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# FOREWORD

*Dubnica Technological Institute successfully published the first issue of the scientific journal Acta Technologica Dubnicae. I really appreciate the support from the management of the Institute, who identified with the idea and the ambitions of Acta Technologica Dubnicae. Their support is a proof of the fact that the school has clear priorities and goals in the field of pedagogical thinking development both in the national and worldwide contexts.*

*Our journal is focused on humanities and social sciences with an accent on pedagogical, psychological and technological aspects of education. It serves as an open platform for the exchange of experience, opinions, and views in these scientific fields.*

*In the first issue we paid attention to standard topics of pedagogical thinking: the relationship between the level of students' resilience and school satisfaction; measurement of the quality and efficiency of educational services; teacher and student competencies from the perspective of the drama pedagogical method; or the use of matrix analysis of lexico-semantic fields for educational purposes. These topics have been discussed for a long time neither in the Slovak nor international scenes. It is necessary to stress that especially the Slovak pedagogy does not reflect most of these problems and not much scientific research has been done in these fields. Therefore, by publishing such papers, we intend to form a productive background for pedagogical thinking, pedagogical theory, as well as school and educational reality.*

*In this issue we give space to a wide academic background and to interdisciplinary topics which form the basis for pedagogical innovations. Each paper presents an original view on specific questions of school education, psychological questions of conditions and relationships within families, preparation of future professionals for leadership roles, strategies for life-accompanying learning in wider socio-cultural context, taking into consideration the educational policy and the educational practice in Slovakia and in other EU countries.*

Viola Tamášová

Editor



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# STUDIES

## Humanistic Psychology in the University Preparation of Future Teachers

*Lubica Gáborová\**

**Abstract:** The study shows the possibilities of humanistic psychology in conditions of university preparation of future teachers. It brings results from the research of PCA (Person-Centered Approach) principles applied at the universities.

**Key words:** humanistic psychology, directive, non-directive, facilitator, student.

### 1 Introduction

Humanistic psychology aims mainly at a live out personality. It looks at a man from his own, subjective view of the world, sense of himself and feeling of his own value. Its main representatives are C. R. Rogers, A. Maslow, R. May, G. Allport, C. G. Jung, A. Adler, E. Erikson, E. Fromm, A. Ellis a K. Horneyová. C. R. Rogers (1986) set the necessary and adequate conditions for a change in personality, which were formulated in his psychotherapeutic practice. He proposed that the change of personality could happen in a situation, when a man appreciates a congruent therapist and when the therapist constantly tries to understand him/her emphatically and to sustain positive relationship with him/her without questions.

The topical hypothesis of this approach is a precondition of “increasing potential of every human is released in relationship with other human. It is released when man who helps, goes through and communicates, is careful, sensitive and perceptive” (Meador – Rogers, 1991, p. 9). The approach aimed at a man found the fulfillment in all areas of human effort, where the main result is the full psychical development of an individual. From this philosophy, C. R. Rogers (1986) created a concept of PCE, depicted in his work “Freedom of education for the 80’s”. He emphasized “the necessary and adequate

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conditions” (empathy, congruency and acceptance) in the education area. He reminds that the impact of all three conditions on a personality is enormous.

*An emphatic teacher* not only sympathizes with his students, but he also communicates his feelings. He tries to see the world through the student’s eyes, “to walk in his shoes”, to feel what a student feels. A component of empathy is the empathetic listening to a student. It is the finding of half covered student’s emotions. The teacher should try to understand the student, not to judge him/her. Student’s empathy could be developed in different subjects, as well as outside them. The result of such approach could be a pro-social personality.

Sufficiently strong empathy could hardly exist without the sufficient unconditional positive acceptance (Meador – Rogers, 1991). An *accredited teacher* positively accepts the students; his/her activity is not tied to rating and evaluating their thoughts, feelings and behavior. This kind of relationship could be called unconditional positive relationship.

The teacher’s mission is the acceptance of the student’s personality as a whole and not only of some of its parts. The teacher should show his willingness to accept the student with all his qualities and difficulties. It could be named an unreserved acceptance without any conditions. The teacher “feels respect of expected difficulties which are common in new curriculum” (Rogers, 1995, p. 233). The accredited teacher should accept the student as a parent does (Zelina, 1994). He does not approve each of his expressions, but shows a deep unpretended solicitude. Such a genuine attitude is minimally related to assessment. In this intimate atmosphere could be created unconditionally positive relationship.

*A congruent teacher* is a teacher who openly understands his/her attitudes – accepts his/her own feelings. He/she has become a real human in relationship with his students. “It is a man, not only a shapeless personalization of requests from a teaching plan” (Rogers, 1995, p. 233) It is a student, not a teacher, who judges the impact of the learned. The teacher-facilitator shares the responsibility for the teaching process with the others – the students and also with the parents or people from the community/class (Rogers, 1983, pp. 185-194).

The teacher creates the atmosphere of trust with the accomplishment of all these conditions. The teacher considers the student to be human beings who are worth trusting. In the atmosphere of trust, there is natural to develop the need of knowledge, curiosity and desire to learn. The teacher leads the education process as pleasure, with the excitement from exploration within the intellectual and also emotional sphere. Thus

the teaching process is usually deepened, proceeds faster and penetrates into the life and behavior of students. It leads students to the whole-life education.

C. R. Rogers (1983) thinks about the traditional education and humanistic education as two poles of a continuum. On one side there is the traditional approach and on the other side there is the humanistic approach. C. R. Rogers said (1983) "I think every effort in education, every teacher, all education institutions could be rated on this scale." There are two strategies in PCE. "The facilitator creates psychological atmosphere, where the student is able to keep responsible leadership. The facilitator helps reduce accent on static or content results and supports the aim to the process of education" (Rogers, 1983).

In the humanistic approach, there is a man who grows and learns with significant power. In the centre there is a student, but the student's position is not easy at all. He is fully responsible for his headway. There have been determined encouraging results in the facilitation of education. Students achieved better exam results, their IQ score increased, and they reached higher level of knowledge, which has been reflected in better approach to solving problems and decision-making. Optimistic results occurred also with the students who used to have learning problems.

"Facilitated conditions" (Rogers, 1983) cause deep changes of power relationship in the education environment. The school must go through a long way from the traditional authoritative attitude to a position, where the teacher, the school management and the administration respect and value the student. They have to understand what the school experience means and they should create a real human relationship.

## **2 Methodology**

The principles of the non-directive approach are addressed not only to us, but step by step, they are applied in other fields of life as well. We had the opportunity to develop this principle in our profession – in the education of university students. We tried to set up the specific educational style approved by the research. Our classes were led in a non-directive approach mainly in the following aspects:

In a relation to students:

- In the beginning of the first meeting with a non-directive group we introduced ourselves. We left the choice of information shared and the order of them up to the students. It is important to get through the silence and to give the students



time to adjust from time to time. The final comments are the teacher's ones. It is always good to comment on the professional field, the research focus, etc.

- In the same class the students were asked to share their expectations of this seminar, or even to set up the goals to the following term.
- The syllabus was created together with the students and the options for some changes were open. It is good to propose the topics, the problem context or the background, so the students have better idea what to choose. The students also chose the topics discussed in the seminars and the topics suitable for self-study. The teacher decides which specific topics need to be discussed in the seminar.
- We respect a university student as a mature personality with a high level of intellectual abilities, the ability of independent decision making and acting. The content and the process of the further seminar were led by the students. They decided what problem would be discussed in the further seminar and by whom.
- We wanted every student to be in charge of the seminar at least once a term. The attendance and leading the seminar were the only conditions to obtain a credit.
- It is a student who evaluates himself/herself. His/her self-evaluation can be influenced by a feedback of his/her classmates, or the facilitator. We led the student to be sensitive to non-verbal expressions not only to the verbal evaluation.

The teacher should try to:

- Create a relationship with the students. We try to be ourselves like we are in real life, openly presenting our ideas we stand for. We are authentic in this relationship – the relationship is based on empathy, trust, authenticity and sincerity, and of course, on the acceptance of each student regardless of his/her study results or behavior.
- If the students are interested, we use various methods and techniques of empathy and congruence development, based on experience learning. Seminars should be very pro-social.

- We help the students discover their own value, to create a positive relationship to themselves and the importance to express their own ideas.
- All students have an equal chance to participate in the process of “becoming” a teacher. We rarely use rivalry, only under the students’ choice. In the problem matters we look for the solutions. We cooperate.
- We help students to facilitate the atmosphere. Even if we enter discussions, we merge with the group. The group is important, not a teacher.
- The group is joined by a unique experience. That supports the atmosphere of freedom. The thoughts, feelings and emotions are expressed much more easily when the semester is coming to the end.

Not all the students can understand immediately that for the open, friendly relationship, the teacher’s cognitive skills are very important. We often discuss such matters with the students, so they can feel our faith in their abilities, and also the importance of developing these abilities by demanding activities. It stimulates the motivation of most of the students and invokes the need to educate or strengthen the self-reflection.

Looking back at our work in non-directive groups we can claim that in comparison to traditional groups there was much more humor. We experienced more relaxed atmosphere, felt frankness of the students in their interaction. Last but not least, most of the students experienced the role of the teacher. An important part of the seminar was a feedback. Students that took charge of the seminar, the other students and the facilitator could present their feelings in the education process. Everyone could show their point of view. Such moments should bring friendly and open atmosphere. The remarks should be taken as a good advice.

We should ask for the feedback from the students when the semester is over. The information is anonymous. Most students evaluated the possibility to communicate, to self-realize and to learn positively. For some of them it was an option to learn more about themselves or to know better their co-students in an unconventional situation. Some of them appreciated the possibility to try the teacher’s role.

## **2.1 Examined attitudes of university students**

One of the methods we tried to examine is introducing a new kind of social learning – a non-directive approach in education. We were interested whether the change of education approach can lead to the change of opinion about the subject and the change of atmosphere in a group of students and whether it leads to the change of students’ behavior.

## 2.2 The goal of the research

The main goal of the research was to prove the influence of the non-directive approach within the sample of university students, since we did not find this approach in any accessible literature. We also examined whether the change in a teacher's approach would lead to students' self-reflection of the changes in their behavior – whether they became more sensitive, emphatic, congruent and accepted.

## 2.3 Pool description

Out of 210 students of the sophomore year (2nd grade), 163 students have filled out the questionnaire in the 1st class of the Social Psychology seminar and the Educational Psychology seminar. In the introduction of the questionnaire we asked about the opinions of students on both subjects. In the introduction seminar, we explained the principles of Rogers' non-directive approach in education. Students could decide how the work in their class will be established during the following term. The second choice was the traditional approach that has been previously experienced in psychology classes. After the "pros and cons" discussion, 5 groups of the students decided to continue in the traditional way (control group) and 5 groups chose the non-directive approach (experimental group).

Introduction group in the beginning of the semester	163	Control group at the end of the semester	93
		Experimental group at the end of the semester	108

Table 1 *Research sample*

Introduction group in the beginning of the semester	163
Control group at the end of the semester	93
<b>Total</b>	<b>256</b>

Table 2 *Introduction and control groups*

Introduction group in the beginning of the semester	163
Experimental group at the end of the semester	108
<b>Total</b>	<b>271</b>

Table 3 *Introduction and experimental groups*

Control group at the end of the semester	93
Experimental group at the end of the semester	108
<b>Total</b>	<b>202</b>

Table 4 *Control and experimental groups*

## **2.4 Methodology of the research**

We used a questionnaire method in the research, which seemed to be the most appropriate one to investigate the problem. Asking the questions is one of the basic methods of educational and socio-psychological research and diagnostics. The questionnaire included scaled items, which created bipolar adjectives at a 7-grade measurement continuum with a zero, neutral view in the middle of the scale.

In the research we used the following antipole criteria:

For the assessment of the students' opinion to the Social Psychology seminar and the Educational Psychology seminar, we used the following criteria:

interesting – not interesting;

valuable – not valuable;

needed – not needed.

## **2.5 Organization of the research**

The research had two phases: we gave the students an entry questionnaire in the beginning of the semester. After the administration of the questionnaire, the students split into two groups. The control group (5 seminar groups) continued to work “traditionally”, as in the previous seminars and the second group (5 seminar groups) worked using the non-directive approach during the whole semester. After the credit week, the second phase followed. We gave the students the same questionnaire as in the beginning of the research. We familiarized the students with the experiment and explained the importance of their cooperation.

## **2.6 Research outcomes processing**

We tried to find statistically significant differences between the analysed variables applying the statistical method – calculation of  $\chi^2$ . We analyzed the research data according to the type of seminar: traditional vs. non-directive.

## **3 Results**

We tried to analyse the student's opinion on the psychology seminar in the following dimensions: interesting – not interesting, valuable – not valuable, needed – not needed. We used absolute numbers in the first line and the percentage in the second line. The students were profiled during their university study mainly in their major subjects. In the first phase we found out if the psychological disciplines are interesting for the students.

GROUP	Interest in seminars							Row total
	Attractive	Very interesting	Interesting	Do not know	Less interesting	Not interesting	Not very interesting	
Introduction group	19 11.7	46 28.2	46 28.2	31 19.0	8 4.9	12 7.4	1 0.6	<b>163</b> <b>60.1</b>
Experimental group	42 38.9	47 43.5	14 13.0	2 1.9	0 0	2 1.9	1 0.9	<b>108</b> <b>39.9</b>
<b>Column total</b>	<b>61</b> <b>22.5</b>	<b>93</b> <b>34.3</b>	<b>60</b> <b>22.1</b>	<b>33</b> <b>12.2</b>	<b>8</b> <b>3.0</b>	<b>14</b> <b>5.2</b>	<b>2</b> <b>0.7</b>	<b>271</b> <b>100.0</b>

Table 5 *Interest in psychology seminars*

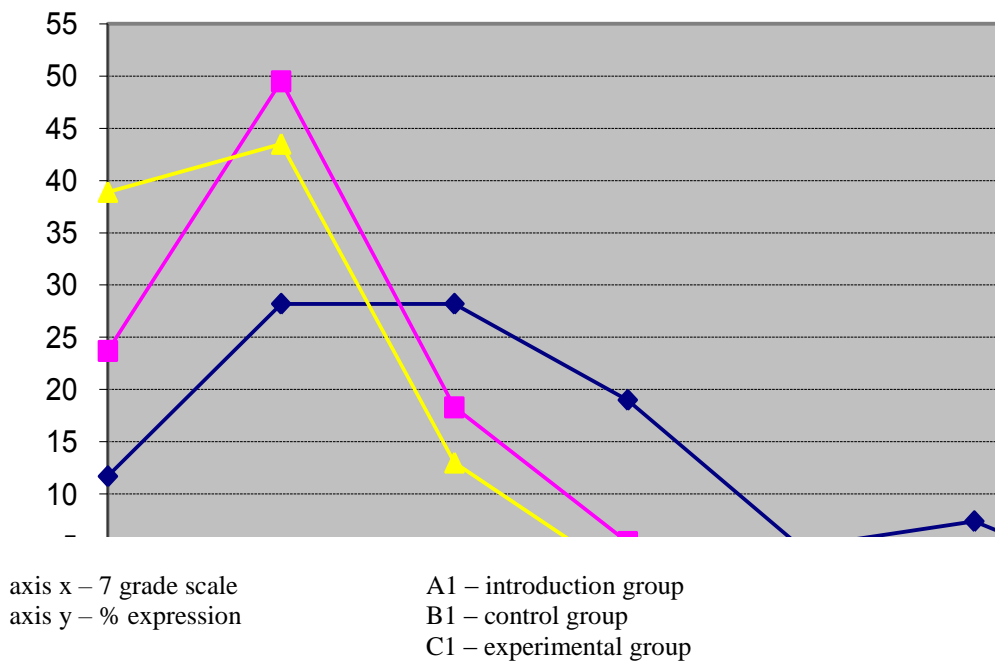
In accordance with the relevant literature (e.g., Rogers, 1995; Zelina, 1994), we could state that the change of a teacher's approach to students caused the change of a student's relationship to a subject taught. A student should have space for discussion with other students as well as with the teacher about the issues which are discussed during the lesson. Such approach strengthens feeling of unity and responsibility for the accepted decision (Fontana, 1997).

The most significant change in university students' minds regarding the traditional or non-directive seminars occurred in an "attractive" group. 11.7% of the students from the traditional seminars and 38.9% of the students from the non-direct seminar consider the seminars attractive which makes the difference of 27.2%.

Another significant opinion shift could be seen in the comparison of positive and negative attitudes. 68.1% of the students think positively about the psychology seminars which are very attractive for them, 95.4% of the students which had the seminar conducted in a non-directive method expressed the positive attitude.

A significant difference could also be seen with the neutral opinion. There were 19% of the students in the control group, who in dimension "interesting – not interesting" expressed neutral opinion. In the experimental group there were 1.9% of the students with neutral opinion. Negative opinions expressed with institutions "not interesting" and "not very interesting" were changed from 12.9% in the control group to 2.8% in the non-directive approach group. The value  $\chi^2 = 57.58$  in the statistical significance  $p < 0.05$  – the difference between two groups can be considered significant.

Figure 1 *The dimension “interesting – not interesting”*



The curves which express the answers from the introduction, control and experimental groups are significantly mixed, which means that there are statistically significant differences between the groups. In spite of that we could say that the psychology seminars seem to be attractive for most of the students. The most significant positive movement occurred in the 2nd grade – very interesting and in the 4th grade – neutral opinion, which decreased significantly. However, one-semester of a non-directive approach is a fairly short period for changing the opinion.

On the basis on the above-mentioned findings, we could make a conclusion, that the students in general have significantly good attitude to the psychological disciplines, regardless of the approach applied in the seminars. The most positive opinion on the seminars could be seen in the students from the experimental group where 43.5% said, that seminars conducted in the non-directive approach were attractive, for 38.9% of the students the seminars were very interesting. There were no significant differences regarding gender and study results.

### 3.1 Value of information from psychology

The second dimension examined was the valuability and non-valuability of information from the seminars. From the results of the students' evaluation of the program they attended we could find out whether the new approaches are more effective than the old ones and whether they could serve as suggestions for work in the following semester.

Group	Valuability of information							Row total
	Attractive	Very valuable	Valuable	Do not know	Less valuable	Not valuable	Worthless	
Introduction group	26 16.0	51 31.3	48 29.4	26 16.0	9 5.5	2 1.2	1 0.6	<b>163</b> <b>60.1</b>
Experimental group	38 35.2	51 47.2	12 11.1	4 3.7	1 0.9	1 0.9	1 0.9	<b>108</b> <b>39.9</b>
<b>Column total</b>	<b>64</b> <b>23.6</b>	<b>102</b> <b>37.6</b>	<b>60</b> <b>22.1</b>	<b>30</b> <b>11.1</b>	<b>10</b> <b>3.7</b>	<b>3</b> <b>1.1</b>	<b>2</b> <b>0.7</b>	<b>271</b> <b>100.0</b>

Table 6 *Valuability of information from psychology*

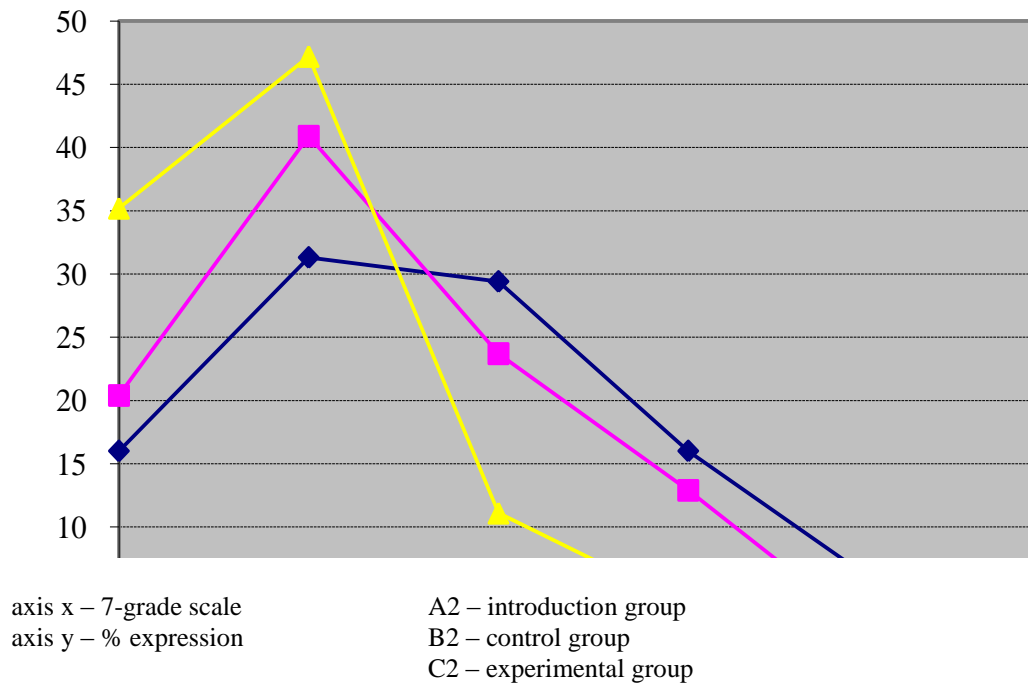
Information was valuable for 93.5% of the students who made decision about the progress of seminars from social psychology and pedagogical psychology. Most of the students (47.2%) considered new information very valuable. The percentage of students with neutral opinion decreased from 16% to 3.7%. There were 2.7% of the students with negative opinion.

The difference between the groups showed to be significant also with  $\chi^2$  – test.  $\chi^2 = 37.08$  with 0.05% level of significance which is much bigger difference than between the groups lead with the traditional method.

In comparison of the results from the control and the experimental groups in the end of the semester, we found out that most of the students from both groups considered information from psychology very valuable. For 35.2% of the students from the experimental group it was attractive. Neutral opinion had 3.7% of the students from the experimental group compared to 12.9% of the students from the control group.

As we could see, the students in all three groups considered the knowledge from psychological disciplines very valuable. In comparison of the introduction and the experimental groups we found out, that the most significant change occurred in the dimension “attractive” in the experimental group. The percentage of students with neutral opinion in this group significantly decreased. At least one per cent of the students from each group considered the information from psychology worthless. We could see significant differences between the groups.

Figure 2 *The dimension “valuable – not-valuable”*



### 3.2 Need of psychology in future teachers’ training

There have never been doubts about the application of psychology in education. Psychological aspects arise from the base of the educational process – the teacher-student interaction. There still exists a problem, how big should be the extent of psychological disciplines included into the training of future teachers. There could be seen noticeable differences with using more attentive observation of the extent and the content of psychological disciplines at universities which train future teachers. The university teacher could also be a model of behavior for his students – prospective teachers. The teachers of psychology have space for creating positive interactions and friendly atmosphere in their lectures and seminars which could be used by their students in their future teaching job.

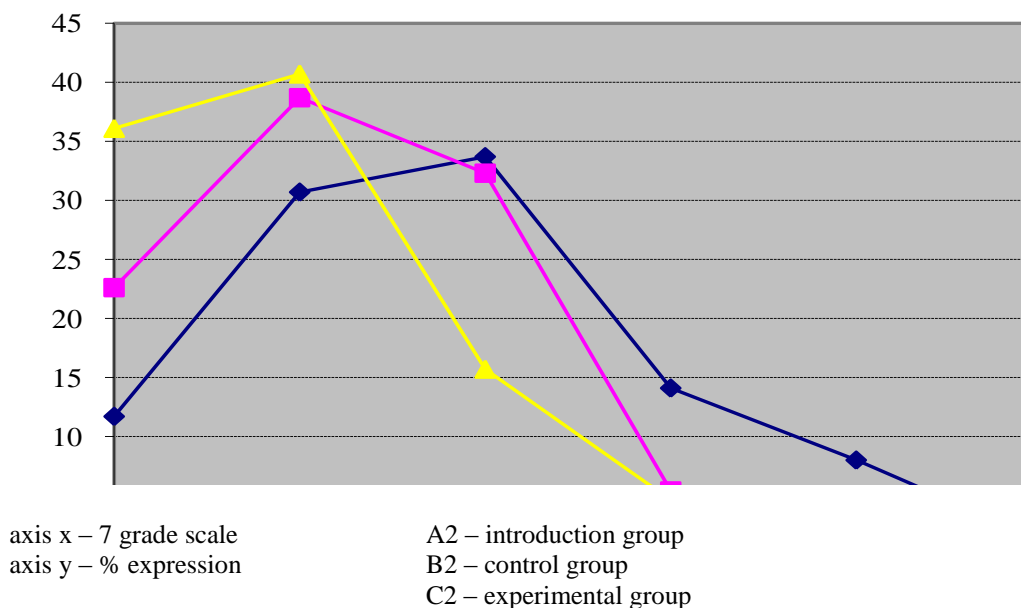


GROUP	Need of psychological knowledge							Row total
	Necessary	Very needed	Needed	Do not know	More or less needed	Not needed	Not needed at all	
Introduction group	19 11.7	50 30.7	55 33.7	23 14.1	13 8.0	2 1.2	1 0.6	<b>163</b> <b>60.1</b>
Experimental group	39 36.1	44 40.7	17 15.7	5 4.6	2 1.9	0 0	1 0.9	<b>108</b> <b>39.9</b>
<b>Column total</b>	<b>58</b> <b>21.4</b>	<b>94</b> <b>34.7</b>	<b>72</b> <b>26.6</b>	<b>28</b> <b>10.3</b>	<b>15</b> <b>5.5</b>	<b>2</b> <b>0.7</b>	<b>2</b> <b>0.7</b>	<b>271</b> <b>100.0</b>

Table 7 Need of psychological knowledge

Using more detailed analysis of the segmented groups, we found out that most of the students (33.7%) considered the psychology subject to be needed for their future job. Majority of them considered it “very needed”. The percentage rose up to 40.7% in the experimental group after one semester of the non-directive approach. The majority of the students considered psychology “very needed” for their future jobs. The difference between the introduction and the experimental group is high.  $\chi^2 = 39.43$  with 0.05% level of significance.

Figure 3 The dimension “needed – not needed”



Majority of the students considered knowledge from psychology to be needed. There could be seen significant differences between the introduction and the experimental groups in neutral opinion as well. There are only minimum students who consider psychology as “not needed” in the experimental and the control groups. The change of opinion into a more positive one could be assigned to the non-directive approach at the seminars in the experimental group. With the comparison of all three groups, we found out statistically significant differences in the questionnaire results.

#### **4 Discussion**

We tried to find out the attitudes of the students to the psychological disciplines. We defined the attitude as opinion, judgement, conviction to things and effects and we emphasize its regulative function in human behavior.

In the study of students' attitudes we found out:

- In general, the students perceive psychological disciplines very positively. Up to 68.1% of the students after three semesters of psychology seminars assessed them at the 1st, 2nd or 3rd grade on the scale, labelled as “attractive”, “very interesting” or “interesting”. In the control group, the percentage increased. The most significant positive opinion change appeared among the students in the experimental group, after one semester of non-directive approach (95.4%). We recorded the most significant change in positive opinion at the 1st grade of the scale in the dimension “attractive” with the comparison of the introduction and the experimental group. Differences between the groups were statistically significant. We detected no significant differences regarding gender and relationship.
- The students considered the knowledge from psychological disciplines mediated by the faculty attractive, very valuable or valuable. In the introduction group 76.7%, in the control group 85.0% and in the experimental group 93.5% of the students. With the comparison of the introduction and the experimental group we also found out significant decrease of neutral opinion among the students of the experimental group. We found out statistically significant differences comparing the groups.
- We found out that for the majority of students – future teachers – psychology appeared as a necessary discipline, very needed or needed, what was shown with the credited percentage on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade of the scale. For most students from the introduction group (33.7%), psychology appeared

needed, majority of students in the control group (38.7%) considered it very needed, the same in the experimental group – some students considered psychology very needed or necessary (36.1%). The differences between the groups are statistically significant at 0.05% level of significance.

## **5 Conclusions**

The process of becoming a teacher is a long-lasting one. It may have various forms. The most important thing is the decision of a young man to become a teacher. On the long way, he meets many different approaches, models of behavior, which could guide him/her towards his/her aim. One of the possibilities coming out from psychotherapy is the non-directive approach in training and education. Modification of the learning process towards psychotherapy seems to be a promising possibility.

- A teacher aimed at a student is interested in teaching which is functional, has sense and which affects a student and his/her acts.
- His/her lessons are an experience for a student, which was given possibility to solve problems interesting to him/her.
- Learning will be easier, if a teacher is congruent to real life.
- A teacher accepts a student as the way he/she is. A teacher tries to understand student's feelings. He/she accepts him/her without questions.
- A teacher counts on self-actualization of a student. He/she understands the hypothesis that a student, who knows about the problems of real life, wants to learn, rise and explore and longs for knowledge and creation.
- A teacher tries to create inter-personal relations and subsequently an atmosphere in class to fulfill the natural tendencies.

It is good, when students realize, that the requirements of the non-directive approach in training and education have not been set by a teacher, but by the life itself. The teacher's role is to provide sources which help students do well both in profession and life. Let me, at the end of this study, express my conviction that students who have experienced the non-directive approach in the lessons will be predisposed to apply it in their future pedagogical practice.

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## **Research on Abuse and Violence against the Elderly in a Family Setting**

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**Abstract:** The article calls for attention to the problem of violence and abuse of the elderly within their family, partnership, and relationships with relatives in the postmodern society. The outcomes of the research, carried out on a sample of the elderly people within different residence settings are presented. Results show that all kinds of violence and abuse are present in all kinds of settings, except in the residence with relatives, where sexual abuse was not noticed. Physical and sexual violence and abuse is mostly present in the households in which the elderly live with their partner, while psychological violence is present in the households with relatives. Material violence and abuse are present in case of elderly people who live alone. Both, men and women, experience most violence and abuse in their flats.

**Key words:** family, the elderly, violence and abuse, postmodern society.

### **1 Introduction**

The problem of violence in the Slovene family seems to be more and more present, worth to be paid attention to and researched by the media and wider public policy. The reasons for this are the permanent warnings of the non-governmental organizations about the problems of violence in a family, statistical data which indicate increasing trends of the violence in private, higher level of public sensibility to this phenomenon, the regulation of the Criminal Law of the Republic of Slovenia (KZ-1, 2008), where violence in the family is considered as an act of violence, and last but not least important, the adoption of the Law on Prevention of violence in the family (ZPND Law on Prevention of Violence in Family, 2008).

Behavioral norms of the postmodern society, among which unfortunately are also ageism, sexism, and reconciliation with violence in society, are important factors in the occurrence of violence against the elderly. The elderly are often described as weak, helpless, dependent, in short, less worth to be paid attention to, from the state and their own family. The life quality of the elderly certainly does not depend on

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material conditions, but their safety and acceptance in the family, wider social environment and their psychosocial well-being are of great importance for their health as well.

In the sixties of the previous century, criminology became interested in violence against children. In the seventies criminology discovered women as the victims of violence and in the eighties the attention was paid to the elderly, who experienced violence within and outside the family.

Violence against the elderly in a family was first mentioned in 1975 in British research reviews (named "granny battering") (Baker, 1975; Burston, 1977). Abuse is a harsh reality for many old people however a lot of them do not want to admit openly that abuse is present and will be present in institutions and also in private family settings.

It is sensible to be mentioned in the very beginning that in the Slovene literature there are many examples where there is not possible to draw clear, undoubted border between violence and abuse. However, between these two concepts there are some essential differences. Violence is considered as any act against another person and against the will of that person. So, violence against the elderly includes all forms of behavior (spoken or acted) by the person who takes advantage of his/her superiority and affects the old person. It does not need to be a personal relationship among the perpetrator and the victim (Ramovš, 2007, pp. 90-91). According to the UN definition (ZN, 2002, 4) abuse is a single or repeated act, or inadequate behavior, happening in any relationship based on trust, which harms the old person and put her/him in danger. So, what makes the difference between the violence and abuse is a personal relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, when the act is being repeated. Regarding variety of unwanted behaviors and their similar, if not the same meaning, we decided to use both expressions – violence and abuse, together.

To prevent violence, it is necessary to recognise it. Therefore, we provide short descriptions of the most common typical forms of violence and abuse in a family the elderly are confronted with (Razboršek, 2002; Parker, 1999; ZN, 2002; Pentek, 2000).

*Harm to the body or physical abuse:* it means the usage of physical force on an old person, which may cause physical injuries, pains or defects. *Psychical or mental abuse:* causing suffering, emotional suffering or sadness. Moreover, dealing with the elderly like they are children, as well as prohibition of their contacts with family and friends, ignoring them or forcing them to be isolated from the social life, are all

examples of psychical abuse. *Negligence*: rejection or unfulfilling any kind of obligations to the elderly, someone has to do for an old person. There are active and passive forms of negligence. Passive negligence means unintentional lack of care and help, caused by the lack of knowledge or information. In case of active negligence it is carried out intentionally/consciously. *Financial or material abuse*: is a form of illegal or irregular usage/exploitation of the old person's savings, possession or property: turning cheque into cash without permission, signature forging, theft of money or possession, signing of the document under the force or by playing trick on an old person (for example contract or will), rejection of the right to supervise his/her property, fraud, abuse of the position of a protector, caretaker or lawyer. *Sexual abuse*: it is an unwilling sexual act with an older person without their consent. Here is also included unwilling touching, forced nakedness and photo taking. *Self negligence*: it is a form of abuse when an old person neglects himself/herself, thus putting in danger his/her health and life. *Medical abuse*: this is a kind of abuse, when an old person is prescribed drugs which are not urgently needed (opiats, sedatives) or is unreasonably rejected further adequate therapy (too old for certain treatment). Aggressive testing which can put dying old people in danger is also considered to be medical abuse.

Besides all the mentioned forms of violence and abuse, it is significant that more types of abuse happen at the same time, they are intertwined and intensified (for example: exploitation, limitations, and at the end, violence). The elderly are, besides the mentioned violence, encountered with other negative phenomena: discrimination, human rights and freedom violation, inaccessibility of life supplies and other services.

Besides the signs of abuse, it is also important to recognise risk factors which can lead to violence in a family. Regardless, if the risk factors are the consequence of the environmental influence, psycho-physical or cultural and socio-economic influence, risk factors are present in family relationships (intimate, welfare, caring) where the elderly live at relatives' home or care homes. None of the places, unfortunately, offers a real home to the elderly. Instead of expected understanding, safety, shelter and warmth, they often encounter coldness, misunderstanding, bad relationships and conflicts (Felicijan, 2004, p. 13).

## **2 Results of some studies on violence and abuse of the elderly in the world and Slovenia**

Violence against the elderly, which became of public interest much later than other types of violence, currently seem to be of interest of great number of researchers. Finally, current data are of exceptional value for each state which is willing to deal with this problem. At this point, it is sensible to warn about limitations on studying

this phenomenon. Experts around the world give different definitions of an old age, what makes gaining the comparable empirical data difficult. The second limitation is, not precise and clear terminology regarding violence and abuse in the research of elderly people. Different terminology brings a lot of definitions, varying from study to study so much that their results are not comparable. Next problem is the use of different methods of collecting the data. Most researches were carried out on the basis of records on already reported abuse to the competent state institutions, or there were only assumptions about the possible abuses of the individuals (doctors, social workers, or randomly chosen people).

The beginning of the research of the extension of violence and abuse started in the world in the beginning of the nineties in the previous century. The first extensive American research was carried out by phone by K. A. Pillemer (cited in Filkenhor, 1988) in the area of Boston. They found out that 3.2% of the surveyed experienced negligence, psychical or physical abuse, but they did not checked extension of material abuse, what is certainly the deficiency of the research. The Canadian research, four years later, included also material abuse into their research and revealed that material abuse was the most frequent type of abuse (5%) of the elderly (Podnieks, 1992). In Great Britain in the same year there were psychically or physically abused or neglected 5% of the individuals older than 65 years of age (Bennett, 1992). Completely different methodology was applied in Finland, where the survey did not include the questions about the personal experience on violence and abuse only the questions about any knowledge of other people's experience (Ijas, 1992). Percentage of the abused was 5.7%. Similar results were found in the Netherlands, 5.6% of the elderly up to 69 years of age was assumed to have experienced violence and abuse (Jonker, 1998).

No matter that the mentioned research was based on the relatively small samples and was methodically incomplete and not comparable, it provoked a few governmental institutions to start recognising the phenomenon. Results certainly confront us with the fact that violence and abuse are present and call for other experts/professionals to recognise the problem of the modern society as a global one.

According to the national study on violence and abuse of the elderly in the USA, based on the cases registered with the competent institutions, the authors assessed that in 1996 there were about half a million of people older than 60 years of age neglected or abused in a family setting (NEAIS, 1998). They also presumed that ratio of the registered and unregistered abuse was 1:5. Some experts also assess that there are around one to two million of the elderly Americans suffering from abuse (Dyer,



2001). Even more frightening is the information that 84% abuses are not registered (NCEA, 2003).

The National Social Life, Health and Aging Project (NSHAP) is the first American national study based on the representative sample of the elderly. The respondents were asked about their experience with verbal, physical and material abuse in a family setting. Those who had experienced it were also asked who the perpetrators were. The sample comprised 3,005 older people, from 57 to 85 years of age. The study showed that 9% of respondents were abused verbally, 3.5% materially, and 1% physically (Waite, 2008).

	<i>VERBAL ABUSE (%)</i>	<i>MATERIAL ABUSE (%)</i>	<i>PHYSICAL ABUSE (%)</i>
<i>Total sample<sup>1</sup></i>			
Number	398	152	12
Spouse/partner	26.2	9.6	19.6
Parent	2	0	0
Child	14.5	34	24.8
Other	57.3	56.4	55.6
<i>Partial sample<sup>2</sup></i>			
Number	249	104	10
Spouse	21.4	5.8	18.5
Ex spouse	3.1	2.5	7.4
Partner	1.6	1.6	4.7
Parent	1.8	0	0
Father/mother-in-law	0.3	0	0
Child	13.7	35.7	21.3
Brother/sister	7.6	12.3	0
Son/daughter-in-law	5.1	2	12.5
Friend	12.1	9.7	0
Neighbor	5.5	2.2	0
Co-worker/chief	15.7	5.6	0
Rest	12	22.6	35.5

Table 1 *Abuse perpetrators* (Waite, 2008, p. 254)

<sup>1</sup> Comprises questionnaire and a face-to-face interview.

<sup>2</sup> Comprises a face-to-face interview.

The data in Table 1 show the perpetrators' relation to the victims, who experienced verbal, material or physical abuse. According to the data from the first part of Table

1, we can find out that the most frequent perpetrators are not the members of the nuclear family. There was a question about the other members of the family. Therefore, the authors carried out a face-to-face interview, where the respondents mentioned other perpetrators within the extended family. The other perpetrators are shown in the second part of the table. It is obvious that the perpetrators are brothers and sisters and son/daughter-in laws. Similar data were gained by M. Arai (2006), who found out that parents who live with their adult son and his wife experience more abuse in the relation with a daughter-in law.

In 2007 a research named "Health and Long-Term Care in the European Union" (Special Eurobarometer 283, 2007), comprising the sample of 28,660 Europeans older than 15 years of age was carried out by EU. All EU state members (EU27) and two states-candidates (Croatia and Turkey) took part in the research. The respondents were, among other issues, assessing also the extension and characteristics of violence against the elderly on the basis of their own presumptions. Generally speaking, the highest risk factors of abuse among the EU state members, besides Turkey, exist in Romania and Greece. At the bottom of the scale is Sweden, with the lowest percentage of different types of violence against the elderly. Considering only the negligence of the elderly, Malta steps out with a positive trend (Special Eurobarometer 283, 2007).

It was not until recently that the violence and abuse of the elderly were discovered in Slovenia. The first research in this field was made by the Anton Trstenjak Institute in 2003. The research was carried out among the subscribers of the journal "Quality old age" and the volunteers of intergeneration societies for quality old age. The aim of the research was to gain as much information as possible and to warn the public about the abuse of the elderly in Slovenia.

In 2004, the Government's Office for Equal Opportunities conducted a research "Violence against the Elderly", in which 43 centres for social work, 23 community services and 187 pensioners' societies took part. The research showed that older women are the victims of different types of violence more often than the older men. The most frequent types of violence are the psychical and physical abuse, most often caused by their partners.

It has to be said that in Slovenia there are very few professionals who are studying the issues of violence against the elderly within the family. There are very few studies on the specific types of violence, and even those are geographically, time, content or disciplinary limited.

We have the analyses of the legislative regulations of the family violence, the data of the centres for social work in the form of case studies, the data which point out the aspects of criminality from the Ministry for domestic affairs or the police, on disposal. At the same time we are confronted with the lack of more complex sociological studies, which would register social background and causes of the family violence, its nature and prevalence.

The only extensive empirical research about the violence in a family, ordered by the Ministry of Work, Family and Social Affairs, was conducted by the Scientific and Research Centre of the Koper University in Primorska and the Faculty for Social Sciences in 2005. The opinion poll "Violence in Families" (Simčič, 2006) at representative sample (n=1006) of off age population of the Republic of Slovenia was prepared and carried out within the project "The Analysis of the Family Violence in Slovenia – Suggestions of Preventive Measures". The goal of this opinion poll was a holistic analysis and interpretation of the existing state and social climate and attitudes to the questions tackling the issues of violence in a family. The analysis also contained the cluster of questions checking familiarity of the respondents with the phenomenon of violence against the elderly in families. When asked if they knew family in which violence was carried out with the old person, most respondents, 86.4%, answered "no", 13.6% knew one, two or more such families. Most often were the cases of psychical violence (40%), followed by the negligence (21%), physical violence (19%), economical (18%) and sexual violence (2%).

### **3 Empirical research**

The objective of our research was to present and point to the actual phenomenon of the violence and abuse of the elderly and indirectly to the need of the holistic approach and solution of the problem, and at the same time to present an empirical picture of the extension and structure of the violence and abuse of the elderly.

Our research was based on two hypotheses predicting:

**H1:** that all forms of violence and abuse are present in all kinds of living environments and that the abuse occurs mainly in the households where an old person lives with a partner;

**H2:** that the violence and abuse happen mainly in the victim's home setting.

*Research methods:* the basic research methods used were the descriptive and causal non-experimental method of the empirical sociological research.

*Survey sampling:* the sample consisted of 300 individuals 65 years of age and older, living in Maribor area and its outskirts, alone, in their own household with a partner, with relatives, and at care homes: Danica Vogrinec Maribor (unit Pobrežje and unit Tabor), Sony Home, Home for the Elderly – Community of Tezno and Lambrecht's Home Slovenske Konjice.

*Data collection and processing methods:* the data were acquired by a probe and questionnaires. The questionnaire consisted of 23 open or closed questions. There were 340 surveyed individuals. 300 properly filled-in questionnaires were analysed. Three essential measurement characteristics of the questionnaire were considered: validity, objectivity and reliability.

The collected data were processed by the statistical program SPSS. The gained empirical data were processed by a multivariate analysis, using following statistical tools: frequent dispersion, median, standard deviation of the cross table and correlation coefficients.

We also considered limitations and presumptions: the research was based on the common presumption of scientific recognition and specific limitation of the questionnaire because of some similar indicators between the psychical violence, abuse and negligence. The latter one was not included into the research, and some of the respondents did not fill in the questionnaire considering the phenomenon as a taboo topic.

### **3.1 Results and interpretation**

The sample was made of 24% male and 76% female respondents. More than a half of the respondents lived in their domestic environment: 18% lived in their own household, 21.7% lived together with a partner in their own household, and 17.7% lived together with their relatives. Other individuals were care home residents (42.7%). The marital status data showed that more than a half of the respondents (56.3%) were widows or widowers, 26% were married, 9.3% single, 6.3% divorced or lived separately, and 1.7% were unmarried.

Before analysing the presence of the single form of violence and abuse, it should be mentioned that the variables indicating a single kind of violence and abuse were gained by adding values to indicators and the sum was divided by the number of added indicators. The value indicators were: 1 – never, 2 – sometimes, 3 – often, 4 – regularly. The higher is the mean, the more often the violence happens.

Type of violence	n	minimum	maximum	median	standard deviation
Psychical violence	300	1.00	3.20	1.588	0.469
Material violence	300	1.00	3.00	1.327	0.436
Physical violence	300	1.00	2.40	1.183	0.308
Sexual violence	300	1.00	2.67	1.109	0.300

Table 2 Frequency of the types of violence and abuse

According to the gained empirical data, it was found out that the elderly were mostly exposed to psychical violence and abuse, as the estimated value of the median was 1.588, followed by material violence and abuse 1.327, physical violence and abuse 1.183 and sexual violence and abuse 1.109. Out of the calculated median it is presumable that all types of violence and abuse are present in all types of living settings. This is verified by statistically significant difference ( $p=0.00$ ) in all types of violence.

Type of violence	n	median	st. deviation	test value is 1	
				t-test	sig.
psychical violence	300	1.5883	0.46943	21.708	0.000
material violence	300	1.3267	0.43572	12.986	0.000
physical violence	300	1.1827	0.30770	10.282	0.000
sexual violence	300	1.1089	0.29987	6.289	0.000

Table 3 Structure of the presence of violence and abuse in all kinds of living settings

Type of violence in case of single life in one's own household	n	median	st. deviation	test value is 1	
				t-test	sig.
psychical violence	54	1.6926	0.49558	10.270	0.000
material violence	54	<b>1.5586</b>	0.58828	6.978	0.000
physical violence	54	1.2704	0.41145	4.829	0.000
sexual violence	54	1.1728	0.44269	2.869	0.006
type of violence in case of life with a partner in one's own household	n	median	st. deviation	test value is 1	
				t-test	sig.
psychical violence	65	1.6354	0.48844	10.488	0.000
material violence	65	1.3513	0.45465	6.229	0.000

physical violence	65	<b>1.3015</b>	0.39548	6.147	0.000
sexual violence	65	<b>1.2359</b>	0.38964	4.881	0.000
<i>type of violence in case of life with relatives</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>median</i>	<i>st. deviation</i>	<i>test value is 1</i>	
				<i>t-test</i>	<i>sig.</i>
psychical violence	53	<b>1.7623</b>	0.51300	10.818	0.000
material violence	53	1.4308	0.34504	9.090	0.000
physical violence	53	1.2340	0.26234	6.493	0.000
sexual violence	53	1.0314	0.14999	1.526	<b>0.133</b>
<i>type of violence in case of care home residence</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>average</i>	<i>st. deviation</i>	<i>test value is 1</i>	
				<i>t-test</i>	<i>sig.(2)</i>
psychical violence	128	1.4484	0.38760	13.090	0.000
material violence	128	1.1732	0.31331	6.253	0.000
physical violence	128	1.0641	0.13959	5.192	0.000
sexual violence	128	1.0495	0.16779	3.336	0.001

Table 4 The structure of the violence and abuse occurrence in various settings

The gained empirical data show that all types of violence and abuse are present in each type of setting, however, the statistical correlation shows that the sexual violence is not present in case of the residence with relatives, i.e. it is not significant ( $p=0.133$ ).

We found out that all types of violence and abuse are present at all living settings, except the setting with relatives where the median is not significant. Therefore, we cannot claim that the violence is present in this setting. It is necessary to point out a piece of information about the median experience of sexual violence and abuse, which is, among all types of residence, the highest one at one's own household and life with a partner.

On the basis of the type of living setting of the respondents, it was found out that there were significant differences in the presence of all types of violence and abuse. Physical and sexual violence and abuse were most frequently present in the household in which the elderly live together with their partners (1.3015 and 1.2359), while on average, there is most of the psychical violence and abuse in the joint households with relatives (1.7623) and there is most of the material violence and abuse among the elderly who live alone (1.5586). The data also showed that most of the violence and abuse happen in domestic environment. Therefore, the H1 is completely rejected.

<i>Where the type of violence and abuse were experienced</i>							
			in my flat	in the relatives' flat	at care home	other	together
<i>gender</i>	male	number	35	11	9	3	58
		share	60.3%	19.0%	15.5%	5.2%	100.0%
		share altogether	13.8%	4.3%	3.5%	1.2%	22.8%
	female	number	93	17	73	13	196
		share	47.4%	8.7%	37.2%	6.6%	100.0%
		share altogether	36.6%	6.7%	28.7%	5.1%	77.2%
		number	128	28	82	16	254
<i>together</i>		share	50.4%	11.0%	32.3%	6.3%	100.0%
		share altogether	50.4%	11.0%	32.2%	6.3%	100.0%

Table 5 *Share of the locality of violence and abuse experience*

It is obvious that the male, as well as the female respondents experienced most of violence and abuse at their homes (50.4%). 11% of the respondents experienced violence and abuse in their relatives' flat, 32.3% at care home, 6.3% elsewhere (in the street, in the yard...). Thus the H2 is confirmed.

#### 4 Concluding remarks

Violence and abuse of the elderly is a serious, but unfortunately a very frequent problem in a family, community and in care home settings.

Respect for human rights is one of the most important criteria for the definition of a country's democracy. The elderly should have completely equal rights as other age groups, but unfortunately, their rights are often overlooked or not completely recognised. If we want to ensure a decent life to the elderly in a democratic state, we have to respect the human rights and increase the social sensibility to violence and abuse in a family. Informing and public awareness are the basic parts of prevention, along with the irreplaceable roles of the education system, bringing up and media.

At the same time it is necessary to continuously develop preventive social work activities in the societies of the elderly and other non governmental organisations, which unite older citizens. The meetings within intergeneration programs for quality aging are an excellent possibility for elderly people to speak about their dark sides of life in confidence. In the holistic approach to the problem of violence and abuse of the elderly an in-depth analysis and interpretation of the actual state are important. Since the current data are of exceptional importance for each state which has an intention to

deal with this problem successfully. It is also meaningful to mention some limitations which make comparison of the data regarding the research of this phenomenon impossible. Preparation of a unique questionnaire with comparable scales for violence and abuse sensitivity testing, presuming that it contains all types of violence and abuse of the elderly, would be of great help at least in the area of the European Union.

In conclusion, it must be said that no one is allowed to close their eyes to the distress of a family. Each citizen is obliged, according to their abilities, to contribute to the decrease of the phenomenon of violence and abuse of the elderly in a family and thus to help victims experience a ray of hope.

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## **Gender Differences in Attachment Styles Using Slovak Version of the Experiences in Close Relationships – Revised (ECR-R)**

***Gabriela Rozvadský Gugová – Anton Heretik\****

**Abstract:** There is a vast amount of literature on similarities and differences of women and men experiencing (close) relationships and using different strategies for coping with daily stress and significant life events. Western folk psychology expects women to be generally more anxious and men to be more avoidant when solving close-relationship conflicts and experiences in long term relationships. We used the Experiences in Close Relationships – Revised (ECR-R) questionnaire that is based on the Attachment-style theory distinguishing four distinct attachment styles – secure, anxious/ambivalent, disoriented/disorganized and avoidant.

**Keywords:** experiences in Close Relationships – Revised (ECR-R), anxiety, avoidance, coping.

### **1 Introduction**

People have to cope with daily pressure of their surroundings, which is often a stressful experience. There is a vast amount of literature on the topic of coping with stress and the related phenomena. Many authors (e.g., Lazarus, 1966; Amirkhan, 1990) discuss the problems of coping strategies in terms of effectiveness, appropriateness, success, and the like. Two biologically based types of coping strategies are generally recognized – escape (flight) and aggression (fighting) techniques. Based on the research results, the avoidance strategy was later added (Heretik, jr. et al, 2008). J. H. Amirkhan (1990) offered the following basic coping strategies: the instrumental strategies aimed at the problem, the search strategy of social support, turning to other people and the strategies of avoidance, withdrawal, and escape.

Individuals generally prefer one type of coping with stress and there is significant interpersonal variability. On the other hand, it seems that there exist group differences based on gender. In stressful situations women tend to react with fear and retreat and

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they more often turn to their close social surroundings. They also speak more openly about the emotional aspects of demanding situations. Men, in general, are oriented towards solving their problems on their own, and they are more “instrumentally” focused (towards solving the problem-oriented strategies and relieving the stress through the activities like sports or even drinking alcohol). A. Heretik jr. et al. (2008) found significant gender differences in strategies of coping with stress and difficult life situations based on the data from an epidemiological study of selected anxiety disorders and trait-anxiety called EPIA (N=1251, Novotný et al., 2006). Women coping with stress turned significantly more often towards their close relatives and the priests. Men more often reported sport, hobbies but also drinking alcohol as their strategy to relieve stress. It also seems that in the relationship between the attachment and the coping strategies, there are even gender differences in coping with stressful events.

The Theory of Attachment Styles is based on the presence of stable longitudinal patterns of expectations, needs, affecting regulation strategies and social behavior that can be traced to early childhood experiences of the attachment to significant persons – mostly parents. The author of a classical version of the attachment theory is J. Bowlby (1969). A significant contribution for the theory from the psychometric perspective was brought up by M. Ainsworth and significant revisions and orientation towards the adult attachment style was conducted by P. R. Shaver and his colleagues (Mikulincer – Shaver, 2007). The cross-cultural studies showed that the attachment styles are valid in cultures that differ from the Western world (Young-Sun et al., 2008). The research also shows that both the attachment style and coping tend to be the stable long-term patterns of behavior independent from the actual mood or trait-anxiety (Picardi et al., 2005; Mikulincer – Shaver, 2007).

R. C. Fraley, N. G. Waller and K. A. Brennan's (2000) ECR questionnaire, underwent a detailed psychometric analysis using the item response theory, resulting in a revised version of the original questionnaire, which is now known as the ECR-R (Experiences in Close Relationships – Revised). Both versions contain 20 items. L. Dvorská (2008) used the ECR-R questionnaire for examining the relationship between the emotional attachment in romantic relationships and coping strategies of adults. At present the ECR-R is considered to be a tool with sufficiently proven psychometric properties (Bieščad – Hašto, 2010).

The goal of the present study is to analyze the data based on ECR-R reports about the attachment styles towards romantic partners of 920 Slovak adult respondents with the focus on gender differences. In the discussion we try to relate our findings to the findings of some foreign authors and to the topic of coping strategies of men and women.

## 2 Methodology

We used the translation of the experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R) to the Slovak language (Bieščad – Hašto, 2010). In the survey there was a total of 920 respondents, comprising 428 men and 492 women ranging in age from 18 to 55 years ( $M=30.20$ ,  $SD=8.65$ ), all being secondary school graduates of Czech and Slovak nationality. The administration of the test was conducted from September to December 2010 in groups of 50 to 100 respondents. Further description of the sample of respondents and ECR-R can be found in Rozvadský Gugová (2010). For the administration a paper sheet questionnaire was used. The respondents filled in the data on a pre-printed sheet of A4 paper with the questions. The time limit was not set. The respondents were able to adapt well to a group of 100 people and reported no problem with time.

In the first part of the administration, the respondents were given instructions on the type and purpose of the questionnaire, in the second part the paper sheets were provided to each participant. In the next section, as the administrator verified that all respondents have completed the basic data in anamnestic part, a short briefing of ECR-R was offered.

## 3 Results

### *Gender and scores on the attachment-related anxiety and attachment-related avoidance*

We found statistically significant differences in relationship between gender and score on both scales. Women scored significantly higher on Anxious scale (t-test ( $493.427$ ) =  $2.272$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ,  $d = 0.15$ ) – Table 1. Men scored significantly higher on Avoidant scale (t-test ( $493.427$ ) =  $-2.427$ ,  $p = 0.015$ ,  $d = 0.13$ ) – Table 1.

ECR-R Scales	Gender	N	M	SD
Anxiety Scale Score	Women	493	58.69	17.74
	Men	427	55.56	16.90
Avoidance Scale Score	Women	493	44.63	15.11
	Men	427	47.00	14.49

Table 1 *Gender differences in Attachment-related anxiety and Attachment-related avoidance of ECR*

N = Number of participants, M = Mean, SD = Standard deviation

*Marital status and scores on Attachment-related anxiety and Attachment-related avoidance*

In the whole group we have not found any statistical differences between the marital status and the scores on both scales (for marital status and *Attachment-related anxiety score* ANOVA,  $F = 2.479$ ,  $p = 0.060$ ,  $ETA = 0.110$ ) and for marital status and *Attachment-related Avoidance score*, ANOVA,  $F = 0.051$ ,  $p = 0.985$ ,  $ETA = 0.16$ ) – Table 2.

Marital status	Anxiety Scale Score		Avoidance Scale Score
Single	M	58.77	45.14
	N	355	355
	SD	18.52	14.53
Married	M	54.92	45.52
	N	212	212
	SD	17.31	15.85
Divorced	M	53.82	45.77
	N	39	39
	SD	17.32	15.75
Total	M	57.11	45.32
	N	606	606
	SD	18.10	15.05

Table 2 *Marital status and in Attachment-related anxiety and Attachment-related avoidance of ECR-R*

\*There was only one person in category “Widowed” and this group was excluded from the analysis.

Divided sample based on gender showed significant relationship between marital status and score on Anxiety scale (ANOVA,  $F = 5.554$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ,  $ETA = 0.201$ ) – Table 3. Single men scored significantly higher than other marital groups (t-test ( $166.85$ ) =  $3.052$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ,  $d = 0.41$ ) – the effect that did not show in the group of women.

Gender	Marital status		Anxiety Scale Score	Avoidance Scale Score
Women	Single	M	58.69	42.2
		N	188	188
		SD	18.37	14.28
	Married	M	56.94	45.75
		N	127	127
		SD	18.24	16.59

	Divorced	M	55.83	46.13
		N	24	24
		SD	18.3	14.99
	Total	M	57.84	43.82
		N	340	340
		SD	18.26	15.27
	Single	M	59.07	48.46
		N	166	166
		SD	18.61	14.17
Men	Married	M	51.91	45.19
		N	85	85
		SD	15.44	14.77
	Divorced	M	50.6	45.2
		N	15	15
		SD	15.67	17.42
	Total	M	56.3	47.2
		N	266	266
		SD	17.8	14.58

Table 3 *Gender differences in marital status and in Attachment-related anxiety and Attachment-related avoidance of ECR-R*

#### *Age and scores on Attachment-related anxiety and Attachment-related avoidance*

Age correlated negatively with the score on Anxiety Scale ( $r = -0.101$ ,  $p = 0.02$ ) and positively on the Avoidant scale ( $r = 0.075$ ,  $p = 0.023$ ). Results were statistically significant, but correlations are marginal. Gender did not influence the direction or robustness of these results.

## **4 Discussion**

Analysing the differences in the attachment style we found that women scored significantly higher on attachment-related anxiety and men significantly higher on attachment-related avoidance. This is in correspondence with the existing literature (Alonso-Arbiol et al, 2007; Mikulincer – Shaver, 2007) and also with typical western folk psychology expectations. Metaanalysis of 100 studies with attachment style measures showed gender differences in the same direction as our study (Del Giudice, 2011).

We can compare our results with findings of Greek authors Koskina and Giovazolias, 2010. Participants were nonclinical male ( $n = 100$ ) and female ( $n = 381$ ) university

students. Other Greek study of Tsagarakis, Kafetsios, and Stalikas (2007), present the ECR-R which was used to measure romantic attachment. They have demonstrated good validity and reliability (factor structure, criterion, convergent validity, internal consistency, and test-retest reliability). Moreover, they reported a high reliability ( $\alpha = 0.91$  for each dimension) and a moderate correlation ( $r = 0.43$ ) between the two dimensions (*anxiety* and *avoidance*).

In case, (Koskina and Giovazolias, 2010) the reliability was  $\alpha = 0.89$  for the total ECRS-R ( $\alpha = 0.88$  and  $0.86$ , for the subscales *anxiety* and *avoidance*, respectively). The two subscales had a moderate correlation  $r = 0.31$  ( $p < 0.01$ ). Independent-samples  $t$  test revealed significant gender differences in romantic attachment. Men scored significantly higher on the ECRS-R,  $(479) = 3.07$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . This difference was attributed to the *avoidance* dimension, with men reporting being more avoidant,  $t(479) = 4.27$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . In our case we had moderate correlation  $r = 0.365^{**}$ , correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) for the subscales anxiety and avoidance.

Finally, it should be noted that the attachment style as a stable pattern is not only connected to relationship with a parent or a romantic partner. The preferred stable personal attachment style can be found also in school environment in relationship with a teacher and peers (Al-Yagon – Mikulincer, 2004). This has direct implications also for educational process. There are some limitations of the presented study which should be considered. The participants were mostly young people with high percentage of them being in early 20's of their age. Quite large percentage (34.1%) had not stated their marital status which could skew relationship between the scores for Attachment-related anxiety and Attachment-related avoidance. On the other hand, the analyses of the relationship between the mentioned variables were based on a group of more than 600 participants.

## **5 Conclusions**

Analyzing the differences in attachment style we found that women scored significantly higher on attachment-related anxiety and men significantly higher on attachment-related avoidance. This reflects the general tendency towards experiencing close relationships, but based on other studies it has similar impact on other relationships – like peer relationships or teacher-student relationship. The study found an interesting result on marital status and attachment style where single men scored significantly higher on attachment-related anxiety scale of ECR-R. Next we focus on the item analysis of ECR-R in relationship to gender and marital status and in future

we plan to do some methodological study on psychometric qualities of ECR-R based on the obtained sample.

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# ARTICLES

## The Use of the Drama Pedagogical Method in the Training of Cultural Project Managers

*Szabolcs Zalay\**

**Abstract:** The universities are traditionally elitist bulwarks. How do they counter this image? I would like to present a special andragogy strategy which I apply in university level education, in the Cultural Project Managers' training against poverty and social exclusion in the Institute of Cultural Studies at the University of Pécs. I demonstrate the application of drama pedagogy method in the course of the training. We have more and more experience concerning the fact that the Hungarian "drama pedagogy school", that became stronger in recent decades, has introduced and developed effective methodological frameworks to realize constructive pedagogy able to create more efficient pedagogical situations than the traditional education methods. This means that today's Hungarian drama pedagogy possesses the qualities which enable to answer many of the challenges mentioned above.

**Key words:** responsibility, culture, training, drama pedagogy, constructivism.

In the communication training of cultural project managers we are able to get extremely valuable feedback on the behavior that defines professional success in future. Below, I discuss the training structure, which will greatly help cultural professionals to develop an attitude aimed at battling poverty and social exclusion. I explore the nuances of the training method, during which, inter alia, with the aid of communication acts performed in the roles, the participants can examine real communicative situations and conflicts (Zalay, 2002). The attitude system of the group unfolds, and as a result of the controlled process management, the participants will have discipline, understand their need to take part in exercises which generate tension. It is possible to unveil the sources of problems, to propose solutions to them, or indirectly generate the need of the participants' change. As a consequence, communication skills can develop optimally and a significant improvement in the

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choice of communication strategies aimed at combating poverty and social exclusion is projected which will be reflected in further work.

## **1 Challenges of our time**

Today, when you can learn in new ways, new methods should be taught as well. In the era of the IT revolution we have a speed challenge: anyone who slows down, will be left behind, will be boring and will be ignored. Intense experiences are required by the students. There is a quantitative challenge: everyone can have access to everything, if they are lucky, or if they want, but that is why students need quality experiences. There is a democratic challenge: students require democratic atmosphere and publicity. Finally, there is a global challenge: everyone is in a competition and at the same time is at risk. Therefore, we, as teachers, are expected to develop community responsibility competences and competitiveness. If we want to respond to these challenges, an educational paradigm shift and methods, which offer lively alternatives and give experiences preserved in the long-term memory of the participants of the learning process, are required (Zalay, 2008). Today's Hungarian drama pedagogy promises to be a method of such a paradigm shift, and offers an excellent opportunity for the transaction of different kinds of educational trainings.

Drama pedagogy, its current Hungarian version, bears the marks of the constructivist pedagogy, especially the so-called "school drama" (Zalay, 2006). It is considered to be the pedagogy which can evoke significant learning experiences. Indeed, the essence of its mechanisms of action can be recognized by learning that occurs at the deeper meanings subjectively understood by the level of experience of the effect that occurs in the discovery, which personalizes their problems through the study of a fictitious medium. At the same time, the constructive drama operates with deliberately planned but high-level-autonomy collective learning systems, thus developing a strong degree of openness, empathy and the ability to understand others in the community due to the synergistic collaboration experienced by the participants. All these experiences will be indispensable for future cultural project manager in their work.

## **2 The developmental opportunities of communication training**

The training of cultural project managers, tried out in the Institute of Culture of the Faculty of Adult Education and Human Resources Development at the University of Pécs, have the overall aim of improving participants' communication skills and raising interactions awareness. This learning process, compared with normal school processes, happens in a much more intensive way, by providing extra energy in practice, the "novelty" of the tasks performed, playfulness and team spirit. The role of a trainer is

quite unique as well, not located above the group, not taking on a teaching role. A trainer is rather a moderator, keeping the process in hand, adapting the follow-up tasks to the group's "state", describing their rules, but making no judgement. The "work" progresses within the framework of shared goals, expectations and rules not directed "from above", as the trainer is helping participants in the joint planning. The group members are equal, forming a circle; no one is cast out, forming a closed shape, so theoretically everyone can be in constant contact with the others.

It depends largely on the trainer's competence and professional experience to get the group to an appropriate level of confidence, which is the key to the whole training. At the same time the trainer must proceed with caution, because the occurrence of rather intimate questions too early can lead to alienation of some members of the group and can lead to failure of the group. Learning, itself, is based on continuous activity and active participation. The group members participate in a series of roleplaying tasks which is processed through event discussions.

This will increase the training efficiency – via practices and situations the participants get in strong mental and emotional effects, and these effects are strongly entrenched through the experiences of individuals. The continuous, active participation puts the group members into a continuous interaction, which on the one hand develops cooperation skills, which may improve communication skills, on the other hand it may affect their personal self-esteem, identity development, and the improvement of skills can also promote more conscious, flexible thinking.

All this depends on individual participation and success of the training. Working together usually strengthens the relationships between group members, may affect the individual's openness towards others, increase the tolerance, the level of trust, the participants can learn about consensus building strategies through appropriate exercises. The participants can get feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of working together with people. They may find answers to what extent they can affect people, or they can influence the extent of their organization skills, and realize in what areas they might need to increase efficiency. By increasing people's skills, judging people by the first impression can become avoidable (Várnagy, 2003), and this will also be an important condition for the successful and exclusion-free cultural broker work.

The tasks solved together and individually, help identify the harmony between the group and individual performance. The team members learn what they are usually seen like, what the others and outsiders say about them, and through the participation in training situations their self-image expands to a new dimension. Thus their self-

knowledge increases, their personal constraints and opportunities also become more conscious. In exercises the participants develop communication skills, become more aware of verbal and nonverbal communication in different application forms, of the ability to recognise different meanings of the voice, the look, the facial expression and posture, and via this they develop better understanding of other people.

Success or failure during interesting and specific tasks and practices encourages the participants to think more flexibly. Thus the participants can get to know the other members in different ways. Good atmosphere and well-executed training using deep impressions, not only improve individual communication skills, but the participants go through the development of personal skills and self-perception, thinking, social ratios, and they improve human relations by shaping each other.

### **3 Special features of constructive drama pedagogy training**

The communication training based on drama pedagogy features comes especially from the developed professional background of the “drama” linked to conscious applications. According to one of the most notable Hungarian drama pedagogue, Erik Szauder, the main element of the use of drama in pedagogy is the examination of individual and social values and Foucault’s cultural content analysis (Foucault, 1986) by the means called “the problemization of the idea”. In other words: drama is increasing personal knowledge of critical behaviour, obviously in a fictional situation but, apart from this, it has all the elements of reality (Szauder, 2001, p. 31).

The main features of this method come indeed from its nature of being art-pedagogy, because it can operate with the developed methods of theatre and drama. Although, as Erik Szauder (2001) puts it: “The application of drama in education, the situation is slightly different, because the participants in the process created are both actors and audience”. The dramatic happening does not have, unlike written drama, a pre-recorded text, regardless of the intentions of the participants (i.e., text, action, and relation-system). The participants in the drama happening are “forced” to manifest cognitive and social activity in the situations which become experienceable and understandable, only if the participants have actively summoned them. The jointly created situations, besides events of social and emotional content, of course, may also convey a lot of factual information as well. They are, however, unlike the “textbook-tasting”, alienated, decontextualized way of conveying, and they appear in the contextual framework (Szauder, 2001, p. 31). That is, in contrast to the situation often happening during traditional situation training exercises. Role-play taking place in the dramatic context does neither mean taking-off from the reality nor it can give room to irresponsible “playing”. On the contrary: it makes the continuous correlation of the

laws of reality and the reality of fiction inevitable, because despite the fact that fiction in some respects may terminate the framework of reality (e.g., linear timeliness or spatial constraints), the internal logic has to align to real-life experiences (Szauder, 2001, p. 32).

Laszló Kaposi, the president of the Hungarian Drama Society and one of the creators of the Hungarian “drama pedagogy school”, believes that educational drama differs from other dramatic processes in the fact that the determining elements of created situations (space, time, characters, relationships, etc.) are knowingly regulated to serve educational purposes. Contrary to the generally more loosely structured, and therefore less controllable dramatic games; the administration of “situational practices” and the theatre, uncertain in its effects, where all these elements are much more restricted, is more difficult (Kaposi, 2004).

From all this comes the key to the effectiveness of communication training inspired by the drama: aside of the practicality of educational benefits of traditional training with the help of the internal laws of drama through the use of their conscious mobilization and management of the artistic experience and all this located in a verifiable, protected context. In this way, it does not expose the participant to the doubtful experience of “fooling around”, and with offered “openness” – ideally – does not the abuse situations left uncontrolled as a result.

The best training, however, spontaneously develops according to the features, composition and mood of those present, and also to the teacher’s empathy. Even the most thorough planning may not be good enough, if we are not ready to improvise. And so, all times vary, as two drama lessons cannot be the same. Because of this and the always exciting opportunity of making a new contact makes communication training exciting and adds opportunities of catharses.

If, during the training, we consciously use the above-mentioned methods of drama pedagogy, taking the advantage of educational benefits analysed building on the professional bulwarks of “drama”, we can get to the very efficient development of communication. All this plays an important role in the communication training of cultural project managers inspired by the drama pedagogy.

#### **4 The dramaturgy of the learning process**

If we want to know how the learning process takes place at the deeper levels of the training and what a secret is the effect mechanism of drama pedagogical training, we definitely have to look at the “internal dramaturgy” of the training. By this we mean

the really dynamically active ingredients, which carry the potential of creating the meaning. Coming from the classical terminology, here we have dramatic action and diction, in teaching drama the so-called “convention” that operates and regulates the whole dramatic structure, creating the “motivic” network of a constructive (learning and teaching) drama and training; and, last but not least, the cathartic effect of their theatrical means by which the training can really influence the arts and experiential education.

Two types of action of dramatic manifestation should be taken into account, and exploring their relational system provides an explanation for the “special” nature of the opportunities of drama learning (Bolton, 1996). One is the so-called “external action” which is created by the collision of two specific worlds. Therefore the situational actions of the players are concrete actions and actions of “another world” at the same time. The objects are both specific objects but they bear symbolic meaning as well. The quality of the dramatic action is determined by the way of connectivity between the two contexts. Depending on the extent to which a participant perceives and understands the role played, the fictional world unfolds its real meaning to him. The training seems only an action, in reality, it is thinking embedded in the action aimed at the meaning creation, with the interaction of two mediating contexts (Bolton, 1996, p. 22). The two types of meaning originated from external action are: a person practicing skill exercises and bringing these skills to the surface, which is needed to achieve the specific role. The knowledge can evolve and develop during the game, as an effect of moral experience it can be identified and filtered out. This is an inductive process taking place. During external actions, on the basis of actual experiences, the general logic contents can be manifested in the personality.

However, the training of the learning process is more relevant in terms of what happens during the “internal action”. During the presentation which is the result of referencing to each other in two contexts, the underlying content that may be produced and become adaptive in the point of view of learning, which can be materialized only in the action. In fact there is no new knowledge, but rather the mobilization of prior knowledge. In other words, the game provides opportunities for the use of such knowledge, which has not yet been activated by the personality. The “internal action” moves from the general direction towards the specific one, from the theme towards the action, which is just the opposite of the “external action” moving from the specific action towards the general direction (Bolton, 1996, p. 27). On this basis, we can state that there is a lot of learning potential in the training of drama based principle both in the field of skills and knowledge. The biggest change yet can occur in the deeper meanings, the meanings subjectively understood.

The subjective meanings are created by the emotional attitudes which participants manifest in their name and express during situations created (Telegdy, 2006). The requirements of the learning process are (Bolton, 1996): the joint participation, the emotional experiences used in a new quality, overshadowing “raw emotion” and the content of personal appearance and common content appropriate to the training situations. The stages of change in understanding resemble the typical constructivist model of learning: confirmation, clarification and change. They occur variably, often sliding into each other during training sessions.

The essence of “internal action” is that new experiences incorporate into the existing experience and knowledge structure, if the participants are given the opportunity to build bridges between the known and unknown content by means of discovering new meanings and processing experiences (Neelands, 1994). Therewith the task of the trainer is to find the way to mobilize the existing knowledge and to establish a direct connection to the material examined. This can be achieved by giving “a sort of a focusing lens” into the hands of the participants (Neelands, 1994). Such an image properly symbolises the essence of the training mode of action that generates a situational learning processes, in which the learning experiences become intensely experienceable and interpretable; by means of consciously controlled adaptive operation of a dynamic impact through the artistic means.

Obviously, because of their artistic character, action and diction should complement each other. “Speeches” within the training have a dual function. On the one hand, in connection with the “external actions” they develop communication skills, on the other hand during the “internal action” via experiencing the joy of expression they will become active parts of creation as a learning process. However, besides the scenes there are discussions, which are at least as important as they deal with coordination, questions, possible arguments and work by means of evaluation. The “language” of these trainings is clearly characterised by constructive communication as the trainer continuously operates in his “vocalizing” role and does not do so in a reckoning tone, but in the spirit of linguistic construction based on reciprocity. Such an example may be of strong effect to the group dynamic processes, since the learning process, especially the long-term educational process, develops a synergistic network of communication (Zalay, 2004). Moreover, the reflective nature of drama has a special role during which the language will be put forward by meta-cognitive aspects.

## **5 Conclusions**

The constructive mode of action in drama pedagogy training used in the training of cultural project managers therefore can be grasped in the respect that the teaching and



learning processes used in the dramatic process training are linked to the theatrical form. This relationship is based on a unique paradox. Namely, the training would like to assert both intellectual and emotional influence, much like the theatre. At the same time it strives to maintain an equilibrium in which the teacher-trainer's pre-conceived plans and strategies operate "yet retains the possibility of its spontaneity, the participants' creative role as if they were the 'writers', 'dramaturges' or even 'the director'" (O'Neill – Lambert, 1982). But the biggest contradiction to be bridged is between the artistic impact and understanding the tension between the need for change. Because the training does not want to "dazzle" (Bolton, 1996) or "manipulate" the participants, but it actually wants the participants to be responsibly aware of what is happening to them and to observe themselves from the outside. Not because of someone else's requirements, but because this is not for the viewers to play, not even the trainer, but in order for a deeper understanding to happen. Despite this understanding, such theatrical forms should be offered during the training, which can be of cathartic influence, as Dorothy Heathcote puts it, "acting at the level of the cardia, drama deals with what people digging deep in themselves want to know about what it means being human" (Wagner, 1976). This will require the dramatic theatrical skills.

The theatre "wishes to explore, since ancient times, the nature of the social phenomena what it means to exist as human beings" (Neelands, 1994). The history of modern drama pedagogy carries the same lesson, namely how educational drama managed to find that. How could it distance itself from this very strong base that the past of the theatrical drama meant (Huszár, 1981), creating its own identity in the world of pedagogy, and then return to the same place. Now with an entirely new autonomous identity, inter alia, in the form of the above analysed training show the participants of the learning process the opportunities of "the experience of being human".

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## **Recruitment Process Outsourcing**

***Jana Cocul'ová\****

**Abstract:** Nowadays outsourcing presents a common way to increase business performance. This way of providing supporting business activities is more often used in the field of human resources. The paper deals with the topic of human resources outsourcing, especially the recruitment process outsourcing and it brings the views of several authors on the advantages and potential risks of its use.

**Key words:** outsourcing, human resources, recruitment process, recruitment process outsourcing.

### **Introduction**

In Slovakia there has been a significant shift in the perception of the role of human resources management since 1989, when it has begun to attach strategic importance to the management of personnel activities. Changing market conditions, increased competition and higher pressure on the quality of production and services has led managers to perceive the value of a quality workforce which currently represents the most valuable resource of a company. The range of activities which fall under human resources departments has been gradually extended and the current human resources departments began to be overloaded by performing all personnel activities. That was one reason why some companies have begun to consider the possibility of providing some activities by using outsourcing.

### **1 Development of human resources outsourcing in Slovakia**

In Slovakia, human resources outsourcing started to develop after 1989. The main impetus was to become open to foreign investors, whereas in western countries at that time, outsourcing of personnel activities had been a common way of providing business activities. First, there was a kind of selective outsourcing in the transfer of one and eventually several of personnel activities to an external supplier. After 2000 there are also reported efforts to use complex outsourcing, which represents the transfer of the entire field of human resource management to an external company. As A. Chalupová (2006) states, the Slovak market is increasingly dominated by the

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efforts to use selective outsourcing. The reason may lie with the providers of external services because there are still only a small number of organizations providing complex outsourcing in the field of human resources. Soňa Lacušková, a personnel manager of Penta Investments, stated that “the market is faced with two approaches to offer services in human resources – with the complexity and the effort to be a specialist in a particular area. Both approaches have their advantages and disadvantages. Specializing in the same type of services usually brings a deep knowledge of many issues and practices. At the same time, however, we meet with the fact that perceptions are narrowed and there is no perception of the overall context of human resource management” (Chalupová, 2006).

## **2 Benefits and risks of human resources outsourcing**

Opinions on the use of services of personnel companies are different. Therefore, any company which faces deciding whether to use outsourcing of some personnel activities or to continue in the internal performance of these activities, has to consider carefully how the benefits from such forms of cooperation arise, as well as some risks that can occur when using outsourcing. The resulting decision depends on a specific goal and specific needs of each company. J. J. Laabs (1993) points to the benefits that can be achieved by outsourcing human resource activities:

- Reduce costs – it is expected to reduce the cost of personnel work, since there is a reduction of personnel departments.
- Time management and effort savings – outsourcing saves time and effort. Management no longer deals with the recurrence of problems in the field of human resources. Routine problems are transferred to the recruitment company that is responsible for dealing with them. This can significantly reduce the burden on company management.
- Increased focus on core competencies – the fact that management is exempt from paying attention to routine personnel activities, more attention can be focused on primary objectives and strategic issues. Outsourcing HR activities will enable the company to focus on its competitive advantages and also the personnel managers to be more strategic than personnel officers. “Outsourcing changes the role of HR (human resource) managers from ‘jacks-of-all-trades’ to management consultants” (Caruth – Caruth, 2010).
- Service through professional experts – given that the personnel-consulting companies specialize exclusively in the field of human resource management, their employees have high skills and years of experience in the field. The team of professionals ensures that activities are performed at a high level. Situation,

which for its own internal staff may prove difficult, can be overcome by outsourcing specialists.

- Increasing employee morale – it is assumed that company employees may feel greater magnitude, resulting from the use of qualified specialists in order to best meet the staff. These feelings may lead to higher employee morale.

Despite the undeniable advantages that companies can obtain by using outsourcing in human resources management, this kind of cooperation also brings some disadvantages. Donald L. Caruth and Gail D. Caruth (2010) point out the possible negative aspects of outsourcing HR activities:

- The increase in direct costs – when calculating the total cost of outsourcing this amount may seem bigger than the internal provision of the activity. The authors highlight the fact that the internal management of human resources generated hidden costs, i.e. costs, which are typically not identified as expenditure on human resources management, for example administration of employee benefits. Managers may spend considerable time explaining and discussing employee benefits to employees, these costs do not appear at that time as the costs of human resources. However, if an administration of employee benefits is transferred to an external provider, the costs of negotiation with employees will become part of the fee. This may lead to the assumption that the total cost of the activity is increased, but in fact only those costs are clearly identified. This may be very disturbing for the management of companies.
- Incompatibility with an external provider – successful relationship requires compatible corporate culture and philosophy of both partners. This discrepancy predicts a discordant relationship, so when choosing a supplier it is necessary to analyze also the background of the supplier, its values and philosophy.
- Loss of control – personnel managers should be aware that the transfer of the activity to an external provider will lead to loose direct impact on the performance of delegated activities. For the success of the relationship it is necessary to build a sense of confidence in the ability and quality of a provider.
- Vaguely defined responsibilities – this problem may occur in situations when a firm uses more suppliers. To avoid this problem, it is necessary to have detailed analysis and clearly defined responsibilities in outsourcing contracts.
- The decline of employee morale – the use of external people for the exercise of personnel activities can have some negative influence on internal staff to feel

“detached”. It is necessary to ensure permanent communication and support from company management to understand the changes.

- Fear of leakage of confidential information – this relationship is associated with the access to internal corporate information by the provider. To eliminate the risks associated with leaks of confidential information it is required to specify the precise terms of access and manipulation with business information under the outsourcing contracts. In this respect, it is also important to find a right partner – with the ownership of international quality certificates and the membership in the association of recruiters. Positive references should guarantee the compliance with the highest standards and ethical principles (Chalupová, 2006).

The success of outsourcing HR activities depends on the knowledge of both the potential advantages and disadvantages which can be brought to the enterprise by such decision. One way to eliminate the risk of failure is the right choice of the personnel activity that is to be outsourced.

### **3 Recruitment process outsourcing**

Business success is largely dependent on the expertise and the skills of employees. To obtain quality employees is often a key issue for the enterprise management, as many already know that quality staff is the way to achieve corporate objectives, and that the acquisition of a talent is not an easy process. This is usually one of the reasons why a company decides to outsource such personnel activity. Currently the outsourcing of recruitment and selection of employees presents a common way to increase business performance. In literature the term RPO (Recruitment Process Outsourcing) is used for denoting the outsourcing process of recruitment and selection of employees.

Beharelle Patrick, a CEO of personnel-consulting company SeatonCorp, says that RPO can be defined as providing a part of or all the phases of the recruitment and selection through an external supplier, where can be distinguished three categories (Marquez, 2007):

1. Complex outsourcing which includes a comprehensive outsourcing, from finding and assessing candidates to administrative functions.
2. Selective outsourcing of recruitment and selection of the staff when outsourcing is used only for a certain type of job position.
3. “Project recruiting” means that companies outsource a large number of workers for a specific project.

Human Resources Outsourcing Association (HROA) defines RPO as a type of business process outsourcing, in which the company management transfers the responsibility for the recruitment process to the service provider. It is a form of cooperation, in which an external supplier selects the most appropriate methods used throughout the RPO (<http://recruitmentoutsourcingprocess.com>).

RPO is distinguished from other forms of external contractors for obtaining employees. The main difference is the process. The RPO provider in this process is fully responsible for the whole process, the methods used, keeping the process as well as the results of the recruitment process. If an external provider is only a part of a process managed by the client, it is not an RPO (Overman, 2009).

However, many managers have different views on what exactly is RPO. A survey conducted by the International Association for the area of human resource management Human Capital Institute (HCI) and by Futurestep proved this fact. Companies interviewed nearly 400 respondents in the survey RPO: Today's Challenges and Opportunities, which took place in August and September 2008. 73% of respondents indicated that it agrees with the definition of RPO, which involves some form of selective outsourcing of recruitment for selected grades of positions. Only 16% defined RPO as outsourcing of all recruitment activities for certain jobs. In the words of Ross Jones, the head of the research carried out, "clearly there is no consensus on what RPO includes. The wide using of RPO is characteristic of the current tactical approach, however based on the responses of some respondents there is a desirable need for the comprehensive strategic approach" (Overman, 2009, p. 19).

The survey results showed that more than 59% of the respondents outsource some or all of the recruitment procedures, while 50% said they plan to use RPO next five years.

It is possible to encounter different opinions on the effectiveness of RPO. Some authors point to many benefits that RPO brings, while others see it as a wrong approach to the use of company's most valuable factor.

Bryan Duggan (Duggan – Croy, 2004) lists a number of arguments for the use of RPO. The first one emphasizes that the acquisition of a key personnel is a strategically critical value for each firm. To obtain a high-quality professional staff there are needed special skills that can be obtained by using RPO. Another important aspect that speaks in favor of RPO is the costs associated with searching, addressing, assessing and selecting the most suitable candidate. The author writes another very important reason for using RPO – the access to a large number of quality candidates. He also points out that ordinary personnel managers do not have such skills and experience in

assessing and selecting the staff. As a very important fact he emphasizes the internal time-consuming process of obtaining and ensuring the selection of employees.

Dean Shoesmith, the personnel director of Sutton Council, takes also a positive approach to the use of RPO. He points to a substantial reduction in costs by using RPO, but adds that it is not the only positive consequence of RPO. External organizations provide their own RPO technology that a company could not afford to use on its own. He also welcomes the reduction of time to obtain a suitable candidate. But he adds that the strategic HR activities should continue to be implemented in-house (Braid, 2007).

Gordon Croy (Duggan – Croy, 2004), the director of the supply chain NTL Group, points to the negative side of RPO. He argues that in many cases the attributes as the ability to adapt to corporate culture, identification with the values of the company, being the part of a team are more important than the experience and knowledge of a worker. It is assumed that the external providers may not have sufficient knowledge of the company culture and therefore they may not be able to assess these requirements to potential applicants as the internal staff of human resource department is able to do. He also points out that the best personnel and consulting firms in the market have a wide range of clients, which can be a problem because they are the clients of the same personnel-consulting company and are excluded in order to be the source of candidates for the other companies. Consequently, the enterprise must either use less quality personnel company, a company without additional knowledge and contacts, or high quality staffing company with a limited selection of strong candidates.

Gordon Croy (Duggan – Croy, 2004) rejects the argument that RPO enables to decrease the time for the implementation of the recruitment process. He refers to the amount of time to be invested in search of suitable suppliers and management of relationship between the client and the supplier. He also emphasizes modern techniques in the recruitment process that will significantly save time compared to the past, such as online advertising and online discussions. They ensure shorter time to implement the process than it would be with using a third party. The possibility to know many other suitable candidates who may be applicable to other jobs in future is another important aspect of using the internal way of recruitment and selection of workers.

Ferric Valentine, the manager of a branch GCG, argues that although many companies are increasingly using RPO and they are satisfied with it, there are also many companies which have returned to the internal recruitment. F. Valentine points as a possible reason for the dissatisfaction that some companies outsource only the part of the process of recruitment and some part they continue to perform internally. He



indicates that the result is “a sort of hybrid creation, which does not work” (Braid, 2007). When RPO has to be successful, it must include the overall transfer process, not only some of its phases. A similar view is the one of Ben Kemp (Braid, 2007), who agrees that the business benefits of outsourcing will occur only if it is implemented correctly. Whether a firm outsources or not, depends mainly on its requirements and capabilities. Vance Kearney, the vice president of HR at Oracle, believes that the recruitment process has to be implemented within the organization. He adds that the decision of company to use RPO is inconsistent with the opinion that people are most valuable company resources. He perceives the recruitment process as a strategic, not an administrative function, therefore it must remain a matter of the company (Braid, 2007).

## **Conclusions**

Many authors perceive outsourcing as a way to achieve quality employees. Currently, the market operates a large number of companies providing services in human resource management, and many of them are specialized in specific personnel activities, including the recruitment and selection of employees. Their number in the Slovak market in recent years has increased, suggesting a high level of use. The fact that the outsourcing of human resource management records dynamic growth in our conditions, the survey results, where more than 200 human resources managers and CEOs of companies were interviewed, prove it. The survey showed that up to two thirds of respondents consider outsourcing as a solution to assure service quality and also cost savings ([www.jeneweingroup.com](http://www.jeneweingroup.com)). Despite the growing trend of using outsourcing in the management of human resources we can meet with different views of the authors who see outsourcing HR activities rather negative and they highlight the risks associated with it.

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# **Parameters of the Quality and Efficiency of the Educational System from the Aspect of Ergonomics**

*Martin Lorko*<sup>\*</sup>

**Abstract:** In the article, the selected ergonomic parameters improving basic educational systems (educational workplaces) are analysed from the point of view of a teacher and a student. The emphasis is put on the complex ergonomic optimization of these educational systems so as to improve their quality and efficiency by increasing productivity and quality of work in the systems.

**Key words:** ergonomics, educational system, productivity, quality, efficiency.

## **1 Introduction**

The current educational systems in Slovakia do not correspond to the trends in industrially advanced countries. The consequence of this is a declining level of applicable knowledge and skills of the graduates in practice. Improvement of this situation requires a complex solution of the educational systems, which should provide highly qualified and creative professionals for practice, able to solve current and future expected tasks arising from the requirement to improve the quality of life of the human population. Requirements for educational processes and conditions, under which the educational processes are currently realized, need to be changed, as they lead to low efficiency of education. The educational system must be humane, productive, first quality, creative and motivating in terms of the development of personality characteristics of a student as well as a teacher. Therefore, it is necessary to pay the utmost attention to the ergonomic optimization of basic educational systems in educational institutions.

## **2 Ergonomic parameters of basic educational systems**

Practice confirms that the complex ergonomic optimization of the work system and working conditions in educational institutions can increase productivity and work quality of teachers, students and service personnel, which in turn leads to improved quality and efficiency of education in these institutions.

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Ergonomic parameters increasing the quality and efficiency of education in educational institutions should be sought primarily in educational centres. These parameters are hidden in the working conditions of teachers, students and service personnel, the ergonomic requirements for work equipment, methods of work, organization of education, work environment, communication, setting up the aims of education and achieving them, the optimization of energy, material, information, and also financial flows.

Because of the number of elements and processes that affect the quality and efficiency of education, it is necessary to solve this problem systematically. Education is perceived as the system of education, in which the quality of the individual subsystems (or components) and processes that take place between them, affects the quality and efficiency of the entire educational system. The author's presented model of educational system treats the surrounding environment, and its subsystems have ties to the environment of educational system or other educational centres.

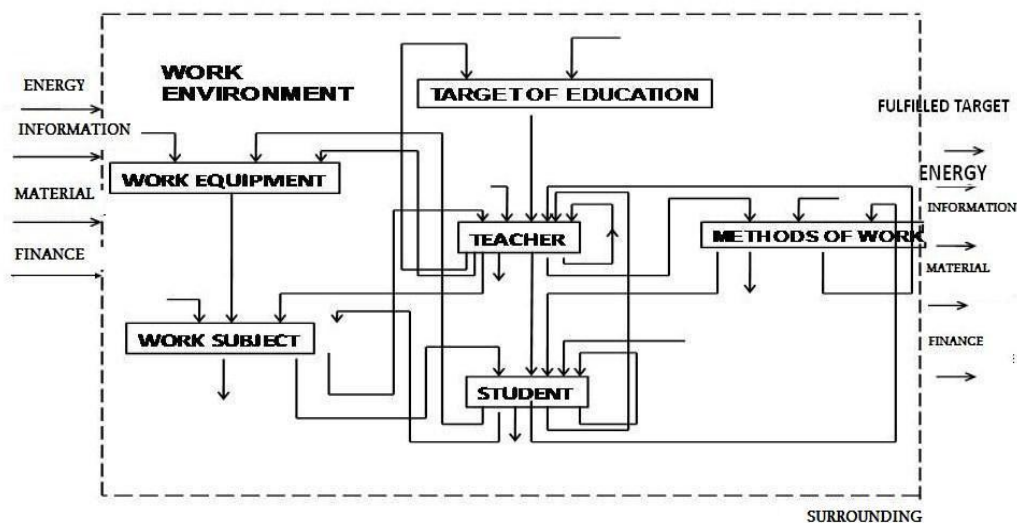


Figure1 *A simplified model of the basic educational system in educational institutions*

Basic subsystems of education are teacher/s and student/s. There are also targets of education, work methods, work equipment, work items and work environment to be concerned. In terms of examination, these subsystems may consist of other subsystems or elements. Teachers, in interaction with students, use their own experiences, various work methods and diverse work equipment in performing their jobs. Students also work with already acquired knowledge and experiences, they recognize new learning

and working techniques, work equipment and work items, which they use for further effective acquisition of knowledge, experience and skills. The target of this education is a well prepared graduate demanded by the labour market.

## **2.1 Requirements for teachers**

The current requirements for teachers are often enormous (to register, to receive, to process, to reproduce excess amount of rapidly changing information, to carry out the work within binding deadlines, often in poor working conditions and in a low-paid job). Therefore, we should not forget the quality of life of teachers and their motivation, regarding their important social role and tasks, which should be effectively implemented. Only a quality teacher has the potential to educate quality graduates and only a personality can bring up personality. Therefore, it is necessary to pay the utmost attention to the choice of top quality teachers, their training and motivation, as well as the working conditions. Unfortunately, the role of a teacher does not correspond with the social requirements putting emphasis on the entire educational system in the current social conditions in Slovakia. We lack a coherent system of continuous educational and specialized professional training. The teacher must have the ability to learn constantly (to “starve” for the latest knowledge of science and technology). Knowledge, understanding and skills of teachers in the given subject and their effective use in educational process are fundamental conditions of first quality of their work.

Systematic professional development is considered to be a professional responsibility for teachers in more than 20 European countries and regions. It is voluntary in Slovakia, but clearly linked to the career benefits and salary increases. It is necessary to determine the appropriate minimum of a year time limit for these activities of teachers for the given subjects (EURYDICE, 2008).

A very important requirement for the teacher is to think positively, to be humane to students and colleagues, to be able to motivate, to be empathetic, friendly, to be able to explain and develop the creativity of students in science and research. The teacher should receive students’ feedback during the teaching process to be able to lead them properly to the development of their critical thinking and solution of various problems. If teachers do not understand their position, position of their students and their current situation, they will never reach their educational target.

## **2.2 Requirements for students**

The basic requirement for a student is a positive recommendation and certificate of previous educational institutions, in which the student obtained the required knowledge

and skills, as well as the recommendation to continue in other forms of study. Educational institutions in order to maintain the high quality of their graduates should pay close attention to the selection of the candidates for study. In addition to the verification of their knowledge, experience and skills, it is necessary to pay attention to their internal motivation for the study in the given course and the depth of their interest in the given area of education. We must not neglect the other physical, mental and sensory conditions of the candidate for appropriate kind of education. The system of education must be set so that the students should take the interdependence on other people (understand the meaning of humanism and pluralism), in order to be able to learn throughout their lives to know how to use the acquired knowledge and skills effectively in practice and to be able to solve their own problems (to make their own decision and assume full responsibility for it). The most important thing for the students' life in a global society is to understand local and global problems of humanity and lead them to seek ways of their solution (Doyle, 2008).

### **2.3 Requirements for work equipment**

Under the work equipment we understand all material tools (working tools, accessories, furniture, textbooks, computers, etc.), which are used as the equipment of a workplace to ensure effective educational process and facilitate all-round development of personality characteristics of teachers and students. The basic ergonomic requirements for the work equipment should include mainly the optimal technical facilities for the particular area of education, their humanity, comfort, high functionality and aesthetic level. Educational institutions should use the latest teaching aids to meet the essential criteria described in ergonomic standards. Educational centres should be equipped with ICT to ensure optimal audio-visual communication between teachers and students. We must not forget the risks arising from these technologies (the loading of electromagnetic smog, fast fatigue, deterioration of eyes and other body functions) that affect students and teachers.

### **2.4 Requirements for educational methods**

Educational methods include lectures, group discussions, individual presentations, homework, seminars, workshops, conferences, brainstorming, role playing, case studies, subject-oriented learning, experiential learning, project-oriented learning, independent study, consultation, e-learning, etc. Most of students evaluate lectures as the best teaching method. However, a group discussion is often evaluated as more effective because students do not rely solely on mechanical learning and discussion encourages greater creativity. Therefore, when a teaching method is chosen by a teacher, it is necessary to consider not only the experience of a teacher, but also the

perception of students and their previous efficiency assessment of teaching methods, as well as their suggestions for improvement.

So called experiential learning is an important area in the educational process, which is based on personal activity. "Tell me and I will forget. Show me and maybe I will not forget. Involve me and I will understand" (Chinese proverb). If we include more senses and invest more energy, the experience will be more intense and will have greater effect. The financial aspects of educational process can significantly affect the choice of educational method.

## **2.5 Organisation of education**

A general organization of education, i.e. time (schedule of educational activities), spatial (where and under what conditions) and staffing (who will be implemented) does not play less important role in optimizing the educational system. There is a scope of flexible educational programs, efficient location, organization and equipment of educational area for individual or group education, seminars, lectures, practical exercises, laboratory tests, and so on.

## **2.6 Requirements for work environment**

The work environment in educational institutions must meet the basic ergonomic parameters of lighting comfort and visual communication (illumination, colour and spatial solution of workplaces in accordance with the action, which will take place there, elimination of excessive electromagnetic radiation), acoustic comfort and audio communication (exclusion of noise, vibration and shock), climate comfort (optimum parameters of temperature, humidity and airflow, elimination of unpleasant radiant heat and sudden changes in air pressure), dust-free environment, exclusion of toxic chemicals of various state, protection against hazardous biological factors, as well as providing a favourable psychosocial climate.

## **2.7 Requirements for the target of education**

The target of education must be clear, transparent, and understandable and accepted by students and teachers. The main target may include a set of partial targets, the achievement of which will move us to the main target. The target of education is also the output of the basic system of education, thus we should pay significant attention to it. Too big and too ambitious targets may not be fulfilled, which will threaten the quality and efficiency of education. Too small targets may lead to uninterested students. Therefore, the main target should be based primarily on the requirements

arising from the needs of practice, which are included in the profile of the graduate of the given study. From the main target are derived the basic targets and from these, the partial targets, which are achieved within the educational activities. The target must meet the form and content requirements and must conform to the schedule of study, so that the student can master the study material by logical sequence and know how to use it practically or demonstrate the knowledge in examination.

## **2.8 Requirements for communication during the educational process**

Mutual high-quality communication between teachers and students means that they know the object of communication and the communication code and the exchange of information is open and truthful. Information sources, from which they arise, are genuine and credible, informational noises are excluded. Communication impact on a student develops in the way, where as many as possible sensory organs are involved into the learning process and educational activity leaves a deep impression (experience) in a student so he/she will be proud to say that after this experience is smarter and more capable in the field.

## **2.9 Requirements for the control of achieved target of education**

The control of the achieved educational target (in the form of tests, examinations, etc.) cannot be a threat. It must be a natural way of verifying the knowledge and skills in application of the acquired knowledge in solving practical problems with the possibility to re-add the missing knowledge. This creates a possibility of solution of individual projects, examination of knowledge, practical verification of skills, etc.

The various methods including self-evolution, teaching portfolio analysis, evaluation of students' knowledge and teaching methods evaluated by the students can be used for the evaluation of the efficiency of the system of education. Students must be assured that the evaluations given by teachers and educational institutions are objective and true. Otherwise, it is unlikely that the public will take a given educational institution seriously.

The most acceptable criterion for measuring a good education is the amount of voluntary participation of students in the classroom. Many scientists in the field of education argue that students are legitimate judges of the efficiency of education and are qualified to express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with education (Hoyt – Pallett, 1999).



### 3 Conclusions

The overall quality and efficiency of education depends on the quality of the educational process and under what conditions it is carried out. The best indicator of the efficiency of the education is the success of graduates in job-hunting and their professional competence use as a short-to-medium term effect of the received education. Efficiency and quality are interrelated and conditional. Products of education, which appear to be effective, are used as inputs into a new process to its improvement. Efficiency is thus a tool for improving the educational system and its expected results.

Educational institutions should be a motor of economy, a place of creation and preservation of knowledge. They should prepare students for research and teaching, as well as prepare professionals for market needs and international cooperation in a given discipline as well as continually provide lifelong education of professionals. We must not forget that one of the main targets of education should be: to teach students to be able to take control of their own development, to take their destiny into their own hands and to contribute to human progress and higher quality of their own lives by their education (Franc – Zouňková, 2007). It will not be possible to achieve the target without efficient educational system, whose efficiency is linked to productivity and quality of work at individual educational workplaces. That will depend on the consistent application of ergonomic parameters in the basic educational systems.

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## **The Safety and Hygiene at Work in a School Curriculum**

***Katarína Ižová\****

**Abstract:** The article discusses the implementation of safety, hygiene and health measures at work into the education at all levels – from preschools to university education. It is focused on the purposeful and systematic shaping and developing the knowledge and expertise in OSH (Occupational safety and health) from an early age, because this issue is under current legislation concerning teaching.

**Key words:** health and safety at work, education, sectional theme.

### **Introduction**

The education in occupational safety and health at work is a process designed to purposeful and systematic creation and development of knowledge, skills, habits, awareness, attitudes and desirable forms of behavior of employers and employees. The current Law no. 140/2008 concerns the issue of teaching subject at schools preparing students for future profession and continuing adult education including retraining. From an institutional aspect, this process begins at preschool and continues at all levels of education and vocational training to implement the economic practice and involve the domain of edification adequately.

### **Rome Declaration on Mainstreaming OSH into education and training**

The main objective of the Rome Declaration, which was realized on the 1st to the 3rd October 2003 during the Italian Presidency, is to prepare and sustain people during their life, since their childhood, engaging schools and any other professional training institution, in actions providing safer and healthier workforce in the EU of tomorrow. Experts agreed upon the need for the European strategy based on qualified and quantified goals aimed at preparing children and young people for future work life. The health and safety experts agreed upon the need for the European strategy based on qualified and quantified goals aiming at:

- providing all citizens and workers, in particular, with a life long learning;

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- improving the involvement of initial and continuing educational and training system in fostering health and safety in the workplace;
- preparing children and young people for the challenge of their future working life providing occupational safety and health.

### **Occupational safety and health at work in education**

One of the main objectives of the concept of state policy OSH is to build an effective system of education to health and safety from the basic to academic education including the training of employees and certification of specialized forms of education. Establishing an effective system of education to health and safety requires an all school approach, because only then we can ensure a safe learning environment for students as well as health and safety of the school staff. Capabilities of OSH principles and the educational process at each stage are different (The conception of OSH state policy).

The realization program of conception OSH in 2012 (The conception of OSH state policy) imposes to ensure the development of the school system of education to OSH and quality of education in preschools, elementary schools, secondary schools and universities, continuing education and teacher training for education to OSH. Within the measures and tasks that are set to reduce the number of accidents at work in our republic according to the concept of the state OSH policy, the introduction of teaching chapters from the OSH into the training of students at secondary schools and universities with an emphasis on identifying and managing risks in concrete terms including the prevention are included (The conception of OSH state policy).

#### **A) Preschools**

The objective of preschool education on safe conduct and behavior is the formation of a positive relationship to the children's life protection, their health and the health of other people. According to the State education program for preschool education (The state education program ISCED 0) in cognitive area within the thematic area children should:

- differentiate simple and intuitive way to describe the health status and illness,
- observe the principles of health with the help of adults,
- adopt positive attitudes to their health and the others' health and describe them through various artistic means of expression,
- summon adult assistance in emergency situations, which is at risk of health or the health of others, be aware of a risk of the contact with strangers (refuse candy from strangers, see it as a health hazard),

- identify the causes of potential danger and harm to disable handling with certain subjects, for example sharp objects, matches, medicines, chemicals, detergents, electrical appliances, but also of the unknown nature,
- recognize, differentiate, select and choose healthy food.

The issue of ensuring the safety and health is also an integral part of the content of education of children in kindergartens. The children are taught through the content to protect their health and the health of the others and to deal with rudimentary health-threatening situations (The state education program ISCED 0 – preprimary education).

Many kindergartens are involved in the healthy kindergarten project which is a part of the project “School supporting health”. The aim is to create conditions for the correct psychical, physical, social and emotional development of pre-school age children by applying educational principles and creating a favorable learning environment. There are also other health lifestyle programs for kindergartens, such as “Strengthening physical and psychological health of children of pre-school age”, “Step by step”, “Golden apple”, and “We want to breathe fresh air”.

#### **B) Elementary schools**

The sectional theme “The life and health protection” in the elementary school curriculum is implemented through the State education program and separate organizational forms of teaching – didactic games. The aim is to form pupil’s relationship to the protection of their health and life and also health and life of other people, to provide students with necessary theoretical knowledge and practical experience, to acquire knowledge and skills in self-protection, assistance to other health threats and life (The state education program ISCED 1, ISCED 2).

#### **C) High schools**

The compulsory part of education for pupils of secondary vocational schools in the Slovak republic is a subject matter of “Protecting life and health”. The content of the curriculum is implemented by two separate exercises and special purpose courses for the protection of life and health. The curriculum acquaints students with the basic obligations of workers, manufacturing, marketing, distribution centers and service centers by profiling graduate. The content of the curriculum also introduces them to the device manufacturing, marketing, distribution centers and the center of services for profiling. It teaches the occupational health and informs them about the most common sources and causes of accidents. Students learn the basis of first aid in accidents. The content of the curriculum also introduces hygiene standards, personal hygiene and workplace to them, familiarizes them with the operating unit, equipment manufacturing, sales, distribution and service centers and personnel. The curriculum acquaints students with basic obligations of the whole staff.

The sectional theme is realized through the subject of the State educational program and separate organizational forms of teaching – special exercises and the course “The life and health protection” (The state education program ISCED 3, 3A). It integrates the capabilities of students aimed at protecting life and health in emergency situations, also during the stay and movement in nature, which may arise from unforeseen threats of the surroundings.

The objective is:

- to form the relationship of students to the issue of their health and life, also health and life of other people,
- to provide the student with necessary theoretical and practical knowledge, to acquire knowledge and skills in self-protecting and providing assistance to others in case of threats to health and life,
- to develop the moral character of students which is the basis of national and patriotic feeling,
- to form the conditions for achieving higher fitness, and organism resilient to physical and psychological burdens of difficult life situations.

For secondary vocational schools the education to health and safety, hygiene work and fire protection are an integral part of the theoretical instruction and practical training (The state education program ISCED 2B, ISCED 3, ISCED 3A). In the opinion of several experts, while there are some excellent resources available for teachers, much less attention has been paid to the training of teachers. It is recognized that teachers need training in delivering risk education; if they do not have such training, and risk education is just one option on the curriculum to choose from, they may be reluctant to teach it and opt for topics they feel more comfortable with, even if they have been provided with good resources.

#### **D) Universities**

The issue of safety and health at work penetrates into the education at universities and colleges. The common principles of work safety should be incorporated into the curriculum of education at universities and colleges. The students must be oriented in this field, because they are future employers and employees in various positions.

The specificity of OSH future occupation is incorporated into appropriate vocational training taking the study program into account. It should be noted that the graduates of university education shall be employed at different levels of management functions of production entities, sites and services according to their erudition in OSH management.

The universities and colleges included in OSH training:

- Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava
  - Faculty of Material Sciences and Technology in Trnava
- Technical University of Košice
  - Faculty of Mining, Ecology, Process Control and Geotechnologies
  - Faculty of Mechanical Engineering
  - Faculty of Manufacturing Technologies
- Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra
  - Faculty of Education
  - Faculty of Social Sciences and Health Care

## **Conclusions**

The education and training to health and safety in the school system requires ILO Convention no. 155. Currently in the Slovak Republic, OSH law regulates the area of health and safety and risk prevention. This issue must be the subject of teaching at school preparing students for profession and continuing adult education including retraining. The improvement of safety and health at work has significant economic importance, because it provides optimized workflow, increases the confidence of employees, reduces losses and provides higher productivity, efficiency, quality of work, and increases the prosperity of business and society. It is necessary to introduce this issue into the school curricula and to prepare students for safety at work.

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# Strategy for Life-Accompanying Learning in Austria

*Wilhelm Filla*<sup>\*</sup>

**Abstract:** A comprehensive “Strategy for Life-Accompanying Learning” was developed in Austria and will continue until 2020. Since the strategy’s objectives are formulated in a very concrete way, it will be able to verify whether they have been reached. Prior to the publication of this strategy, a process of discussion with a broad base of participants had gone on for a couple of years. Practice will show to what extent the strategy can be implemented.

**Key words:** Life-Accompanying Learning, strategy in Austria, perspective 2020.

## 1 The national significance of the strategy

In a process of discussion that lasted several years, a national “Strategy for Life-Accompanying Learning” was developed in Austria. This process rested on a very broad base: the experts in educational policy as well as the scientists and educational practitioners were involved. The significance ascribed to the result of the process emerges from the fact that it was presented to the public on 5 July 2011 by the Austrian Federal Minister of Education together with the Ministers of Science and Research; Labour and Social Affairs; and Economy, Family and Youth.

## 2 Characterisation of the strategy

“LLL: 2020” is a short title of the strategy. It implies that the strategy will continue until 2020. The brochure “*Strategie zum lebensbegleitenden Lernen in Österreich*” (Vienna, 2011) gives a very clear overview of and detailed information on the entire strategy. One sentence in the foreword to the brochure reads as follows: “The Austrian strategy for life-accompanying learning ‘LLL: 2020’ links different areas of politics to one common objective for the first time, and as a result they strengthen each other reciprocally.” This sentence also emphasizes what is unique here in Austria: one does not speak of “lifelong” but rather of “life-accompanying” learning. The much softer word “life-accompanying” is substituted for the word “lifelong”, which is often perceived as a threatening concept. Practice will show whether there is more to this than merely a semantic difference. A very important message of the brochure is that life-accompanying learning is a national and political concern that fits into a European perspective. Again, practice will show if this is more than just a mere declaration.

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For nearly two decades, life-accompanying learning has not been equated with adult education; instead, it has been understood to refer to different age groups – practically “from the cradle to the grave”. What is new about this strategy is the fact that it has been designed for a clearly structured and precisely determined period of time. It contains clearly stated objectives that arose from international comparisons. It can be verified whether the objectives have been reached since they are phrased very specifically and in many cases they are quantifiable. The entire strategy is linked to a financial prospect. According to the OECD indicator, expenses for education should be increased from 5.4 percent of the gross domestic product in 2007 to 6 percent in 2020.

### **3 Objectives**

In detail, the objectives are as follows:

- To pass a federal law providing guidelines for kindergartens by 2014.
- To halve the share of high-risk pupils in reading from 28 to 14 percent.
- To reduce school and training drop-outs from 8.7 to 6 percent.
- To increase the percentage of apprentices who complete their vocational matriculation examination from 2 to 10 percent.
- To increase the quota of gainfully employed people between the ages of 55 and 64 from 41.1 to at least 50 percent.
- To increase the quota of participants in non-formal continuing education in sparsely populated areas from 35.7 to at least 45 percent.
- To increase the percentage of people between the ages of 30 to 34 who have completed a university degree to 38 percent.
- To increase participation in continuing education compared to the European LLL structural indicator from 13.7 to 20 percent.
- To establish quality standards for educational offerings and instructors' qualifications in the post-employment educational phase by 2015.
- To implement the National Qualifications Framework (NQR in German) by 2012 and a validation strategy for recognising non-formal and informal learning by 2015.

### **4 Structure of the strategy**

The presented strategy document is comprehensively structured and contains four basic principles, five guidelines, ten action lines, as well as “the eight key competences for lifelong learning” as a continuous reference point. All follow the recommendation of the European Council and the European Parliament.

#### **4.1 Basic principles**

The four basic principles are as follows:



1. Gender and diversity. This means learning to act in a gender-sensitive way and implementing these actions as well as perceiving and exploiting the potentials of diversity.
2. Equal opportunities and social mobility. This means the permeability of the education system and the promotion of equal opportunities.
3. Quality and sustainability. This primarily refers to the professionalisation of teaching staff and evidence-based policy.
4. Efficiency and innovation. This includes safeguarding the efficiency of the education system and its timely restructuring.

#### **4.2 Guidelines**

The five guidelines are as follows:

1. Life phase orientation. Enable educational processes that do not depend on age and are suitable for different age groups.
2. Putting the learners in the centre. Connect different learning locations, develop new learning architectures and new teaching and learning forms, make learning more flexible and develop the role of instructors.
3. Life Long Guidance. Provide comprehensive support for learners, improve and expand counselling and professionalise consultants.
4. Competence orientation. Assure transparency and comparability of qualifications, develop competence portfolio instruments and recognise informal knowledge and competences.
5. Promoting the participation in LLL. Strengthen the motivation for and joy of learning and education, incentive and promotion measures.

#### **4.3 Action lines**

The ten action lines range from “strengthen pre-school education as a long-term basic requirement” of every strategy to “enhance quality of life through education in the post-employment life phase” and create “procedures for the recognition of non-formally and informally acquired knowledge and competences in all educational sectors”.

#### **4.4 Key competences**

The eight key competences include:

Native language competence.  
Foreign language competence.  
Mathematical competence and fundamental natural science and technical competence.  
Computer competence.  
Learning competence.  
Interpersonal, intercultural and social competence as well as civic competence.  
Entrepreneurial competence.  
Cultural competence.

### **Achievement of objectives**

Objectives and measures that are as concrete as possible about all aspects have been phrased in great detail, thus averting the danger of creating “strategy papers” that become lost in platitudes and buzzwords. A whole bundle of measures was determined for implementing this comprehensive and very complex strategy. One measure includes annual monitoring in order to determine the level of implementation and success. An annual report to the Council of Ministers is also planned; it will present the state of implementation and identify any deviations.

### **Critical remarks**

This strategy, which has been presented here in excerpts, is a novelty in Austria. It indicates that the education policy has taken a great step forward. However, there is also criticism. It can be established that there is no or too little reference to concrete educational and learning *content*. What has largely been omitted is the area of a political education that can be understood broadly, for example. One also has to critically remark that due to the frequent quantification of objectives there is the danger of introducing a “quantity over quality ideology” to the educational landscape.

### **Perspective**

On the whole, the education policy in Austria has taken a great step forward with the “Strategy for Life-Accompanying Learning”. Concrete results will depend strongly on the political implementation of the strategy and on the financing of its implementation. However, it will also require making as many people as possible who are working in education aware of this strategy and anchoring it sustainably in order to motivate people to act accordingly. Only a few days after the presentation of the strategy, a first step was taken in this direction. The Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture published a paper entitled “*LLL-Strategie in Österreich – Praktische Überlegungen zur Entwicklung und Umsetzung*” (“LLL Strategy in Austria – Practical Reflections on its Development and Implementation”, Vienna 2010) in its publication series “*Materialien zur Erwachsenenbildung*”, issue 2/2010. It is very likely that this publication will be followed by many related events and discussions which all aim at influencing the practical actions of as many people as possible in the spirit of the strategy.

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# REVIEWS

## **Taking First Steps in Teaching English: Assessing Learners (Danica Gondová)**

*EDIS, Žilina, 2010. 142 p. ISBN 978-80-554-0236-9.*

***Gabriela Tkáčová\****

At the end of the year of 2010, an interesting book entitled “*Taking First Steps in Teaching English: Assessing Learners*” was published at University of Žilina, dealing with the issues of assessing English foreign language learners. The objective of the book is to emphasize the fact that assessment is an inseparable and inherent part of all learning which takes place in a classroom, and as such has a substantial impact on the outcomes of the learning process. The author of the book, Danica Gondová, addresses many issues linked with classroom assessment, such as functions of assessment, the value of formative and summative assessment, as well as its positive or negative impacts on one’s learning. The main part of the book deals with summative assessment. It describes various kinds of tests used to measure learners’ achievements summatively, the qualities of good tests and ways of assessing language systems and skills. It offers realistic and valuable advice on practical techniques that can be used to assess learners’ achievements; it gives useful guidelines on designing one’s own tests; and it also includes many practical examples. The textbook focuses not only on assessing and testing language systems and receptive skills, but also on the issues linked with assessing the productive skills – speaking and writing.

Because the book is meant for teacher trainees in the first place, it also includes some vocabulary tasks which provide the reader with language help. It also offers activities, which have been designed with the aim of helping the reader understand the subject matter, as well as checking his/her understanding and mastery of the issues connected with classroom assessment. In her book, the author draws on her wide experience from teaching practice, item writing and test design and offers a complex picture of assessing foreign language learners. As such, it may be a useful guide for all English teachers, even though it is meant for teacher trainees and beginning teachers, in the first place.

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# INFORMATION

## **International Scientific Conference & International Workshop**



***Present Day Trends of Innovations 2011***  
**7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> July 2011**

**Dubnica nad Váhom, Slovak Republic**



***Ladislav Várkoly\****

The International Scientific Conference “Present Day Trends of Innovations 2011” (DTI 2011) and the International Workshop were held on 7th and 8th July 2011 in Dubnica Technological Institute in Dubnica nad Váhom. Prof. Ladislav Várkoly, the head of the Institute of Vocational Subjects and Information Technology and the scientific guarantor of the DTI 2011, initiated this event. During the conference banquet, prof. Dušan Repčík, the rector of the Dubnica Technological Institute in Dubnica nad Váhom, and doc. Viola Tamášová, the editor of the scientific journal *Acta Technologica Dubnicae*, officially promoted the first issue of the journal.

The organizer of the International Scientific Conference DTI 2011 was Dubnica Technological Institute in Dubnica nad Váhom together with e-learnmedia s.r.o., Dupres Consulting s.r.o. and Dupres s.r.o. in cooperation with Politechnika Radomska im. Kazimierza Pułaskiego, Wydział Nauczycielski; Instytut Technologii Eksploatacji – PIB w Radomiu; Politechnika Częstochowska, Wydział Zarządzania; Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Informatyki i Przedsiębiorczości w Łomży; Uniwersytet Rzeszowski; National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Karpenko Physico-Mechanical Institute in Lviv; Vysoká škola manažmentu v Trenčíne; Vysoká škola ekonómie a manažmentu verejnej správy v Bratislave; Vysoká škola v Sládkovičove and J. Selye University in Komárno.

The International Scientific Conference DTI 2011 was the second formal meeting and the occasion for academic debate in the field of IT technologies and their use in

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university environment. The International Scientific Conference Board of DTI 2011 counted 18 professors. The audience consisted of teachers, scientists, young researchers, postgraduate students and engineers from Slovakia and neighbouring countries. More than 125 people participated in the Conference DTI 2011 programme and events. The Conference focused on actual use of modern technologies and devices, forthcoming trends as well as the newest innovations in the field of mobile and media communication.

Within the scope of the Conference there were the following topics:

- Modern e-learning technologies and informational systems;
- Education management, knowledge management, self-learning organization;
- Electronic educational materials and modern interactive teaching aids;
- Modern teaching aids and interactive sensoric modules;
- Virtual laboratories and remote experiments;
- Operational reliability and safety of technologies and applications;
- Internet schools and online courses and
- Automotive information technologies.

The main objective of the International Workshop (after the Conference DTI 2011) was to share information and facilitate collaboration regarding progressive and innovative forms of education and also the dissemination of future collaborative international research in this field. A scientific monograph entitled "Present Day Trends of Innovations", L. Várkonyi (Ed.), Dubnica Technological Institute in Dubnica nad Váhom, published by Publishing house MiF Dubnica nad Váhom, 2011, 228 p., ISBN 978-80-89400-26-3, EAN 9788089400263, contains the scientific papers in English. The papers in other languages were published as DVD Conference e-proceedings, containing articles, video-presentations and multimedia files, entitled "Dnešné Trendy Inovácií 2011", L. Várkonyi (Ed.), Dubnica Technological Institute in Dubnica nad Váhom, 2011, ISBN 978-80-89400-27-0, EAN 9788089400270. Both publications provide a comparison of innovative trends on the international basis. During the banquet and closing session of the DTI 2011, prof. Várkonyi introduced the co-organizer and the venue of the Conference DTI 2012 – Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Informatyki i Przedsiębiorczości w Łomży in Poland.

**Notice:**

- 1) Continual collaboration in international scientific-research grants headed by prof. Várkonyi and other new activities were successfully negotiated by the Conference DTI 2011 participants.
- 2) Vocational and media partners of the International Scientific Conference Present Day Trends of Innovations 2011 were: Strojárstvo – European Engineering Magazine, Garmin, Media/ST Publishing house, Infoware, Instore Slovakia, PC Revue, konferencie.sk, edumenu.cz, education.sk, TV Považie, Televízia Trenčín, MY noviny Stredného Považia.

# ACTA TECHNOLOGICA DUBNICAЕ

**Acta Technologica Dubnicae** is an interdisciplinary journal whose primary objective is to fulfill the need for thorough discussion of research results in disciplines relevant to pedagogical, psychological and technological aspects of education and to contribute towards the wide diffusion of scientifically sound contributions in this domain.

## Guide for Authors

Submission of an article implies that the work described has not been published previously, that is not under consideration for publication elsewhere, that its publication is approved by all the authors, and that, if accepted, it will not be published elsewhere in the same form, in English or in any other language. A letter will be sent to the corresponding author confirming receipt of the manuscript.

Please write your text in good English (American or British usage is accepted, but not a mixture of these). The submission should not exceed 20 pages with figures and tables (format A4, Times New Roman 12, single space). Use decimal points (not commas); use a space for thousands (10 000 and above).

Provide the following data on the title page (in the order given):

*Title.* Concise and informative. Avoid abbreviations and formulae where possible.

*Author names and affiliations.* Present the authors' affiliation addresses below the names. Provide the full postal address of each affiliation, including the country name, and, if available, the e-mail address of each author.

*Corresponding author.* Clearly indicate who is willing to handle correspondence at all stages of refereeing and publication.

*Abstract.* A concise and factual abstract is required. The abstract should state briefly the purpose of the research, the principal results and major conclusions.

*Keywords.* Immediately after the abstract, provide 3-5 keywords, avoiding general and plural terms and multiple concepts.

*Abbreviations.* Define abbreviations that are not standard in this field at their first occurrence in the article.

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