementation of the same. Their professional work is aimed at encouraging and directing the development and progress of students, recognizing, identifying and understanding the difficulties they face and providing help to overcome them, as well as preventing learning and behavioral difficulties. In addition, their professional role is achieved through collaboration with teachers and school leadership to provide optimal conditions for students' learning and development, as well as for the successful functioning of the school as an institution. They also unreservedly support parents in matters that are important to the development and education of their children. Providing expert assistance and support is achieved through collaboration with students, teachers, school management, parents, as well as entities from the immediate and wider environment.

---

\* Specialized paper

## **2. The meaning of the term counseling**

Starting from the fact that the term counseling is used in different ways in different situations of daily life, it is necessary at the outset to emphasize the difference between counseling that takes place in an informal context and counseling which is a formal way of professional support to individuals, smaller or larger groups. As opposed to informal assistance, i.e. secular counseling, which is spontaneous and with different intentions (can be provided by almost anyone), counseling, as a form of professional activity, is a formal form of assistance provided by a person who is specifically qualified for such work in the various sciences and scientific disciplines (psychology, pedagogy, medicine, law, etc.) etc. (Janković, 2004)

In this sense, counseling is defined as a theoretically and methodologically based, systematic and planned activity that requires training and responsibility. The theoretical and methodological underpinnings involve the grounding of relevant theories and theoretical approaches, methods and techniques derived from them, as well as grounding the results and implications of scientific and empirical research in this field. Counseling training implies developed competencies that the expert gains through general and specific education, training and supervision, which upgrades them through continuous professional and personal development, while responsibility means counseling in accordance with professional standards, legal regulations and codes of ethics. (Srna, 2012) The concept of counseling can be viewed from two angles:

- 1) Counseling as providing expert advice (information, guidelines, recommendations, suggestions) which implies that the counselor offers "ready-made solutions" ("recipes") to the specific needs and problems of counseling users (eg counseling in the education process, choice of profession, employment, etc.) in various social situations lack and satisfaction of social needs, etc.
- 2) Counseling as a partnership in which the counselor helps users to better understand themselves and their problems. In this case, counseling involves linking two experts - the counselor (as counseling counselor) and the counseling beneficiary (as an expert on himself and his problem) (Srna, 2012)

The above points to the fact that the term counseling is not a singular one, but has a much wider meaning and use, and that it is not easy to give a general definition of it. However, one can emphasize the definition, created in 2010 by consensus of 29 counseling organizations, which defines the term counseling as "a professional relationship that enables different individuals, families and groups to achieve mental health, well-being, education and careers". (Zuković, 2017) In this sense, it also seems plausible that the essence of counseling can be described as helping individuals or groups recognize their strengths, reflect on their actions and lifestyles, and be able to make their own decisions about the direction and way of changing the quality of one's life. (Corey, 2004)

## **3. Pedagogical counseling**

In terms of pedagogical activity, counseling activities are denoted by different terms-counseling, pedagogical counseling, pedagogical-counseling work, school counseling, developmental pedagogical activity, counseling-educational work (Hechler, 2012; Jurić, 2004; Mandić, 1986) etc. It is important to emphasize that the philosophy of counseling, from a pedagogical point of view, goes beyond the scope of the act itself, which implies contact



between the counselor and the person/persons involved in the two-way counseling process. From the perspective of counseling in educational institutions, the act of counseling is a comprehensive element of a set of designed educational activities aimed at children/ students, educators/ parents, parents and other actors in the educational process. (Jurić, 2004) Counseling in this way is defined as a factor of pedagogical activity, that is, as an educational tool that enables each person to maximize their abilities and capacities. (Hechler, 2012) This means that counseling is also a process of teaching the user how to overcome their difficulties and find their own solutions (Corey, 2004) and realize their personal opportunities and potentials. (Hechler, 2012)

#### **4. Objectives and characteristics of pedagogical counseling**

Pedagogical counseling is a process aimed at developing social skills or self-awareness, increasing self-esteem and assertiveness, developing personal freedom and expression. (Nelson-Jones, 2007) Certain authors define it as a technique used in situations where it is necessary to act to change or improve the condition of an individual who has no direct control over the application of a particular need, with the person having to make certain changes in his life and surroundings. In this regard, the authors point out that the counseling process involves the application of the principles of mental health, psychological principles and other social science principles through cognitive, affective and behavioral interventions to achieve well-being, personal development or pathology correction. (Gladding, 2012) In relevant literature, pedagogical counseling is considered an approach to life skills development, characterized by four key points:

- 1) Most of the difficulties students face, due to their prior learning.
- 2) Apart from the influence of external factors, the essence of the problem lies with the students and is the result of a lack of thinking skills.
- 3) Effective counseling implies that the counselor, within the framework of good counseling, advises students on the necessary thinking skills.
- 4) The ultimate goal of pedagogical counseling is self-help, i.e. capacity, students not only to resolve and overcome current difficulties, but also to adequately deal with and overcome future difficulties. (Zuković, 2017)

#### **5. The role of the pedagogical counselor**

In general, the role of the pedagogical advisor is to mediate between the individual and the school system. The responsibilities of a pedagogical advisor include:

- care for the mental development and health of students and school staff;
- timely resolution of emerging conflicts between students and teachers;
- informing the school principal about the students' psychological status and teaching staff;
- preparing and keeping documentation of the activities of the pedagogical advisor;
- keeping a professional secret;
- effective implementation of individual and group advisory work;
- use of valid instruments (tests, examinations and other instruments)

One of the roles of a pedagogical counselor is parental counseling. In that regard, the counselor, by the nature of the matter, undertakes a number of different roles. Some of these roles are formal and very explicit, others less formal and implicit. Sometimes one role is

clearly expressed, and sometimes most of its roles are intertwined. It is important to mention some of these roles:

1. **The counselor as an extended arm of the social system** - assuming formal responsibility that by law belongs to him and his institution, concerning children and their parents.
2. **The counselor as an expert** - He is professionally trained in advisory work, possesses the necessary professional competencies and therefore has responsibility for leadership and the course of counseling. Accordingly, he assumes the role of active researcher and teacher, using various strategies and skills for effective counseling.
3. **The counselor as a partner** - The partnership between the counselor (as a specialist in the process of change) and the parents (as experts in their life experiences) enables them with common strengths to move forward together. In such a relationship, the counselor assumes the role of "associate stimulator" and "friendly leader" who is prepared to point out errors and to illuminate potential solutions.
4. **The counselor as a "third parent"** - this is a less formal role of counselor, in which the professional position is interfered with the child's personal care and the need to express concern at certain times. The counselor can expect that parental care of the child will be portrayed in a completely different way and may not always be in line with his or her views and attitudes. To avoid such differences adversely affecting a child's condition, it is essential to strive to create a constructive community on both sides.
5. **The counselor as a model** - this role is one of the most effective and requires highly developed counselor awareness about the influence on counseling users. It is not justified for the counselor to expect parents to take the problematic situation or conflict with their children seriously and, at the same time, verbally or non-verbally, to show mistrust or contempt for those parents. It is therefore important for the counselor, through the role of model, to show harmony between words and deeds. In order to successfully fulfill these roles, it is important to be able to counteract one's own prejudices in dealing with parents, be culturally sensitive, get rid of the categorization that "the usual, the typical" is always functional and work to differentiate one's own "I" from the professional attitude and approach. (Jul, 2014)

Parents face many challenges during the development and growth of their children and sometimes they need professional support to:

- Reexamination of educational styles
- Choosing the right style of parenting
- Harmonizing the educational styles of both parents
- Overcoming the crisis period
- Helping set boundaries for the child
- Understanding the psychological stages and processes that children go through as they grow older
- Resolving conflicts in an appropriate manner
- Overcoming difficulties in adapting to children's needs
- Better understanding among family members
- Work on personal development (Wooten, 2018)

Pedagogical counseling focuses on issues related to upbringing, learning and parenting. The purpose of pedagogical counseling is to improve parenting skills. Counseling can be done with one or both parents. In this way, parents can resolve their dilemmas regarding their child's upbringing, gain knowledge, and identify where they might make the wrong steps in the process. It is about enhancing the strengths that parents possess, learning new ways to solve adolescence problems, and reducing mistakes, introducing parents to any emotional

blockages that may exist with their child, thereby causing problems in learning and in achievement in general. Parents are faced with a specific problem that they are unable to solve and usually want to learn the skills that will help solve the problem. Counseling is focused on improving relationships, with a focus on improving communication and finding a new problem-solving strategy. During counseling, parents have the opportunity to openly express their thoughts and feelings, as well as clearly identify appropriate roles in the family and rules of conduct. Counseling lasts from 60 to 90 minutes once a week, while total counseling can last from a few sessions to several months. (Wooten, 2018)

Some authors emphasize the importance of adopting and implementing the five concepts that help the counselor fulfill his or her role in working with parents effectively:

- 1) Connectivity;
- 2) Trust;
- 3) Support and trust;
- 4) Internal cognitive restructuring;
- 5) Investing in resiliency development. (Zuković, 2017)

All of this involves embracing a postmodern understanding of parental counseling, which leaves much more room for the experience and perspective of parents. Specifically, the postmodern approach shifts the emphasis on the role of the adviser as an expert, as the advisor as a practitioner. (Jul, 2014) Depending on the role of the practitioner, the counselor accepts the attitude that parents know best about their children and that they have creative potential for someone who solves a problem, which means that the parents need him as much as he needs them. (Zuković, 2017)

## **6. Functions of a pedagogical counselor**

The functions of a pedagogical counselor are discussed in various connotations and sources; Popkochev identifies the following four basic functions of a pedagogical counselor:

1. Diagnostic,
2. Advisory,
3. Preventive and
4. Corrective Development Function. (Nikolaj Popov, 2018)

He lists the tasks involved in each of these four functions in a very detailed, precise and systematic way. In summary, the following basic functions of a pedagogical counselor can be identified using the job description:

1. **Assisting function**- includes providing assistance and support in the field of mental development and health of children and students, enabling decision-making related to further education and employment, adapting students to the educational and social system.
2. **Diagnostic function** - includes determining the initial state at the beginning of the school year; identifying difficulties in students' cognitive, socio-emotional development and behavior; identification of gifted students as well as those in need of additional educational support; assessment in the field of vocational guidance and guidance.
3. **Counseling function** - includes:

- Individual counseling with:
  - students - about problems related to their behavior, relationships with peers, parents and teachers, personal development;
  - teachers - problems arising from interaction with students and peers;
  - parents - problems in their relationships with their children, developmental problems..
    - Group work involving:
      - training aimed at developing social skills and achieving social relationships;
      - solving problems related to health risks;
      - developing the skills needed to deal with various forms of violence.
  - Counseling school management and school staff on:
    - developing school rules, programs and projects;
    - school climate;
    - solving problems related to school development.

4. **Mediation function**- manifests itself mainly in situations where there is conflict resolution between students, teachers, parents and school leadership.

When it comes to the collaboration of the pedagogical counselor with different subjects, it is about: students; teachers; departmental heads; parents, other family members, guardians; director, assistant director, deputy director; municipal and state institutions; NGOs; other professionals: speech therapist, psychologist, psychiatrist, doctor; police. (Nikolaj Popov, 2018)

## Bibliography

- Corey, G. (2004). *Teorija i praksa psihološkog savjetovanja i psihoterapije*. Jastrebarsko: Naklada Slap.
- Gladding, S. (2012). *Counseling: A Comprehensive Profession*. New York: Pearson/Merrill/Prentice Hall.
- Hechler, O. (2012). *Pedagoško savjetovanje – teorija i praksa odgojnog sredstva*. Zagreb: Erudita.
- Janković, J. (2004). *Savjetovanje u psihosocijalnom radu*. Zagreb: Nacionalna sveučilišna knjižnica.
- Jul, J. i. (2014). *Kompetencija u pedagoškim odnosima. Od poslušnosti do odgovornosti*. Beograd: Eduka.
- Jurić, V. (2004). *Metodika rada školskog pedagoga*. Zagreb: Školska knjiga.
- Mandić, P. (1986). *Savjetodavni vaspitni rad*. Sarajevo: Svjetlost, Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva.
- Nelson-Jones, R. (2007). *Praktične vještine u psihološkom savjetovanju i pomaganju*. Jastrebarsko: Naklada Slap.
- Nikolaj Popov, V. S. (2018). *STRUČNI SARADNIK U ŠKOLI: Komparativni pregled za 12 zemalja*. Sofija: Bugarsko društvo za komparativnu pedagogiju.
- Srna, J. (2012). *Psihoterapija i savetovanje: teorija, praksa, istraživanje*. Beograd: Zavod za izdavanje udžbenika.
- Wooten, L. (2018). *Pedagoško savetovanje - savetodavni rad sa roditeljima*. Преземено October 29, 2019 од Igrologija: <https://www.savetovalisteigrologija.com/podrska-roditeljima.html>
- Zuković, S. (2017). *SAVETODAVNI RAD U INSTITUCIJAMA VASPITANJA I OBRAZOVANJA – teorijski i praktični aspekti* –. Novi Sad: Filozofski fakultet Novi Sad.

## THE BASIC FEATURES OF SOCIAL AND REHABILITATION PEDAGOGY IN EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL WORK\*

**Jasminka Kochoska, Blagojche Anastasov**

“St. Kliment Ohridski“ University- Bitola, Faculty of Education- Bitola  
*gemelli4@yahoo.com*

### **Abstract**

When it comes to education for social work, social and rehabilitation pedagogy is crucial. The main goal is to provide students with continuity in the programs for inclusive education and rehabilitation with people in different environments and organizational forms in all life periods. Therefore, the focus of this paper is placed precisely on this area, the place of social and rehabilitation pedagogy in the educational system, their significance and dimensions, methods and their functions. What is really needed and puts an apostrophe on is the acquisition of students with basic theoretical knowledge and understanding in the field of social and rehabilitation pedagogy, the necessary competences for practical work in this field, execution and evaluation of the programs implemented for these persons, the necessary competences for communication and teamwork with professional school workers and with the parents or caregivers of people with special needs, as well as acquiring basic knowledge for ongoing professional development in the process of lifelong learning.

**Keywords:** *pedagogy, social work, education, students, training.*

### **1. Introduction**

The basic essence and tendency of each science is to ensure progress, progressing forward, enriching the quantum of knowledge and confirming the quality of the same. The same goes for pedagogical science. The total intentional influences of personality development include the intentional influences with which the person whose development is influenced and enables the acquisition of certain knowledge, abilities and habits. Pedagogy is a complex science that has the task of studying its subject in all its complexity, from different aspects, with an appropriate methodology in different situations and occasions. This also points to another act, that this science is branched on a multitude of different disciplines. In this paper, it is precisely about this, about social and rehabilitation pedagogy, as an integral and essential part of the profession social worker. Specifically, it refers to all the necessary competences, knowledge, skills, and which should be adopted by students, future social workers.

The very term "profession" refers to a specific area based on a long theoretical preparation that forms the basis of the professional activity. The connection, specifically with this profession, is closely related to the social role and is a complex unit of some profession culture. There are different opinions about the definition of a social worker and this makes this process very complex. This is due to the fact that the work of a social worker is not

---

\* Specialized paper

related to a time constant, a standardized job form, or one place, but it can be found in different places and in different disciplines. (Atanasoska 2006)

Social work, as part of the social context, can not function as a closed system without relations and relationships with other social phenomena. Social phenomena are the result of the related action of individuals or social groups. It is an activity in which there is a connection between people and social groups, which means that their actions are based on the interaction-communication relations between them. Social pedagogy and social work are two fields that mutually intertwine and compensate, since both disciplines deal with educational aspects with regard to persons at risk of risky behavior; work with marginalized groups, etc. In continuation are given some basic, but essential features of social and rehabilitation pedagogy, as an integral part of general pedagogy, as well as an indispensable part of social work, as a profession.

## **2. The meaning of the term Social Pedagogy and its development**

The term social pedagogy has a much wider meaning than social work and education. It is used to describe the scope of work in these areas, mostly holistic and group-oriented forms of social work and schooling. Social pedagogy has its roots since the German progressive education and is often encountered such as 'Community education' or 'education for socialism'. (Smith 2009)

At the center of social pedagogy, there is a man who, as an individual, has an innate potential, is valuable, and how resourceful he can make a significant contribution to the wider community, of course, if he is appropriately involved in that process. Namely, the importance of social pedagogy is the existence of well-being, learning in the individual and its growth. Of course, its priority is to tackle and prevent social problems and inequality. It is very closely related to society and reflects cultural attitudes and traditions in many different ways. It gives signals of thinking in a particular society, about the process of child rearing, the relationship between the individual and society, and the care and support of society towards its disadvantaged or marginalized members. Observed from this perspective, we have the impression that social pedagogy is not mechanical, procedural and automated, but on the contrary, it is quite dynamic, creative and process oriented. It does not signify anything but a clear signal that social pedagogues should really be fully committed to their profession, to act in a tangible and constructive way. (Pedagogy 2015)

With its very meaning that it refers to raising a child, it is emphasized that education is not only an obligation of the family and parents, but it is a common responsibility of the society as a whole. It has a long tradition in many countries in Europe, and wider, as an area where there is practice and academic discipline, and which deals with the resolution of social inequality and the facilitation of social change through fostering learning, well-being and linking to the individual and the community level. Social pedagogy in different countries has developed in different ways and therefore, in different ways, reflects the cultural and social norms, attitudes and ideas for education and upbringing, the relationship between the individual and the society, and the provision of social assistance for their marginalized members.

Social pedagogues, as professional workers, work in different environments, with different age groups, ranging from early years to adulthood, groups of adults and, of course, older people. In order to achieve a holistic perspective within social pedagogy, it connects the theories and concepts of social work with related disciplines such as sociology, psychology, education, philosophy, medical sciences... Social pedagogy can be treated as multidisciplinary, because it includes: Psychology, Sociology, Social Work, Social Management, Law and Politics, Economics, Social Justice, Media, Theatrical Pedagogy, Health, Mediation, Therapy, Oversight, Communication concepts, etc.

### **3. Dimensions of social pedagogy in education**

Social pedagogy is closely related to the relationship between individuals and society, assuming that it is conflicting and social conditions are determined by suppressing individuals. Therefore, its original intention is to improve the unequal social conditions and empower individuals to independently succeed in that battle. The focus of social pedagogy is placed on the social dimension of education. (Zozulakova 2018) This task in general, as well as the approach to social pedagogy, is increasingly entrusted to professionals involved in activities for providing welfare, care and education for children. When it comes to schools, social pedagogy has an integrated view of the needs of the individual (the child), and in this respect emphasis is put on the five key dimensions: care and wellbeing; inclusion; socialization; academic support; and social education. (Kyriacou 2009)

### **4. Methods and functions of social pedagogy within social work**

At the core of defining methods in social pedagogy, general pedagogy can be easily recognized as a foundation. Hence, methods in social pedagogy are an indispensable tool in shaping the personality traits and features, stimulating her behavior in a certain direction, motivating the personality, transferring knowledge and creating a system of knowledge in her. There are a number of methods that can be applied in a variety of different situations. The problem around them should be thoroughly known and the necessary skill for their application should be adopted, as the proper use of these is of crucial importance in social work. They also relate to the relationship between the two entities that are its actors. From the established relationship between them depends the choice of methods and their inclusion in social work.

The choice and use of methods in social pedagogy are made on the basis of social pedagogical considerations. In the past there were three basic defined methods:

- Individual case handling - the goal of improving and developing the individual's life circumstances
- The work of social groups - the goal of which is the development of social competences,
- Working with community intervention - the purpose of which is the development of social demographic structures.

These three main methods in social pedagogy are actually the basis for many other methods used today. (Wikipedia 2018)

N. Huppertz and E. Schnizler consider that social pedagogy has 7 important functions and presents them in the following way:

1. Pedagogical function, which includes educational efforts to support the optimal development of the child, the formation of healthy lifestyles,
2. Preventive function that contains activities and programs that are used to prevent different deviations and prevent negative effects,
3. Compensatory function that includes activities leading to deficit compensation
4. Corrective function that applies activities for prisoners, care for children with special needs and children with emotional and behavioral difficulties, day care, homes for abandoned children and children without parents / families and correctional homes (reformatory prison, penitentiary institutions)
5. Tutorial function that offers assistance to people who are considered as part of marginalized groups
6. Structural function that influences the processes of inclusion of people in the field of professional qualification,
7. Distributive function that fights in the domain of helping refugees, immigrants and social work with them. (Zozulakova 2018)

## **5. Rehabilitation pedagogy in social and educational system**

Rehabilitation pedagogy refers to the application of appropriate methods for psycho-physical and social assistance to individuals or groups of people in order to recover the lost skills independently and to engage in life despite the difficulties they have. Today, the modern rehabilitation approach relies on encouraging and strengthening the person to use his maximum capacities and abilities, which in any case requires teamwork from professionals from a diverse profile, and most often social workers. (Vikipedija n.d.)

Rehabilitation is a complex process of empowerment, to the greatest extent possible, to achieve a more normal life and work with people whose ability is visibly reduced. Rehabilitation is an integral part of health care. It is an integral part of the difficulties and defects of the physical, emotional, social and economic nature, but it must be noted that in man there are still a number of other, preserved abilities, which should be maximally developed, and to a large extent the ability for self-knowledge.

When we talk about rehabilitation as a process, it can be found in the following three phases:

- Medical rehabilitation, which refers to treatment, special care, physical therapy, work therapy, aids, disability sports, home and education adaptations.
- Professional rehabilitation, which is aimed at training and adaptation to a particular job or in the case of retraining.
- Social rehabilitation means the involvement of the person in the production work, in the family and social life. (Medicinski.info n.d.)

Rehabilitation, in general, has its own principles, such as continuity, complexity and team interdisciplinary work.

An excellent example of a sector in which rehabilitation pedagogy is represented can be used by the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences at Humboldt University in Berlin, which offers comprehensive training for special education for rehabilitation, with professional integration in support of chronically ill persons, people with special needs and the elderly. The main feature of this department is a long and successful tradition in training staff from this field. The student has a wide range of choices both within the scope of the subject as well as in his



specialization. Students, as in any other discipline, are expected to be committed to their work, to possess excellent communication skills, and also to show particular interest in interdisciplinary research.

## **6. The intention of the Rehabilitation Pedagogy Learning Program**

What is significant for the students of this discipline is the acquisition of a solid, wide and differentiated knowledge of key working areas in rehabilitation. It is necessary to be educated in early childhood education and rehabilitation of children and youth, to have professional rehabilitation and educational work with persons with disabilities, persons with chronic diseases in order to prevent and improve health, as well as to have knowledge of geriatric rehabilitation. In addition, they should be able to carry out educational work and promote integration of people in intercultural working environments. Rehabilitation pedagogy enables students to study the most important forms of disability, as well as psychosocial conditions throughout life, social consequences and barriers that appear as a brake in participation and integration of the person in society.

Furthermore, what is of great importance in the preparation of students as future social workers is the acquisition of basic skills for decision-making in the field of rehabilitation diagnostics, planning and rehabilitation-pedagogical intervention. Familiarizing with the rehabilitation system, including its legal bases, students will be able to classify and evaluate educational activities in interaction with the daily social life of clients, their needs and in general, the institutional conditions. Students can come closer to the scientific and educational perspectives, as well as the theoretical and ethical basic concepts in special education - self-determination, participation, empowerment, help, diversity, etc. For students, future social workers inevitably is the knowledge of the research methodology as a powerful tool through which they can critically evaluate the results of current international scientific researches on rehabilitation, as well as the importance of the issues related to the practice and the realization of smaller practical research in this field. (Berlin 2018) The concept of this type of program is in the direction of the students to be able to implement the program for inclusive education and rehabilitation of persons with special needs in various organizational forms, institutional and informal environments and in all life periods. In the education of students from the group for social and rehabilitation pedagogy, there are key and necessary things for their successful work as future social workers. They are the following:

- the basic theoretical knowledge and understanding of the fields of fundamental and specialist pedagogical study and of the rehabilitation of people with special needs,
- the competences required for practical operation in the area of the assessment of special needs, as well as of the planning, execution and evaluating of programmes implemented for these people,
- the competences required for communication and team work with professional workers and with the parents or guardians of people with special needs,
- additional knowledge in the selected areas
- the fundamental knowledge that will enable ongoing professional development in the process of lifelong learning. (Education 2017)

Social and rehabilitation pedagogy enters the field of research in the field of health and social care in order to encourage research in the learning process and student practical training, encouraging deep and common engagement and understanding of how people learn in various health, education and social care settings. These researches can be divided into three broad topics, such as:

- Educational practice based on evidence
- Effective workplace learning
- Partnerships for patients (Morris n.d.)

Social rehabilitation can be treated as a modification of the person's behavior and elimination of disorders in it; emotional restructuring, and the shaping of right and well integrated social attitudes. Scientific concepts and theories that are the theoretical basis for social rehabilitation can be divided into four groups: behavioral, interactive, multidisciplinary, and cognitive. Social rehabilitation is multidimensional and is often understood as a system of impacts from mutual actions; conversion to values of a higher order, which is related to the realization of the ideals; social reintegration of the individual through the reconstruction of his own and social identity or as a self-social rehabilitation, social rehabilitation self education. (Jęczeń 2016)

## Bibliography

- Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu. *Rehabilitation Pedagogy*. March 2018. <https://www.hu-berlin.de/en/studies/counselling/course-catalogue/programme-descriptions/rehamono> (accessed December 10, 2018).
- Education, University of Ljubljana/Faculty of. *Special and Rehabilitation Pedagogy*. 2017. <https://www.pef.uni-lj.si/381.html> (accessed December 27, 2018).
- Jęczeń, Jarosław. "Social rehabilitation through education." *Roczniki Teologiczne* 63, no. 1 (2016): 5-19.
- Kyriacou, Chris. "The five dimensions of social pedagogy within schools." *An International Journal of Personal, Social and Emotional Development* 27, no. 02 (2009): 101-108.
- Medicinski.info. *Rehabilitacija značenje*. <https://www.medicinski.info/znacenje/rehabilitacija.html> (accessed December 25, 2018).
- Morris, Jane / National Association of Educators in Practice. *Pedagogy in health and social care*. <https://www.brighton.ac.uk/research-and-enterprise/groups/healthcare-practice-and-rehabilitation/research-areas/pedagogy-in-health-and-social-care/index.aspx> (accessed December 24, 2018).
- Pedagogy, ThemPra Social. "Social Pedagogy." *ThemPra Social Pedagogy*. 2015. <http://www.thempra.org.uk/social-pedagogy/> (accessed December 20, 2018).
- Resocialisation, Institute of Social Prevention and. *University of Warsaw*. 2018. (accessed 2018).
- Smith, Mark K. "Social pedagogy: the development of theory and practice." *'Social pedagogy' in the encyclopaedia of informal education*,. 2009. [http://infed.org/mobi/social-pedagogy-the-development-of-theory-and-practice/#greek\\_pedagogue](http://infed.org/mobi/social-pedagogy-the-development-of-theory-and-practice/#greek_pedagogue) (accessed December 24, 2018).

Tatjana Atanasoska, Emilija Petrova Gjorgjeva. *Opsta pedagogija*. Bitola: Pedagoski fakultet-Bitola, 2006.

Vikipedija, Slobodna enciklopedija. *Rehabilitacija*.

<https://sr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Рехабилитација> (accessed December 25, 2018).

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. *Social pedagogy*. 2018.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_pedagogy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_pedagogy) (accessed December 15, 2018).

Zozulakova, Viera. "Social pedagogy in the field of social work."

*elektronicky\_zbornik\_IPHELP*, 2018: 127-134.

## OVERVIEW OF MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSES\*

**Josif Petrovski**

Faculty of Education – Bitola  
*josif.petrovski@uklo.edu.mk*

### Abstract

Massive Open Online Courses are one of the most popular trends in education in the last decade. The term Massive Open Online Courses, or abbreviated MOOC, is set of open access and free teaching content, videos, presentations, simulations, video webinars, uploaded to an online platform for a large group of participants to be educated or pass certain tests. Although rapidly expanding as an educational form, MOOC still lacks research and precise papers examining its implementation worldwide. This paper presents the MOOC from a technological as well as a pedagogical focus on its development and implementation in the education system.

### INTRODUCTION

Distance learning as an educational method already has a long history. Through a series of technological changes in the world from simple delivery of learning materials to students, to the use of everyday communication technology to home computers and the Internet. The Internet and mobile Internet are increasingly embracing existing trends in higher education as a way of securing and supporting the emergence of a new model called Massive Courses over the Internet or Massive Open Online Courses.

Massive Open Online Courses are a relatively new phenomenon affecting higher education. The European Commission defines MOOC as “an online course open to everyone without limitations, usually structured around a set of learning objectives in a field of study, which often lasts for a defined period of time (with a start and end date) on a network platform that provides interactive opportunities (between peers or between students and instructors) that facilitate the creation of a learning community. As is the case of any online course, it provides some course materials and self-assessment tools” (Ellis, 2007). They are of open type, which has more obvious meanings in this research. While research is growing on this topic, the literature is still limited. Researchers are following the implementation of the MOOC in all its forms from conceptual to technical. Conference and journal journaling procedures make up the bulk of MOOC literature (Liyaganawardena, Adams, & Williams, 2013). Informed educators will be better equipped to make evidence-based decisions, to foster the positive growth of this technology, and to adapt it to their contexts.

The accelerated development of MOOC in recent years has led to millions of registered users on hundreds of courses around the world. MOOCs are often published by third parties through online platforms and are developed independently of the academic environment. The

---

\* Specialized paper

history of MOOCs is not that distant. The term first appeared in 2008 by Steven Downes and George Siemens and was based on the "distributed peer-to-peer learning" model. After that, in 2011, several other educational videos were developed by professors at Stanford University and published through open network platforms supported by free web resources. This is the year MOOC exploded all over the world and is still expanding every day. Later, they established the Coursera (<https://www.coursera.org>) as an independent non-profit technology in early 2012. In the same year, other independent nonprofit initiatives such as Udacity and Udemy were established. After that, MIT and Harvard incorporated their own platforms.

Another wave of users followed the Futurelearn and Iversity platforms, which are European platforms. They maintain their courses throughout Europe. Futurelearn is owned by the Open University in the UK which is a well-known name in the field of distance education with extensive pedagogical expertise and experience. Iversity is a German initiative that is using the European Credit Transfer System. They state that their partner institutions have the opportunity to offer exams that grant ECTS credits. As the only MOOC platform has courses offering ECTS credits, they are working to further expand this opportunity.

In this sense of generational development, Siemens (2012) identifies two types of MOOCs:

- cMOOCs - the first generation started in 2008, focusing on creating long-lasting knowledge. Participants' creativity, autonomy, and networking are encouraged. At the same time, participants are expected to enrich the course content.
- xMOOCs - the second generation launched in 2012, is based on a more traditional format, with fixed structured content, centralized discussion forum support, and automatic or peer review.

With this division xMOOC are likely to have a greater impact on higher education as a result of their main advantages: high quality content provided by leading partner universities, availability of deadlines and grades, the attribute of unnecessary costs and ongoing financial support for development. The newest generation of xMOOC brings undeniable positive outcomes for students. But there is always the financial question, how to survive if not charged for education.

## **QUALITY OF COURSES**

With the appearance and implementation of MOOC, it has been noted that the target group of participants are already interested and motivated individuals who wish to learn through online platforms. MOOCs also require a certain level of digital literacy from participants. These have raised concerns about the inclusiveness and equality of access. Usually, there is a lack of formal quality assurance for MOOCs. Courses are often evaluated by participants in tables that rank them according to the perceived quality of the offer (Yuan & Powell, 2013). As such, courses disappear due to lack of demand or in response to poor performance. Other ways of evaluating courses include informal feedback of social media participants.

Successful completion criteria for MOOC were also a point of controversy. Meyer (2012) reported that the dropout rates at courses offered by Stanford, MIT and Berkeley were 80-95%. For example, only 7% of the 50,000 students who enrolled in the Coursera course in software engineering have completed the course. However, whether these rates are important

or not depends on the purpose of the MOOC in the first place. If the goal was to provide free and high-quality courses from elite universities and professors, then the results of the final tests do not have to be relevant. However, it would still be useful to improve MOOC participant retention rates. Still considered a modern occurrence, studies are underway to discover why and at what stage students are most likely to drop out of courses.

## **PEDAGOGICAL ASPECT OF MOOC**

To implement MOOC, minimal academic support is sufficient. Pedagogues who are informed about MOOC often work in the field of distance education or IT technology, but now these courses are being implemented to meet the expectations of many people to study and take for free. Previous implementation, cMOOC, was based on peer models and social learning; however, the successor model, xMOOC, has delivered online learning management courses, including video lectures, assessments and feedback. Courses usually last about a week, and students can access relevant sources of materials as they wish. Some of these activities include automated multiple-choice quizzes, short videos, document sharing and forum conversation. The courses are based on a model of peer learning from other users, although there is an expert who is conducting the course. There are also online synchronized learning opportunities such as Live Seminars. When examining the course structure, it can be seen that the first MOOC courses included enrolled lectures, notes and assignments that were once published through the campus management learning system. Over time, the format of video lectures has improved, and today, with more professional videos, including animations and simulations with their interactive features, they are released as MOOCs.

Most of the courses are in the form of adult learning and professional development, vocational education and recruitment courses. Some MOOCs target workers who work rarely and professionally, and often in locations where they do not have access to higher education institutions to further expertise in their field.

In essence, MOOC courses are based on these areas when interacting with students (Acosta & all, 2014):

- Video lectures: Video lectures at MOOC have different presentation styles, from talk heads to lecturers. Lectures are mostly in English, and translations are provided if necessary. The duration of the lecture videos is usually 5-10 minutes, with built-in quizzes to check on what has been learned.
- Assessment: Tasks are primarily assessed through the use of: (a) automatically generated multiple-choice questions, or (b) peer-review when students themselves check and evaluate assignments
- Forums: Forums are a place where students post questions and other students answer, and are a major method of interaction between students and course lecturers. Forums typically consist of general discussion, topic-specific discussions, course feedback, and technical feedback topics.
- Readings: Most MOOCs do not require students to purchase books, and most materials are available online or provided by course educators; however, Coursera for example, earns money through an affiliate program with Amazon.com.

- Video sessions: In addition to weekly lectures, there are live video lectures with the course instructor.
- Additional Activities: A series of teaching activities are offered to enable students to further test their knowledge acquired in the course.
- Additional resources: These are frequently scripted videos to further understand the learning material
- Social Media: Students are encouraged to continue discussions on dedicated pages on other social media platforms, such as Facebook and Google+.

One of the problems that MOOCs have, from a pedagogical point of view, is how to evaluate learning, especially as it involves a large group of participants. Automated grading systems are used in general. Yuan and Powell (2013) found that most of the assessments in MOOC are conducted through multiple choice questions with automatic responses and peer feedback. Hardesty (2012) stated that new techniques have been proposed to develop more sophisticated automatic grading systems and trends are emerging to try to incorporate feedback from a variety of sources such as machine algorithms, teachers, experts and peers.

## **ADVANTAGES OF MOOC**

### *Improving access to higher education*

MOOCs are seen as an important tool for expanding access to higher education, including those in the developing world, and ultimately enhancing their quality of life. The MOOC can be seen as contributing to democratization not only locally or regionally, but also globally. MOOCs can help democratize content and make knowledge available to everyone. Students can access complete courses offered by universities around the world, something previously unattainable. With the availability of affordable technologies, MOOCs are expanding access to the extraordinary number of courses offered by world-renowned institutions and teachers. (Heller, 2014)

### *Providing affordable education*

The costs of higher education continue to rise as institutions tend to provide too many services. With MOOC, some of these services can be transferred to other appropriate institutions in the public or private sector. MOOCs are for a large number of participants, can be accessed by anyone with or without prior entry qualifications and are offered in full or in part for free.

### *Sustainable Development Goals*

The original philosophy of MOOC is to open quality higher education to a wider audience that will be accessible for a long time.

### *Offers a flexible learning schedule*

Certain lectures, videos and tests via MOOC can be accessed at any time compared to the scheduled hour time. This allows students to complete their assignments in a timely manner, and allows participants flexibility based on their personal schedules. (Teixeira & Mota, 2014)

### *Online Collaboration*

MOOC learning environments make it easier for students around the world to work together for common goals. Instead of physically meeting each other, online collaboration creates student partnerships. While time zones can influence students' communication hours, projects, assignments and more can be completed to incorporate the skills and resources that different students offer, wherever they are.

### **DISADVANTAGES OF MOOC**

Several MOOC vulnerabilities have been identified. For example, a new study by the research group Ingiger Liger Ed and the Babson Survey (Allen & Seaman , 2016) shows that two-thirds of engaged professors do not want to attend such classes. Factors in their rejection of MOOC are lack of personal communication, lack of frequent teacher feedback or irreplaceable classroom experiences.

It was also mentioned earlier that student assessment is a result of the difficulty of checking who is completing tasks correctly and in a timely manner. The humanities, social sciences, and business, which require written work online, using critical thinking skills, are difficult to assess online. Hill (2012a) summarized the major interrelated barriers: developing revenue models to make the concept self-sustainable, delivering valuable endpoints such as credentials, badges or acceptance in accreditation and authenticating students in a way that satisfies institutions for accreditation or hiring companies that student identification is actually known. He also declared a low completion rate (below 10%) as a barrier, but we believe it is due to the early phase of the MOOC life cycle and will improve faster. Important steps have already been taken to overcome some of these obstacles.

### **CONCLUSION**

Despite being a fairly recent phenomenon, the massive open online courses, or MOOCs, have attracted widespread interest from people around the world. Although they provide opportunities for education in courses offered by prestigious universities, lack of recognition and proper accreditation are still a problem. MOOCs have attracted thousands of people from all over the world; however, closer inspection of student demographics indicates that the majority of those who have served these courses have already completed university education. As such, at present, they seem to be only increasing access to higher education rather than expanding access. Some of the likely reasons for such remarks may be: people with higher education have better "access" to MOOC; they are better prepared for the self-learning required in these courses and they are less concerned about recognizing them than students without higher education qualifications who have to 'prove' their skills to employers. With changes in funding for the higher education sector and austerity measures, the MOCS meets the needs of "knowledge workers" to update their skills and continuous professional development.

Therefore, at present MOOC seems to serve the sector of continuous professional development better. MOOC can also provide value for leisure time students. MOOCs are a new and reinforcing phenomenon in the context of budget cuts and increased education costs. The xMOOC type, encompassing the advanced Coursera, edX and Udacity free online



platforms with the best quality free content, have the potential to generate major changes in overall higher education and specifically entrepreneurial education around the world. Universities will need to adapt their education strategies online and on campus. The most affected will be low-ranking universities, located mainly in developing countries and regional universities, which tend to combine with other universities in state systems, for example.

Both cMOOC and xMOOC are a valuable and rapidly expanding opportunity for additional entrepreneurship education, reaching a large and diverse audience who can enjoy the freedom of self-taught social support through the learning network and through peers. Further research is needed to identify the amplitude of this phenomenon and to assess the appropriate timeframe for the changes needed, as well as the effect of MOOC on the overall learning environment.

## REFERENCES

- Acosta, E. S., Otero, J. J. E., & Toletti, G. C. (2014). Peer review experiences for MOOC. Development and testing of a peer review system for a massive online course. *The New Educational Review*, 37(3), 66-79.
- Allen, I. E., & Seaman, J. (2016). Online Report Card: Tracking Online Education in the United States. Babson Survey Research Group. Babson College, 231 Forest Street, Babson Park, MA 02457.
- Ellis, H. J. (2007). An assessment of a self-directed learning approach in a graduate web application design and development course. *IEEE Transactions on Education*, 50(1), 55-60.
- Hardesty, L. (2012). Lessons Learned from MITx's prototype course. Retrieved on July, 7, 2015.
- Heller, R. F. (2014). Learning by MOOC or by crook. *Med J Aust*, 200(4), 192-3.
- Hill, P. (2012). Online educational delivery models: A descriptive view. *Educause review*, 47(6), 84-86.
- Liyanagunawardena, T. R., Adams, A. A., & Williams, S. A. (2013). MOOCs: A systematic study of the published literature 2008-2012. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 14(3), 202-227.
- Meyer, R. (2012). What it's like to teach a MOOC (and what the heck's a MOOC?). *The Atlantic*.
- Siemens, G. (2012). MOOCs are really a platform.
- Siemens, G., & Downes, S. (2008). Connectivism & connective knowledge. *Universidad de Manitoba*.
- Teixeira, A. M., & Mota, J. (2014). 3 A Proposal for the Methodological Design of Collaborative Language MOOCs. In *Language MOOCs* (pp. 33-47). Sciendo Migration.
- Vryzas, K., & Tsitouridou, M. (2002). The home computer in children's everyday life: the case of Greece. *Journal of Educational Media*, 27(1-2), 9-17.
- Yuan, L., & Powell, S. J. (2013). MOOCs and open education: Implications for higher education.