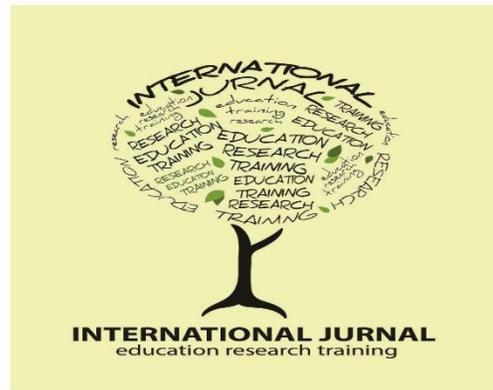


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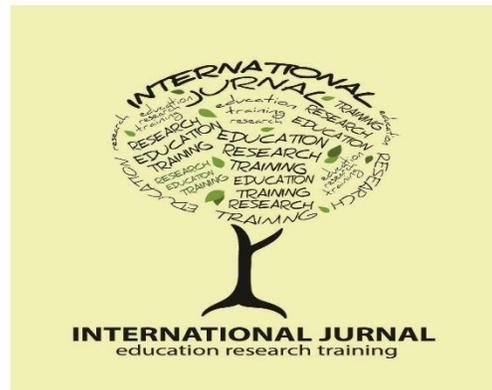


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ИСТРАЖУВАЊЕ И ОБУКА**

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## EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONALISM IN THE ITALIAN DOUBLE-TRACK LEARNING AND TRAINING ACADEMIC SYSTEM

**Francesca Oggionni**

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UDK:

### Abstract

The educational professionalism has to deal with the complexity of contemporary society, which requires a multidimensional approach to individual and collective needs. The dichotomy between social and health education, implied by the current double-track learning and training academic system, shows its limits in the introduction of a disparity in social acknowledgment - mainly due to a lack in legislation, that qualifies as “enabling degree” only the one related to health professions - which is likely to reduce the guarantees of citizenship rights, besides going on weakening the educational professionalism itself.

An *integrated model of lifelong learning* comes out as a strategy in seeking a convergence between the two profiles, placing them in an organic project aimed to create generative connections between theoretical and experiential knowledge, transversal and specific, pedagogical and organizational skills, through which strengthen the value of educational social work.

**Key words:** educational professionalism, lifelong learning, acknowledgement, qualification.

A profession is defined in terms of recognized knowledge, skills, activities and areas of intervention, established by the legislative and the educational systems. The characteristics of the professional profile of the educator emerge, therefore, from the indications contained in national and regional policies, which the local authorities, the public organizations and the private social sector have to refer to.

The distance between the general principles of law and the concrete need to manage local problems, made of multidimensional and specific needs for different territories, however, produces at national level a lack of uniformity in the ways of gearing the educational work possibilities. The heterogeneity is reinforced by two main critical issues: a double-track learning

and training academic system and a parallel impasse in legislation that produces a disparity of recognition between the two professional profiles.

### ***Critical aspects in course of analysis and in search of solutions at a political level***

Looking at the history of social educators' profession, since the fifties has emerged the awareness of the need for a solid educational preparation, supported by methodological tools and reflective abilities, that can provide transversal and specific knowledge and skills in relation to different areas of intervention. Professional Schools for Educators were created in the sixties by provincial or municipal governments; they defined a theoretical and practical training model based on a multi-disciplinary knowledge and closely tied to local services.

The most recent transition to the academic education took place at national, regional and local level with a fragmented regulation, that consequently has produced an unclear recognition of the professional profile of social workers and their related competencies admitted to the exercise of the educational profession.

The situation is complicated firstly by the existence - permitted by the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) - of a double-track learning and training academic system: for the acquisition of knowledge and skills in education it is possible to choose between two parallel profiles, corresponding to two different degree classes:

- L-19, class in Educational Sciences, oriented to a pedagogical and humanistic profile;
- SNT/2, class in Health Professions and Rehabilitation, oriented to a technical medical profile.

The educational proposals are different in subject contents, according to their distinct focuses of interest: Educational Sciences courses are oriented towards a multidisciplinary approach to social problems, pursued by stimulating the connection between pedagogical, anthropological, sociological and psychological knowledge; in curricula related to the Departments of Medicine, however, the scientific and medical disciplines are in the foreground, with pedagogical knowledge in the background.

In both academic paths it can be recognized the intention to promote the recursion between theories and practice, starting from the opportunity of trial the professional role within the services. The quantitative gap in the number of hours reserved for training activities, however, reveals two different functional attributions to theoretical and practical knowledge:

academic studies can be planned to introduce to the educational profession by moving towards its theoretical and reflective foundations or, assuming a more pragmatic approach, through the acquisition of specific operational-methodological competences.

The main characteristics of the professional profiles and the recipients of their educational actions are similar, but the distance between the two paradigms - social and health ones – gives to educational work different shapes, as it mainly seems to regard transformative projects rather than diagnostic or rehabilitative actions of assistance.

Multidimensional social needs make evidence of the coexistence of social and health dimensions in stories of life of disadvantaged people; the introduction of a dichotomy between them is likely to reduce the complexity of problems and the range of possibilities of intervention, ending with the weakening of educational professionalism itself. An impasse in legislation, that in the last nineties has qualified only health professions, has justified a different attribution of value to social or health qualifications; the disparity of recognition and legitimacy has led and allowed the formalization of an imbalance of power and the consequent inequalities in employment opportunities; but the international orientation is designed to closely link the health professions with the human sciences and, therefore, to support the search for substantive responses to the growing complexity of contemporary life, rather than their simplification and fragmentation.

It is currently ongoing the legislative process of evaluation of the Draft Law On. Iori n. 2656/2014 "Regulation of professions of educator and pedagogue": in coherence with European guidelines, which encourage the sharing of common competency models, it aims to put an end to the professional and academic mess on professional functions and social recognition of educators and pedagogues, by defining tasks, functions, places and areas of intervention, taking into account the needs and requests (not only of assistance) emerging from the territories.

New ways of thinking about educational professionalism, not only in terms of working possibilities, but also of learning and training opportunities, recommend the adoption of a systemic approach: it is useful to bring a particular problem in an overall framework, in order to revise the contradictions and to seek coherent and sustainable new strategies, aimed to increase the social, cultural and economical recognition of educational professionalism, but above all to preserve and develop the quality of educational work.

### ***Educational professionalism is based on a continuous process of learning***

The educational professionalism, by virtue of the complexity and constant evolution of its contents, has a lifelong learning need: it is the result of a process of continuous acquiring of theoretical knowledge, methodological tools and experiential skills that certainly cannot be accomplished in three years of academic studies. The mastery of pedagogical and educational skills comes out from a continuous process of in-depth study and integration of partial knowledge; it can be accomplished by a trial of the educational role and the acquisition of meta-reflective tools, leading to the development of theories from praxis. Not considered only as an individual process, the dialogue and a fair exchange among colleagues are recommended, in adoption of a capitalization logic, to draw up a gradually shared and transmitted professional knowledge. A serious evaluation of the critical aspects of having two parallel institutional curricula - different more in terms of legitimacy than in quality of knowledge and skills offered - enables to recognize the risk of creating an imbalance within the educational professionalism.

This awareness stimulates the research for points of contact, integration and convergence between social and health approaches. Both academic programs are designed to convey theoretical and practical knowledge that can support a functional analysis of social, cultural and territorial realities, as well as to develop pedagogical and design skills, methodological and operational abilities, organizational and institutional competences, in order to enable students to carry out complex programming and planning tasks (such as the needs analysis, the structuring of educational interventions, their organization and ongoing monitoring, the evaluation of the results achieved). Furthermore, as professionals, they should be able to assume different functions in relation with disadvantaged people requiring support, accompaniment, facilitation, assistance, treatment and rehabilitation (often in collaboration with other professionals). They also should take on the role of coordinator and/or manager of projects, activities and services through the integration and enhancement of local resources.

These are complex professional tasks for which a basic training is a prerequisite; however it is clearly indispensable to think about a lifelong learning programme. In fact, the complexity of social work and educational intervention requires the development of analytical and interpretative skills in order to figure out social dynamics in different contexts, and a multidimensional approach to problems and social needs, according to specific characteristics of

people and territories. The educators' professional skills must be transversal and specific, on social, educational and health issues, acquired at university (which provides a theoretical framework) and in the field (where actively making experience of the professional role and reflectively proceeding with the construction of a solid professional identity). Undoubtedly, the educational professionalism is built through a recursive process of connection between theories and practice. Except for training activities, the academic system is not currently managing this process at the maximum level: in the articulation of bachelors and master degrees, in fact, a program oriented to an in-depth knowledge of specific aspects of educational work or specialized skills and methodologies of intervention does not exist; there is rather a shift to other apical professional figures, with roles and functions different from educators.

The quality of educational social work therefore needs to be ensured and searched through a process of communication between social policies and services, universities and organizations, students and educators; thus, between all those subjects that are participating (formally or informally) in the process of construction of educators' professional identity. They observe educational events from different points of view and produce local theories that often remain on parallel tracks, while they should be brought together into an organic project of large shared knowledge, in the assumption of the task and the responsibility to strengthen the social and cultural recognition of educational professionalism.

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## **THE NEED FOR MARITAL EDUCATION IN MACEDONIA**

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### **Abstract**

In the past decades, the way marriage, marital life and intimate relationships function have considerably changed. Couples often choose to live in a non-marital community, delaying marriage and childbearing, and an increasing number of marriages are ending in divorce. Also, many relationships and marriages do not meet the needs and expectations of partners and tend to end up unhappylye.

Numerous personal and social consequences arise from stress in relationships, conflicts, dissatisfaction, and divorce and they influence partners, their children and ultimately the whole family and society on multiple levels.

Hence, the growing interest of researchers on topics related to marriage, divorce and intimate relationships and on the way to prevent the abovementioned consequences. In order to preserve relationships and marriages, partners need to learn how to be happy in that community, and the challengesto raise healthy and happy children. A possible strategy could be premarital and/or marital education, which as educational programs are increasingly introduced worldwide.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the advantages of this kind of education and to consider possibilities for its introduction in the Republic of Macedonia.

**Key-words:** marriage, marital education, intimate relationships, intimate partners.

## **1.Introduction notes**

Marriage corresponds to a high value, both for the development of personal happiness and for the society. Marriage is important at many intertwined levels: emotionally, socially, and economically. As one of the oldest social institutions, the marriage has undergone various stages in its development, but it has always served to regulate gender relations between men and women and to promote offspring. Lately, there have been rapid and radical changes in married life globally. According to many authors, the most significant changes that lead to the rearrangement of marital and intimate life are the emergence and broad acceptance of individualism and giving priority to the individual and his desires, needs and interests. Unlike the previous period when marriage and family were fundamental to social life, they are now no longer a feature of modern society.

Changes are inevitable. Every social category, even marriage and marriage relations are subject to change, however, nowadays, marriage has become a breakable institution. Static data is the main indicator of its vulnerability.

The statistical data for the Republic of Macedonia provides us with the following picture: The number of divorces that occurred increases, and the number of concluded marriages is reduced. That being said, from 710 divorces that took place in 1995, the number grew to 2045 divorces in 2013. The number of marriages concluded in 2013 is 13982, 15 490 in 2007, while in 1994 -15736 concluded marriages. Also, the average age when people conclude marriages is increasing, indicating that couples later get in marriage. Thus, the age at which couples marry is 25.8 for women and 28.6 for men, while in 2004 the average age for women was 24 and for men 27, while in 1994, 23 for women and 25 for men.

The birth and the reproduction rates are also affected by the negative tendencies in the marriage itself. After the Republic of Macedonia declared its independence, it has seen a continuous decline in the birth rates. According to the Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia in 2005 were born 32 154 children, in 2005 26,083 children were born and in 2013 23,334. The birthrate rate ranged from 17% in the early 1990s, to 11 current percentages (below 15% was considered low birth rate). This would mean that in the last twenty years, that is, since the beginning of the transition, the numbers reflect that 9,000 children less were born than before. Reducing birthrate led to a decrease in the vital index, i.e. a decrease in the number of

live births compared to the deaths, which in the period from 2007 to 2011 was 121 live births per 100 deaths and has fallen by two-thirds compared to the data in the past five decades. The rate of natural increase (difference between live births and deaths) from 8.1 in 1994 declined to 1.9 in 2013. The rate of total fertility (cumulative fertility rate) reached the limit of 1.46 children per woman average in the fertile period (15-49 years). The minimum for simple reproduction, not for population increase, is 2.1 children per woman, a percentage typical of the total fertility rate in 1994.

Delaying marriage, postpones giving birth as well. Women get their first child later in their life, so if the average age for giving birth of the first child was 23 in 1994, today giving birth of the first child is postponed until the age of 28. Women are increasingly choosing to give birth to a child without marriage. Almost 12% of the total number of children born comes from a non-marital community. This parameter also increased by 4 percent compared to 1994 when it counted to 8 percent.

The crisis of marriage also confirmed the opinion that marriage is not something that must be fulfilled as a life goal, and divorce does not constitute a moral condemnation for the divorced ones, but rather a "happy exit" from an unhappy marriage. The conducted research that was done recently among first and second year students at the Faculty of Philosophy, shows that while young people in the Republic of Macedonia generally still believe in marriage as an institution, they do not accept marriage "at all costs", they openly see modern forms of marriage, and the divorce is accepted as an integral part of the relationship. Half of them believe that they do not have to marry, for most of the respondent's marriage is not a permanent community, i.e. "it is not forever". Half of them believe that most of marriages end up unhappy. Individuality is increasingly expressed as a characteristic. Young people consider that the most important reason to get married is love and personal satisfaction. Young people are not willing to sacrifice and compromise when love fades, and disagreements arise. Most of them would not accept to live in a community (with the parents of the spouse after getting married), they would not place marriage before the career, and the majority would never forgive unfaithfulness. Also, half of them would have accepted a relationship with divorced partners and would live in an extramarital community. Half agree that it is acceptable for a woman to give birth outside wedlock. Most of the respondents approved same-sex communities (Radulovic, Avirovic 2016).

Such acknowledgements present a sufficient alarm and a fact that, although the Macedonian society is more conservative, when it comes to marriage and marital relations, in relation to the Western and Northern Europe, we present negative changes and tendencies for marriage itself.

The reasons for this situation are found at different levels:

- Economic situation;
- The effects of globalization;
- Empowerment of women and change of gender roles;
- Strengthening the individual for the community account, etc.

If problems are seen as a reason for action, it is logical to ask the question, what can be done to improve this situation, restore faith in marriage, and reduce the number of divorces. That is the reason why there is a growing interest of researchers to find a way in which such situations can be prevented. Keeping relationships and marriage, teaching partners how to be happy in their unity and to raise healthy and happy children is a real challenge. As one of the possible strategies, is the premarital and marital education, which as an educational program, is increasingly being introduced in the world.

What is marital education?

Marital education corresponds to education of marriage of young people, marital values and relationships, then acquiring the communication and emotional skills needed in the relationship with the partner and the children, as well as training for coping in crisis situations.

The main goal of marital education is to create and maintain a happy marriage. The individual objectives consist of the following:

- individuals and couples have to acquire theoretical preconceived notions of marriage, coexistence, intimate relationships, and parenthood;
- get acquainted with the actual conditions and preferences for marriage and divorce, in their own society and beyond;
- learn the underlying reasons for marriage and its functions;

- to understand the consequences of not concluding a marriage and getting a divorce. All of that aiming to gain realistic expectations of getting married;
- to acquire emotional skills that will help them cope with problems (issues).

Marital education in a wider framework, apart from education, it includes counseling, therapy and state strategy.

Therapy or marital counseling is usually conducted when partners are married and are facing specific problems. It can be carried out as individual therapy or therapy in couples dealing with the problems that the particular marriage is facing. Therapy is used in cases of acute marital anxiety, but also for chronic problems that stress the marriage and involves the need for intensive, personalized and professional help. The issues in the counseling are very different and can include problems such as: infidelity, domestic violence, addiction, jealousy, sexual dysfunctions, child problems, financial problems, and more. Family therapy is performed by psychologists, psychiatrists and family therapists. Due to the complexity of the problems and the high level of anxiety of the partners who need counseling, therapy often involves multiple sessions over a longer period of time. Very often married couples have a need for psychiatric support due to high levels of stress and depression. Research done in the United States (where family / marital therapy has been practiced for a long time) shows that marriages with frequent conflicts face an increased risk of psychological disorders and psychopathological phenomena. Studies conducted in the United States show that despite the negative effects of the stress, only a low number of marriage partners who are experiencing problems require professional help. It is estimated that only 22 percent of couples with conflicts in the marriage asked for help. The rest of them, discuss their problems with friends, family members and representatives of their religious organization. (Cathryn Hunter and Jo Commerford, CFCA PAPER NO.33 2015, Relationship Education and Counseling Recent research findings). In any case, this form is an intervention rather than a prevention of marital problems and is intended for couples who are already married.

The State strategies, in turn, involve mechanisms by which the state itself can make an influence to the future situations with marriage and divorce. Government policies can affect marriage in various indirect ways, as well as to the overall indirect effect of the number of marriages and divorces. For example, starting from the laws relating to the definition and

redefinition of marriage and divorce, through the envisaged social and health protection, and to the economic situation and employment policies .... the state can affect the status of the family and its well-being and harmony. A Comprehensive Framework for Marriage Education, Alan J. Hawkins Visiting Scholar, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and School of Family Life, Brigham Young University. Direct state influence could be achieved if the state includes marital education in educational programs and integrates it into the education system. However, it should be taken into consideration that this form implies the inclusion of the entire social system, and it depends on the financial, administrative and democratic capabilities of the state and of course it should be accomplished in the long turn.

([https://cdn.theatlantic.com/assets/media/img/mt/2014/02/239868138\\_e8005a2e88\\_b1/lead\\_large.jpg?1430159638](https://cdn.theatlantic.com/assets/media/img/mt/2014/02/239868138_e8005a2e88_b1/lead_large.jpg?1430159638)[https://cdn.theatlantic.com/assets/media/img/mt/2014/02/239868138\\_e8005a2e88\\_b-1/lead\\_large.jpg?1430159638](https://cdn.theatlantic.com/assets/media/img/mt/2014/02/239868138_e8005a2e88_b-1/lead_large.jpg?1430159638))

In terms of education, it represents a starting point in the overall marital education. For the last decade, marital education has been widespread in the United States, Canada and Australia and in some European countries. It can be found either as part of a formal education or in the form of a secondary education course or as a separate curriculum in some studies as a compulsory course before concluding marriage or as part of a religious education that is held within religious organizations. Marital education may be segregated for secondary school students, students, couples before concluding marriage, and for young couples who are already married. The purpose of this paper emphasizes the importance of marital education for high school students. That is, the focus is on marital education for adolescents.

The range of issues that encompasses marital education for students is large and includes: marriage, extramarital union, parenting, partnership, healthy sex life, family violence. Apart from the theoretical approach, it is necessary to study practical skills and tasks for better communication skills and dealing with problems.

According to Alexandra Solomon, a professor at Northwestern University's Family Institute (she includes marital education as a separate curriculum for students), the most important topics that marital education should offer to young people are:

- Communication and miscommunication (To help students learn about themselves, get them to think about who they are, what they want and what they expect from their partner and the relationship);
- Students get acquainted with possible marital conflicts. To say that they are inevitable, but they can learn how to deal better;
- Students should strengthen their communication skills guided by the idea that they are not alone in the relationship and that they should always be taken into consideration by the other party and problems should be resolved side by side with the partner;
- To learn that marriage is not just a romantic story, but to turn the expectations for a perfect marriage into a perfect marriage plan.

Solomon claims that after working with students on these topics, they themselves conclude that the idea of a perfect marriage as love at first glance is just a myth. Also, they believe that marriage requires a lot of work, but if you invest, it's worth a lot. Thus, their unrealistic expectations of marriage are replaced by practical pre-knowledge that will help them become more prepared to get married. It is equal to a kind of pre-primary training. (<http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/02/the-first-lesson-of-marriage-101-there-are-no-soul-mates/283712/>)

The positive effects of marital education are confirmed by the data of the "Marriage Educational Program", which as a service organization has been conducting marital education courses since 1980, according to which almost 79% of young people attending marital education course in marriage show better performance in relation to those who have not attended marital education. ([http://www.marriageeducation.com.au/Marriage\\_Education\\_-\\_Home.html](http://www.marriageeducation.com.au/Marriage_Education_-_Home.html))

### **Marital education in the Republic of Macedonia**

The state and its Constitution and laws provides special protection of the family, and the Centers for Social Work, through advisory and teamwork, perform matters related to special protection and assistance to the family. Awareness is rising regarding the significance of marriage for the society and the consequences of the lower number of concluded marriages and the declining birth rate. The Republic of Macedonia, following the examples of European

countries, is increasingly seeking to find measures for family protection, promotion of marriage and family values. As a result, a number of projects have been made in order to preserve family values, family expansion, the advantages of married life, etc. There is also continuous attempt to introduce and operate family and marriage counseling services. Twenty years ago there were such marriage and family counseling centers that operated within the Social Work Centers through two forms: pre-marital and marital counseling. A visit to premarital counseling was mandatory for anyone who get marry for the first time to get to know future spouses with the institute of marriage, its significance, rights and obligations. But other social challenges and vulnerable categories outweighed the need for marital counseling, which thus functioned as a proforma for young married couples, so their functioning was extinguished.

As a result of analyzes and comparative experiences from the more developed countries in this area, in 2011, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia came up with an initiative to open marriage and family counseling centers with certain adaptation in accordance with the specifics of Macedonia. Counseling centers were foreseen to focus on the possibilities of securing survival of marriage and provide advice on all aspects of family life in terms of social risk.

In 2013 and 2014, in order to provide professional and advisory assistance to the citizens, 21 counseling centers for marriage and family started to work in: Ohrid, Kicevo, Sveti Nikole, Bitola, Skopje, Kumanovo, Gostivar, Kavadarci, Prilep, Veles, Negotino, Kocani, Radovish, Resen, Gevgelija, Stip, Vinica, Tetovo, Berovo, Strumica, Kriva Palanka and Debar. By March 2015, counseling centers for marriage and family were opened in Probistip, Delcevo, Struga, Kratovo, Valandovo, Makedonski Brod, Krusevo and Demir Hisar.

The Regional Counseling Centers are intended to cover matters of the overall area of family occasions, with a particular focus on the possibilities of securing survival of the marriage in terms of social risk, but will not be limited to that, but will provide advice on all aspects of family life, among other things:

- Occurrence of challenges in parents' in practicing of parental rights in terms of meeting the developmental needs of children by strengthening parental capacities and building skills for raising and upbringing their children;
- supporting families who are already at a certain social risk, (broken partnership relationships, divorce, divorced families, conflicted families);

- Occurrence of challenge and development issues of children's, youth issues in adapting social and peer relations, overcoming conflicting relationships between children and parents (<http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/sovetuvalishte-za-brak-i-semejstvo.nspk>)

The idea of opening the counseling centers deserves salutation, but it must be noted that, first, they do not have a preventive character and, second, they do not mandate a specific population. That being said, the issues that are foreseen are dealing with the problems that are facing already married partners, have children or are dealing with the problems of dysfunctional families. Their non-binding nature implies the question of how many of the couples, who have problems, would visit these counseling centers and will ask for their help. Although the services are free, the fear of moral condemnation of Macedonian society is still present. And, despite the fact that counseling services offer, the possibility of pre-marital counseling on their own will, is almost unlikely that young people and adolescents would use it. The effect of introducing counseling on marriage and family remains unclear, as they include a small group of vulnerable categories of people.

However, marital education, which is more and more present in the last decade, has a much larger preventive dimension. In order to obtain marital knowledge before marriage and to include a larger social group, it would be appropriate to incorporate them as a course in the secondary education. It is conceived as a basic framework under which young people would build their attitudes, views and expectations about marriage and family, and then upgrade their knowledge through life. The need for centers and counseling centers to help when problems cannot be solved within the family circle is not excluded, but the assumption is that the introduction of marital education will prevent them from occurring, or at least have no fatal results.

The existence of marital education is certainly a benefit for the Republic of Macedonia. Taking into consideration the positive experiences of the countries that bring it into the education of young people, it should be introduced as a pilot project in all secondary schools in the fourth year. Lectures would take place once a week within a semester, and eventually at the end the knowledge of the students would be evaluated. Positive effects could be determined by comparing the attitudes of students related to marriage before and after completing marital education.

The education would be carried out by family educators, as educated staff from the Institute for Family Studies at the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje. Family educators own:

- General and specific knowledge in the field of family and basic concepts (household, family, marriage, childhood, parenthood);
- They have methodological skills for family analysis, factors of influence, different family forms;
- Ability to organize training and teaching for adolescents in institutional and non-institutional conditions, also to perform intuition-consultative work with students;
- They are able to recognize the problems of modern families and can determine the needs of pre-marital and marital counseling I so on.

That is why they represent the appropriate staff who would do the marital education. The interaction of family pedagogues and psychologists would add to the significance of the overall effect.

## **Conclusion**

Studies show that happiness in life of adult people is significantly conditioned by the quality of their marriage, while divorce is the second most sacrificial life event anyone can experience. Conflicts in marriage lead to various deviations such as alcoholism, drug addiction, domestic violence, rape, and other. Misunderstandings, crises, conflicts and dissatisfaction in the partner / marital relationship also negatively reflects on the parental role, resulting in mutual parental misunderstanding and disqualification, inconsistent parental education attitudes, etc. which confuses and terrifies children. The assumption brings out concern that half of married couples are likely to divorce, and many couples feel unhappy in their relationships. The damage is great not only for the individual, but for the whole society.

On the other hand, the aspiration of most young people is to have meaningful and fulfilled relationships and relations, and a happy marriage in their life as adults, remains visible. Marital education offers the opportunity to help young people to have relationships that would have the foundation to a happy and satisfying marriage. Even if marital education represents only

a baby step in the whole plea of social, economic, cultural and other factors that affect marriage, we still think it should be introduced.

Regarding the target group, the assumption is that the last year of high school is the ideal time for students to get to know the basics of marital education. Then they mature as individuals and begin to think about relationships, partners, marriage, and parenting. Until then, they are identified with their parents and the family they grew up in. If we take in a consideration that the research mentioned above confirmed that young people receive information related to marriage mainly from their parents, the clear need is for marital education to be included in the school.

Students learn about marriage within subjects such as history, sociology, economics, but do not know anything about the marriage they need to conclude. Often quick and uneasy get married, blinded by the initial love and passion and then when faced with reality they are disappointed and frustrated. They get out of that marriage as quickly as the unconscious have entered, which are the reasons for their dissatisfaction. On the other hand, adolescents grow more in an environment in which tolerance for divorce and out-of-wedlock children grows. They are exposed to the daily influence of the media and the Internet which often send confusing and wrong messages about the nature of marriage and a healthy intimate relationship. Under these circumstances, it is logical to assume that many adolescents lack a solid knowledge of what marriage means, what are the benefits of marriage to society, and how to build and maintain a healthy and stable marriage. Therefore, it is justified and necessary to introduce marital education into some form in secondary education, whereby students will acquire basic knowledge about marriage, marriage myths, gain constructive attitudes about marriage and divorce, and will receive basic guidelines and recommendations for successful relationships and marriages.

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## HOW TO MOVE TOWARDS ENQA MEMBERSHIP?-MACEDONIAN QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY AGAINST ENQA EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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### **Abstract**

Massification of higher education (HE), the entrance of new Public Management agenda and internationalization and globalization of HE prompts an increased pressure for accountability and the need for intensified quality control (Van Vught and Westerheijden 1994, Woodhouse and Stella 2006, Hopbach, 2012). In the context of expanded (state and private) higher education providers, the national quality assurance (QA) bodies, policies and practices are expected to play an important role in safeguarding the HE quality.

This paper assesses the conformity of policies and practices of the Macedonian Higher Education Accreditation and Evaluation Board (HEAEB) with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for Quality Assurance (QA) on external QA Agencies released in 2005 by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). Discussing HEAEB progress against ENQA membership criteria linked to its official status, activities, use of external procedures for QA, resources, mission, its independence and accountability procedures, it answers the question how close HEAEB is to achieve full membership. The multivariate analysis showed partial compliance at five and non-compliance at three of the total of eight ENQA standards, suggesting significant discrepancy between tasks prescribed under the HE Law and the HEAEB practices. HEAEB has not assumed yet the role for performing external evaluation of HEI, whereas ex-ante, paper-based and input oriented accreditation of higher education institutions and study programs proved to be ineffective. The research findings suggest lack of internal transparency and accountability procedures, no legal entity status and unfavorable situation with human and financial resources. This puts in question the operational independence of HEAEB and its efficiency. The paper provides recommendations for improved HEAEB effectiveness and achievement of full compliance.

**Key words:** *higher education, quality assurance, compliance, European standards and guidelines for QA.*

## **Introduction**

Massification of higher education (HE), the entrance of new Public Management agenda and internationalization and globalization of HE prompts an increased pressure for accountability and the need for intensified quality control (Van Vught and Westerheijden 1994, Woodhouse and Stella 2006, Hopbach, 2012). In the context of expanded (state and private) higher education providers, the national quality assurance (QA) bodies, policies and practices are expected to play an important role in safeguarding the HE quality. The establishment of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and of a European Register for Quality Assurance Agencies (EQAR), as well as development of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for QA has denoted a new chapter in the Bologna process.

ENQA was established in 2000 with the mission to “contribute significantly to the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of European higher education at a high level”. In May 2005, the European ministries endorsed the “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area” (ESG) document produced by ENQA and E4 group (ENQA, EUA, ESU and EURASHE) to meet the need for a common understanding of quality assurance in the EHEA. EQAR was established in 2008 as a web-based information tool on trustworthy agencies with voluntary registry based on compliance with the ESG. The ESG comprises a set of standards for agencies that wish to be considered as trustworthy and professional in the performance of their functions in the EHEA. The ESG were “designed to be applicable to all higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies in Europe, irrespective of their structure, function and size, and the national system in which they are located (ESG, p.12) [...] The standards [...] reflect basic good practice across European external quality assurance, but do not attempt to provide detailed guidance about what should be examined or how quality assurance activities should be conducted.” (ESG, p.15). Although not legally binding, “the ESG quickly turned into a compliance tool since ENQA regarded compliance with ESG as core of its membership criteria since 2004” (Hopbach, 2012). In order to become member of ENQA and to be granted admission in the EQAR, QA agencies are required to “successfully undergo an external review and to demonstrate that they sufficiently comply with the ESG” (ENQA).

This research paper assesses the conformity of the Macedonian Higher Education Accreditation and Evaluation Board (HEAEB) with the ENQA standards on external QA Agencies. It instigates HEAEB progress against eight ENQA membership criteria (2005 version) providing overview on its official status, mission, independence, the use of external quality assurance procedures for higher education, accountability procedures, its activities and resources. Illustrating some constrains under which HEAEB is working, it also draws policy conclusions and provides recommendations for improving HEAEB effectiveness and achieving full compliance.

The multivariate analysis has encompassed a combination of qualitative and quantitative data. In order to generate data needed, the paper has used primary and secondary data: analysis of the national legislation and internal HEAEB policies and procedures (HE Law, HEAEB Guidance and Books of rules for QA, etc.), survey with random sample of 237 regular, senior years students (0,54% of the student body) and 76 university teachers (2,79% of the teachers body) and a semi-structured interview with HEAEB members and other people familiar with its work. The survey was conducted at four of the five state universities in the country: the University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius”, Skopje (UKIM), the University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Bitola (UKLO), the University “Goce Delcev” in Shtip (UGD) and the State University in Tetovo (DUT). The research evidence was judged against the existent four ENQA descriptors for compliance with ESG: fully compliant; substantial compliant; partially compliant and no compliant.

### **Macedonian Quality Assurance Agency (HEAEB) against ENQA membership criteria**

The quality assurance system of Macedonian HE is regulated according to the “general model” of quality assessment (van Vught & Westerheijden, 1993) with (1) national coordinating body; (2) institutional self-evaluation, (3) peer-review external evaluation and (4) published reports model elements. The current system consists of evaluation (self-evaluation, external evaluation and evaluation of the teaching staff), of accreditation (of institutions and study programs) and of other activities for QA (university ranking). The Law on Higher Education (LHE) provides for mandatory cyclical self-evaluation by HEIs every three years, for external

evaluation by HEAEB every five years and for national ranking of HEIs (done by institution selected by the education Minister) every two years.

The research findings showed partial compliance at five and non-compliance at three of the total of eight ENQA standards, suggesting at the same time significant discrepancy between HEAEB policies and practices. HEAEB is the only agency for QA in the country that decides on accreditation for all study programs at public and private universities, of study programs for second and third cycle at scientific institutes and on accreditation for establishing new private HEIs. HEAEB provides only opinion of accreditation for new state HEIs, while the Ministry makes final decision upon the site-visit inspection. The accreditation is done based on paper, its input oriented and is done more as a formal check on whether the project embeds all the required documentation and proof that the minimum [national] norms and standards for establishing HEI and carrying out HE activity are met (premises, equipment, number of teaching staff and their qualifications etc.). HEAEB can renew and/or redraw the accreditation based on the follow-up assessment of the “quality of HEI activities, research, art and other professional work of HEI, of the university staff and study programs of the HEIs”.

Uneven treatment in accreditation of new (public versus private) HEIs may suggest that the state is not equally interested in quality of all HEI and in quality of the entire HE. This is quite challenging and causes concerns in the condition of growing number of private and (new) public HEIs and universities as well as of over 60 state funded study programs dispersed all over the country. How the state will protect over 7,000 students studying at private HEIs (2012/2013) and ensure that they will get the minimum quality? Furthermore, *“Dispersed study programs were not subject of accreditation [at all], since these study programs were already accredited by/at their home HEIs “(1: 11.10.2012).* Even we accept this as relevant reason for the study programs it remains unclear how they were opened without being examined against the minimum norms and standards for HE activity prescribed by Law. Anemic reactions of general public and particularly the academic community yielded in „quiet acceptance“these studies.

Basic policies, standards and procedures for external QA exist and are regulated by the HEAEB Book of Rules (Official Gazette no.151/2012) and Guidelines for external evaluation (Official Gazette no.67/2013), yet they are not employed in practice. The first cycle of external evaluation of all state HEIs and the only one that has been performed to date by a national QA body (the Agency for Evaluation of HE at the time) took place in the period 2002-2004. Most of

these reports (including the external evaluation reports of UKIM, UKLO and of the SEEU at Tetovo conducted by the European University Association (EUA) were released at their web sites. The outcomes of these external evaluation processes have so far no influence on the level of funding of HEIs, but should primarily serve for improvement purposes. However, based on the summative assessment grade/mark of 4 separate assessment areas denoted in HEAEB Guidelines for external evaluation, a HEI could be awarded 3 or 5 years accreditation.

The review of HEAEB mandate and list of tasks assigned by the LHE suggests a discrepancy on what HEAEB needs to do and what HEAEB really does. Five years from the merger of Evaluation Agency and Accreditation Board and from the merger of accreditation and evaluation functions into one national agency –the Higher Education Accreditation and Evaluation Board, HEAEB still performs accreditation and not external quality assurance under its core function and on a regular basis. LHE provisions from January, 2015 assigned additional task to HEAEB to arrange external state exam for students as a way to check the objectivity of the internal assessment done by their university professors. Being observed by the academia as direct interference into the university autonomy, massive students' protests organized at the beginning of 2015 by the students and professors plena challenged the external assessment policy and put new LHE on hold.

Although recognized by the LHE as “independent body” responsible for QA, HEAEB has no “legal entity” status, but operates as a/under the Department of the Ministry of Education and Science. 32,6% of the survey respondents believe that HEAEB should operate under the auspices of the universities, 31,6% within MoES and 28,7% that should operate independently from the government and the universities. As stressed by one of the interviewees, “*the Government has no interest to see HEAEB established as a separate legal entity, independent from MOES. (1: 11.10.2012)*”. The scarce resources are oftentimes stated as main obstacle. The status on May, 2014 didn't speak favorably on HEAEB available resources, both human and financial. Still, one of the interviewed HEAEB members has been optimistic that “*There is an organogram and an assessment for minimum 11 positions needed for normal functioning of HEAEB, recruitment preparations are done and this problem should be mitigated soon*” (5: 15.05.2014). At the time of the research, only 1 out of 23 HEAEB members and none of the 5 HEAEB supporting personnel have been trained in quality assurance. There has been no funding allocated for training of the HEAEB staff and donor funded projects on QA are seen as the only

opportunities for training. The annual HEAEB budget allocated by the state is not publicly available and is not “visible”, since it’s neither presented as explicit budget line /allocation in the Ministry budget, nor can be found under the budget allocated for higher education. Administration load of HEAEB is huge due to continuous reaccreditation submissions by HEIs that should provide for compliance of their study programs with the new law amendments. There is no publicly available document that describes the accreditation fee policies. The interviews with the HEAEB members revealed problems with the regular and timely payment of monthly fees to the HEAEB members, noting that *“the payments are either late or non-existing, whereas nobody really knows where the funds from the HEAEB own revenue account go.”* (4: 12.05.2014). HEAEB current premises seem to be inappropriate for the nature of its work, improperly marked and with no clear sign/directions on how to reach it. HEAEB is moderately equipped with furniture and other necessary IT equipment. Contrary to the article 77 provision of the LHE, neither Ministry, nor the HEAEB has any electronic system for maintenance of accreditation data record. These suggest that HEAEB cannot perform its task in effective and efficient manner.

HEAEB mission is defined in the article 7 of its Book of rules (Official Gazette no.151/2012) as “advancement of the system of assuring continuous quality of the higher education process”. Still, it’s not accompanied by clear and explicit goals and objectives for its work, nor there any management plan as publicly available document. Whereas ENQA standards emphasize that the agencies must be independent from Ministries, from HEIs, from the Government, from the political parties and other stakeholders, HEAEB confronts number of challenges regarding its operational efficiency, consistency and independence. Although it’s impossible and not expected HEAEB to be totally organizationally independent and isolated, its current status compromises its organizational and operational (in)dependence on the government and political parties. *“Whereas the HEAEB members are assigned for 4 years term without possibility for replacement, the members of HEAEB are changing following the change of the parties in the ruling coalition”* (1: 11.10.2012). This doesn’t imply per se that these HEAEB members lack objectivity, professionalism and honesty, yet the way they are appointed suggests that they are inclined to make decisions in line with /under the influence of their nominal political party’ philosophy/ideology. Therefore, the opinion of 26,7% of the professors and

60,7% of the students respondents from UKIM that HEAEB should be consisted of a permanent team of professionals doesn't come as a surprise.

Although LHE provisions provide for obligation to HEAEB members to report in a case of a conflict of interest, there is no indication that this practice exists. However, interviewees pointed out that HEAEB pays attention in the nomination of the experts for the accreditation commissions by excluding the experts from HEI under review for accreditation. HEAEB Book of Rules provides for the external experts to participate into the work of HEAEB without right to vote and decide. The current QA system relies entirely on domestic reviewers that in a small country like Macedonia can compromise the impartiality and objectivity of their judgment, can foster collegial solidarity and emerge quasi-competition among the HEIs. The observations of all interviewees have been that the students are insufficiently consulted in the QA processes. ...”*The two students that serve as HEAEB’ members as representatives of the Student Parliament seem to be uninterested, non-attentive, lack commitment and oftentimes do not show up at the HEAEB meetings which takes place once per month” (1: 11.10.2012).*

Accountability procedures are not strengths of HEAEB. According to the LHE (article 69) “the evaluation results on the quality of higher education are embedded into reports that are publicly available”. HEAEB publishes report on the external evaluation results that “submits to the Government of RM, to the Ministry of Education and to the HEI being subject to external evaluation” (article 71). Although one of the interviewees noted that the HEAEB prepares and submits annual reports to MOES, they are not publicly available. There are no summary periodical reports on HEAEB work, nor publicly available written documents and/or other evidence for the existence of the internal quality assurance procedures of HEAEB which include any internal and/or external feedback mechanism. HEAEB web site is still under construction (status end of May, 2014), so the list of accredited institutions is available at the web site of MOES. HEAEB Book of rules envisages a process of self-evaluation of its work (to be performed once a year) and for an external evaluation (to be performed by ENQA), but at the time of research they have not been conducted yet. There is an accreditation appeal procedure described in details in the LHE. However, the question rises on whether the Macedonian court is the right place of such appeals, or it should be other appeal body within the HEAEB.

## **Recommendations - Moving towards ENQA membership?!!**

Macedonian academic community lacks serious debate on many issues linked to the implementation of the Bologna process, including the issue of quality and system of quality assurance. A wide professional discussion is needed on QA by including all stakeholders and by encouraging the academia to walk from a reactive to proactive stance. It is necessary to rethink and revise the entire system of quality assurance, including the role, organizational setting and functionality of HEAEB. The state must ensure that all preconditions for making the HEAEB impartial and fully operational are in place. HEAEB should develop the necessary internal policies and accountability procedures as imperative for fulfilling assigned European standards for ENQA membership.

Compliance with ESG standards on the official status is essential for full membership of every national agency in ENQA. Providing HEAEB with a legal entity status is only one of the steps that should be undertaken closely linked to other standards and criteria for independence in decision making. HEAEB should have a Statute and should manage and decide upon its finances from both funding sources autonomously (those allocated from the state budget and the funds received from the accreditation fees paid by the HEIs). HEAEB should prepare a long term development strategy and a management plan that will explore in details the initial steps vital for independent and professional functioning. There is a need of revision of organizational setting and for commencing of a Managing Board as highest governing body of HEAEB that will be elected by the Macedonian Parliament upon the nomination of the Interuniversity conference, university Senates, students' organizations and the Government. The accreditation and external evaluation functions within HEAEB should be separated in two different departments. Because of the closer linkage with the higher education qualifications and its recognition, on a mid to a long term, an option for transferring ERIC/NARIC center under HEAEB should be explored, to become integral and organizational part of HEAEB. It is necessary to start establishing a department for analytics that will gather and analyze data for higher education system in RM, as well as a separate appealing commission or (small) department that will review appeals to HEAEB accreditation decisions.

Without adequate human and financial resources, HEAEB cannot progress in the development of the quality assurance procedures and achieve greater work efficiency. Based on

the number of positions and staff competences determined by the organizational structure assessment, HEAEB should develop a comprehensive professional development plan and receive the necessary funding for systematic training of HEAEB members in accreditation and in external evaluation. The staff and the evaluators should be given permanent re-training. Further efforts are needed to equip HEAEB with necessary technical equipment and electronic data supporting system. This will enable a linkage with the existing electronic systems and data bases available at HEIs/universities as I-Know system and in future, with the data based on the teaching and research faculty staff engaged in higher education and research. As inevitable in the process of building quality culture, HEAEB should develop its own internal quality assurance procedures, using the PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) principles. They should depict the workflow of documents and procedures, as well as the way of receiving and processing feedback information from the involved experts, the institutions and the students as key stakeholders in these processes. As envisaged with its Book of Rules, a Code of conduct should be developed together with a clear conflict of interest policy. Remuneration of HEAEB members, employees, experts and ad-hock engaged persons must be regulated with an internal book of rules.

Accreditation of HEIs in Macedonia cannot be seen as warranty of obtained quality standards of study programs, but rather as warranty that the minimum defined norms and criteria for establishing HE and for practicing HE activities have been met. Continuous reaccreditation of already accredited study programs only for the purpose of formal compliance with the frequent law amendments is unnecessary and twists the real purpose and the meaning of reaccreditation. Reaccreditation of the study programs should be based on periodical evaluation findings (that doesn't exist at the moment in RM). 5 years period foreseen with the Law is ideal period for revalidation/renewal of accreditation. HEAEB needs to consolidate and advance its existing activities (accreditation of institutions and programs) and to gradually introduce new activities - audit (in some countries known as periodic evaluation) and external evaluation of HEIs that will contribute to advancing the entire system of quality assurance in Macedonian higher education. The exchange of experience and cooperation with other European agencies for quality assurance in accreditation and recognition of joint degree programs qualifications is also needed. HEAEB should consult the methodologies and protocols for accreditation of these programs developed by the QA agencies in other countries, but also should consult current initiatives and best practices from the unified European methodology for the Joint Degree programs of the European

Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA), including A Guide to Assessing the Quality of Internationalisation, as well as the Guidelines for Good Practice for Awarding Joint Degree. The participation in regional and European projects and initiatives together with other QA agencies should be encouraged that will improve the knowledge of the HEAEB staff, but also its visibility, transparency and its public image.

Along with the consolidation of resources and current activities, HEAEB should focus on piloting the external evaluation and strengthening the capacities of its employees that in two to three years' time will be equipped to manage the process of external evaluation. HEAEB should demonstrate consistency in the way the procedures are implemented as well as focus on regular external evaluation and cyclical evaluation reports. The first preparatory step in the external evaluation processes should be developing and disseminating a Guide for higher education quality that should include the ENQA European standards and guidelines for QA translated into Macedonian, a vocabulary and/or a glossary of all internationally accepted and used terms related to the QA processes, as well as the book of rules and legal acts that address different aspects of these processes. This could become a basic resource pack for initial support of HEIs. The glossary needs to be developed in close consultation with education experts and linguists since its development also assumes creating new (currently non-existing) education terminology. HEAEB should also create its own pool of experts, a data-base or a register of experts from different scientific areas with experience in evaluation processes (domestic and foreign). The existing lists of experts for regulated professions of EURASHE should be taken into account. The involvement of external reviewers outside Macedonia will require of the HEIs to conduct the self-evaluations and reviews in English which includes additional translation costs. Yet, HEIs should consider accepting this extra burden as a step towards increased transparency and credibility of the interview panels and of the external evaluation process. The similar approach should be applied for the students' representatives in the evaluation panels. The accent should be put on improvement and not (only) on the control of quality.

In order to demand transparency and accountability from the HEIs, HEAEB should demonstrate accountability by itself. It is critically for HEAEB to get involved into its self-evaluation as pre-requisite for external evaluation and full membership application at ENQA, which will help to all people involved with HEAEB (the administrative staff and the HEAEB members) to reflect on and improve its work. A functional and user-friendly web site is urgently

needed where all evaluation, annual and other reports deriving from HEAEB' work will be published and shared with the HEAEB perspective Board and other stakeholders (MoES, the Parliament of RM, the universities), as part of its routine practices. Last but not the least, HEAEB has to start preparing public analytical reports on Macedonian higher education system and of the quality assurance system.

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## **SOURCES OF STRESS AND MOTIVATION FOR WORKING STUDENTS**

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### **Abstract**

Previous theoretical and empirical achievements in the field of educational psychology indicate that most research and studies are directed towards students, while there is a lack of research on the teacher's role and status in the educational process.

If we regard teaching as an interactive process in which the leading actors are the teachers and the students, we must not disregard the impact of the ones on the others. It should be particularly highlighted that the teacher's behaviour has an effect on: the student's security, the level of anxiety, the value system, the mood, the adaptation and inadaptation, the academic success, the emotional balance as well as other types of behaviour.

This research opens perspectives to many questions concerning teachers' professional development and the characteristics they need to possess in order to fulfill their professional role successfully. The previous theoretical and empirical achievements in the field of educational psychology show that most research focuses on the students in the teaching process, thus neglecting the role of the teacher and their status in the educational process.

**Key words:** Profesional development of teachers, sources of stress, motivation for work.

### **Sources of Stress and Motivation for Working with Students**

The teaching process is an everyday interaction with the school administration, the students and the parents and it requires teachers to play various roles and spend many hours working hard on a daily basis (lectures, maintaining discipline during instruction, assessment, questioning, meeting with parents, etc). That is the reason why the specified activities

(creativity, class management and implementation of teaching methods) might be called into question if the teacher experiences a high level of stress (Krnjaic, 2003).

Over the past twenty years, professional stress has increasingly become a problem particularly faced by teachers, but also by many others whose professions entail helping other people. Research has shown that 25%-30% of teachers from all over the world are exposed to high level of stress, which results in serious consequences such as: job dissatisfaction, health problems and emotional exhaustion (Pop-Jordanova, 2005).

Generally, when talking about sources of stress among teachers, Vizek-Vidović (1990) underlines that this refers to chronic stressors which exist in our social communities to a larger or lesser extent. Research on stress reveals a large number of stressors among teachers, most of which are the same, regardless of whether they occur among teachers from urban or other areas.

Most common sources of stress among teachers appear to be the following: role conflict, role ambiguity, workload, bad social support from colleagues and the principal, lack of opportunity to make progress in their job, etc.

Analysing the results from a significant amount of empirical research, Boyle et al. (1995) indicate that there are at least four major dimensions of teacher stress: student misbehaviour, time/resource difficulties, professional recognition needs and poor relationships.

This is what gives rise to the fundamental question to which this paper will attempt to give an answer: *Is there a connection between the sources of stress among primary school teachers and secondary school teachers and the motivation for working with students?*

## **Research**

The sample of this research comprises 208 teachers from three primary schools in Skopje (PS Rajko Zinzifov, PS Stiv Naumov and PS Zivko Brajkovski – 103 teachers) and three secondary schools in Skopje (SSS Nikola Karev, SSS Josip Broz Tito and SSS Gjorgji Dimitrov – 105 teachers) from Skopje (Table 1).

**Table 1. An overview of the research participants according to sex and job position (primary and secondary education)**

	Primary education		Secondary education		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Male	34	33.01	41	39.05	75	36.10
Female	69	66.99	64	60.95	133	63.90
Total	103	100.00	105	100.00	208	100.00

In order to examine the sources of stress and motivation for working with students among teachers, the following instruments were applied:

- A scale for measuring teacher stress created on the basis of a research conducted by Boyle et al (1995) as well as in the research of Griffith et al. (1999), and which was later translated for the needs of a research conducted in Zadar, Croatia. The scale comprises 25 questions divided into three subscales by using a factor analysis – **student misbehaviour, professional recognition needs and workload.**
- Teacher motivation scale for instruction of students created by Dragana Petrovic in 1993. This scale examines the teachers' motivation for working with students and instruction and it consists of 10 statements regarding the satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the possibilities in terms of working with students.

Before analysing the results of this research in accordance with the established hypotheses, the data concerning the descriptive characteristics of primary and secondary education teachers who were part of the sample will be presented.

Table 2 gives an overview of the arithmetic means, the median and the standard deviations of the three basic variables in this research on secondary school teachers and primary school teachers. It can be noticed that all scores referring to the sources of stress are above the theoretical average score and they are almost identical with the median, which means that more than 50% of teachers are exposed to sources of stress in their workplace. It is important to underline that the total score of sources of stress among teachers ( $M=84.62$ ) is much higher in comparison with the theoretical average score ( $M=75$ ). Teachers' motivation for working with students is also on a high level ( $M=34.28$ ), which is above the theoretical average score ( $M=30$ ).

**Table 2. An overview of the arithmetic mean (M), the median (Mdn) and the standard deviation (Sd) of the sources of stress and the motivation for working with students among primary education teachers and secondary education teachers (N=208)**

	Student misbehaviour	Unsatisfied professional recognition need	Workload	Sources of stress	Motivation for work
<b>M</b>	20.12	36.89	24.27	84.62	34.28
<b>Mdn</b>	20.00	37.00	24.50	85.00	34.00
<b>Sd</b>	3.93	6.23	4.00	12.19	6.59

**Table 3. An overview of the arithmetic mean (M), the median (Mdn) and the standard deviation (Sd) of the sources of stress and the motivation for working with students among primary education teachers (N=103) and secondary education teachers (N=105)**

		Student misbehaviour	Unsatisfied professional recognition need	Workload	Sources of stress	Motivation for work
<b>Primary</b>	<b>M</b>	20.61	37.53	24.60	86.21	33.32
	<b>Mdn</b>	21.00	38.00	25.00	88.00	32.00
	<b>Sd</b>	4.35	6.53	4.30	13.44	7.27
<b>Secondary</b>	<b>M</b>	19.65	36.27	23.95	83.05	35.22
	<b>Mdn</b>	20.00	36.00	24.00	82.00	35.00
	<b>Sd</b>	3.43	5.89	3.66	10.66	5.71

Table 3 gives an overview of the arithmetic means for primary school teachers and secondary schools teachers respectively. It can be noticed that primary school teachers have a higher total score in terms of the sources of stress (M=86.21) but lower scores in terms of the motivation for working with students (M=33.32), in comparison with the whole sample.

In contrast, secondary school teachers have a lower total score in terms of the sources of stress (M=83.05) but higher scores in terms of the motivation for working with students (M=35.22), in comparison with the whole sample.

The main hypothesis of this research states that there is a connection between the sources of stress and the motivation for working with students. In order to establish a potential connection between these variables, the Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated.

**Table 4. A connection between the sources of stress among primary school teachers and secondary school teachers and the motivation for working with students (N=208)**

	Student misbehaviour	Unsatisfied professional recognition need	Workload	Sources of stress	Motivation for work
Student misbehaviour	1	,432(**)	,414(**)	,698(**)	-,206(**)
Unsatisfied professional recognition need	,432(**)	1	,593(**)	,898(**)	-,251(**)
Workload	,414(**)	,593(**)	1	,795(**)	-,176(*)
Sources of stress	,698(**)	,898(**)	,795(**)	1	-,281(**)
Motivation for work	-,206(**)	-,251(**)	-,176(*)	-,281(**)	1

df=206

\*Significant correlation on level  $p < 0.05$ \*Significant correlation on level  $p < 0.01$ 

The first sub-hypothesis states that in comparison with secondary school teachers, primary school teachers assess themselves as less motivated for working with students and they have fewer sources of stress. This table gives an overview of the differences between the primary school teachers and secondary school teachers in terms of the motivation for working with students and the sources of stress, calculated by using a t-test for determining the significance of the differences between the groups.

**Table 5. Significance of differences between primary school teachers and secondary school teachers in terms of the self-assessment of efficiency, motivation for working with students and sources of stress (N=208)**

	School	N	M	Sd	t-test	p
Student misbehaviour	Primary	103	20.61	4.35		
	Secondary	105	19.65	3.43	1.757	$p < 0.05$
Unsatisfied professional recognition need	Primary	103	37.53	6.53		
	Secondary	105	36.27	5.89	1.459	$p > 0.05$
Workload	Primary	103	24.60	4.30		
	Secondary	105	23.95	3.66	1.172	$p > 0.05$
Sources of stress	Primary	103	86.21	13.44		
	Secondary	105	83.05	10.66	1.878	$p > 0.05$
Motivation for working with students	Primary	103	33.32	7.27		
	Secondary	105	35.22	5.71	-2.105	$p < 0.05$

df = 206

 $p < 0.05$ ;  $t = 1.65$  $p < 0.01$ ;  $t = 2.36$ 

The obtained results reveal that, statistically, there are differences between the two compared groups only in terms of the student misbehaviour ( $t = 1.757$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and in terms of the teachers' motivation for working with students ( $t = -2.105$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The acquired differences are

in favour of the secondary school teachers, which means that they are more motivated for working with students and the student misbehaviour is less of a source of stress for them.

The second sub-hypothesis states that there are differences in terms of the sources of stress, the motivation for working with students among primary school teachers and secondary school teachers with different marital status. Table 6 gives an overview of the differences between teachers with different marital status (married, divorced, single, widow/er) in terms of the sources of stress and the motivation for working with students, calculated by using a one-way ANOVA.

**Table 6. Differences between teachers with different marital status in terms of the sources of stress, motivation for working with students and self-assessment of the teachers' efficiency, calculated by using ANOVA (N=208)**

		N	M	$\sigma$	F-test	p
<b>Student misbehaviour</b>	Married	109	20.14	3.26		
	Divorced	21	19.27	4.25		
	Single	64	21.01	3.61		
	Widow/er	14	19.85	3.40		
	Total	208	20.12	3.93	2.12	>.05
<b>Unsatisfied professional recognition need</b>	Married	109	37.74	6.29		
	Divorced	21	36.02	5.91		
	Single	64	35.67	6.40		
	Widow/er	14	36.87	6.98		
	Total	208	36.89	6.23	1.80	>.05
<b>Workload</b>	Married	109	23.13	4.25		
	Divorced	21	24.17	3.91		
	Single	64	24.43	4.89		
	Widow/er	14	23.46	3.66		
	Total	208	24.27	4.00	2.26	>.05
<b>Sources of stress</b>	Married	109	86.61	8.76		
	Divorced	21	85.87	11.07		
	Single	64	84.84	14.94		
	Widow/er	14	83.16	9.14		
	Total	208	84.62	11.19	2.15	>.05
<b>Motivation for working with students</b>	Married	109	33.62	6.18		
	Divorced	21	33.34	6.11		
	Single	64	34.95	5.38		
	Widow/er	14	35.93	7.18		
	Total	208	34.28	6.59	2.17	>.05

df = 3

p<0.05; F=2.60

p<0.01; F=3.78

The data presented in Table 6 show that there are no differences between the primary school teachers and the secondary school teachers with different marital status in terms of the sources of stress and the motivation for working with students.

The third sub-hypothesis states that there are differences in terms of the sources of stress and the motivation for working with students among primary school teachers and secondary school teachers of different age. Table 7 gives an overview of the differences between teachers of different age, grouped into four categories (20-30 years old, 31-40 years old and 51-60 years old) in terms of the sources of stress and the motivation for working with students, calculated by using a one-way ANOVA.

Table 7 shows that primary school teachers and secondary school teachers of different age differ only in terms of the workload ( $F=3.67$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and the older the teachers, the more the workload appears as a larger source of stress.

**Table 7. Differences between teachers with different marital status in terms of the sources of stress, motivation for working with students and self-assessment of the teachers' efficiency, calculated by using ANOVA (N=208)**

		N	M	$\sigma$	F-test	p
<b>Student misbehaviour</b>	20-30 years old	89	19.41	3.26		
	31-40 years old	45	19.72	3.25		
	41-50 years old	60	21.27	2.61		
	51-60 years old	14	21.68	4.40		
	Total	208	20.12	3.93	2.12	>.05
<b>Unsatisfied professional recognition need</b>	20-30 years old	89	36.47	6.29		
	31-40 years old	45	36.52	6.91		
	41-50 years old	60	36.67	5.40		
	51-60 years old	14	36.79	7.98		
	Total	208	36.89	6.23	1.80	>.05
<b>Workload</b>	20-30 years old	89	23.13	4.25		
	31-40 years old	45	24.17	3.91		
	41-50 years old	60	24.43	5.89		
	51-60 years old	14	24.46	4.66		
	Total	208	24.27	4.00	3.67	<.05
<b>Sources of stress</b>	20-30 years old	89	83.11	11.76		
	31-40 years old	45	84.27	11.07		
	41-50 years old	60	85.14	10.94		
	51-60 years old	14	86.36	9.14		
	Total	208	84.62	11.19	2.27	>.05
<b>Motivation for working with students</b>	20-30 years old	89	33.32	6.18		
	31-40 years old	45	33.34	5.11		
	41-50 years old	60	34.56	7.38		
	51-60 years old	14	35.62	6.18		
	Total	208	32.28	6.59	2.31	>.05

df = 3

$p<0.05$ ;  $F=2.60$

$p<0.01$ ;  $F=3.78$

The fourth sub-hypothesis states that in comparison with female teachers, male teachers assess themselves as less motivated for working with students and they have fewer sources of stress. Table 8 gives an overview of the differences between male teachers and female teachers in terms of the motivation for working with students and the sources of stress, calculated by using a t-test for determining the significance of the differences between the groups.

The results reveal that, statistically, there are significant differences between the two compared groups (male teachers and female teachers) only in terms of the subfactor of sources of stress – student misbehaviour ( $t=-2.785$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and in terms of the total score of sources of stress among teachers ( $t=-2.083$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). The calculated differences indicate that male teachers are more exposed to stress, and they particularly consider student misbehavior as a source of stress.

**Table 8. Significance of differences between male teachers and female teachers in terms of self-assessment of efficiency, motivation for working with students and sources of stress (N=208)**

	Sex	N	M	Sd	t-test	p
Student misbehaviour	Male	75	19.13	4.05		
	Female	133	20.69	3.76	<b>-2.785</b>	<b>p&lt;0.01</b>
Unsatisfied professional recognition need	Male	75	36.37	5.91		
	Female	133	37.19	6.41	-.913	p>0.05
Workload	Male	75	23.60	4.59		
	Female	133	24.65	3.58	-1.535	p>0.05
Sources of stress	Male	75	82.29	12.93		
	Female	133	85.93	11.60	<b>-2.083</b>	<b>p&lt;0.05</b>
Motivation for working with students	Male	75	34.90	6.43		
	Female	133	33.93	6.67	1.024	p>0.05

df = 206

p<0.05; t=1.65

p<0.01; t=2.36

## Conclusion

To a large extent, the results have confirmed the assumptions that the three examined variables are in a constant mutual interaction and they participate in the creation of the complex image of a successful teacher. It is, however, important to underline that as any other research, this one has its own limitations and flaws as well but it also contains recommendations for the future researchers in this field.

In addition, in order to acquire more valid data, it is useful to expand the entire group of teachers through examination and comparison by including higher education teachers, teachers from rural and urban environment, teachers working in private and state schools, etc.

On the other hand, some factors which might have an indirect or direct impact on the three examined variables could be included as additional variables: teachers' salary, their nationality, whether their employment is regulated with a permanent employment contract, how many hours weekly they spend in delivering lectures, do they educate themselves additionally and do they attend any forms of professional development, etc.

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## CONTENT OF AESTHETIC EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

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### **Abstract**

Aesthetic education is an integral part and necessary condition for the versatile and harmonious development of personality. Through it methodically and systematically are being developed the skills for: observation, experience evaluation and creation of beauty in art, nature, life and work.

Each person at birth receives a certain disposition, whose development depends on a number of external factors (education, work, family, preschools, school, etc.). Contents for aesthetic education are all around us and are best understood and adopted in primary school.

Modern school emphasizes the importance of proper development of aesthetic and creative abilities of students in all ages and levels of education adopting the curriculum, means of visual communication and enrichment of the daily lives of students with cultural events and arts, in which actively and creative, participate.

School as an educational institution operates in the esthetic upbringing of many aspects : curricular and extracurricular activities , visits and meetings , exhibitions, publishing, film , theater and musical productions .

Curricula for aesthetic education are located in all subjects who regularly are represented in the teaching process and further develop the aesthetic education and its important benchmarks.

**Keywords:** *aesthetic education, curriculum, teaching content, subjects , student.*

## **Introduction**

Aesthetic education along with other areas of educational work makes one equal whole. It is not and cannot be an activity that is governed by few separate sides of psychic life and from some special and separate spheres of social life, but it includes the whole personality of man and including the main a different manifestation of the individual and social life.

The successful implementation of the aesthetic aspect in the education of the individual provides man with enriched unique influences from all aspects of education, that means than the aesthetic education is realized through intellectual education, physical and moral. With the aesthetic education we mean the development process of the skills in understanding, perception, evaluation and creation of the beautiful (content, artistic form, the development process of artistic attitude towards the truth) .

Purpose of aesthetic education is to help the individual to understand and evaluate art, culture, beautiful and the less beautiful. In this context in our society and with the beginning of the democratic process by identifying the factors, issues and the importance of this educational aspect should be selected pedagogical ways of aesthetic formation of the individual. The essential purpose of aesthetic education that is very well reflected in its content, is the affirmation, keeping the aesthetic values.

The concept of aesthetics is very much wider than aesthetic education. Although the concept of aesthetic education here is very limited from the aesthetics, their values are unique. So the goal of aesthetic education existing the sincerity of the man and we put that in a reciprocal relationship with art. This relationship was further expressed by Balzac who says "The task of art is not to copy the nature, but to express it."

The beautiful is the lens and the supporting beam of aesthetic education, without the beautiful cannot imagine any art and any aesthetics. In comparison with other aspects of education, aesthetic education and its realization requires aesthetic - spiritual motivation. On the other hand, this descend the justification for following of the logic for experiencing the beautiful in all spheres of manifestation, and within all the talents of the individual. Right here there is the importance of the educator in empowering of the children for perception, creation and appreciation of aesthetic phenomenon, no matter where it is realized and where it is expressed.

The basic condition for the formation of this important dimension of the student is systematic and permanent work in the education of taste and aesthetic expressions. However, primarily is the establishment of basic categories of aesthetics, the beautiful, glorious, the lowly, the comedy, the tragedy, the less beautiful and more.

The principle from which the educator needs to start for the formation of aesthetic concepts and categories is different but it is important the objectivity, the reality, the knowledge of artistic creation, the aesthetic experience, painting of the phenomenon, the event and its expression by forms, tools and appropriate ways for the age of children.

Dominant was the thinking, that for a long time with the aesthetic education should be started in the period of the intellectual maturity of the child, however the new concepts of the pedagogy highlight the fundamental importance of aesthetic education starting and requires that with aesthetic culture need to be started from the earliest days of the child. Now, aesthetic culture has become an integral part of modern life, so as the need to start aesthetic education from the earliest childhood, as an integral part of the general educational process.

Modern pedagogy with the esthetic education understands the process of development of the skills in understanding, experiencing, revealing, valuation and for creation of the beautiful specifically the process of development of the aesthetic values towards truth. Today, the content of aesthetic education, when are developed new relationships and human freedom and when are established democratic relationships with new concepts and visions before the pedagogy arises a sharp problem with essential importance.

This content should be a indicator that strongly presents the emotions, creates aesthetic condition, nice and a situation with values, develops the fantasy, creates truly emotional images. The content of aesthetic education as an image of value allows awakening of the feelings of forms, lines, constructions, voices, colors, , shapes , movement, expressions , language of the time and modern language, poetic verse of similarities which revive and initiates aesthetic ideal, to find aesthetic beauty. Also need to be accepted that not a moment passes not to educate the beautiful, to affirm the value of art, music, literature, theater, the film making, visual arts, architecture which together express the aesthetic experience.

### **Approach to the problem**

Art has always been the most important mean of aesthetic education. With the emergence of new concepts of aesthetic education, the art gets great significance as a mean of formation of man and his versatile, complete development. Therefore, the pedagogy is appointed a task scientifically to clear up its influence to the intellectual, emotional and moral development of man. John Dewey sees art as a “form of experience because every creation is associated with the experience. Art is shaped energy and aesthetic is anything that causes pleasure without thinking”.

Art is an object of study of aesthetics which is commonly referred to as the science of beauty, especially in the arts as the fullest expression of beauty. Art, according to various definitions, produces beautiful, it is express, it provides forms and causes aesthetic experience. It is not an act of nature, but is artificial and aesthetic, it is a work that causes aesthetic experience. Today aesthetic education in the conditions of modern life gets a new dimensions and a new role in the life of every individual and the society as a whole. The new recognitions of the position of man in modern society firstly express the development of creative abilities and their contribution to the development of science, technology and culture because almost every human activity and every profession requires more aesthetic taste, creativity and inventiveness that primarily, acquires aesthetic education.

Modern concepts of aesthetic education no longer start from the position that aesthetic culture is characterized only by mature person, but it is a factor for the development of physical and mental abilities of the child. Reasons for this is that every child, more or less, has the ability to observe, experiences, values and creates the beautiful. Because the modern school during classes and other extracurricular activities, especially in artistic subjects in the lower grades (language, art, music education) has the task to familiarize students with the sacred art and with the beauty from their environment (natural and social relations).

It will enable students at the beginning of their schooling to adopt appropriate knowledge, to form appropriate habits and in that way to develop the aesthetic abilities as a condition for the formation of its initial aesthetic experience.

### **Development of aesthetic capabilities**

Capabilities are determine the characters of the personality (or disposition) that enable success in the performance of certain activities. In cognitive sphere are sensory, material and intellectual abilities and they are important for cognitive and intellectual activities. In the affective domain of personality, they are emotions, while in cognitive domain they are motives. Regarding definition for aesthetic education, according Pedagogical dictionary (1967) aesthetic education is defined as education in general, consists in development of the abilities for remarks, understanding, experience, evaluation of the beauty in nature, art and social environment, and development of the needs and capabilities of creation of beautiful. In a broad sense, the task of teaching is to develop and establish student sense of aesthetic values that are located around it in everyday life (objects and phenomena) in the nature and parts of art.

In this way the established aesthetic capabilities can be defined as a state of sensory abilities of the student, while the characters of aesthetic personality as the ability of their coordination with consciousness, mind and desire.

### **Developing capabilities for aesthetic perception**

Aesthetic perception is lively activity in which participate sensory organs, nervous and mental processes, emotions and wishful effort. This relationship is differently explained by aesthetics because the process of perception is regarded in terms of the values of art, the aesthetic act of the observer and his feelings.

Developing capability for perception of the beautiful is one of the tasks of aesthetic education. Vuksanovich correctly notes, " so we can enjoy the beauty of nature, the beauty of form, sounds, color, beauty, painting, sculpture, musical compositions, artistic prose, poetry, dramatic work, ballet, movie, so we can experience these beauties, we should have our own attitude toward them- must be previously acquainted, noticed, we must be aware of their existence and quality " (Vuksanovich, 1990; 156).

It should be added that are necessary quite specific knowledge of each specified area to develop and for ability to notice the beauty in those areas. No one without certain knowledge of any area will not be able to notice the aesthetic values of some art work, though the beauty of

nature and to enjoy in them. The perception evolves with planned work with the students. Their perception is managed by the teacher. They observe and implement parts of nature and notice the beauty in that they are observing. Thus are developed the observation skills and perceiving of the aesthetic values. By watching some movie, an analysis is made in the aspect of scientific knowledge about it, are noticed the aesthetic values and on that basis are experienced and assessed their quality. In the school the teacher discusses with the students about literary work, play or movie from various aspects and in this process students achieve knowledge of these forms of human creation and in terms of aesthetic values.

Without all of it, we will be passive observers of the beauty that surrounds us in nature or social reality that is around us. Thus for fostering the skills for identifying aesthetic values requires knowledge of various areas and that awakens the basis for the development of capabilities in this area. This task belongs to the rational component of the human psyche, and according to that all of this is just education. There is nothing beyond that, what we would might call education.

The development of capabilities for perception, rhythmic and melodic ranges of early schooling takes place in stages. An example is the use of oral dictation, and that just in a simple melodic, rhythmic twists in the form of incentives. The role of perception and memory is especially important as well as the significance of the role of exercise. The exercises should begin with children's songs that are interesting and matching the vocal abilities of the child.

### **Aesthetic experience**

Aesthetic experience depends on aesthetic perception, emotional and aesthetic taste. Emotions are a basic component of the experience while the result is maturing and learning. Children's experiences depend on age, personality traits, emotions and egocentrism. Mainly it is subjectively stressed, emotionally and impulsively, because the children's thinking is self-centered, to judge on itself, while difficult to judgment of others. Researching the perception of artworks, R. Indargen (Indargen 1977) provides that "the aesthetic experience takes place in stages that follow behind one another and lead to incomparable understanding of artwork or aesthetic object.

This experience can be emotional or they reflect or mutually entangle. Ingarden states that experience begins with awakening or by aesthetic original emotions, then it follows an active creative relationship that understands its recognition as a quality, while the third phase understands conceptual acceptance of quality and soothing of the experienced. "

According to S. Bezdanov (1983) aesthetic experience means perception of aesthetic form that specifies in a kind of perception of the parts as a whole and that in a perception of the artwork for its immediate values (because of itself). Bezdanov indicates that aesthetic experience in itself contains tension (cure) that comes with the resolution. Stated expectation and relief is felt like satisfaction (experience), whose intensity depends on how much that work means to us (what is the meaning of the subject and aesthetic forms of artwork.)

Creating capabilities for aesthetic experience is the following task of this field. This task refers to the emotional area in the perceived aesthetic values from any area should trigger in us to feel joy, serenity, flight, thrilling, satisfaction. Simultaneously with the acquisition of knowledge certain areas of the theory of literature developed capability for perceiving the aesthetic values of literary works and the abilities of its experience. The right experience is possible only when we are aware of the aesthetic values of art. Acknowledgments of aesthetic values in general is the ability to introduce aesthetic values in the presented case at the individual that causes emotional feeling.

The role of the teacher, firstly is in the challenging of the experience and its cultivation is widespread. Experience as an internal motivation, spontaneous or challenging emotion is an important didactic principle in teaching. Any experience " caused " by external influence allows the teacher to see students' abilities that allows consideration of the characteristics of the student.

### **Development of aesthetic feelings**

Aesthetic sensitivity (sensitiveness) is the most important disposition and most important kind for the aesthetic capabilities. Aesthetic sensibility belongs in the sphere of effective response to the aesthetic values of art work and as such directly effect son the development capabilities for aesthetic valuation, preferences and aesthetic taste. These kinds of reactive potentials are the basis for aesthetic education and all the activities that enable the student to enrich his visual sensibility and thus to exercise its aesthetic experience.

Aesthetic taste as a permanent disposition and as sum of all preferences is the result of qualitative observation, greater meaning and understanding, qualitative experience and evaluation. This experience of the value of the artwork is in the form of pleasure which also presents an act of consciousness. Besides the feeling, the taste is conditional by the aesthetic education, cultivation of the emotions and general culture. Learning, repetition, age and the intelligence are also important factors for the formation of taste. In the learning it is important the influence of the elderly, especially the teacher because he is often the first and the only who acquaints the student with the beautiful and the value of the artwork.

Aesthetic preference is an elementary form of affective response to the aesthetic value of the artwork, form of aesthetic behavior caused by the express features of the artwork. It involves short-term evaluation of the fancies and aesthetic act of the observer of the artwork in whose basis is aesthetic experience which is caused by feelings values . From the opinion of the descriptive phenomenology, M. Gajger (according to: M. Uzelac 1993) it determines aesthetic experience as a mixture of liking and enjoyment, in which prevails the point of liking, then a moment of pleasure. Gajger marks the liking as a response of the subject, as traditional stance that indicates the aesthetic value of the subject and as an activity of the entity in deciding. Unlike liking, aesthetic experience (satisfaction) is not the answer, but emotional reaction from the liked object and as such it is an act of awareness of what that work means to us.

In the lower grades there are courses where students acquire knowledge how to feel and perceive aesthetic values and at the same time to develop the aesthetic abilities. In this paper we will focus on the aesthetic values of some subjects that we think will best affect the aesthetic experience and education of the student. Modern school in teaching process and other extracurricular activities, especially in artistic subjects in the lower grades has the task to introduce the students to the world of art and beauty in all environments. It will enable students at the beginning of their schooling to adopt certain knowledge, to forma propriety habits and so to develop the aesthetic abilities as a condition for the formation of its initial aesthetic experience.

Modern concept of aesthetic education represents the introduction of the students from the lower grades with all kinds of arts, because it is the only way that the art becomes an integral part of the general culture and the aesthetic education of each individual.

## **Modern concepts of aesthetic education**

### **Music as means of aesthetic education**

Music as an area or field of art, as a special language of art belongs to the field of music aesthetics, whose main task is to study the aesthetic properties of music, in terms of aesthetic knowledge (sensory experience) and rational knowledge that implies that music except the hearing organs it achieves to mind.

Music with its expressions acts strongly to the senses and so determines the relation of man with the reality. This confirms the opinion of D. Mitrovic (1967) who believes that "music from all arts is closest to the human heart and its experiences and that develop as the human experiences in their depth and power. Such action only have the musical works that belong to the art of music, whose hearing does not take us away from the life, but rather contributes to its quality. Therefore aesthetic musical experience as the primary need of the child and one of the primary forms of childhood experience, it is an important factor not only for the musical development but also for the esthetic education.

Musical sense of the quality of the music or its performance is significant definition and necessary condition for musicality by which the musicality and the "musical talent" as synonyms determinethe musical ability at the highest level. The development of musical emotions and musicality depend on early musical experience, from the motivation in the family. Parents who are living with the music, they sing and play to the children, enrich their musical experience and so develop their musical sense which is the basis for the development of their musicality.

The aesthetic sense of the value of the music as a disposition represents a condition for the formation of aesthetic taste or aesthetic taste as a form of response to the value of the music that shows the level of development of aesthetic feelings.

Aesthetic and musical taste as a permanent disposition and as the entirety of all preferences is due to the quality experience of the music, greater importance and understanding of the music, qualitative experience and evaluation of the music. The student his first emotional relationship towards music is hearing from the teacher who introduces him with the beautiful and the value of music, from which will depend his attitude towards music in the future. In the early grades the musical taste is still undetermined due to insufficient musical experience, which shows that taste as part of affective development, can be developed under the influence of the

stimulating environment, cultivation of the aesthetic experience of music and through the help of qualitative music information. This is possible because students are flexible and willing to accept a variety of information and views from adults. Listening to artistic music is the primary task for enrichment of the student's musical experience that will contribute to the development and formation of musical taste at pupils.

Music hearing is the basis of all activities and its development is one of the primary tasks of music education. The hearing is inherited disposition that exists in every healthy child, but not with equal measure. Like before the school, also in the lower grades, the development of hearing and rhythm is based on various games that help the children to overhear observe and recognize different voices, listening and musical tones. The aim of these games is transfer from the accidental to the conscious listening, development of interest for attention to sound phenomena, auditory attention and memory of sound impressions.

Singing is also a form of musicianship that encourages aesthetic experience rich in emotion and influences in formation of the aesthetic taste. The song as a unity of poetry and the music develops musical sensitivity, musical skills and speaking skills. The song should be the engine of fantasy and through the string of musical aesthetic elements of melody, rhythm, dynamics and tempo introduces the child to the aesthetic experience. Choosing the correct track through proper realization and its inclusion in the various curricula in children will develop aesthetic values. As part of the curriculum, listening to music has the task to develop the habit of listening to music, to encourage aesthetic experience and thus to contribute to the understanding of musical messages and their valuation, due to the development of aesthetic experience. Any form of aesthetic expression in the lower grades is important for aesthetic education.

It is especially important in the lower grades that the teacher to apply different musical didactic games because the game is one of the central categories of aesthetics. The game is the foundation of human freedom and it is close to the world of art because itself is an art. Noticing the need to play is an important goal of aesthetic education in addition, for successful work it is necessary the knowledge of factors from which depends the aesthetic education, the criteria for evaluation of the musical artwork, characteristics of the beautiful and the significance of the musical aesthetic taste.

Aesthetic and musical education involves the use of special methodical didactic forms and methods. In the work with young children in school age it is primarily the aesthetic influence

of the music that will encourage and leave traces. Music is a biological need for human and extraordinary mean for encouragement of the imagination as well as for the aesthetic shaping of thoughts and feelings.

### **Art as a mean of aesthetic education**

Aesthetics helps in determination of the values and the significance of the artwork as a science of the beauty. It provides a reliable criterion for proper aesthetic direction of artistic education.

Painting is working with the form, the line and the color. The language of this art is expressed in the abundance of dynamic shapes, light and color, in the rhythm of the color and the composition. Except the drawing, the color is one of the primary means by which the artist depicts the surrounding and psychological characteristics of the characters, their feelings and associations. A special type of painting is also the graphics that is usually associated with words and literature. Sculpture also belongs to the art.

The illustrations are an integral part of the textbook where you can see the correlation between subjects. They all mark the graphic attachments because of the reasonable way of explaining the text. The illustrations are mostly used in the textbooks from the first, second and third grade. They represent the subject of the phenomena and the events of real life of the direct surrounding of the student. While the student has not learned to read the illustrations present the material instead the text. They serve to the student better to understand and learn the new content.

All illustrations have several important functions. Above all they motivate the student, then they direct it for a review, create certain mood, and provide information on visual manner, present certain processes. Illustrations act hard on the development of the student's interest, development of aesthetic ability, aesthetic perception, aesthetic experience, development of aesthetic feelings that contributing to educational outcomes and better equipped illustrations help in the development of art and beyond the aesthetic culture of the student.

Illustrations should encourage and mentally to provoke students to seek answers rather than giving them in finished form. Illustrations should provide data for reflection, elements for detecting and locking, but must not give ready solutions, intrusive messages or conclusions.

### **Literature as mean of aesthetic education**

Arts, especially literature has educational and aesthetic significance. By the power of artistic words, by its primary means of expression, literature depicts man with his fortune of his mental and physical abilities, to the whole of his life process and the activities that also determine the development of his character. The literature is characterized by the features of the deep analysis of the life situations, thoughts and feelings and with that can awaken the fantasy of the reader and to transfer it in a certain time, to make the atmosphere in which the events happen, that it is known that fantasy follows the course of the development of the event and its consequence. The most important role has the language of literature, because it is the porter of the thoughts and feelings of the artist and mediator between the reader and the described event. In the textbooks in mother tongue in lower grades are covered all types of literary arts such as epic, lyric and dramatic works. Dramatic art has its specifics for aesthetic education because it is such a form of artistic expression in which the characters often appear in action, the sharp conflicts, the immediate reactions and richness of living relationships. The reality and the nature of the characters and their relationships are presented in living concreteness, in actions and activities. Because drama works are placed in the theater, it is a place where in itself unites the literature, painting, sculpture and music. These arts are organically involved in dramatic art where its laws are respected.

The theater is a place where these arts are united and the student during watching of dramatic performance simultaneously meets literary work, develops affectional towards the theater and feels its beauty and at the same time is aesthetically educated.

The arts are organized expression of ideas, feelings and experiences in pictures, music and literature. They assist in the development of feelings, emotions, intellect and creativity and contribute to the overall development of the child. A large part of it that is concerned as beautiful, in the society is developed through many forms of art that contributes to the cultural ethnos and to a nice feeling.

Importance of the cultural education in the arts has a correlative character between curricula and covers all subjects and various school activities. Cultural education, brings nearer a basis for coverage of individual creativity in culture and perception of its importance for the

development of human society. Contributes to the general development of each individual, the formation of aesthetic sense, cultural advice and habits, and encourages permanent learning; helps children to learn about the culture of their country, increases the conscious of belonging to this culture, it supports the respect for other cultures and intercultural dialogue. Cultural education through arts and culture contributes to the development of active participation of the individual in arts and culture by encouraging creativity, initiative, and the innovations and tolerance.

### **Conclusion**

Art has always been the most important mean of aesthetic education of students. Art is an object of study of aesthetics which commonly is referred to as the science of beauty, especially in the arts as complete expression of beauty. Aesthetic education through the curriculum of art subjects in the lower grades, today in conditions of the modern life gets new dimensions and new role in life of every individual and the society as a whole.

With the emergence of concepts for aesthetic education, art gets great importance as a mean of formation of man and his entire universal development. Therefore, before pedagogy is appointed task, scientifically to clear up its influence on intellectual, emotional and moral development of man. Modern concepts of aesthetic education represents introducing the students with all types of art because it is the only way the art to become an integral part of the general culture and the aesthetic education of each individual.

Education with the arts covers a wide degree of activities in the visual arts, in the music, literature and painting. These activities and experiences help the student to give a clue to their world, to ask, to speculate and to find solutions so that can know how to compare their feelings and to respond on creative and aesthetic experience.

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## THE USE OF INTERNET IN THE LEARNING PROCESS

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### Abstract

Although the main motive of using the Internet, especially Web 2.0 tools, is to exchange entertainment content, survey results showed that young people between 15 and 24 years are of the opinion that the use of Internet is possible in the learning process.

The survey objectives were to register the content, purpose and the extent of Internet possibilities among young people and to determine their attitude regarding its potential use in the learning process according to their age.

The hypotheses of this study were that the effective application of ICT in the learning process in certain areas correlated with successful learning outcomes. We assumed that the application of the Internet`s content varies in relation to age.

The survey covered 173 students of different ages.

The prevailing use of the Internet is for entertainment. Only 50% of students aged 15 to 19 uses the Internet with the aim of learning, while the older group, for the learning process and to stay informed. Even 78% of first year students use the Internet in the learning process, while 80% of fourth year students. Only three persons have written their own blog. Also, 94% of the oldest age group are members of internet forums whereas only 6 of youngest group visit them. Chat rooms are used for dating and socializing.

These results emphasize the importance of monitoring the use of the Internet among young people and the introduction of the popular Internet space in education and provide a basis for further similar studies.

**Keywords:** learning, Internet, social networks, blog, chat.

Modern education technologies create preconditions for engaging all the senses in the process of acquiring new knowledge. They develop student creativity and ensure greater engagement of students in teaching and learning. Therefore, computer technologies and the Internet represent significant tools for teaching at all levels of education.

The means of mass communication represent powerful tools influencing the modern man. Through them, informative, educational and entertaining content is transmitted, thus meeting all the needs of modern man, who demands to be informed about important social relationships and processes. Education is defined as a correspondent process between the individual and society.

Younger generations receive and process information very quickly. They can perform multiple tasks at the same time. Many prefer a graphical representation of content rather than dry text, they learn better through games than through serious work and basic remembering of scientific facts. In addition, the younger generation expects frequent feedback which in fact, additionally motivates them for further work.

Many teachers and educators will use the above mentioned facts as arguments against informative-communicational technologies (ICT) and develop a negative attitude towards their application in schools. However, the school also needs to be up-to-date and follow improvement in ICT technologies in order to continue to meet the needs of the social environment and to remain relevant in education in general. Because of that there are clear reasons for continuous testing, revising and modernizing the curriculum, teaching methods, forms and work techniques. (Perić Prkosovački & Brkić, 2011)

## **SOCIAL DIMENNSION OF EDUCATION**

Education is a process-oriented human development which is the purpose of the development of consciousness. In the wider processes of human development education refers to those processes which make a human being a reasonable person. More closely defined, education is a socio-individual interactive process of developing the skills of learning, the development of attitudes and values, and the acquisition of knowledge, skills and habits necessary for human life – autonomous and responsible participation in the human community.

The social dimension of education results from the facts that learning is always a certain social form. An environment created by human development in which students are gaining

knowledge from various culturally created ways, forms and content of learning. As an individual process, education is a lifelong process of training the personal forces needed for a meaningful life. (Grandić, R., Knežević-Florić, O. and Milutinovic, J., 2004)

Today, education is considered a basic human right. It's more and more important and plays a role not only as a factor for personal development, but also as a determinant that contributes to continuous development, peace and stability of countries and their relationships. Education is by its nature futurist, because it does not prepare man for much of the existing society as much as for society yet to emerge.

The new philosophy and strategy of education is expressed in the form of four fundamental objectives. (Milutinović, J. 2008).

- 1) Learning for knowledge is including knowledge that enables people to understand their environment and also enable them to independently have critical evaluations. In this framework, training for lifelong learning is a general objective of education.
- 2) Learning to work is closely linked to learning for knowledge, but in fact just represents a link to professional advancement. The goal of education is to develop skills for practical use of knowledge in changing conditions for work and life, as well as to develop skills to cope in many different situations and the ability to work in teams.
- 3) Learning to live together is one of the most important goals of education. It consists of adopting the values of pluralism, tolerance of differences, multiculturalism, mutual understanding, peace and development of skills of non-violent conflict resolution, joint action, etc.
- 4) Learning for being is the objective of education consisting of and contributing in the overall development of each individual - their mind and body, intelligence, sensitivity, sense of aesthetics, personal responsibility, spirituality. The basic role of education is to give everyone the freedom of thought, reasoning and imagination that is necessary for the expression of personal talents and the management of our own destiny.

## **THE ADVANTAGES OF USING THE INTERNET IN THE LEARNING PROCESS**

ICT (Information and Communication Technology) learning systems are solutions for the integration of computers and telecommunications, which allowed simultaneous presentation of more medial sources: texts, video images (static and dynamic), sound (speech and music), graphics, animations, as well as storage for memory, searching and data processing. The revolutionary development of these technologies made it possible to digitally integrate voices, music, texts, graphics and video-image information. The creation of the information highway enabled placement, transfer, access, exchange and flow of information in an unlimited form and for unlimited distances.

- According to Vlahović (2001) ICT learning enables:  
Individualization of learning and students' progress,
- Receiving information, both audio and visual ,
- Unlimited repetitions of given contents,
- The organization of cooperative and interactive learning,
- Managing the learning process,
- Timely feedback,
- Easier access to various sources of knowledge,
- The possibility of access to different views of a problem,
- Improving the quantum and quality of knowledge.

Learning by ICT promotes intellectual development. Teaching and learning through ICT require a high level of intellectual activity by students. Learning with the use of computers and the Internet the student is informed to independently search for the unknown, to search databases and other sources, to compare, analyze, investigate, solve problems and to productively learn and think. (Kennewell, Parkinson & Tanner, 2000)

In this process a number of other intellectual qualities are developed, such as: the habit of engaging in intellectual work, intellectual curiosity, various intellectual skills, development of creativity, sensitivity to problems, abilities of recognition and solving of problems. In general,

teaching / learning using a computer contributes to more efficient intellectual development and greater motivation to learn.

Using this means of mass communication in the classroom, and use of the Internet in the process of learning in particular, allows the individual to become the master and creator of their own cultural improvement. By using the Internet the student acquires knowledge which they can then use and by that, change and be in a position to educate themselves. Possibility of interaction between students and computers have been created and the formation of a program whose contents consist of the following elements: problems, prerequisites for solving them, interpretations, questions, answers, warnings, instructions, explanations and more. These types of learning give students the opportunity to take over the functions of management and gain insight into the process of monitoring, evaluating and assessing the results of their learning. In addition, students are trained to work independently, their motivation and activity in the learning process is increasing. (Lorimer, 1998)

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The overall research objective was to determine the attitudes, use and purpose including the possibilities of ICT learning among young people. We observed ICT learning according to different ages and different levels of education (school or faculty). The hypotheses of this study were that the effective application of ICT in the learning process in certain areas correlated with successful learning outcomes and we assumed that the application of the ICT learning varies in relation to age.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

### **Sample:**

Within this research, young respondents have been clustered into 3 different groups. The survey covered a total of 74 young people aged between 15 and 19 years, then 64 young people aged between 19 and 21 years, and 35 young people aged between 23 and 24 years.

### The instruments and procedures:

To obtain data, subjects were interviewed by an anonymous questionnaire, designed for this study. Questionnaire which was used had open type questions, as well as questions with alternative choices. The questionnaire consisted of 16 questions.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In total, this study presents analyses results of 173<sup>1</sup> interviews. The survey results show that respondents of all age groups use the Internet. However, the purpose of using the Internet is different. From descriptive answers we extracted 4 response categories that described the purpose of using the Internet. From Table 1 we can see that the group of young people from 15 to 19 years uses Internet mainly for entertainment purposes. The situation is similar in other groups. It is interesting that only 50% of young people aged between 15 and 19 use the Internet for learning purposes, while older groups use Internet in the learning process and as an information source more frequently. Even 78% of young people who are first-year faculty students use the Internet in the learning process, while that percentage is even higher among young people who are fourth year students (80%).

**Table 1 For which purpose you use Internet?**

	15 and 19 years	% of answers	19 and 21 years	% of answers	23 and 24 years	% of answers
A) fun	67	91%	55	86%	32	91%
B) learning	37	50%	50	78%	28	80%
C) informing	43	58%	48	75%	34	97%
D) social; making contacts	41	55%	0	0%	20	57%
<b>TOTAL</b>	74	100%	64	100%	35	100%

<sup>1</sup> there is a possibility of discrepancy between the number of respondents mentioned in the sample and the number described in relation to the individual questions.

On the question “How much time during the day they spend on the Internet?” majority of youngsters aged between 15 and 19 years spend up to 2 hours per day on the Internet (49%). Majority of young people aged between 19 to 21 years and from 23 to 24 years spend up to 2 hours a day on the Internet. It is interesting that 22% of young, first-year faculty students spend more than 4 hours a day on the Internet, while only 5% of young high school pupils spend more than 4 hours a day on the Internet.

Analyses of questions related to social networks, resulted that all young people, including faculty students and high school pupils, have their own Facebook profiles. High school students mostly use Facebook for socializing and chatting with friends (92%). Nearly the same percentage was recorded among first-year students (88%). Students in the fourth year of faculty used this social network for that reason recorded 86%. To a large extent, all respondents use Facebook social network for absorbing urgent and important information. What is interesting is that only high school students use the Facebook network to search for a potential romantic partner. In comparison, groups of young people from 19 to 21 years and from 23 to 24 years, no one has opted for this answer.

Regarding the use of the Internet for learning purposes, we concluded that all respondents use the ICT in their learning process. Young people from 15 to 19 years (64%) use the internet to complete their homework, while other groups of young people are using the Internet mainly to write reports and essays. Wiki pages are tools which youngsters usually use in their learning process. In Table 2 we could analyze.

From the questionnaire we concluded that all responders used Wikipedia for different purposes according to their age. Young people from the age group of 23 to 24 years use Wikipedia mostly for information (74%). Wikipedia is used for this purpose by 55% young people from 19 to 21 years old. While that percent is only 26% among the age group from 15 to 19 years. All groups are using Wikipedia mostly for homework papers and reports.

Beside the social network, responders also informed us about their use of blogs, forums and chats. Of the total number of young people, only 3 of them have written their blog (a high school student and two young people from 19 to 21 years of age). It was very interesting that even 94% of responders in the oldest group of young people were members of some forum. Six young people from 15 to 19 years visited forums, as well as only 3 of them among the group

aged between 19 and 21 years. As for the ‘Chat’, all respondents use it, mostly for dating and socializing, and to a lesser extent for information.

**Table 2 In which situation are you using Wikipedia or some other Wiki page?**

	15 and 19 years	% of answers	19 and 21 years	% of answers	23 and 24 years	% of answers
<b>Homework</b>	19	26%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Information</b>	19	26%	35	55%	26	74%
	20	27%	15	23%	7	20%
<b>Reading interesting content</b>	4	5%	6	9%	4	11%
<b>Content related to the school/faculty</b>	24	32%	3	5%	0	0%
<b>No</b>	0	0%	5	8%	0	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100%</b>

When it comes to YouTube, majority of respondents of all age groups do not have an active account. However, they do use You Tube for different purposes: to learn, reviews of new spots, information for travel, for looking at funny video clips. Majority of all respondents use You Tube for observing new music videos. Our statistics show 92% of youngsters between 15 and 19 years of age use YouTube for this reason, while older groups intensively review new music videos (97%). The use of YouTube in the process of learning is highest among the age group of 23 to 24 years (46%), with a slightly smaller percentage in the age group from 19 to 21 years (45%). In comparison, in the age group between 15 and 19 years only 7 pupils are using YouTube for that purpose. Results show that the Internet provided all respondents with the most assistance in resolving their homework, writing papers and obtaining the necessary information.

\* \* \*

Possibilities for use of the Internet in the classroom, which allows the formation of virtual reality in the educational process, are extraordinarily high. Virtual reality in this technique allows: independent work of students during learning, interacting with objects, phenomena and

processes, seemingly managing real phenomena of virtual reality, student participation in what is apparently happening, modeling of certain reality, development of thinking, intuition, aesthetic image assessment skills, development of skills and abilities of importance for design of tools, etc.

The education system will continue the developmental process during the education reform. Under the pressure of technological advancement 'the school' has lost the privilege of being the only or the largest source of new knowledge and information. Students learn through the Internet, movies, travel, etc. For these reasons we have to accelerate our efforts to become up-to-date, modern school as soon as possible, introducing innovative active and interactive forms and methods of teaching to become more efficient, more rational, and creative and to share functional knowledge and skills.

The results of our research have only opened new research fields that could be defined as possible pedagogical implications. We emphasize that the possible directions of development of the educational system is to include planning, monitoring and evaluation of the development of teaching in which ICT is applied. All things considered, innovation is not just ad hoc implementation of changes. It is change that presents a new quality of teaching and learning.

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## **GRADING IN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM**

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UDK:

### **Abstract**

Grading represents a series of procedures used to obtain information about student learning and education (observations, ratings of project realization, tests on paper and forming valuable judgements about the progress of learning).

There are many different approaches and ways to grade students with disabilities in inclusive settings. These different philosophies often come into conflict with one another and the assessment of a student’s progress becomes a tense and stressful process for everyone that are involved. For students with disability educators, a fair and acceptable system of grading must be established before the grading happens. Above all, the grading system must be in accordance with the best practices, legal guidelines and the individual needs of the students who participate in the inclusive setting.

Through joint efforts from the members of the IEP team, they should advance to identify important issues and strategies for evaluation and grading.

The ratio of teachers towards the education of students with special needs is a deciding factor in increasing the inclusiveness of the school. Successful inclusion of the students with special educational needs in regular education depends largely on the availability of resources in the classroom and the way they are distributed by the teachers, also taking into account students without disabilities. The available time for teaching, knowledge, skills and working methods of the teacher also represents an important prerequisite for a successful inclusive process.

**Key words:** Grading, inclusive classroom, education, students with special needs.

### **Introduction**

The number of students with disabilities included in general classes, as well as the amount of time they spend there, has increased dramatically in recent years. (Handler, 2003)

Many researchers agree that the best way to enhance learning for a diverse range of students is through appropriate, reliable, and valid classroom assessment and grading practices.

This is of particular importance in R. Macedonia because the inclusive philosophy has been mandated for all schools. Classroom teachers are responsible for the instruction, assessment, and grading of students with disabilities. That kind of process carries open questions and dilemmas which need to be met with the right lawful solutions.

### **Inclusion**

Teachers have complex and varying attitudes toward inclusion. Educators tend to agree with the principle of placing students with disabilities in general education classrooms, although some controversy still exists.

Inclusion is a philosophy that bring students, families, educators and community member together to create schools and other social institutions based on acceptance, belongins and community (Selend, S. 2001). The importance of the inclusive process is reflected through multiple levels but Geisthardt and Munsch (1996) stated that students with disabilities needed social interaction with nondisabled peers to develop friendships, leadership skills, and social competency. These skills offered students with disabilities the tools they needed to function socially both in school and in the community.

Successful inclusion relies a great deal on regulas education teachers, as well as special education teachers, administrators and parents. Their cooperation is critical and there is a need to further explore their attitudes, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of inclusion and integrating students with disabilities into regular education classrooms (Berg. L Shannon, 2004). School teams spend precious time creating the foundations of inclusive programs for students with disabilities. Careful thought goes into scheduling co-taught classes, creating balanced classroom rosters, training co-teaching partners, developing collaborative relationships, and providing appropriate supports for students with disabilities

However, even with well-planned inclusive services, general education teachers and co-teaching teams often struggle with how to effectively teach students with disabilities in general education classrooms. (Walther-Thomas, C., Korinek, L., McLaughlin, V. L., & Williams, B., 2000)

## Grading

Grading is best understood as a shorthand method of communicating complicated information about student learning and progress. (Guskey, 2002)

A grade, such as a grade on a report card, is a summary of a teacher's judgment of the adequacy of a student's achievement at a particular point in time. Report card grades should reflect a student's achievement relative to the curriculum standards he or she is working toward.

Studies done in the first half of the 20th century exposed early concerns about the validity of grades (Guskey, 1996). These concerns continue to this day, demonstrating that no single grading system fulfills all the purposes of grading and is seen as fair for all students.

Some teachers determine grades based solely on the student's academic performance; other teachers include factors not directly related to the demonstration of academic learning such as effort, participation, homework, spelling, work habits, or behavior. McMillan (2001) found that teachers grade mostly on achievement, but that they do consider other factors, such as homework and perceived effort.

The purpose of grading is to describe how well students have achieved the learning objectives or goals established for a class or course of study. Grades should reflect students' performance on specific learning criteria. Establishing clearly articulated criteria for grades makes the grading process more fair and equitable. Unfortunately, different teachers often use widely varying criteria in determining students' grades, and students often aren't well-informed about those criteria. Recognizing that merging diverse sources of evidence distorts the meaning of any grade, educators in many parts of the world assign multiple grades. This idea provides the foundation for standards-based approaches to grading. In particular, educators distinguish among the product, process, and progress learning criteria. (Guskey & Bailey, 2010)

The initial step in establishing a high-quality, standards-based grading system requires that teachers distinguish three types of learning criteria and related standards (Guskey, 1996, 2004):

- *Product* criteria focus on what students know and are able to do at a particular point in time. They relate to students' specific achievements or level of proficiency based on

culminating demonstrations of learning, such as final examinations; final reports, projects, exhibits, or portfolios; or other overall assessments of learning.

- *Process* criteria relate to what students did in reaching their current level of achievement and proficiency. They include elements such as effort, class behavior, and work habits. They also might include evidence from daily work, regular classroom quizzes, homework, class participation, or punctuality of assignments.
- *Progress* criteria consider how much students gain from their learning experiences. In other words, they focus on how far students have come, rather than where they are. (Guskey, 1996)

### **Grading students with disabilities**

Although a wealth of research verifies the positive effects of including students with disabilities (Waldron, 1998), the process poses unique challenges for grading and reporting. Should the grades for these students be based on grade level standards, for example, or should grades somehow be adapted? Should the grades be based on achievement only, or should teachers also consider effort, progress made, or some other combination of factors?

For students whose education occurs primarily in special education classrooms, the special education teacher typically assigns most grades (Bursuck, Polloway, Plante, Epstein, Jayanthi, & McConeghy, 1996). But many educators are fearful and feel unprepared to work with students with disabilities in their classrooms. (Kochhar, C., West, L. & Taymans, J., 2000) It should be also mentioned that most teachers receive little training or guidance on grading, especially as it relates to students with disabilities. (Rojewski, Pollard, & Meers, 1990)

But still it is common for teachers to be responsible for the instruction and evaluation of students with mild disabilities, learning, emotional, and behavioral challenges, and other needs that require specific attention, even if they do not receive additional funding, assistance, training, or professional development opportunities. Inclusive practices occur in regular classrooms and teachers meet the needs of more and more diverse student populations within general education classrooms, whether or not they are prepared.

Teachers who are poorly prepared to meet the needs of special students in an inclusive classroom poses concerns. (Bruns & Mogharreban, 2007)

Teachers sometimes view the task of assigning grades as time-consuming and unrelated to actual teaching. Problems often arise when teachers apply inconsistent standards and use subjective judgments to arrive at grades. Students and parents usually know little about the grading system used at their school and may have no clear, shared understanding of the purpose of grades. In fact, grades hold different meanings for each of us.

Grading students with disabilities poses additional dilemmas. Grading systems used in general education classes are usually ill-equipped for individualization to meet the needs of a particular student, and research has documented that special education students in general education classes are at risk of receiving low or failing grades. (Donohoe & Zigmond, 1990)

General and special educators often fail to collaborate effectively to coordinate the general grading system with the accommodations and modifications required under a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Even when a classroom teacher wants to individualize a grading system for a student with a disability, the teacher often lacks knowledge of how to do it. Thus, many students with disabilities receive inaccurate and unfair grades that provide little meaningful information about their achievement. (Munk, D., D & Bursuck, D., W., 2003)

The IEP describes how the student learns, how the student best demonstrates that learning and what teachers and service providers will do to help the student learn more effectively. Developing an IEP requires assessing students in all areas related to the known disabilities, simultaneously considering ability to access the general curriculum, considering how the disability affects the student's learning, forming goals and objectives that correspond to the needs of the student, and choosing a placement in the least restrictive environment possible for the student. (La Salle, Tamika; Roach, Andrew; McGrath, Dawn, 2013)

To guide educators in the process of developing appropriate policies for grading students with disabilities, Jung and Guskey developed the Inclusive Grading Model. (Jung, 2009; Jung & Guskey, 2007).

This model, is designed to fit standards-based learning environments and meet the legal requirements for reporting on the progress of students who have IEPs. The five steps of the model include:

- establish clear standards for student learning that distinguish product, process, and progress goals;
- for each standard, determine if it needs to be adapted for the student;

- if adaptation is needed, determine if that adaptation requires accommodation or modification;
- if modification is required, develop an appropriate modified standard;
- assign a grade or mark based on the modified standard and note on the report card which standards have been modified.

Despite increased numbers of students with disabilities being included in general education classrooms for greater portions of the school day, little guidance has come from the special education community to address the challenge of grading included students. Lacking specific policies or recommendations, most general education teachers make informal, individual grading adaptations for such students. (Bursuck, Munk, & Olson, 1999)

Munk and Bursuck (2003) deem the following examples of grading adaptations effective:

- prioritize essential knowledge and related assignments;
- assess the processes or effort that the student uses to complete work and make that the basis for part of the grade;
- incorporate progress on IEP annual goals and/or objectives;
- base part of the grade on the amount of improvement shown in the area being measured;
- vary grading weights.

It is important that co-teachers determine adaptations prior to assigning grades. This allows the teachers to be objective when grading and to address issues of fairness and appropriateness of grading

Theoretically, these adaptations provide encouragement and opportunities for success. Evidence indicates, however, that such adaptations typically lead students to see grades not as an indication of their performance, but, instead, as a reflection of who they are. (Ring & Reetz, 2000). Furthermore, even with these adaptations, most students in special education continue to receive low passing grades, placing them at risk for low self-esteem and for dropping out of school. (Donahue & Zigmond, 1990)

Bauer and Brown (2001, p. 190) highlight the importance of assessment and accommodations for students with disabilities, and their grading in inclusive settings:

- the purpose of assessment is to help teachers gather information to facilitate decision-making.
- fair assessment allows every student to demonstrate what he or she can do.
- student learning can be assessed in a variety of ways.
- accommodations are designed so that students with disabilities can be included in general assessments.
- in state- and district-wide assessments, students with disabilities may participate in the standard testing administration offered to all students, use approved accommodations, or use alternate assessments to measure their progress.

But they also suggest that assessment is unfair if students are:

- not provided an equal opportunity to demonstrate what they know,
- judged on abilities and needs using biased assessments, or
- limited in their educational opportunities because of assessment information. (Bauer and Brown, 2001, p. 168-169)

Finally, to be both just and fair, grading practices for students with disabilities must:

- be consistent with school policy;
- communicate to families the performance of their children;
- reflect the theoretical orientation of the teachers involved;
- be consistent with the IEP established for the student (Christiansen & Vogel, 1998)

Therefore, students must be given opportunities to show what they know in a variety of ways. Assessment is probably the most important tool for special needs students. Assessments determine eligibility for programs and services, measure achievement, and focus new directions for instruction. (Weber, 1994)

Within inclusive classrooms, teachers are under increased pressure to demonstrate that their students are improving academically. Measures of accountability and large-scale assessments ask that teachers show that all of their students, the regular and the special needs, are learning. (Sindelar et al., 2006)

## **Conclusions**

Inclusive environments are about more than just setting and delivery of services. They involve a philosophy of education in which professionals have a moral responsibility to educate every student, remove barriers that prevent full participation, and ensure that students reach their full potential. (Fewster, 2006)

There are myriad perspectives on grading students with disabilities in inclusive settings. These differing philosophies often conflict with one another and can make assessing student progress a tense, stressful process for all involved. For general and special educators who are collaborating and coteaching, a fair and acceptable grading system must be agreed-upon prior to grading. Above all, the grading system must be aligned with best practices, legal guidelines, and the individual needs of students participating in the inclusive setting. (Salend, 2005)

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