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# FOREWORD

*Dear Colleagues, Scientists, dear Readers and Friends!*

*The Editors of Acta Educationis Generalis (AEG) have prepared its summer issue. After a thorough reviewing process, four scientific studies and three scholarly articles were selected. As for their content, they deal with various topics, especially the issues of teachers at all stages of education (from kindergartens to universities) from specific aspects; then the need for vocational training and career development; lifelong learning; education of girls from the aspect of history; and the basic models of parental behaviour.*

*Who are our author and what is the focus of their papers?*

*Ida Zagyváné Szűcs from Hungary, in her scientific study entitled “Teacher Trainers’ Self-Reflection and Self-Evaluation”, uses the so-called “Teacher Trainers’ Professional Competences” worked out in Hungary. The aim of the presented research was to explore whether there are any differences among certain groups of teacher trainers concerning their self-reflection, self-evaluation and commitment to ongoing professional development as, currently, research-based teacher training is being introduced in Hungary. Parallel to it, all groups of teacher trainers will gradually be expected to carry out scientific research. The author claims that there is a need for further research focusing on teaching strategies, methods and good practices where self-reflection and self-evaluation play a crucial role in enhancing self-regulatory learning.*

*Zuzana Geršicová and Silvia Barnová, authors from Slovakia, in their study “Personal and Social Education as a Part of Class Teachers’ Lifelong Learning” focus on the opportunities to change the class teachers’ work with students after taking part in social-pedagogical training. On the level of personal development, the authors were interested in the field of values and attitudes, and on the level of social development, they focused on the changes in communication and opinion scales, where they can see a clear perspective for teachers’ lifelong learning. The presented data are the results of a pilot probe and serve for the purposes of a longer and deeper research.*

*Petra Trávníčková, our author from the Czech Republic, presents the results of her research focused on the identification of preschool teachers’ progress in relation to the use of children’s preconceptions in formal pre-elementary education. The title of her study is “An Analysis of Teacher’s Didactical Activity in the Context of Children’s Preconception Usage”. Based on the obtained data, the author assumes that the practices of the participating teachers in connection with using children’s preconceptions are related to the agency of the child, the experience of the teacher and the overall philosophy of the preschool.*

*Tamás Sós’s scientific paper deals with the demand process of competency expectations at workplaces in connection with career-starter skilled workers having completed their vocational training in schools, and of young specialists’ qualifications, motivation, and the supply process in three disadvantaged counties in Northern Hungary. The study is entitled “The Interrelations of Competency Expectations in Connection with Career-Starter Skilled Workers in the Counties of Northern Hungary”. The results of the research cast light on the sensitive points of vocational training in schools, on the*

educational deficit, on the shortcomings of the qualification system, and on the growing gap between training and the labour market. In the field of employment, probably fewer, but more qualified, skilled workers will be needed. All these mean a significant challenge, a need for a change in specialists' training, in the preparation for a new type of labour force.

The part dedicated to scholarly papers is opened by Szilvia Simándi from Hungary and her article "Intergenerational Learning – Lifelong Learning". She points out the mutual learning relationships and interactions between the young and the old. The starting point of the study is that the younger and older age groups can learn from each other in their free time in a non-formal learning environment – in the framework of study circles. In the paper, the author drafts some practical directives for planning and organizing intergenerational study circles in a non-formal learning environment, which represents an opportunity for common learning and knowledge sharing as well.

The history of female education is the topic of the paper "The World of Female Educational Institutions" by a Hungarian author Irén Virág. For the purposes of her study, four 19th century female educational institutions were selected and the presence of philanthropist ideas in the training offered there was investigated. Three of these were established for the education of the middle-class, while one was founded specifically for aristocrats. The author seeks to answer the question whether the presence of philanthropism can be detected in the education offered by these four schools.

Gabriela Rozvadský Gugová, a Slovak psychologist, is the author of the final paper published in this issue of the journal – "Styles of Attachment Determined by the Slovak Version of sEMBU". Focusing on the basic patterns used in parental behaviour – rejection, emotional warmth and overprotection, the main goal of the presented research was to determine the types of attachment and to obtain information about secure attachment by using cluster analysis. Based on the surprising research results, the author suggests to continue in the research of the Slovak version of sEMBU focused on the types of attachment, especially on the secure type of attachment.

Dear Readers, we have filled the summer issue of Acta with topical and hopefully inspiring papers. I wish you a pleasant summer and stay with us both as our readers and contributors. In our journal, you can find a platform for the presentation of your research results, scholarly opinions, literature reviews and innovative approaches to education.

Viola Tamášová  
Editor-in-Chief







## STUDIES

### Teacher Trainers' Self-Reflection and Self-Evaluation

*Ida Zagyváné Szűcs\**

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**Abstract:**

**Introduction:** A group of researchers have worked out the Teacher Trainers' Professional Competences in Hungary. The aim of the research was to explore whether there are any differences among certain groups of teacher trainers concerning their self-reflection, self-evaluation and commitment to ongoing professional development.

**Methods:** Structured interviews were carried out with a sample of 6 teacher trainers whose selection was based on two principles - those who are considered to be teacher trainers in Hungary and those who are available in one of the most important teacher training centres in Hungary – Eszterházy Károly University. The data analysis was done with the General Step-by Step Model of Qualitative Content Analysis supported by MAXQDA 12 software programme.

**Results:** Self-reflection and self-evaluation are the most important factors in teacher trainers' professional development. Existing standards and criteria to which they compare their achievements play an orienteering role in these two processes, as well as in their self-regulatory learning. However, the levels, the types and the methods of self-reflection can differ depending on what field of teacher training they are involved in and when they were trained as teachers.

**Discussion:** The results of the study promote deeper understanding of teacher trainers' professional competences regarding their commitment to professional development. It has been clearly stated for which group of teacher trainers scientific research as the highest level of reflection can be a basic requirement, and for which group it should be an expected learning outcome in the future. As research-based teacher training is being introduced in Hungary, parallel to it, all groups of teacher trainers will gradually be expected to carry out scientific research to accomplish the highest level of reflection.

**Limitations:** The sample size does not cover the whole scope of teacher trainers, as instructors teaching specific disciplines were not interviewed, and the research was done in qualitative design, therefore the results cannot be generalized. A future research of quantitative design should cover more teacher trainers from other universities and regions.

**Conclusions:** The general step by step model of qualitative content analysis has provided a detailed picture of the driver of the teacher trainers' professional development. The evidence of the acceptance of the position of a role model for their instructed, mentored or supported student teachers, teacher assistants and

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teachers has been given by this research. The need for research-based teacher training in Hungary has been confirmed. Further research should be carried out focusing on teaching strategies, methods and good practices where self-reflection and self-evaluation play a crucial role in enhancing self-regulatory learning.

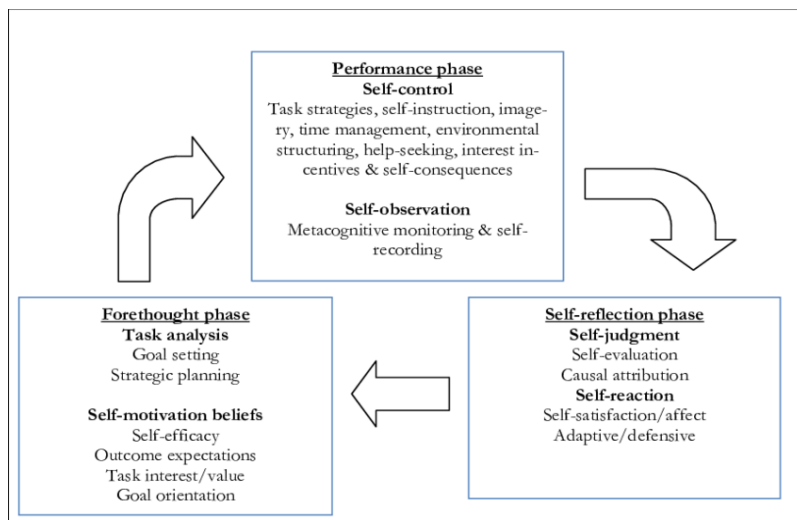
**Key words:** self-reflection, self-regulation, teacher trainers, professional development.

## **1 Introduction**

Lifelong learning is a basic requirement in each trade and profession in the European Union. Teacher trainers represent role models for practicing teachers and future teachers. The concept of teachers' professional development in the career system is inevitably linked to education as a prerequisite for professional growth (Tamášová, 2015, p. 3). The ongoing professional development, which can be described as a regulated process, is essential for teachers' renewal. The engine of the process is self-reflection and self-evaluation. The aim of the study is to show the results of a qualitative content analysis which examined teacher trainers' reflectivity, self-evaluation and commitment to professional development. These three factors are the basic components of the Teacher Trainers' Professional Competences which were worked out by a group of researchers led by Falus Iván in Hungary in 2015. The central question of the research is how much the teacher trainers are aware of the fact that they are considered as role models in a lot of fields including self-reflection and self-evaluation for those who they instruct, train, support or mentor, and to what extent they want to fit as role models. To achieve the goals, a quantitative content analysis was carried out. The results of the research and the conclusions make understanding teacher trainers' competences deeper and help their lifelong professional development.

## **2 Theoretical framework**

The starting point of our research is self-regulation which serves as a frame for self-reflection and self-evaluation. To understand the relationship between the two notions, we use two models – Zimmerman's developed Triadic Model and Atanashou's Recursive Social Cognitive Model for Self-evaluation. The Triadic Model (Figure 1) depicts self-regulation as a process, in which the cyclical change of different processes is going on constantly. The key element of the whole process is feedback including self-reflection and self-evaluation.



*Figure 1.* Phases and processes of self-regulation (Zimmerman & Moylan, 2009).

In the Forethought phase, the importance of the task for the person, how effective the person thinks he/she is to complete the task, whether he/she believes that he/she can do it or not are emphasized. In the Performance phase, the person works out a strategy, concentrates on how to accomplish the task while he/she is monitoring himself/herself and is trying to adapt to the changes. In the Self-reflection phase, self-evaluation is done parallel to the Performance phase. The person is not performing self-evaluation at the end of the process but during it. He/she draws conclusions based on his/her judgements and acts in two ways – either performs an adaptive or a defensive behaviour (Zimmerman, 2000; Zimmerman & Moylan, 2009).

According to Judit Szivák, the reflective way of thinking and reflective teaching are self-evaluation techniques which help the person analyse his/her performance consciously and this way self-evaluation functions as self-control (Szivák, 2003).

The Recursive Social Cognitive Model for Self-evaluation gives another aspect of the relationship between self-reflection and self-evaluation (Athanasou, 2005, p. 295). The model is based on Bandura's (1990) Social Cognitive Theory in which the key element is the notion of self-efficacy. In Athanasou's opinion, self-efficacy and self-evaluation are determined by the same factors – social messages, personal factors and situational factors. Athanasou makes a clear distinction between self-assessment and self-evaluation. Self-assessment takes place in the process of learning, which is followed by self-evaluation, judgement about the person's achievements. Self-evaluation can be done in public or it can be private perception of the achievements. These two dimensions make it clear that self-assessment equals to self-reflection. As the cognitive dimension, it provides feedback in self-regulation. It precedes self-evaluation, which contains emotions, judgements about the person himself/herself, therefore, it is the affective dimension of self-regulation.

There are several models of reflectivity giving the types and levels of reflection (Table 1).

Table 1

*The types of reflection by Griffith and Tann (1992, as cited in Szivák, 2014)*

<u>Rapid reflection</u>	<u>Repair</u>	<u>Review</u>	<u>Research</u>	<u>Re-theorizing and research</u>
Immediate and automatic reflection-in-action.	Thoughtful reflection-in-action.	Less formal reflection-on-action at a particular time.	More systematic reflection-on-action over a period of time.	Long-term reflection-on-action informed by public academic theories.
The teacher gives an answer to the student's question.	After a short period of time of thinking the teacher acts considering the students' reactions.	The teacher is revising the student's or the group's development or problem in his mind or he talks about it.	Based on pedagogical theory, the teacher rephrases his own theory.	

Griffith and Tann (1992) depicted the dimensions of reflection at one time or another. The person can reflect to his/her work during the action and after the action. The other dimension is whether the reflection is done spontaneously or systematically.

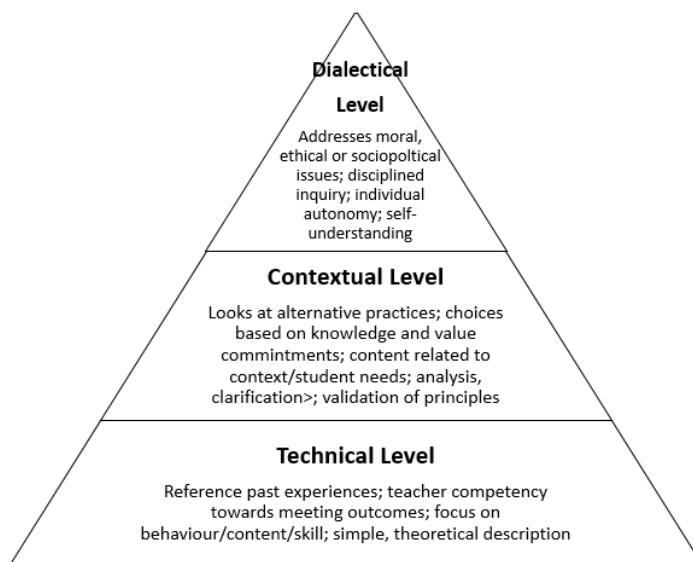


Figure 2. The levels of reflective thinking (Taggart & Wilson, 2005, as cited in Szivák, 2014).

Table 2

*The forms of reflection (Szivák, 2014)*

Participants of the reflective situation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the teacher alone</li> <li>- dialogue with a mentor teacher, a colleague</li> <li>- dialogue with students, parents</li> <li>- professional discussion in a group, debate in a group of professionals</li> </ul>
Form of reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- oral</li> <li>- written</li> </ul>

The role of professional communities is exceptional because they provide opportunities for professional dialogues, debates which generate reflective thinking (Szivák, 2014). Mapping the theoretical background can help understand that the basic precondition for teacher trainers' professional development is their competence to reflect to and evaluate their teaching practice.

### 3 Methodology

The research was conducted applying the general step by step model of qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2014) supported by MAXQDA 12 software programme. The corpus of the analysis was the typed form of structured interviews with 6 teacher trainers. The questions were the following:

1. *Do you ever evaluate your teaching practice as a teacher trainer? If yes, what are the criteria?*
2. *What are your professional strengths?*
3. *What do you consider your professional weaknesses?*
4. *How important do you consider self-reflection and self-evaluation in your work?*
5. *How often do you perform self-reflection and self-evaluation?*
6. *What goals do you have as a teacher trainer for the future?*
7. *Which traits of your personality contribute to your professional development and achieving your goals?*
8. *To what extent do you use new professional experiences in your everyday work?*
9. *To what extent do you use your colleagues' advice and recommendations in your everyday work?*
10. *To what extent do you use the students', teacher assistants', supported teachers' remarks in your everyday work?*
11. *How do you develop your own self-reflection and self-evaluation skills?*
12. *How do you develop the students', teacher assistants' or supported teachers' self-reflection and self-evaluation skills?*
13. *Do you take part in research, training, staff meetings, activities developing your institution on a regular basis?*
14. *Do you receive any feedback from your students, student teachers, teacher assistants or teachers about applying knowledge and skills you taught them in connection with self-reflection and self-evaluation in practice?*

The sample consisted of 6 persons. The selection of the interviewees was based on two principles. On one hand, we focused on teachers, instructors who are the so-called teacher trainers in Hungary. Teacher trainers are instructors who teach disciplines, pedagogical and psychological sciences and methodology at universities, master teachers in schools of teaching practice, mentor teachers working in partner schools and educational advisors who train teachers (Falus & Estefánné Varga, 2015, p. 7). On the other hand, we considered those who were available for us in our close environment. Eger is one of the teacher training centres in Hungary. It was the perfect scene to find interviewees for our research.

Five of the participants have strong connections to Eszterházy Károly University. They used to work or have worked there, they are teachers in the partner school of the University or they took part in the in-service trainings conducted by the University. One interviewee works at ELTE University in Budapest.

The sample consisted of:

- 1 master teacher in a school of teaching practice
- 1 mentor teacher
- 2 university instructors (methodology)
- 1 university instructor (pedagogical sciences)
- 1 educational advisor (Table 3).

Table 3

<i>Description of the sample</i>				
<u>Interviewees</u>	<u>Task as a teacher trainer</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Working experience as a teacher</u>	<u>Working experience as a teacher trainer</u>
1.	mentor teacher: university students, teacher assistants	female	29 years	4 years
2.	master teacher in a school of teaching practice: university students	female	27 years	13 years
3.	university instructor 1 (methodology): university students	male	7 years	2 years
4.	university instructor (pedagogical sciences): university students	female	9 years	6 years
5.	educational advisor: teacher assistants, teachers,	female	25 years	3 years
6.	university instructor 2 (methodology): university students, musicologists, museum pedagogy specialists	female	10 years	10 years

The interviews, having been recorded and typed, were analysed in qualitative design. We used the Mayring's step by step general model of qualitative content analysis. We

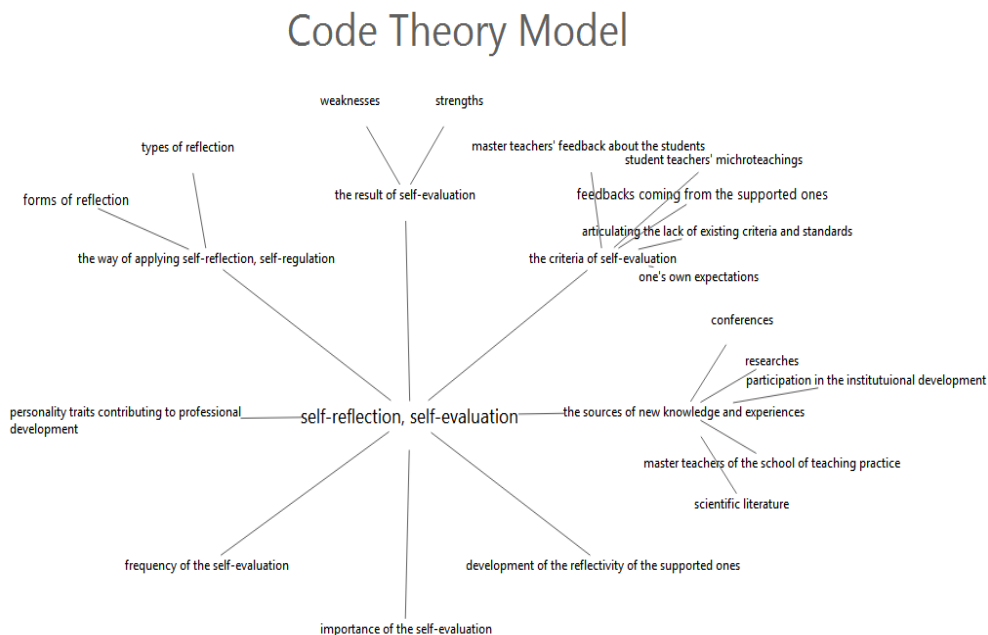
carried out deductive coding based on the questions of the structured interviews. The main categories and the questions were formed with the help of three sources:

1. detailed description of the 4<sup>th</sup> competence of the Teacher Trainers' Professional Competences. The competence is defined in the dimensions of knowledge, skills and attitudes (Héjja-Nagy, 2015, pp. 28-32);
2. scientific literature referring to self-reflection, self-evaluation and self-regulation;
3. models and practices of reflection (Szivák, 2014).

As a result of deductive coding, 8 codes were formed:

1. *perceived importance of self-evaluation;*
2. *frequency of self-evaluation;*
3. *criteria of self-evaluation;*
4. *results of self-evaluation (strengths and weaknesses);*
5. *personality traits contributing to professional development;*
6. *sources of new knowledge and experiences;*
7. *ways of performing self-reflection and self-evaluation;*
8. *development of the supported students', teacher assistants' and teachers' reflectivity and self-evaluation.*

Types and forms of reflection and the levels of reflective thinking were used as sub-codes within the ways of performing self-reflection and self-evaluation. The code system can be seen in Figure 3.



*Figure 3.* The code system of qualitative content analysis (generated with MAXUDA 12).

As we conducted qualitative analysis, the indicators of quality have been provided by theoretical, methodological and data triangulation.

## 4 Results

The focus of our research is on the similarities and differences among teacher trainers regarding their self-reflection and self-evaluation. The central issue is to be answered by taking a closer look at the main categories and giving answers to some more particular questions. The first group of questions is the following:

*To what extent are self-reflection and self-evaluation present in teacher trainers' everyday practice? How do they perform self-reflection and self-evaluation? Are there any differences between university instructors, the master teacher in the school of teaching practice, the mentor teacher and the educational advisor?*

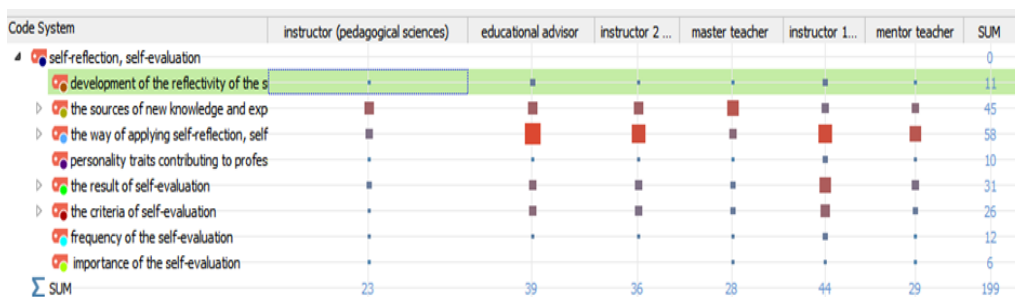


Figure 4. The main categories and their strength in the case of each interviewee (generated with MAXQUDA 12).

The perceived importance of self-evaluation has been detected only in the case of four interviewees, whereas its use in practice has been proved by the fact that the main categories such as *frequency of self-evaluation*, and *the way of self-reflection and self-evaluation are done* have occurred in all interviewees (58 times out of 119). Self-reflection and self-evaluation are the most important for the educational advisor, two university instructors teaching methodology and the mentor teacher. The differences among the interviewees can be seen in the Table 4.

Table 4

<i>Forms and types of self-reflection</i>		
<u>Interviewees</u>	<u>Forms of self-reflection</u>	<u>Types of self-reflection</u>
university instructor (pedagogical sciences)	in mind, written, oral	review, research
educational advisor	written, oral	repair, review, research
university instructor (methodology)	written, oral	repair, review, research
university instructor 2 (methodology)	written, oral	review, research, re-theorising and research



master teacher in the school of teaching practice	written, oral	review
mentor teacher	written, oral	review

All interviewees use review, but the higher dimension of reflectivity research and re-theorising and research were only detected in the university instructors. The mentor teacher and the master teacher in the school of teaching practice did not mention research at all. It can be explained by the fact that both of them have been teachers for more than 20 years. They were socialised in the “old” educational system where research-based teacher training was not in practice, therefore, the competence to do research was not an official requirement for them. They might believe that this component of self-reflection and reflection will not contribute to their professional development.

In order to obtain information about the situation and the participants of self-reflection, the sub-codes of the main category *the sources of knowledge and experiences* were placed in three different groups (Figure 5).

Code System	instructor (pedagogical sciences)	educational advisor	instructor 2...	master teacher	instructor 1...	mentor teacher	SUM
self-reflection, self-evaluation							0
the sources of new knowledge and exp							0
scientific literature	■						1
master teachers of the school of te				■	■		2
participation in the institutional de	■	■	■	■		■	5
researches	■	■	■	■			4
conferences		■	■	■	■		4
trainings	■	■	■	■		■	5
professional communities	■	■	■	■		■	5
the supported	■	■	■	■	■		6
people working on the same field of	■	■		■	■	■	5
<b>SUM</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>37</b>

Figure 5. The sources of new knowledge and experiences (generated with MAXQDA 12).

Participants in the reflective situation:

1. the teacher alone (reading scientific literature);
2. dialogue with a mentor teacher, a colleague (supported students, teacher assistants, teachers, colleagues working in the same field, master teachers in schools of teaching practice);
3. professional discussion in a group, debate in a group of professionals (participation in institutional development procedures, research, conferences, trainings, the work of professional communities).

Only the university instructor (pedagogical sciences) mentioned self-reflection and self-evaluation. Self-reflection in pairs or in groups appeared in all interviewees. It shows that in social situations, individual beliefs come out. Reflecting to others' actions make the individuals place themselves in the position of the reflected ones. This way they provides opportunities for themselves to perform self-evaluation (Bandura, 1990).

*What are the criteria of self-reflection and self-evaluation for the teacher trainers?*

Here, the main category of *the criteria of self-evaluation* was analysed (Figure 6).

Code System	instructor (pedagogical sciences)	educational advisor	instructor 2...	master teacher	instructor 1...	mentor teacher	SUM
self-reflection, self-evaluation							0
the criteria of self-evaluation							0
one's own expectations		*		*			2
articulating the lack of existing criteria and standards			*				1
feedbacks coming from the supported ones	*	*	*	*	*		6
student teachers' microteachings					*		1
master teachers' feedback about the students					*		1
university students' feedback					*		1
evaluation of the teacher assistants						*	1
mentor teachers' professional competences						*	1
teachers' professional competences		*					1
<b>SUM</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>15</b>

Figure 6. Criteria of self-evaluation (generated with MAXQDA 12).

The most varied picture of teacher trainers was shown in this aspect. *The existing criteria and standards (mentor teachers' and teachers' professional competences)* were mentioned by the mentor teacher and the educational advisor. The reason is that there is a set of clearly stated criteria in the form of Teachers' Professional Competences and the detailed description of educational advisors' tasks. The university instructor 2 (methodology) referred to *the lack of existing criteria and standards*. She supported her opinion with the fact that she works in a special field of the discipline where the terminology is not unified. The field is being developed and she is willing to contribute to working out a set of standardised criteria of the discipline.

*Criteria formed by the interviewees themselves (one's own expectations)* were mentioned by the educational advisor and the university instructor 1 (methodology). We classified the remaining criteria of self-evaluation into the following two groups:

1. direct criteria – feedback from the supported university students, teacher assistants, teachers;
2. indirect criteria – university students' microteaching, feedback coming from master teachers of the teaching practice school, results, grades of the supported ones (teaching exams, evaluation of the teachers).

These results justify the importance of direct feedback coming from the supported ones, the person's own expectations and a list of criteria and standards worked out by researchers which play a very important orienteering role in all fields of evaluation.

*To what extent does reflectivity orienteer the interviewees in articulating their goals in professional development? Is it a part of their everyday practice or should it be stated as their future goal, learning outcome? For whom can certain elements (research, re-theorising and research) be a realistic standard? For whom can it be a future goal of professional development?*

The answer to these questions can be given after an analysis of the main category *the result of self-evaluation*. There were two sub-codes developed in coding strengths and

weaknesses. We compared weaknesses with the goals of future professional development. All the interviewees mentioned their strengths and weaknesses (Table 5).

Table 5

*Overlap of the weaknesses and goals of future professional development (learning outcomes)*

<u>Interviewees</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>	<u>Goals of future professional development (learning outcomes)</u>
university instructor (pedagogical sciences) D - level	-	-
educational advisor D - level	+	+
university instructor 1 (methodology) C - level	+	+
university instructor 2 (methodology) D - level	+	+
master teacher of the school of teaching practice C - level	+	+
mentor teacher - C level	-	-

An overlap between the weaknesses and future goals was detected in the case of the educational advisor, two university instructors (methodology) and the master teacher in the school of teaching practice. As for the levels of reflective thinking (Taggart & Wilson, 2005), the mentor teacher, the master teacher and one of the university instructors 2 (methodology) reflected to their practice on contextual level. It means that they prefer reflecting to pedagogical processes:

*One of my goals for the future is that, as the two-semester long teaching practice (for students) is going to be introduced in the near future, I would like to make a detailed plan for two semesters distributed in months. It is the same with the teacher assistants who have to do a two-year programme. To plan what they will do on a monthly basis. I should work them out by the beginning of next September. It is one of my goals. I would like to make them this year (mentor teacher, 13).*

*My goal is to conduct the students' teaching practice in the most successful way, so that they would come to our school with pleasure and they would feel that they learn a lot (master teacher, 13).*

*I would like to read more scientific literature on methodology. When I was a student at this university, I read some of the literature and I tried to teach considering some good points from it. Now, I would like to explore the wider scope of it in order to help my university students' work. I know that they should have a deeper view of methodology (university instructor 1 – methodology, 21).*

In the case of university instructor 2 (methodology), educational advisor and university instructor (pedagogical sciences), the dialectic level was detected. It means that they

consider moral, ethical and political issues of their profession and observe it with a critical point of view.

*Now it is the theory that I work out for my colleagues, but I would rather work on the Hungarian concept of Children's Museum (university instructor 2 – methodology 2, 32).*

*If you consider the present Educational Advisory System, you can see that we (advisors) visit teachers, give very good pieces of advice to them, and then we do not see them for a while. I would like to visit the same teachers regularly, it means the teacher "belongs" to somebody (advisor), we could provide them with regular feedback. It is useless to visit them and leave them alone. There is a need for a constant dialogue between us. We should see their professional development (educational advisor, 19).*

*I would rather integrate my research into my teaching practice (university instructor – pedagogical sciences, 13).*

These differences make us draw the conclusion that the highest level of reflection (research, re-theorising and research) cannot be articulated as basic criteria for certain groups of teacher trainers (mentor teachers, master teachers at schools of teaching practice, educational advisors), just as a possible future learning outcome. It is resulted in the formerly mentioned time factor. For the future teacher trainers, who will graduate from universities where research-based training will be achieved, it can be a formally expressed criterion.

*Do teacher trainers intend to develop self-reflection and self-evaluation on the side of those who they support? Are there any differences among teacher trainers in this aspect?*

As the most important function of the Teacher Trainers' Professional Competences is to depict a role model, it is necessary to explore how they develop their self-reflective and self-evaluation skills of those who they support. Most teacher trainers do not know the theoretical description of a self-regulated learner, but on the basis of their personal experience, they are able to identify them and to provide a role model for students (Simándi, 2016, p. 39). All the interviewees expressed their intention to develop these skills. Some differences appeared in their methods.

According to scientific literature, the methods can be divided into two groups: non-structured and structured methods. The non-structured methods mean that the supported university students, teacher assistants, and teachers get a minimal amount of instructions on how to reflect to their own practice. Their self-evaluation is more emphasised in these cases. The structured methods mean that the supported ones are directed by questions such as: What has happened? What does it mean? How have my beliefs changed? Description, interpretation and conclusions referring to the future are the basic components of structured methods (Szivák, 2014). There are several ways of developing reflectivity, but we are not going to describe them now. The above explanation has been relevant to give the evidence of the existence of these methods in the interviews. Some examples of the non-structured methods:

*I like working with teachers face-to-face because we can develop a deeper personal relationship through effective communication. When I meet them for the first time, we have a warm up conversation and I can make a friendly atmosphere. They open to me and reveal their problems from their teaching practice. I like having a friendly conversation with them and finding solutions together, finding the roots of their problems. Sometimes, it is only a lack of knowledge or insufficient security (educational advisor, 13).*

*We start a kind of game of microteaching activity. While we are doing it, everybody is a partner in it. I do not conduct these activities as an instructor. I am a colleague of theirs. We have a democratic conversation, everybody can reflect to the activities, make comments. There is no good or bad solution. I think it is a good practice in these games (university instructor 2 – methodology, 21).*

Some examples of the structured methods:

*...I try to promote my students' development by teaching them some techniques, approaches supporting reflectivity (university instructor – pedagogical sciences, 25).*

*... during microteaching, we do things as they do them in the school of teaching practice. First, a student performs self-reflection then other students reflect to his/her activities and thoughts, and I do it as well. He/she is sitting opposite us. I usually make them take notes about the strengths and weaknesses. They can use these notes later. I always ask them to reflect to the activities in written or oral form (university instructor 1 – methodology, 34-36).*

*I ask them (students) to reflect to the things happening during lessons each time. When they observe a lesson, they do it in written form. Then we discuss it. They can learn a lot from it (master teacher, 25).*

*When we analyse the lessons conducted by my students, he/she starts talking about his/her opinion regarding the lesson. He/she should tell what he/she thinks about the lesson, whether he/she could achieve the goals. I do not ask questions, I try to motivate him/her to share his/her views first. Then at the very end, I tell my point of view. I try to make my student find the solutions by themselves. Of course, when the teaching practice is over, I have to evaluate their work in a more detailed form (mentor teacher, 26).*

Both non-structured and structured methods are evidently present in the interviews. If we refer to Athanasou's Recursive Social Cognitive Model for Self-evaluation where self-reflection and self-evaluation are clearly separated from each other, we can draw the conclusion that the 6 teacher trainers mainly focus on the processes of learning during their supporting activity, they intend to accomplish directed development of the supported ones. It has been justified in the case of university instructors. University students, teacher assistants or teachers at the beginning of their career need such a kind of structured and directed support. However, the use of non-structured methods can be fruitful for those who are on the higher level of self-regulation. It would be worth considering a balanced use of non-structured and structured methods paying attention to

individual differences. Therefore, more studies of international good practices could contribute to improving the teacher trainers' methodological repertoire.

## **5 Conclusion**

The purpose of the qualitative content analysis of six interviews was to answer the questions whether self-reflection and self-evaluation as the key elements of self-regulation can be detected in teacher trainers' beliefs, whether there are any differences among the interviewees in this specific field of interest, and to what extent and how they intend to transfer these skills to those who they support. Although we cannot make generalizations, the conclusions drawn may deserve some consideration.

Self-reflection and self-evaluation are the engines of teacher trainers' professional development. Differences have been shown in types, forms of reflection and the levels of reflective thinking. Research, re-theorising and the dialectic level of reflective thinking are among the possible future learning outcomes in the case of mentor teachers, master teachers in schools of teaching practice and educational advisors. The complete introduction of research-based teacher training will make it a basic professional criterion for all participants of the teacher training system.

The fact that self-reflection and self-evaluation are mostly done in pairs or groups has revealed the need of higher level of reflective thinking among the interviewees.

Direct feedback coming from the supported students, teacher assistants and teachers takes priority in self-evaluation. For some teacher trainers, the existing criteria and standards of the professional development have strengthened the orienteering role of these criteria in self-reflection and self-evaluation.

All the interviewees are aware of the importance of being a role model for the supported students and teachers. They believe that the development of the reflective skills of the supported ones is very important and they serve as role models for them in this aspect as well. Mapping and working out non-structural methods which focus on self-evaluation is a possible field of future research. It would contribute to the development of the methodological culture of teacher trainers in Hungary.

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## **Personal and Social Training as a Part of Class Teachers' Lifelong Learning**

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### **Abstract:**

**Introduction:** The presented paper deals with the issues of the work of class teachers and their further education in the field of personal and social training. The main goal of the research was to find out about changes in personal and social development after the realization of social-pedagogical training.

**Methods:** On the level of personal development, the authors were interested in the field of values and attitudes. On the level of social development, they focused on the changes in communication and opinion scales. The changes in the above fields were measured by means of a pre-test and a post-test which were administered before and after the realization of the training.

**Results:** In the participants of the realized research, the research team, to a certain extent, succeeded in reducing prejudice and beliefs and the participants learnt about the necessity of considering students' individual abilities and specific environmental influences on their behavior and manifestations at school. On the level of opinions, there was a shift towards a stronger belief in the significance of the impact of the environment and the family background on students' behaviour and their personality traits.

**Discussion:** The presented data are the results of a pilot probe and have brought initial insights related to the presented issues for the purposes of a longer and deeper research, which is in the phase of its realization.

**Limitations:** As the project was realized with ten groups of teachers showing a deep interest in participating in it, it is not our ambition to generalize the obtained results; nevertheless, we find them interesting and inspiring.

**Conclusions:** Along with knowledge from pedagogy and psychology, class teachers need a huge amount of creativity, ideas, techniques and methods, which can promote the development of students' value orientation. The authors can see a clear perspective for teachers' lifelong learning here.

**Key words:** class teacher, personal and social training, teachers' lifelong learning.

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## **1 Introduction**

Researchers, policy makers and educators agree that teachers are one of the most important school-related factors. Especially the work of a class teacher is generally considered demanding. It is a long-term process in which teachers build their relationships with the class as a group and with individual students, gradually develop the necessary competencies for this job position – according to Čilić, Klapan and Prnić (2015), competence is a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivation and personal characteristics enabling individuals to act actively and efficiently in a certain (specific) situation – and work on the improvement of their teaching and communication skills in order to become even better professionals. Class teachers gradually become mediators of experiences or mentors. From the professional point of view, teachers are not only in charge of education, but also of leading and managing their class of students as a whole. However, in this context, it must be emphasized that teaching cannot be deconstructed into a number of discrete and separately identifiable parts (Hayes, 1997, p. 166).

## **2 Class teachers**

Průcha, Walterová and Mareš (2003, p. 253) define class teachers as *“persons who manage and educate a collective of students in a particular class. At the same time, they coordinate the educational work of teachers teaching in that class of students”*.

In the current society, the job position of a class teacher requires more complex professional skills than it was in the past. In the modern era, these teachers must be professionals which are able to communicate with the young generation efficiently; they must keep up with their students. From the professional point of view, teachers do not become good class teachers immediately after starting their professional career. Practicing teachers working on this job position for several years confirm the need for further education (Tamášová, 2015) especially in this field. In relation to the educational work with students, they ranked the need for professional training for class teachers as the third most important within an analysis of their educational needs (see Tamášová & Geršicová, 2014). Only professionally well-prepared teachers willing to dedicate their time to students are able to motivate their students for the improvement of their social skills. They can help them solve various life situations, can offer students the opportunity to make independent decisions in problem solving and can become role models for their students.

Teachers' managerial abilities have been found to positively relate to students' behavior and achievement in every process-product study to date. Classroom management involves responding effectively when problems occur, but also preventing problems from occurring by creating environments that encourage learning and appropriate behaviour (Little & Akin-Little, 2008). The basic requirement for efficient classroom management is a good knowledge of students. Horváthová (2003) indicates that class teachers gain and gather information, and based on them, they make assessment. In the educational process, they monitor their students' behaviour, school achievement, and their school attendance. Along with knowing their students well, the educational process is of a great importance from the aspect of class teachers' educational work in the classroom. Class teachers should also have a solid knowledge from several fields, especially from the field of psychology. They should not only know their students very well, but they should also work on the improvement of the quality of the relationships in

the classroom. They should make efforts to improve communication and to try to be helpful in finding solutions for conflicts that arise in the class as, in current practice, various educational problems, especially with bullying, occur quite frequently (see Adamík Šimegová & Kováčová, 2011).

Generally, teachers instructing the same class of students perceive it differently. The more teachers instruct a class, the more attitudes towards it occur. One of the tasks of class teachers is to become their students' tutors, not to remain only teachers, but rather mediators of knowledge. The relationship between the class teacher and the students should be intense and the communication frequent and warm. In everyday school life, students often enter into conflicts with teachers that usually require solutions on a higher pedagogical level and the presence of the class teacher is required. If that teacher is present in the classroom, students often seem to be less aggressive and show more respect. Under such circumstances, class teachers feel more responsible for their students.

According to Spousta (1994, pp. 8-9), class teachers have the following duties in the classroom:

- teaching (teach their curriculum content of their teaching subjects – especially students in their class but also other students);
- education (especially in their class of students – formation of the collective of students and the student board);
- leading and managing the educational process in every class they teach;
- coordinating the educational work of all the teachers teaching in the class;
- collaborating with all the organizations and institutions which are in contact with the students in the class.

The work of a class teacher is demanding and comprehensive in many aspects. Teaching and managing a class are among teachers' duties. Teachers often ask the question how to communicate with students efficiently and to improve the process of class management. Štúr (2013, p. 4) claims that *“students are happy to go to school if they feel that their teachers understand them and are always willing to help. For this, it is not enough to apply a range of teaching principles, it requires a mature personality, trust in own knowledge and emotional stability on the side of the adult. Not to control by hierarchy, but by the power of human understanding”*. In this context, the authors would like to highlight two of the roles of a class teacher.

### *2.1 The social role of a class teacher in relation to students*

Class teachers should maintain a certain social status of dignity attributed to their profession. Their way of behaviour and self-expression should be in accordance with the generally accepted standards and the social role assigned to teachers in order to fulfil the expectations for decent and professional behaviour. All the relationships of these teachers should be based on the generally accepted social norms. Only good relationships in the classroom can be considered a proof of the teacher's professional behaviour. Benešová and Kollárová (2002) claim that it should be clear for all participants of the process that good communication is the result of a high level of functioning of the existing relationships, even if it is not visible at the first sight. Even though we do not realize them, they are gradually developing. If a conflict occurs, it is

often solved by itself. Individuals engaged in these relationships should be personally and socially mature.

Teachers should be sufficiently qualified and professionally skilled for their roles. Along with teaching responsibilities, they should self-sacrifice to a certain extent and be willing to help students in solving their problems related to their education and personal lives. They should be able to give advice and help solve conflicts. Class teachers should frequently encourage and praise the students in their class as it helps develop their self-confidence. Self-confidence and self-assured performance contribute to their preparedness for their personal lives in the future. The promotion of students' development helps to create friendly relationships between students and teachers.

Based on the above, the work of a class teacher does not include only education, but the social aspect of their work has an important role to play, too. There is a large scale of factors, which have a significant impact on their work and bring the requirement for solving various conflicts in the classroom, dealing with various situations and problems not only during the time they spend at their workplace but also after leaving the school building.

### **3 Personal and social training**

The notion of personal and social training can be characterised based on Valenta's (2006, p. 13) definition, who considers personal and social training "*a practical discipline focusing on the development of key life skills, more precisely, on personal and social skills necessary for everyday life. In other words – a discipline dealing with developing life competencies, especially developing the relationship with oneself and the life in interpersonal relationships*". According to Gymerová et al. (2009, p. 7), personal and social training is "*a practical discipline dealing with the issues of the development of key life skills or life competencies*".

The above authors have pointed out the importance of the development of key life competencies and life skills. The authors assume that personal and social training focus on the development of key competencies – personal, social, and moral – which a young person needs for living a successful and happy life. It means gaining knowledge, development of abilities, skills and creation of opinions, attitudes, and of the value orientation necessary for coping with a variety of real life situations. Turek (2008, p. 200) indicates that "*key competencies are the most important ones from among the entire set of competencies. These are useful for the solution of many, usually predictable problems. They help individuals to cope with rapid changes at work, in personal and social life successfully*". For young people, it is advantageous if they are offered the opportunity to develop these skills and try them out in practice. By means of practical skills, they gain knowledge and improve the way of realization of a particular activity. Flexibility, communication, integrity, collaboration, problem solving, friendship, tactfulness, care, responsibility, patience, endurance, self-confidence, self-organization, sense of humour, etc. can be included among life skills.

Students as individuals, groups of students and everyday life situations of various frequency represent the subject of personal and social training (Valenta, 2006). According to Gymerová et al. (2009), the most important issues to deal with are young people, their personalities and personal relationships. It comes to an agreement between the above two authors – students are in the centre of personal and social training's attention and they need an individual approach. Students become the objects and, at the

same time, the subjects of education. The main goal of personal and social training is to prepare a harmoniously developed personality. Personal and social training should contribute to the development of the ability for learning, self-knowledge, self-regulation, and self-organization. They promote students' creativity, good interpersonal relationships, and communication skills; and help them develop certain values, attitudes, opinions and practical ethics.

### *3.1 Goals of personal and social training*

*"Personal and social training should help every student find their own path towards life satisfaction based on good relationships with themselves, other people and the world"* (Valenta, 2006, p. 45). In practice, it means leading students and helping them find themselves and such a life trajectory which will satisfy them. It is important to support students and, by means of personal and social training, teach them how to cope with various life situations, make good decisions, take full responsibility for their own behaviour and actions, maintain good interpersonal relationships and not only respect themselves, but also others. Young people should be sufficiently equipped for dealing with various personal and social roles successfully in their future lives.

Valenta (2006) mentions the following basic goals of personal and social training in the field of knowledge, skills and abilities:

- understanding oneself;
- creation of positive interpersonal relationships in the classroom and outside it;
- development of good communication skills and gaining knowledge related to it;
- development and improvement of basic cooperative skills;
- development of the basic social skills in the process of coping with demanding situations;
- development of study skill;
- promotion of skills and gaining knowledge in the field of psychohygiene.

In the field of attitudes and values:

- creation of a positive attitude towards themselves;
- recognition of the value of cooperation and support;
- development of the moral aspect in communication situations and various forms of behaviour;
- prevention of social pathological phenomena and destructive forms of behaviour.

Another definition and specification of the goals of personal and social training is offered by the National Institute for Education (Štátny pedagogický ústav, 2012) in Slovakia, which in the cross-section theme personal and social training, introduces the following list of goals:

- development of a positive attitude towards oneself and others;
- taking control over own behaviour;
- creation of good interpersonal relationships both in and outside the classroom;
- development of basic communication and collaborative skills;
- development of basic social skills necessary for dealing with a variety of situations;
- respecting the diversity of people, opinions, and approaches to problem solving;

- following the basic principles of healthy lifestyle and involvement in low-risk behaviour in everyday life situations ([www.statpedu.sk](http://www.statpedu.sk)).

The above goals of personal and social training should be considered when introducing the thematic fields of personal and social training into the educational process.

### *3.2 Thematic fields of personal and social training*

To achieve the above goals, specific content containing the thematic fields of personal and social training was drafted. *“The fields of personal and social training are identical with the fields of human skills, personality traits, characteristics, abilities, attitudes models of human behaviour, etc. The themes contain practical phenomena, which are generally well known and constitute a part of each individual and their lives.”* (Valenta, 2006, p. 15). These thematic fields are focused on personal, social and moral development. All the three components of development are closely related to each other. Gymerová et al. (2009), along with personal, social, moral development, include also spiritual development here. The thematic fields serve as a tool for developing and practicing practical life skills and abilities. Valenta, Srb et al. and Gymerová et al. introduce the same classification of thematic fields in their publications.

Srb et al. (2007) distinguish between eleven thematic fields divided into three groups:

#### *Personal development:*

- cognitive skills;
- self-knowledge and self-concept;
- self-regulation and self-organizations;
- psychohygiene;
- creativity;

#### *Social development:*

- learning about people;
- interpersonal relationships;
- communication;
- collaboration and competition;

#### *Moral development:*

- problem solving and decision-making skills;
- values, attitudes and practical ethics.

In the current society, many changes related to the life style of young people and the expectations they have to face have occurred. The content of personal and social training is identical with these eleven thematic fields and corresponding exercises support young people in gaining skills and abilities, which help them adapt to various changes in the course of their lives, to integrate into the society successfully, and to live an active life.

Personal development means improving individuals' ability to learn, their self-knowledge and self-concept, self-regulation, self-organization, psychohygiene and is helpful in developing creativity. It is focused on students themselves; they can gain more information about themselves and thus, improve their self-knowledge. Individuals can learn how to manage their time dedicated either to learning or their hobbies efficiently

and will have the opportunity to develop own creativity. They will learn to think positively and to cope with stressful situations in order to live a happy and successful life.

### *3.3 Exercises focused on personal and social development*

Exercises focused on personal development are derived from the individual thematic fields.

#### *Development of the ability to learn*

- Practicing sensual perception – with a focus on senses. They constitute the basis of our lives. Along with the increasing amount of experiences and knowledge, perception is improved.
- Practicing attention and concentration abilities – it is beneficial to find out more about own personal predispositions for keeping concentration and paying attention. Students can learn to focus attention intentionally.
- Practicing the ability to remember – students can develop a range of strategies for remembering and recalling information. It is important to introduce those which suit their needs and desires best.
- Practicing problem-solving skills – learning to identify the problem and then searching for various solutions.
- Ability to plan own learning and studies – i.e. identification of own learning style, searching for appropriate learning methods.

#### *Self-knowledge and self-concept*

- Me as a source of information about myself – leading students towards self-observation, self-reflection, recognition of what they can learn about themselves by themselves.
- Others as a source of information about myself – students can learn how one's self-concept can influence others, to select important information from among the reactions of others, not to refuse criticism, but, at the same time, not to let others hurt them.
- My body, my mind – learning about own thinking, feelings, temperament, character, attitudes, values, and communication.
- What I do and what I do not know about myself – students learn to gain realistic information about themselves and to find out what other people think about them.
- Reflection on my personality in my behaviour.
- My relationship to myself – working on the development of students' relationship with themselves and building their self-confidence.
- My learning – learning to learn, seeking new learning strategies.
- My relationships with other people – to realize what students' existing relationships are like. The goal is to find out how they can improve interpersonal relationships using own resources.
- Development of a healthy, well-balanced self-concept – i.e. self-image, self-reflection, and self-evaluation.

*Self-control and self-organization*

- Exercises focused on the improvement of self-control, self-regulation, regulation of own actions, experiencing and will.
- Time management, planning and organization of own learning, setting goals and steps leading towards their achievement.

*Psychohygiene*

- Stress prevention – ability to think positively and having a good relationship with themselves, development of social skills helpful in stress prevention in the context of interpersonal relationships, good time management.
- Behaviour in adverse situations – ability to cope with stressful situations, thinking about the problem, release – relaxation, efficient communication, seeking help in demanding situations.

*Creativity*

- Development of the basic features of creativity – flexibility of ideas, originality, ability to see things differently, sensitivity, ability to put ideas into practice.
- Creativity in interpersonal relationships – getting rid of stereotypes in solving interpersonal problems, optimising own relationships by means of other approaches (Valenta, 2006).

People rarely engage in the process of self-evaluation; they more frequently evaluate others. Self-knowledge can represent a big advantage. When learning about themselves, students can find out what their strengths are. Along with that, they learn to improve the weak sides of their personality. It can also help them in decision making in various life situations.

Social development is focused on getting people to know each other, build interpersonal relationships, improve communication, cooperation and competition. Students learn how to maintain good interpersonal relationships, how to learn about their friends, classmates, family members, how to communicate, listen or solve problems.

Games and exercises in the field of social development are focused on the following:

*Getting people to know*

- mutual learning about each other within the group;
- careful manipulation with information about others and from others;
- development of sensitivity towards differences and diversity; looking for the advantages of being different;
- mistakes in the process of getting people to know.

*Interpersonal relationships*

- maintaining good relationships;
- behaviour promoting good relationships, the ability to experience closeness with others, trust and sharing, empathy, seeing the world through other people's eyes, showing respect, support and help;
- human rights as regulators of relationships;

- relationships in our group, working with the natural dynamics of the particular social group;
- showing respect for the opposite gender.

#### *Communication*

- ability to distinguish between the signs of respectful and disrespectful communication;
- ability to show and promote own opinions, needs and rights in a sophisticated manner;
- training observation, and empathetic and efficient listening;
- training verbal communication skills (technique of speech, verbal expression), practicing and conscious use of non-verbal communication (body language, the language of objects and the environment created by people, the language of actions);
- practicing leading a dialogue, its rules and managing it;
- communication in a variety of situations – providing information, refusal, thanking, assertive communication, solution of conflicts, negotiation;
- protective communication skills against aggression and manipulation, the ability to make interesting presentations;
- ability to lead, engage in and contribute to group discussions.

#### *Cooperation and competition*

- development of individual cooperative skills – self-regulation in the case of disagreement, opposition, the ability to compromise, the ability to build on the ideas of others and to develop an own line of their thoughts, positive thinking;
- development of cooperative social skills – clear and respectful communication, solution of conflicts, subordination, leading and managing group work;
- development of individual and social skills necessary for ethical coping with competition (Gymerská et al., 2009).

The development of moral values is focused on problem solving and decision-making skills, values, attitudes and practical ethics. In the process of gaining these skills, students learn to distinguish between good and not good, they acquire certain attitudes and create own values. Based on the above, they learn how to solve problems and can make decisions.

Exercises and games focused on the development in this field can be divided into two fields:

#### *Problem-solving and decision-making skills*

- development of a positive approach to problem solving – seeing problems as challenges;
- development of effective techniques of problem solving and decision making;
- problems in interpersonal relationships;
- dealing with educational problems;
- problems with self-regulation.



*Values, attitudes and practical ethics*

- analysis of own and others' attitudes and values and their reflection in behaviour;
- refusal of any manifestations of aggression or addiction;
- leading youth towards responsibility, reliability, justice and respect;
- awareness of real problems that young people can influence and their solution;
- supportive and pro-social behaviour;
- application of decision-making skills in ethically demanding everyday situations (Gymerská et al., 2009).

Without morals and set values, there would be no civilised societies. If young people's moral attitudes and values are developed, it can represent a big advantage in the future. This will contribute to the creation of a successful, decent and educated generation.

*3.4 Opportunities for the implementation of personal and social training into the work of schools*

The attitudes of schools to the themes of personal and social training vary. The question how to implement the topics of personal and social training into own curricula must be answered by every school individually with regards to their own specific conditions and possibilities. In general, authors focusing on these issues, present four possible ways of including personal and social training into school curricula.

Valenta (2006) suggests:

1. the themes of personal and social training should be reflected in teachers' behavior and actions;
2. using the potential of the themes of personal and social training in various (everyday) school situations;
3. integration of the themes of personal and social training into other subjects, other fields of education or programs of study;
4. inclusion of the themes of personal and social training into the schools's work in independent time units, subjects, etc.

Srb et al. (2007) recommend to:

1. change the way teachers usually communicate with students and how they treat them;
2. change how teachers use spontaneous, unplanned situations in personal and social training;
3. implement the content of personal and social training into various school subjects that teachers teach;
4. modify the forms and methods of working with the themes of personal and social training and to include them in independent time units.

Gymerská et al. (2009) consider personal and social training an integral part of school life depending on:

1. the way we usually communicate with young people and how we treat them;
2. the way we use spontaneous, unplanned situations in the work with young people;
3. integration of individual thematic fields of personal and social training into the educational process;
4. realization of independent programs of personal and social training.

It is clear at a glance that the suggestions of all the above authors concerning the inclusion of personal and social training in school curricula are similar, or even identical in some aspects. The research team opted for the fourth path for the purposes of the implementation of personal and social training in schools and used whole-class sessions with the class teacher as independent blocks.

Based on the state of the above-mentioned class teachers' preparedness for personal and social training, the research team decided to apply the form of social-pedagogical training. In this context, social-pedagogical training requires an individual approach by its drafting as well as by creating its structure. The research team decided to use the methods of experimental learning, experiential learning and learning by doing for the purposes of social-pedagogical training, which they complemented by theoretical knowledge from the given field. This is the authors' way of creating a link between practical and theoretical learning. As a basis, the authors use Kolb's experiential learning cycle accentuating the meaningfulness of learning in a closed cycle. They have divided a two-week course into three independent blocks. On the first day, the first two blocks are introduced – getting to know each other within the group and increasing group cohesion; and the third block – development of social and pedagogical competencies – is realized on the second day of training, within which the participants focus on the role of creative drama and structured drama in social-pedagogical training. The main goals of the social-pedagogical training drafted by the authors of the paper, and realized using the methods of experiential learning are as follows:

- to show teachers the path leading towards the development of their students' personal and social skills both as class teachers and as subject teachers;
- give teachers an opportunity to try out various methods in the course of the training and to find out whether these promote their personal development – as team members (members of a collective) or as teachers – professionals.

Among the partial goals of social-pedagogical training are:

- deepening self-knowledge, optimisation of self-regulation and self-control;
- improvement of the participants' social competencies, understanding the processes on group level and their dynamics, developing the competence to solve interpersonal conflicts constructively and efficiently;
- development of the ability for empathy, acceptance, recognition of the impact of own behaviour on other people.

#### **4 Research on the changes in personal and social development with an accent on class teachers' opinions and attitudes**

Within the pilot probe, the main goal was to find out about the changes in personal and social development after the realization of social-pedagogical training. On the level of personal development, the authors were interested in the field of values and attitudes. On the level of social development, they focused on the changes in communication and opinion scales. The changes in the above fields were measured by means of a pre-test and a post-test which were administered before and after the realization of the training. The selection of the sample was intentional as it consisted of practicing teachers, who were class teacher as well and were willing to participate in the realized research. The research sample consisted of 267 participants – 97 males and 170 females. The authors are aware of the fact that it is a group of respondents with already developed (and

usually grounded) attitudes and values. Therefore, even the smallest shift in their attitudes and values can be considered the results of a successfully managed and effective project. In the next phase of the research, the authors would like to focus on secondary school students and primary school pupils as a higher efficiency in the effect of projects on personal and social development can be presumed in them. In cooperation with class teachers and their students, we will organize whole-class sessions with the class teacher using the methods and forms of personal and social training. By means of pre-tests and post-tests, we will find out more about the efficiency of the selected methods and techniques on students' personal and social development. The pilot probe was carried out in years 2016 and 2017.

The items of the pre-test and the post-test were divided into two groups. The following set of pre-test and post-test items was used for measuring the changes in the field of personal development (values, attitudes):

2. Individuals' behaviour is mostly influenced by inheritance and it can be changed by upbringing/education only to a small extent.
5. Conflicts and disputes are manifestations of emotional weakness and the result of a lack of understanding from important others.
7. For me, the first impression is decisive when categorising others and evaluating their personality.
8. People should respect others even at the cost of suppressing own opinions or interests in order to prevent conflicts. There are no conflicts between good friends.
9. Only emotional and irrational people engage in conflicts. Rational people are capable of self-control.
12. Everyone must take full responsibility for own addiction, I see its main cause in one's inability to solve problems.

The second one is the field of social development (*communication, opinion scales*). The following test items were focused on it:

1. Individuals' behaviour is mostly influenced by those people who they spend their time with.
3. Individuals' behaviour is mostly influenced by upbringing/education; inheritance can be overcome by it.
4. Inappropriate communication can be considered the main cause of misunderstandings, disputes and conflicts among people.
6. A change in the environment, influence of peers, loss of safety (in family or peer group) can contribute to addictions.
10. Most values, attitudes and opinions regarding life are developed in family environment, schools have only a small impact.
11. People should apply more reason and logic. In such a case, they can avoid conflict situations. They take a sober look at reality and are able to react to most situations appropriately.

For the purposes of the pre-test and the post-test, the following 5-item Likert scale was used: 1 – strongly agree; 2 – agree; 3 – neither agree nor disagree; 4 – disagree; 5 – strongly disagree.

Table 1

<i>Gender specific differences in individual items in the pre-test</i>					
<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Degrees of freedom</u>	<u>Arithmetic mean Males</u>	<u>Arithmetic mean Females</u>	<u>Chi – square</u>	<u>Statistical Significance</u>
1	4	2.144	1.976	5.134	
2	4	3.526	3.506	2.278	
3	4	2.619	2.735	2.659	
4	4	2.041	1.812	8.091	
5	4	2.835	2.894	1.223	
6	4	2.278	2.000	10.45*	p < 0.05
7	4	2.773	2.906	5.154	
8	4	3.206	3.418	3.020	
9	4	3.237	3.506	4.724	
10	4	3.134	3.100	4.915	
11	4	2.351	2.706	9.412	
12	4	2.577	2.953	6.623	

Based on the data shown in Table 1, it can be assumed that in the group of respondents, the selected components of personal development (values, attitudes), as well as of social development (communication, opinion scales) were on a relatively high level. Statistically significant differences between males and females were found only in item 6 (*A change in the environment, influence of peers, loss of safety (in family or peer group) can contribute to addictions.*). In the pre-test, the arithmetic mean was 2.28 in the case of males, while in the case of females it was 2.00. It follows that females are more likely to believe in the effect of the environment on students' behaviour than males. In other items, no significant differences were found.

*Will there be any changes in the observed values after the realization of social-pedagogical training? If yes, in which items will they be the most significant?* An overview of the data gathered by means of the post-test administered immediately after the realization of the social-pedagogical training is shown in Table 2.

Table 2

*Gender specific differences in individual items in the post-test*

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Degrees of freedom</u>	<u>Arithmetic mean</u> <u>Males</u>	<u>Arithmetic mean</u> <u>Females</u>	<u>Chi – square</u>	<u>Statistical significance</u>
1	4	2.010	1.959	7.093	
2	4	3.278	3.059	12.29*	p < 0.05
3	4	2.763	3.059	10.78*	p < 0.05
4	4	2.052	1.782	8.025	
5	4	2.660	2.647	6.096	
6	4	2.082	1.700	18.84**	p < 0.01
7	4	2.928	3.365	10.66*	p < 0.05
8	4	3.227	3.388	6.534	
9	4	3.093	3.376	12.72*	p < 0.05
10	4	2.856	2.918	9.911*	p < 0.05
11	4	2.371	2.724	8.077	
12	4	2.608	2.941	8.768	

As shown in Table 2, in the post-test, statistically significant differences between the two genders were found in six items, which represents a 50 per cent shift compared to the results of the pre-test. In the field of personal development (values, attitudes), it is item 2 (*Individuals' behaviour is mostly influenced by inheritance and it can be changed by education/upbringing only to a small extent.*), item 7 (*For me, the first impression is decisive when categorising others and evaluating their personality.*) and item 9 (*Only emotional and irrational people engage in conflicts. A rational person is capable of self-control.*). It can be assumed that in both genders, there was a shift towards neutral opinions, but this trend proved to be stronger in females than in males. The statistical significance is on the level of 5%. In item 2, there is a shift in attitudes from “disagree” to “neither agree or disagree” in males. In females, the results are similar, but the shift is much stronger (the difference between arithmetic means is 0.447). In item 7, there is a shift from “agree” to “neither agree or disagree” and this shift is stronger in females again (the difference between arithmetic means is 0.459). And, finally, as for item 9, there is a shift from “disagree” to “neither agree nor disagree” on the opinion scale. In this case, the shift in attitudes is similar in both genders. In the second field of social development (communication, opinion scales), there was a shift in three items, too, particularly in items 3 (*Individuals' behaviour is mostly influenced by upbringing/education, inheritance can be overcome.*), item 6 (*A change in the environment, influence of peers, loss of safety (in family or peer group) can contribute to addictions.*) and item 10 (*Most values, attitudes and opinions regarding life are developed in family environment, schools have only a small impact.*). The existence of differences between the opinions of males and females was confirmed in item 6. The statistical significance is on the level of 1%. In the case of females, the shift on the scale was from “agree” towards “strongly agree”, and the difference in the arithmetic means is 0.3. In the case of males, a shift from “neither agree or disagree” towards “agree” can be

observed. Similarly, in item 10, there is a change in the direction from “neither agree nor disagree” to “agree”. A shift in the opposite direction, i.e. towards a neutral opinion, can be observed in item 3.

The obtained results can be interpreted from the aspects of emotionality and experiencing various situations during the realized social-pedagogical training with a different intensity in females and males. The authors consider interesting that, in the attitudes of both genders, there was a shift towards neutral opinions. Based on these results, they assume that in the participants of the realized research, the research team, to a certain extent, succeeded in reducing prejudice and beliefs and the participants learnt about the necessity of considering students’ individual abilities and specific environmental influences on their behavior and manifestations at school. On the level of opinions, there was a shift towards a stronger belief in the significance of the impact of the environment and the family background on students’ behaviour and their personality traits.

## 5 Conclusion

The presented data are the results of a pilot probe and have brought initial insights related to the presented issues for the purposes of a longer and deeper research, which is in the phase of its realization. As the project was realized with ten groups of teachers showing a deep interest in participating in it, it is not our ambition to generalize the obtained results; nevertheless, we find them interesting and inspiring. In the post-test, we noticed a significant shift and significant differences as for gender in the field of attitudes and values as well as in the field of opinions. This fact could indicate a positive impact of the class teacher on students’ personal and social development during the whole-class sessions with the class teacher.

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## **An Analysis of Teacher's Didactical Activity in the Context of Children's Preconception Usage**

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### **Abstract:**

**Introduction:** This paper presents the results of research focused on identification of preschool teachers' progress in relation to the use of children's preconceptions in formal pre-elementary education. It represents the theoretical concepts that are applied in the work with children's preconceptions in schools. It analyses them and creates a platform for their own empirical investigation. This research was carried out in the Czech Republic.

**Methods:** The empirical part of the study was conducted in the form of a qualitative research. Participant observation and interviews with preschool teachers were used for the data collection. The research findings were analysed and a model for using children's preconceptions was created and interpreted subsequently.

**Results:** The presence of children's preconception in educational activities in preschool was found in the realised participant observation. The ways and types of practice of preschool teachers in relation to using children's preconception are interpreted based on the research findings. Afterwards, based on the participant observation, in-depth interviews were carried out. From the collected data, it was observed that the practices of the teachers in connection to using children's preconceptions are determined by the agency of the child, the experience of the teacher and the overall philosophy of the preschool.

**Limitations:** This research was realised in the Zlín region in the spring of 2017. Data from the research cannot be generalised for the whole population. However, the following research will address agency theory in connection with children's preconceptions.

**Discussion and conclusions:** The practices of teachers in relation to using children's preconceptions in formal education in preschools. The results show that the approach of teachers in connection with using children's preconceptions differs. There are three ways interpreted out of the research findings:

1. A preschool teacher notices the preconception but does not react to it.
2. A preschool teacher notices the preconception and reacts to it.
3. A preschool teacher intentionally identifies the preconception and uses it further during the educational activity. The results show that a child's agency plays an important role in relation to using children's preconception. Additionally, they show that the decision to use or not to use children's preconceptions is influenced by the preschool teacher's experience and the philosophy of the preschool.

**Key words:** children's preconceptions, agency theory, preschool teacher.

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## **1 Introduction**

Every child coming to a preschool has already got his/her own experiences, thoughts, and opinions and is ready to present them. Preschool children are at the best age for beginning to explore, mainly because they are in their early life, entering the society and beginning to discover themselves and the world around them. They are constantly asking questions like “What is it?” and “Why?” (Koutníková, 2017). Each life experience is reflected on the child and is considered standard and absolutely relevant by them. Based on their need of meaningfulness and stability, they put this knowledge into their own logical context and they create their own authentic theories about the world around them. These theories are called “children’s preconceptions”. These fixed constructs following their own logics and meaning are very strong (Turek, 2005). They are not just nonsensical fiction formed by misunderstanding and insufficient amount of information. They are tools of child knowledge. They represent the only available knowledge for children. Children’s preconceptions have become a phenomenon in connection with pedagogical practice. But how can children’s preconceptions be perceived in relation to children’s learning? Is it necessary to substitute this subjective child conception with a relevant answer? Or can they be perceived as the first step on the way to knowledge? Is a teacher able to observe the way how a child creates and understands the content of his or her concept?

Preschool teachers play an important role in this context. A teacher chooses a more or less appropriate developmental approach, which is offered to a child by him or her subsequently. This is also influenced by the teacher’s agency, in fact his/her “belief” in himself/herself as a teacher (Fives & Gill, 2015). If we want children to be active in discovering and identifying the world around them, it is necessary to give them enough space – not only formal space, but also personal space. In relation to that, we need to think about the child’s role in the educational process (Wiseman & Hunt, 2014). Is a child perceived as a subject we need to forward information to, or is this the child’s main task? We need to focus on the question whether the child is provided with an opportunity to present his/her own hypotheses and opinions. The DAP model (Development Appropriate Practise) is a suitable tool for teachers, who are interested in leading children to an efficient and natural way of learning. This model supports children’s active exploration and integration of all educational areas included in the curriculum. The DAP model deals with creating suitable conditions for enriching the educational process for teachers, children and also specifying mutual relationships with parents (Fives & Gill, 2015).

The theoretical part of the study is based on academic literature concerning the definition of the cognitive approach to learning. Our attention was focused mainly on children’s preconceptions as a prerequisite to child learning and the agency theory as a new view on learning. The aim of this work was to find out whether preschool teachers use children’s preconceptions as part of their didactic processes. The partial objectives were to describe how preschool teachers work with children’s preconceptions and understand their reasons, why they do or do not use them. In the research, the qualitative method of participant observation was used which was completed with in-depth interviews with the teachers.

## **2 The theoretical definition of cognitive approaches to learning**

From birth, the mind of a person is oriented to find new meanings in new experiences. Dewey perceives experiences as an important factor in the learning process (Howes, 2016). In preschool age children, it is advisable to focus attention on the development of concrete thinking. It is necessary to concentrate on presenting the cultural context of the world in contact with specific materials. In other words, to give children a chance to work actively with information and build on their knowledge on the basis of our experiences (Šíp, 2016). In the context of child preconceptions and their further development, it is necessary to use both the above mentioned experiences and skills. The formation of children's preconceptions is of a great importance, and if appropriate conditions are created and accessed systematically and in time to this genetically conditioned trait (Nakonečný, 2013), we can perceive them as a prerequisite for a child's learning.

Children who either come to pre-elementary education already have different experiences with the world and ideas about it. They have already created their own theories on different phenomena, and these built-in constructs, which have their own logic and meaning, are very strong (Turek, 2005). Furthermore, they also differ significantly from the relevant theories of the adult world frequently. However, they are the subjective interpretations of the phenomena and, therefore, children acknowledge them (Slavík, Chrz, & Štech, 2013). When a child's preconception is generated, the child does not change it until he/she has the right incentive to modify it. The child is further mentally working with the incentive for change, which may be a new piece of information, experience or knowledge. This theory is based on the thoughts of J. Piaget. On the other hand, L. S. Vygotskij understands preconceptions differently. His idea is based on the assumption that human psychological development is strongly influenced by the environment (Vygotskij, 2004). According to his theory, the child – teacher cooperation resulted in the development of concepts. Vygotskij and Piaget agree with the idea that the child not only acquires the concept, but also reworks and enriches it with the elements of his/her thinking and creates his/her own insight (Škoda & Doulík, 2011). This is the reason why children's learning should not be of outer and remote nature for being dealt with by a child. It should be something close, something he/she has his/her own opinion about and what he/she wants to know more about.

There is a need for considering children's preconceptions to be real, equivalent theories, and these should be taken into consideration by us as the real and equivalent ones. Children's own ideas can be described – description, they can be explained – explanation, they are predictable – prediction, and there can also be instructions given on how to carry out the activity – techniques. So they have all features of a scientific theory (Gavora, 1992).

The basis of the theory of preconceptions in learning has a very strong connection with cognitive psychology. This is especially because it concerns various aspects of learning. It focuses on a child's development of judgment, decision making, and analysis. Teachers whose work is based on this theory, offer pupils problematic situations and encourage them to address them, and deliberately and systematically use children's preconceptions in their work. Bertrand, in his book, which characterizes various theories of education in the context of cognitive psychological theory, focuses mainly on constructivist theories as a process of construction in a learning child (Bertrand, 1998, p. 17).

Children's preconceptions are the current decoding structures of individuals giving information, which are meaningful for them. In other words, they appear to be the tools of knowledge. This is how Gordon's model works with children's preconceptions (Bertrand, 1998). This model understands preconceptions as an instrument of a child that is understandable and natural to him/her and encourages him/her to be aware of it and systematically work with it. In contrast, there is the Paradox of cognitive conflict, which treats preconceptions as obstacles in the development which lead to mistakes and which must be replaced by relevant ones as quickly as possible (Žoldošová, 2006). These two opposite approaches to working with children's preconceptions were further used in the interpretation of our research findings, where I try to identify different perspectives in the undertaken observations and interviews.

### **3 Methodology**

The main aim of this study is to find out whether preschool teachers use children's preconceptions as a part of their didactic procedures. The following two partial objectives are further pursued from this overarching aim:

1. To describe how preschool teachers work with children's preconceptions.
2. To learn about the reasons for preschool teachers to use or not to use children's preconceptions.

This study focuses on the didactic activities of preschool teachers in the context of using children's preconceptions. I used constant comparison to implement a qualitative research (Gavora, 2010, p. 182). I intended to capture and describe the work of preschool teachers with children in relation to children's preconceptions.

The participants were observed during the preelementary educational process. At the beginning of the research, I wanted to concentrate mainly on observation of the participants. However, during the survey, it seemed useful to extend the scope to an in-depth interview.

#### *3.1 Characteristics of participants:*

*Teacher A:* A woman aged twenty-four. She has been working in pre-elementary education for about a year and a half, and is currently pregnant, so she is to start her maternity leave. She works at a kindergarten in a smaller village in the Zlín Region. Her class is mixed with children aged from 4 to 6/7. She graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Preschool Teacher Training at Tomas Baťa University in Zlín. She is going to attend a follow-up Master's program in Olomouc. The teacher's approach is transmissive. As a personality, she is dominant and principled.

*Teacher B:* A woman aged twenty-six. She has been working in pre-elementary education for two years. At this time, the kindergarten is going to join the "Start Together" program. She graduated with a Bachelor's degree in the program of Preschool Teacher Training at Tomas Baťa University in Zlín. She plans to continue her education, however, now under the new kindergarten program. The teacher is influenced by this program, and she said during the interview that she had changed her view on children. She wants to approach them more sensitively and with respect. In the class, she has a mixed group of children aged from 3 to 6/7 years.

*Teacher C:* A woman aged twenty-six. She graduated from the Higher Technical School in Litomyšl specializing in Pedagogy and received the title Dis. Later she worked in an Alzheimer senior home and now she has been working at nursery school for the second

year. The kindergarten in which this teacher works uses the elements of the “Start Together” program. She shows a big interest in this program and she takes part in training that concerns this program. Among children in her class, she has a child with an autistic spectrum disorder and a child with ADHD. She works with an assistant, who is always with her in class. In the class, there is a mixed group of children aged from 4 to 6/7. In the interview, the teacher revealed elements of self-reflection and her intention to improve in her job. She is aware that she has not always done well and wants to change her attitude.

*Teacher D:* A woman aged twenty-six. She has been working in pre-elementary education for seven years. She started working in a kindergarten in the final year of her studies at the faculty of education. She studied Social Pedagogy at Tomas Baťa University in Zlín, ending with a Bachelor’s degree. In the class, she has a mixed group of children aged from 3 to 6/7 years. She is currently planning to complete a follow-up Master’s program in Preschool Pedagogy at Tomas Baťa University in Zlín. She would like to study this specialization because she would like to teach and the studies of social pedagogy have not provided her with appropriate information. The teacher also favours a more transmissive way of teaching, among other things, also because she has tried it in practice, as she told in the interview.

*Teacher E:* A woman aged thirty-one. She has worked in pre-elementary education since graduation from university for almost 12 years. In the course of her practise, she changed her view on the educational process and not long ago, she earned a Bachelor’s degree at Tomas Baťa University in Zlín, specializing in Preschool Teacher Training. She said in a conversation that the transmissive way of teaching did not prove to be effective in practice. And she noticed that children better respond to the activities they are interested in. Based on this information, she was looking for ways how to work more effectively with children. Considering that available literature was not sufficiently comprehensive, she decided to apply for bachelor studies. As a part of her studies, she gained useful information and she is planning to continue in her education.

I used free writing to implement the participant’s observation. So I did not create an observation sheet and record everything that was happening at the moment in the classroom. Then, I asked some observational questions during the observation. For example: Does the teacher give children an opportunity to express their opinions? How does she react to the children’s preconceptions? Who is the main agent of the process? The observation took place in five kindergartens in the Zlín Region. I observed a total of five preschool teachers, each of them twice. So I collected a total of 10 observations. I was particularly interested in the mainstream education after breakfast (snack) and before going outdoors, so I tried to catch the “main didactic activity”. This activity lasted for a very long time, from 20 till 70 minutes. During observation, I tried to capture all the events in the classroom, whether they were the children’s activities, the teacher’s response, their dialogues, asking the questions, or the answers, which the children interpreted. As a part of my observation of activities, I tried to have a kind approach to the children and I tried to maintain all the ethics of their personality, as the qualitative research with children requires (Kirk, 2007).

## **4 Interpretation of research findings**

### *4.1 The child may not have an opinion*

In pre-elementary education, a teacher can be more a manager who not only organizes didactic strategies, environment preparation, etc., but also children. The teacher is an authority for children, and then they act according that. It is obvious that these teachers identify more with the paradox of cognitive conflict. The children's opinions are more or less perceived as an unwanted hit into their work, as they know the child and know best what he/she needs. These teachers often act not only as organizers, but also as leaders and evaluators of the educational process. In fact, the teacher does not really care what he/she thinks about her proposal, he/she absolutely expects to fulfil his/her expectations:

Teacher: *"So, Eliška will be counting."*

Eliška stands up. *"One, two, ..."*

Teacher: *"So, Kubík, here you have a marker and you can cross out the day."*

It can be seen that the teacher instructs the child in this example. In fact, it seems to be automated, and the child blindly takes the marker and counts, as if he/she does not even need to think. And it really is so in this case, it is really essential for the child to obey. It is clear that in this type of approach to the child, the teacher especially aims to organize the children. In this category, there was no conflict between the teacher and the child when the child did not obey and expressed his/her own opinion, for example in the sense that he/she does not agree with the task. It is certain that in this educational style, there is not much space for children to express their opinions or to decide based on their own personality. Another situation is demonstrated in the second example.

Teacher: *"Try to think out how to do it in the way you see each other."* Children are making a circle.

Teacher: *"So how have you solved it? ... I would like to know what you have decided for."*

Here, it is clear that the teacher is interested in the views of the children and wants to know what they think and why. By the end, we can see that she tries to ascertain how they decided. So she works not only with what just children say, but also with how they act. As the children's answer to the question how the problem has been solved is connected with another question, this relates with the choice of activity and how the children act in the particular situation. Therefore, they will go to do the activity for which they have opted for. Undoubtedly, this approach to children is both more demanding and more enjoyable; the teacher gives them an opportunity to choose and express their opinions. It is necessary for them to have an opinion already.

### *4.2 The child must know the correct answer*

In elementary schools, it is common for children to be evaluated on the basis of correct answers. This phenomenon also occurs in pre-elementary schools. The teacher asks questions and the children have to answer them. Of course, the answers must be correct. In this phase, a teacher who has a great authority at that time, becomes even more authoritative as a judge and evaluator. The child knows that the teacher wants to hear

one right answer. If he/she knows it, he/she is happy because he/she is praised, if not, punishment comes.

Teacher: *"But you did not say it correctly. How is it right?"* Children recite. Teacher: *"Well, before you messed it up."*

Here, we can see that not only individuals but also the whole group is required to give correct answers. In the records of the observation, we can encounter different dialogues and discussions. But it is mainly that the teacher asks a question, waits for the answer, gets the correct answer, and then a word of praise (excellent, yes, well, etc.) follows. However, another example is needed, where the teacher asks questions and does not evaluate the answers.

Teacher: *"Which sense have we not mentioned yet? You said sound, sight, smell, and what else ..."*

Child: *"Taste."*

Teacher: *"I think we can try whether we recognize it and if it is good."*

We can see that there was no real subjective assessment of the child's response and the correctness of the answer. In this case, the child did not hear "Yes, you are right!". The teacher accepts the child's answer and continues the activity.

#### *4.3 The child may not be independent*

Leading children towards independence is one of the most important things during the educational process. It is also in the period when a contradiction is set. By defending their natural needs, we are holding children on a string and dragging them back. In this category, it is important whether the preschool teacher leads or does not lead children to independence both in instruction and organization. In the first example, we can notice that the teacher instructs and controls their performance. She determines not only the rules that are important within the organization, but also the trivial ones with which the children would certainly be able to cope by themselves.

Teacher: *"Someone will stand up, take a basket and you all will throw your candy papers there. Has everyone given a piece of paper?"* The child nods. Teacher: *"Okay, we will finish eating calmly ... quietly, we finish eating quietly and then we throw away the papers."*

In that example, we can observe a way of educating a child. Maybe it is not entirely leading to independence, but at least I feel like this is the first phase. The teacher does not say the right answer; however, she guides the child to it. Moreover, the teacher does not give him instructions in this case, she does not favour him. Through questions and answers, she helps him figure out what he needs to do. Another phase of this development could be that the teacher would only ask the first question.

Teacher: *"So what do you need?"*

Child: *"A pencil."*

Teacher: *"You have got it. What else besides the pencil?"*

Child: *"The book."*  
Teacher: *"The book. What else?"*  
Child: *"Paper."*  
Teacher: *"And have you got it?"*  
Child: *"No."*

The third part of the observation tells us that the teacher pursues the children to suggest the answer by themselves. We can notice that when the children were sitting at another table, instead of reassigning them or reminding them of the right place, she asked them a question that was supposed to bring them to the right answer.

The children go to the table, where two other teachers are sitting. The teacher goes to the boys and asks them. Teacher: *"Are you guys sitting at the right table? Do you think the table is ready for drawing?"*

Children: *"No."* The children stand up and go to sit to the drawing table.

And it really happened. The boys looked around the table and found out that they were sitting at another table. They stood up and moved to a table that was ready for artwork. In connection with this category, I feel that teachers are trying to work with independence. So far, they do not give the children enough freedom and responsibility for their actions, but I think that in the work of some observed teachers, we can find the basic elements of children's preconceptions.

#### *4.4 Children must feel well*

As I later found out, during the interviews, all the observed teachers said that it was very important for the children to feel well, comfortable, relaxed and entertained. In spite of the fact I found in the observations that sometimes it is not possible to talk about a pleasant climate. At least for the child mentioned here by me. In my opinion, it is basically a kind of disrespect for a child. Not only she evaluated that the child does not know the answer, what is insensitive from the teacher as an authority; the little girl is silent. And the third thing is that her ignorance is presented among all children. The children do perceive it, of course. It is the evaluation by adults, and it is quite possible that such statements also occur among them.

Teacher: *"And what colour is that?"* The child is silent. Teacher: *"L., you will go to school soon. K. has a sweatshirt like that."* The teacher is trying to help L.

Child: *"Green."*

Teacher: *"Yes."*

Such an assessments and comments by the teacher appeared on a daily basis. However, it is not like that the teacher is pleased by offending the child in some way. In my opinion, she is not aware of the consequences of her behaviour or what she says to the child. Maybe she does not even think about it, she just talks to them as to adults. If we take into account the importance of this period in a person's life, we have to consider how we are talking to children and what we are telling them.

Child: *"Teacher, I am sad ..."*

Teacher: *"Come to me, why are you sad? Because you do not go home after lunch? It does not matter. Come on, you will watch if I am not making mistakes."*

In this dialogue, the child comes to the teacher and seeks physical contact. I did not notice the reason, why he mentioned his home and became sad. I suppose, however, that it had to be caused by some activity that reminded him of his home or something unpleasant happened to him. But that is just my assumption.

The next part of the research continued after the creation of significant categories based on the observation. After this entry into practice, I decided that it was necessary to enrich the research with another qualitative method, which was in the form of in-depth interviews. The results, the ways the teachers think and the types of teachers included in the research are as follows:

#### *4.5 Teacher as a manager*

In this category, we present the statements of teachers who organize children. Thus, what is the educational process like? Is the environment well prepared? Whether there is a space for children's independence or they need support from the teacher in performing the activities. In the first example, we can read the answers of a teacher who has prepared some tasks for children. She is convinced that one version is enough for all ages. She believes that children will work on their own. However, it is questionable whether all the children in the group can be successful in performing the activity and experience success as children compare their work with the work of others. If the "philosophy" of the kindergarten is to lead children towards accepting differences and working independently, I do not see a problem, but if it is not, I am worried about the younger children who can be demotivated by their performance in comparison with the older pupils.

Teacher: *"In order to do that, I have to adjust the class environment appropriately. I have to reorganize it. I am not going to make them a harder and an easier version, but there is the only one, and they will do it on their own."*

But of course, it is possible that the teacher later finds out that it is more suitable to prepare more versions of the task. However, the way she has prepared the lesson does not correspond with the requirements for working with child preconceptions. Teachers should make an attempt to create an offer which is attractive for children and to stimulate their interest and internal motivation. The offer should be varied in order to provide children with sufficient incentives to choose from.

Teacher: *"I prefer guided management here. For instance, in the morning, we call them individually and then they learn in the controlled unit."*

The second example tells us about the organizational forms that the teacher uses and which she prefers. She prefers managed organizational activities, so, the children's interest in the activities is not important for her. As her statement shows, she calls the children and they perform tasks. Her activity is therefore based on external motivation. However, the predominant external motivation suggests that children are rather



organized from outside, and so, their activity is not based on their interest or experiences.

#### *4.6 Teacher as a guide*

During the interviews, I focused on what the teachers do in order to promote the children's independent work. A teacher who is a guide should monitor the children's activities and help only when it is necessary. It is a person who prepares the environment in a way that children do not really need him/her to do any activity. In other words, the activities are designed so that the children can do them alone. As it is clear from the above, the focus of this part of the research is on children's independence. In the field of education, the notion of a guide can be perceived as a kind of skill. In the following part, we can see that a teacher works with a child and finds his/her phonemic differentiation by a natural way of talking, but entirely deliberately.

Teacher: *In some normal conversation, when a boy tells me that his car is a fire-truck, I ask him what it is and what it begins with. And he tells me, "Well, a fire-truck!". And I ask, "And what does it begin with?", and he answers, "F – fire-truck – I see, F!".*

In this situation, the child does not notice that he/she is being tested. The teacher leads a natural conversation with him, except that the child "understands poorly". The child does not have a problem to repeat the word. The situation would be different if the teacher had called the boy and asked him, *"What letter does fire-truck start with?"*. The child could feel like being tested and could be afraid to answer. Definitely, the first case is much more enjoyable for a child.

Teacher: *"Internal motivation plays a big role. If he/she wants to do something, then it is the way he/she does it. It is easy. If a child lacks internal motivation, I try to wake it up."*

Another important factor is whether the teacher is aware of the importance of internal motivation or whether he/she only gives instructions which children must follow. In the example above, we can see that the teacher is aware of the role of motivation. If there is no internal motivation, this teacher offers activities which motivate children externally. In the interview with this teacher, she says that her internal motivation is more important to her than the external one.

#### *4.7 Teacher as a leader*

This category is the opposite of the previous one. Here, very strong authoritative tendencies can be observed. In fact, if the teacher sets some rules, the children must follow them. We can observe a certain degree of consistency here. On the other hand, I have to say that this directive approach in working with children is neither effective nor pleasant for both sides. However, the teacher may not act as a leader all the time.

Teacher: *"Just when I set up something I want to happen and they do not do it, then we get back to it and we have to wait until it just happens. If I do not peddle, stomp, I am lax, they will get used to it and say, "Oh, it's probably not necessary".*

Teacher: *"And they did not know why, so I tried to lead them through questions. And then they came to the right answer. The correct answer was that there was no wedding".*

The question is how much children are encouraged to come up with their thoughts. The point is that there is something the teacher wants to hear and that is the correct answer. However, she does not act as a guide who gives them a helpful hand, but some kind of pressure is present. For example, children are asked questions as long as they get to a meaningful answer and nothing else is relevant – neither their ideas nor thoughts. This kind of pressure is clearly visible in the statement: *“They did not know it, so I had to lead them. I asked them questions and they finally came to it.”*, etc. This approach, of course, does not correspond with children’s preconception usage.

#### *4.8 Teacher as an evaluator*

It is obvious that preschool teachers must somehow evaluate their work with children. Thus, they should perform reflection. On the other hand, this category has a different meaning. The teacher evaluates the children’s statements, their relevance and correctness. Based on the results of the interviews and observations, it can be assumed that teachers do not even realize that they are constantly evaluating the children.

Teacher: *“At the moment I record something that is completely wrong in quotation marks or should not be like that, I am not the evaluator. I give it back into that group of kids, highlight what the kid said, give additional information and so, we can all sort it out, and we can all get to some solution together.”*

The first teacher is fully aware of his/her influence on children and their development, while the second one has not realised the contradiction between motivation and negative assessment so far. Within one sentence, she talks about motivation and a “bad” answer at the same time. If we give a negative feedback to children, it has a demotivating effect on them. Another opinion, as stated by another participant, is that when we evaluate children in some way, they feel tested. Hence, this is perfectly logical.

Teacher: *“We just go to the woods or play something what they are looking forward to... and they are just trying to find something, and I tell them that it is not what we have been looking for, it is something different. And they just remember that it is good.”*

When we analyse this statement, we can find some signs of the paradox of cognitive conflict. For example, the teacher speaks about giving the children a task. When they fulfil it, she clarifies the expectations to children and gives them feedback during the evaluation, *“No, that is not what we have been looking for”*. Therefore, it is clear that the teacher completely ignores the children’s preconceptions.

#### *4.9 Teacher as the author of the educational offer*

What is interesting, it was found out that one of the teachers really adapted the work to the children’s needs and even the educational offer was changed by him or her. In other words, the children interfered with and changed this educational offer. Nevertheless, it was just one teacher among the participants during my research. So, I tried to find out, which criteria are important in planning the educational offer for other teachers.

Teacher: *"They figured out that a complete skyscraper could be built from that. And I said it was a good idea and we could show it to their parents and they came up with some other suggestions. So, one day, they created a plan of their own business."*

In most interviews, the main issue was the creation of the educational offer as the most important criteria in this process. This is followed by planning carried out by teachers. Another important aspect was setting the educational goals, and finally, there was also another phenomenon occurring in the interviews – planning activities based on teachers' intuition. Teachers decide which activities are interesting for children based on the knowledge of their personalities. One of the teachers also mentioned that the creation of the educational offer is inherently connected with perfect knowledge in the field of developmental psychology.

Teacher: *"I prepare the materials based both on their age and opinions on what can attract their interest. So, when I have a more demanding activity, as for example an atelier, I try to prepare something easier, something even the two-year-olds can manage."*

Here, the teacher prepares an educational offer considering the age of children. She also works with the idea that it is essential for children to be interested in the offer. So, we can see the first elements that could lead to children's preconceptions. Therefore, the activities she proposes are tailored to inspire all children's internal motivation. The second alternative of the explanation of her approach is that she wants the children to be successful and so she invents activities within which even the younger children can reach the expected goal.

## **5 Conclusion**

A preschool teacher can work as a manager, an evaluator, a leader or a guide. In the research findings, I have learned that the approaches of the participants to the educational process were different. While one of them had a clear idea that a child needs strict discipline, another one left this theory and, based on her own experiences, let children be independent and let them decide about their own content of education themselves. In spite of the fact that teachers' personalities and approaches may vary, similar traits can still be found. It is a must that children feel good. When this need is satisfied by the teacher, the child learns better.

Another similarity is in the effort for a prepared environment. Even though each of them prepares it on their own, based on their best intentions, this preparation varies according to the teachers' approaches to children. If a child is perceived as an equal partner, the environment is ready for a child to engage in activities independently. If the approach is opposite, children are motivated mainly externally. Therefore, the teachers' task is to show an interest in children, accept their personalities or activity and to motivate them. The first approach is to work with children's interests, meaning that the prepared activities are attractive for them and they want to participate in them without saying so by the teacher.

Teachers can be divided into two groups in the context of their dominant position which also relates to communication and learning processes. The first group intentionally works with children's preconceptions and naturally builds on them, the second group of

teachers induces children to the right answers by various techniques of “pressure”. The first technique can be in the form of permanent asking questions when the child finds the correct answer sooner or later. The second method is correcting the wrong answers and telling the right ones. The last possible alternative is that the teacher is not interested in the children’s opinions or presumptions.

Moreover, we can also observe the teachers’ behaviour following the children’s answers, where the teachers have two options as for their reactions. One of them is to evaluate the correctness and relevance of the response and to fix it. The second option is that the teacher does not evaluate the children’s statements at all.

The opposite situation occurs when teachers interpret the reality to children through their active involvement. The teachers’ leadership cannot only be observed in terms of asking questions, but also in relation to independence. In my research, I was confronted with both possibilities. Teachers either guide children, when a problem which could be solved by them alone arises or, on the other hand, teachers who are aware of children’s preconceptions supervise their problem solving processes from a distance. Thus, in the research, I could observe various teacher agency in the participants. While some of them are supporters of teacher agency, one of them sees children as the agents in the educational process, which make decisions not only as for the activities they want to perform, but also interfere in the educational offer in some way (Bandura, 2001).

Finally, at the end of the interviews, I was curious about what preschool teachers leads towards using or not using children’s preconceptions. Their answers made it clear that the main reason was their own experience. They have often argued that they are doing so, because they have simply proven themselves to be effective. In contrast, one teacher claims that the traditional approach to the educational process has not been sufficient according to her experiences. So, she became interested in another model and was motivated to learn about the Gordon’s model, in which children’s preconceptions are used and worked with. Another factor influencing the attitudes towards preconceptions is the kindergarten’s philosophy. For example, two teachers work in a kindergarten where the “Start Together” program was established.

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## **The Interrelations of Competency Expectations in Connection with Career-Starter Skilled Workers in the Counties of Northern Hungary**

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### **Abstract:**

**Introduction:** Examining the connection between vocational training and the world of work, nowadays it is essential to mention the “gap”, which keeps on growing, between training and the economy due to the quick technological changes.

**Purpose:** The purpose of the research is scientific investigation of the demand process of competency expectations at workplaces in connection with career-starter skilled workers having completed their vocational training at school, and of young specialists’ qualifications, motivation, and the supply process in three disadvantaged counties in Northern Hungary. Considering the conditions of the training of specialists, we started from the opinion, an axiom drawn up all over Europe, that there is a shortage of specialists in the labor market in quantitative and qualitative respects alike. Digitalization, “Economy 4.0” is basically transforming technological and logistics processes, while professions disappear, or new ones are created. In the field of employment, probably fewer, but more qualified, skilled workers will be needed. All these mean a significant challenge, a need for a change in specialists’ training, in the preparation for a new type of labor force.

**Methods:** The method of the research was a primary data collection embracing the area of Northern Hungary, self-completed online questionnaires, complemented with focus group interviews. In the framework of a secondary analysis, according to stratified sampling, based on OECD-PISA survey, there will be a comparison of students’ average results on the European scale.

**Limitations:** The lack of representativeness restricted the research with the employer survey.

**Results:** The results of the research cast light on the sensitive points of vocational training at schools, on the educational deficit, on the shortcomings of the qualification system, and on the growing gap between training and the labor market.

**Conclusions:** The conclusions are aimed at the improvement of vocational training, and at broadening the connections with the employers. There is a demand for an incentive system, so that along with big companies, also SMEs will take part in the formal training of professionals within the school system in bigger and bigger proportions. We will further continue our studies in this direction.

**Key words:** skill, competence, qualification, employer, vocational training.

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## **1 Introduction**

Nowadays, significant changes happen one after the other at an accelerating pace in the world of work, contributing to the growing “gap” between vocational training and the labor market. These changes are a lot more intensive than the initiatives of education or training. Training demand and supply are separated from each other, satisfying the demand in the framework of training in schools takes longer (Benedek, 2013). In the recent years, several studies have dealt with the career choices of students learning a profession in the school system, with the competency stock of young skilled workers, with the qualification expectations at workplaces, with elements influencing one’s career building (Borbély-Pecze, 2014; Molnár, 2016). The employers’ needs and requirements regarding the employees’ skills change continuously, they are influenced by several factors, among others the branch of work, its profile, operation, equipment, mechanization, and the supply of professionals. Skills (competences) mean a significant value of professional knowledge as part of human resources in the development possibilities of economic units, planning, the statistical region, or a sub-region.

The relationship between schools, workplaces and career starters, the “triangle” of vocational training, affects the quantitative and qualitative indicators of training. It is also an issue whether the skill demands of the potential workplaces work their way into training at the appropriate level and to a proper extent (Varga et al., 2017). It cannot be neglected either whether the principles of dual education are a part of the daily practice, or they are just declarations. When new knowledge is acquired, the application level of the adaptive and innovative methods has an influence on the efficiency of training. During practical training, in many cases, doing tasks mechanically in an unsophisticated way is characteristic; tasks improving creativity and problem solving are missing (Lükő, 2015). It also belongs to working up this subject, how much the competency supply of skilled workers differs from the employers’ demands (Vas, 2011) and to what extent the vocational training in the school system establishes a successful career start?

One of the challenges for teachers, vocational trainers, vocational workers, and human resources development professionals is to encourage the future skilled workers to do their best based on their knowledge, skills and competency supply, and to prepare them to apply this knowledge. Another expectation is that the school qualification system meets the perspective demands (Halász, 2008). According to Tamášová (2015, p. 8), the question which needs to be answered is in which areas teachers should be educated, what continuing education should involve. There is a simple answer – education in all current issues for which young people, as the potential new generation of teachers and educators, need to be prepared. This is the European trend.

## **2 Methods**

In the framework of an empirical research, we studied the motivation of career starter skilled workers and the expectations of the labor market in three counties of Northern Hungary having characteristically disadvantageous indicators. The challenges of vocational training at schools will be interpreted. In the study, we applied the questionnaire method using our own questionnaire with closed and open questions, based on the available data from the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture. The exploration of interrelations was carried out in the framework of an empirical research as part of a study involving several dimensions of vocational training. N=107 vocational trainers’ and N=126 employers’

opinions were cross-checked. The online questionnaire survey was complemented with N=21 focus group interviews. The proportion of the completed questionnaires received from the vocational training institutions in the educational system was 67%, which meets the requirements for representativeness. Whereas those from the workplaces do not – only 126 out of 150 requested employers answered. During the secondary study, in a European outlook according to the stratified sampling, in the framework of the National Student Performance Assessment Program, the average results of 15-year-old students are compared.

The initial assumption of the research is that most young people do not choose vocational training on the basis of a conscious career building. Those who got into this type of training as a residuum, are on a forced path. Another assumption connected to this is that the students are not properly motivated in connection with their profession, the professional vocation of the career starter skilled workers is missing. The subject of the research is the prior idea that the managers of schools and workplaces judge the skills considered most important differently in connection with career starter skilled workers. It is also an assumption that the managers at workplaces are more critical as for the quality of initial vocational training in schools in connection with the career starter skilled workers' academic and practical preparedness than those in education. The first circle of questions in the study is aimed at the choice of career – we wanted to know what the characteristic tendencies are, how the opinions of the representatives of schools and workplaces correspond with or differ from each other.

### *2.1 The informal system of connections determines the choice of career*

In the studied issue, seven characteristic questions were worked up based on the opinions of schools and employers.

Table 1

<i>Attributes of ways of establishing contact in the students' choice of career</i>		
<i><u>The way of establishing contact</u></i>	<i><u>Schools'</u></i>	<i><u>Employers'</u></i>
	<i><u>opinion</u></i>	<i><u>opinion</u></i>
With the help of acquaintances, friends, relatives	4.43	4.23
Through online advertisements	3.79	3.48
Through print advertisement	3.22	3.24
Based on participation at job fairs	3.21	3.32
By taking up trainee positions	2.79	2.55
With the help of career centers	1.79	2.22
Via personal consultancy firms	1.72	1.91

Source: Own editing based on research

As shown in Table 1, the representatives of schools and workplaces indicated their opinion about the characteristics of young people trying to find a job on a five-point scale. The two sides agreed on the order on the first two places. The acquaintances, friends, relatives (schools: 4.43; employers: 4.23), i.e. the informal connection network, got on the first place in job seeking. Secondly, there was also an agreement between the two sides that online advertisements have a significant influence on this young age group



(schools – 3.79; employers – 3.48). It is noteworthy that job fairs organized for students are on the 3rd – 4th place in the field of interest.

It is obvious that the traditional institutional solutions which require significant financial and organizational resources are not the most effective on their own in the choice of career. After this comes the choice of a workplace based on accepting a trainee position (schools – 2.79; employers – 2.55), and finding a job with the help of career centers (schools – 1.97; employers – 2.22). The least characteristic for all is the choice of working possibility with the help of personal consultancy firms (schools – 1.72; employers – 1.91). The recently mentioned examples show that the new forms of choosing a career help students in higher education to find a job more frequently than those with secondary qualification. The analysis of the choice of career of students in vocational training was followed by a study on the commitment towards training, and the motivational factors.

## 2.2 *The characteristics of the professional vocation of career starter skilled workers*

In Table 2, the results of the research focused on the shortcomings of competency development are shown. Within this, the issue was narrowed down to the sensitive points of vocational training at schools.

Table 2

<i>What do you consider the biggest problem of vocational training in the school system?</i>		
	<u>Schools'</u> <u>opinion</u>	<u>Employers'</u> <u>opinion</u>
The lack of professional commitment with career starters.	4.30	4.24
Vocational training is not attractive.	3.57	4.13
The practical knowledge of career starters is incomplete.	3.09	4.14
The professional knowledge of career starters is outdated.	2.95	3.74

Source: Own editing based on research

Schools and employers, using a five-point scale, evaluated how significant they find each given competency. One of the most important statements of the research is that career starter skilled workers do not really have professional vocation, they are uninterested. The two groups had a very similar opinion (schools – 4.30; employers – 4.24). With the other issues, their opinions differ. The professional preparedness of those who completed school training was judged unfavorably more significantly by the employers (schools – 2.95; employers – 3.74). Both answer groups found this the smallest problem, even if the values were different. The practical knowledge of those having finished school is insufficient, also here the employers were more critical – by more than one grade on the scale (schools – 3.09; employers – 4.14). As for practical knowledge, the schools did not really consider it a problem, however, employers found this issue the second most critical problem. There is also a significant difference when stating that, according to school leavers, it is not attractive to take part in vocational training (schools – 3.57; employers – 4.13). This is the second biggest problem for the

schools, but only the third one for the employers. It partly answers the question why school leavers do not want to stay in their profession. After acquiring their professional qualifications, a significant number of students does not take up a job in accordance with their qualification.

Schools reported that there is a need for the profession they teach, but more than 20% of school leavers do not establish themselves in the profession they learnt. The exploration of the reasons needs further analysis. The following part demonstrates well that commitment to the profession and motivation are related to the employers' expectations in connection with young professionals.

### *2.3 The most important expectations in connection with career starter skilled workers – working discipline, professional practical preparedness, problem solving skills*

On the basis of the opinions of the representatives of training institutions and employers, in this section, the most important skills of career starter professionals are discussed.

Table 3

*Important skills in connection with career starter skilled workers*

	<u><i>Schools' opinion</i></u>	<u><i>Employers' opinion</i></u>
Working discipline	4.81	4.72
Professional preparedness	4.69	4.54
Problem solving skills	4.55	4.54
Working independently	4.52	4.60
IT knowledge	3.74	3.57
Organizational skills	3.59	3.97
Foreign language knowledge	3.50	3.13

Source: Own editing based on research

In Table 3, also on a five-point scale, we tried to find the answer to the question regarding the abilities and skills considered more or less important by the responders from schools and employers. Interestingly, both groups find working discipline most significant almost to the same extent (schools – 4.81; employers – 4.72). A high value was given to the importance of professional practical preparedness (schools – 4.69; employers – 4.54). Schools found this the second most important, while they put problem solving skills on the third place. Considering this latter issue, employers' opinions show a similarity (schools – 4.55; employers – 4.54).

Noteworthy, schools assign a high value to working independently – it is on the fifth place in the order of importance. However, according to the employers, this is of an even higher importance and consider it the second most important expectation (schools – 4.52; employers – 4.60). Problem solving skills and a cooperative ability are considered similarly important by the training institutions and the employers. It gives food for thought, though, that foreign language knowledge was the competency evaluated as the least important (schools – 3.50; employers – 3.13). IT knowledge is considered quite important (schools – 3.74; employers – 3.57). In the evaluation of organizational skills, there is a bigger difference, employers find this a lot more important than schools do (schools – 3.59; employers – 3.97). The level of application of these skills in practice has a determinant significance in the evaluation of the work of young career starters.

*2.4 Managers at workplaces are more critical, they rate the career starter skilled workers' preparedness as medium*

Table 4 shows how vocational trainers and representatives of workplaces evaluate the efficiency of theoretical and practical training, how vocational training grounds career.

Table 4

<i>The theoretical, practical and career grounding character of vocational training</i>		
	<i><u>Schools' opinion</u></i>	<i><u>Employers' opinion</u></i>
Practical preparedness of career starters	3.86	3.43
Theoretical preparedness of career starters	3.78	3.26
The career grounding character of vocational training	3.74	3.20

Source: Own editing based on research

Based on the answers to the questions, it can be seen that the opinions of the employers about the future skilled workers are more critical than the schools' opinions. While schools evaluate it as a good medium level, the companies' opinion differs from this by half a grade, and they consider the preparedness of school leavers obviously medium. It is visible e.g. in the question how school system training can ground the successful career start, and the career itself (schools – 3.74; employers – 3.20).

During the vocational training at schools, practice oriented training is in the foreground, less attention is given to theoretical training, and the character of the training grounding the career. It means a problem especially in the context that most young people learning in this kind of educational institution come from an environment lacking or hardly providing any stimuli, and they lack the basics of common academic knowledge and positive life style patterns to follow.

*2.5 Within secondary education, vocational training in the school system has a lower social prestige*

Focus group interviews complemented the questionnaire survey in three counties – in groups of 6 in Nógrád County, 7 in Heves County and 8 in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County. It was expressed that among those going on with their education within secondary education, the most important objective is to take the general final exam and vocational training has a lot lower prestige. It shows great uncertainty that in 70% of the cases, and this is a general standpoint, it is only defined in the final period what vocational training the student selects.

There is no awareness in choosing a profession, young people get into vocational training because they cannot find anything better. For most of the young people coming from disadvantageous conditions, grown up in an environment lacking stimuli, obtaining vocational qualification means an opportunity for emergence. The lack of knowledge about local labor market needs hinders perspective planning. Choosing a career at the age of 14 is considered too early. Young people have very little experience of their own. The structure of vocational training does not help later corrections either. In the new structure of vocational training, there is no interoperability. In the course of training,

students cannot change to another professional field, in the worst case, they drop out from training. In a better case, they start again and learn a different profession.

### **3 Average reading comprehension, mathematics and science results of the Hungarian youth in European comparison**

We complement the above study by an international comparison of the competency survey results also concerning Hungarian students.

The OECD-PISA survey in the fields of reading comprehension, mathematics and sciences is carried out every three years among 15-year old students of the developed countries since 2000. The following comparison tells a lot about what basics the Hungarian youth in secondary education have in the fields of reading comprehension, mathematics and sciences, and where we are in a European comparison. The results are shown in Table 5.

Estonia, Germany, Denmark and Poland are the most successful in all the three measured areas. In the improvement of the Polish students' achievement, probably, an important role is played by the educational reform introducing the 9-year primary school in 1999. The Swedish youth achieve good average results constantly, and in the last three years further improvements have taken place. Austria and Germany show good skill levels in mathematics and sciences. Among the countries discussed, at the bottom of the table you can find Hungary, Slovakia and Romania with deteriorating results.

In Hungary, in connection with the shortcomings of education, the reasons need a separate analysis. The negative tendency calls the attention to a more successful acquisition of the basics of education during the general education, and in the field of vocational training, beyond the knowledge of the profession at skills level, to the challenges of meeting the demands of the higher level skills of the digital world.

Table 5

*OECD-PISA average results of 15-year old students*

<u>Countries</u>	<u>Reading</u>			<u>Mathematics</u>			<u>Sciences</u>		
	<u>2009</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2015</u>
OECD average	493	496	493	496	494	490	501	501	493
Austria	470	490	485	496	506	497	494	506	495
Czech Republic	478	493	487	493	499	492	500	508	493
Denmark	495	496	500	503	500	511	499	498	502
Estonia	501	516	519	512	521	520	528	541	534
Poland	500	518	506	495	518	504	508	526	501
Hungary	494	488	470	490	477	477	503	494	477
Germany	497	508	509	513	514	506	520	524	509
Romania	424	438	434	427	445	444	428	439	435
Sweden	497	483	500	494	478	494	495	485	493
Slovakia	477	463	453	497	482	475	490	471	461

Source: Own editing based on [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org)

#### **4 Conclusion**

During the interpretation of the research results, one can perceive the critical points of vocational training. The lack of wide basics should be highlighted among them. Several factors play a role in this, like the shortcomings of primary school education, the decrease of compulsory educational age to 16 years of age, the proportion of early dropouts is constantly above 10% during the education, and also there are not enough lessons for competency development due to the reduced number of lessons. The shortcoming of practical training is that the conditions to completely work up the Professional and Exam Requirements are not insufficient. In the recent years, the preparedness of career starters has not improved as much as expected. Due to the dynamic economic and technological changes, the difference between skill demand and supply have shown a growing tendency. During the research, an opinion was markedly worded, that is when vocational training is planned, the issue which should be put into the foreground is not the professions in demand, but the development of skills in demand. The challenges of the digital world will probably speed up this process significantly. Based on the results of the research, we highlight four task circles:

1. Young people do not choose vocational training on the basis of conscious career building. Most of the youth follow the example of their family members or friends. This could also be favorable, if the decision was part of a conscious career building, but it is not. The focus group interviews obviously show that mostly the students with weaker results choose vocational training. For many of them, getting into professional training is only the matter of “drift”; they choose a profession on the basis of “lack of a better”. Career building should be made more conscious for the future skilled workers as early as the primary school years. Within professions high in demand, the proportion of students learning a profession after the final exam reaches 25%, and this tendency should continue, which expectedly will be forced by technological processes as well.
2. The process of becoming a skilled worker is characterized by motivation deficit, the incentive systems do not work properly. The research stated a motivation deficit among those taking part in professional training and a lack of commitment towards the lifestyle of skilled workers as a significant problem, which we have to struggle with to improve the efficiency of supply with future professionals. This is a serious issue which can only be treated as a symptom by the educational and training system on its own, it can be handled in a comprehensive way, in its complexity, in social and economic relations, which needs further research. This issue also shows that professional qualification is only one of the factors of employability. Among others, modern financial and moral incentives are needed, and also the social prestige of skilled workers as a “status” should be improved. For the future, it seems appropriate to bring back the earlier practice which is giving grants to all students based on their educational results, and not just to students learning a profession in high demand, which is the situation now.
3. Working discipline is not an evidence, but it is worded as a highlighted objective. A lot is told about the climate of professional training when the representatives of schools and employers consider a skill like working discipline the most important, which should be obvious in the daily practice, as an objective to be achieved. This is a sign of serious discipline problems teachers and instructors have to face during the training. This situation casts light on a serious training problem, which is also a

task to be tackled – people working in the field of professional training do not get special pedagogical, psychological, restorative, nor innovative methodological knowledge with the help of which they could improve the quality of training. It is to be considered when improving the training and further training system of the vocational training of professionals.

4. Experience in Northern Hungary shows that vocational training schools concentrate on practice oriented training. Their success is influenced by two conditions – on one hand, they struggle between various expectations often eliminating each other, e.g. placing centralization into the foreground disadvantageously affects the local demands for decentralization when the proportions and directions of the training are defined. On the other hand, it is more difficult to learn a profession if the students gain practice limited only to certain tasks at workplaces in the framework of dual training, but they do not take part in professional training including a complex and extensive professional exam requirement level. If there is a lack of workplaces which are able to provide an opportunity to extensively learn the professional basics, it would be expedient to build more than earlier on training in the apprentice workshops.

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## ARTICLES

### Intergenerational Learning – Lifelong Learning

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**Abstract:**

**Introduction:** Nowadays, providing the access to learning appears as an emphasized priority for every stage of life, due to the demographic changes, even near the place of residence or with the utilization of the possibilities of the new informational and communicational technologies, which bring new possibilities also in the dimension of learning between generations.

**Purpose:** Intergenerational learning can also be defined as a mutual learning relationship and interaction between the young and the old. The starting point of the study is that the younger and older age groups can learn from each other in their free time, in a non-formal learning environment in the framework of study circles. This paper drafts some practical directives for planning and organizing intergenerational study circles in a non-formal learning environment.

**Methods:** We intend to make a synthesis based on former research and literature – learning between generations, spending free time, learning at an old age, study circles – and following this, a methodological guide is going to be made for planning and organizing intergenerational study circles.

**Conclusions:** Study circles can be seen as intergenerational learning possibilities – young and old people with different preliminary knowledge can make a profit from the experiences gained during joint work, and from the topics examined from different points of views. The younger and older generations can work together in a non-formal learning environment and there is an opportunity for common learning and knowledge sharing as well.

**Key words:** intergenerational learning, learning from each other, free time, non-formal learning, community culture.

## 1 Introduction

Nowadays, the issues of permanent learning (Lifelong Learning – LLL), and learning that is spread in every area of life (Life Wide Learning – LWL) are more and more frequently dealt with. The expression lifelong learning, places the process of learning in the time dimension, while life wide learning vigorously emphasizes the feature of different learning areas complementing each other. Learning can take place in learners' free time, in the framework of the activity done in a community, can be connected to

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work, and its result can be used in the world of work, in everyday life, or it can be even connected to hobbies (European Commission, 2012; Németh, 2015).

In the past years, many initiatives have started to support learning. The particular recommendations (Commission of the European Communities, 2000; UNESCO, 2017) emphasize, for example, the utilization of learning supporting possibilities hiding in new technologies, providing access to learning, the importance of learning from each other and between generations, the need for preparation for lifelong learning, as well as the recognition of non-formal and informal learning results (Miklósi & Oszlanczi, 2010). Among others, the GRALE 3 (Global Report on Adult Learning and Education, UNESCO, 2017) report identifies three key areas of adult education: getting the basic skills, basic competencies; the area of professional training and the support of active citizenship, which includes, among others, free learning and community learning as well. The pursuit for active citizenship at the same time encourages the preparation for lifelong learning and its practical realization. The above-mentioned report also deals with the effects of adult education on health, lifestyle, labour market, as well as social, civil and community life, organized with the purpose of self-realization, professional interest, finding a workplace or creating better working possibilities, but the individual can also be motivated by belonging to a community. Currently, there is a decrease in the participation in formal training. Among the members of the adult population, mainly the non-formal learning environment comes into the fore (Forray & Juhász, 2008).

## **2 Learning and motivation**

Adult learning and learning at an old age have their specific characteristics – e.g, the cognitive achievement capacity – and are also influenced by the education and health condition of the individual itself. And vice versa, research on learning at an old age has proved that suitable activities in this field can have a beneficial effect on health and life satisfaction (Kolland, 2008; 2011). Research results (see Swindell, 2009) draw up three guidelines to reach an active/successful old age:

- keeping the risk of illnesses low;
- maintaining mental/intellectual and biological/physiological health;
- preserving vitality and positive activity.

Research results show that women tend to participate in learning at an old age more often with the aim of spending their free time actively and in a more useful way (Forray & Juhász, 2008). Learning at an old age can have various sources of motivation (Jászberényi & Bajusz, 2013; Goriup, Čagran, & Krošl, 2015):

- Communication need – Different learning scenes mean also communication scenes – they promote the establishment of new relationships, new groups, maintaining and evoking older relationships, etc.
- Spending free time in a useful way – When people become retired, the amount of free time they have increases significantly. In older adults, the need for spending these hours in a more useful way comes up – they take part in lectures in clubs, meet their friends or attend courses, learn languages, do hobbies or go on trips. Often, retirement also gives opportunities to deal with things that were planned for a long time, but their realization failed due to a lack of time even to learn new things. Many people retire in a way that they do not need retirement, they want to continue an active life and learning new things can be an integral part of it.



- Healthcare reasons – Deterioration of health is an inherent part of old age. As time goes by, there are more and more situations when people learn for the sake of protecting their health, e.g. when changing dietary eating habits, individuals have to learn new cooking techniques, recipes or change their lifestyle according in several aspects.
- Technical development – A fast development of technical tools, information technologies and the Internet generated the elderly adults' need for getting familiar with these tools and for learning how to use them (Napora, 2016).

In the process of learning between generations, those jointly done activities become decisive which are based on the different experiences of various age groups and generations. Learning is based on the exchange of experiences itself, thus, the knowledge and skills characteristic for a certain generation can be utilized (Ludescher & Waxenegger, 2008). According to Kolland (2008), although we speak about a heterogeneous group, it still cannot be called intergenerational learning, as one-way knowledge sharing cannot be seen as such either. The three basic principles of intergenerational learning, as defined by Kolland (2008), are learning together (communicative learning), interdisciplinary learning, and learning from each other (dialogic learning). Two dimensions of interdisciplinary learning can be observed – the chronological and the connecting dimension. The first one is related to passing cultural and social norms, while the second one is related to understanding those living in different social situations. In connection to the social capital, many studies have been made. The technical literature usually refers to the works of Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman and Robert Putman, as a starting point. In his social capital theory, Putman (2000) emphasizes, among others, the role of informal small groups based on regular and real interactions – the role of reading circles, supporting groups, study circles, and the significance of relationships based on cooperation.

There are many examples of good practice for intergenerational learning in the circles of free time activities – older adults mentor the young ones, while the youth teach the older people how to use new technical devices; they work together on, for example, environmental protection projects; or they act together in a play, etc. Many times, the emphasis is not on the learning activity, but on the time spent together and the social activity for the sake of a common aim (Forray & Juhász, 2008; Jászberényi & Bajusz, 2013; Tengely, 2010).

An opportunity for intergenerational learning is also offered by study circles. It is a learning possibility where the members of a group of different-aged people define together what and how to learn with the help of a facilitator. Both the young and old students coming with different knowledge and experience benefit from the experiences gained during the group work by presenting the particular topics from different points of view (Ludescher & Waxenegger, 2008). Intergenerational learning is based on dialogue-based learning. The communication between the generations and the experience and knowledge exchange surplus generated from the learning process are parts of the learning experience (Kolland, 2008). We see study circles as a form of regular learning- and participant-centred education in small groups, which is built on the division of labour and cooperation of the participants, ranging from topic selection and activity planning to the evaluation of the achieved results.

One of the initiatives of the ADD LIFE Project Toolkit (ADD LIFE European Tool Kit) (Waxenegger et al., 2008) was specifically directed at the development of intergenerational education programmes. The international project was seeking the answer for the question how universities can elaborate, experiment new and innovative learning possibilities for the realization of intergenerational learning inside and outside the university walls.

### **3 Tips and advice for planning and organizing intergenerational study circles – a methodological guide**

In the rest of the study, considering the experience of the ADD Life Tool Kit (Waxenegger et al., 2008), too, we have formulated some practical directives for planning and organizing intergenerational study circles in a non-formal learning environment:

- *Facilitator* – The leader of the study circle is competent in the organization of the study circle but is not necessarily an expert in the given topic, s/he rather facilitates – supports the creation of a dialogue among the participants, promotes participants' self-confidence, creates a calm atmosphere, encourages cooperation and avoids rivalry (Kindström, 2010; Larsson & Nordvall, 2010). We should aspire for a clear shaping of the way of participation and the creation of the relationship between the topic and the personal lives, and the actual situation of the participants. We should incite a dialogue, a dissolved exchange of views and opinions, as well as provide an opportunity for commenting on for each participant, both during the learning process and in the process of evaluation (Kolland, 2008; Ludescher & Waxenegger, 2008). The method of the study circle can help promote the participants' self-confidence, too. We should support challenging but realistic goals. It should also be taken into account that the use of language should be "generation sensitive", adjusted to the expectations and needs of the particular participants. Cultural differences can obstruct intergenerational learning. The students should examine their own cultural backgrounds with a critical eye and should respect other approaching forms as well. Different cultural codes can cause misunderstandings and, in a given case, they can lead to problematic communication situations (Kolland, 2008). We should aspire for maintaining the attention and interest of the members of the study circles, provide the possibility for each participant to join the online work. During the learning process, we should give supporting feedback, continuous strengthening (which can also come from other members of the community) (Mogyorósi, 2017).
- *Preliminary knowledge* – The work in the study circle builds on the preliminary knowledge and experiences of the participants (knowledge construction). It is important that the expectations of the participants are clear to everyone. For example, the following questions should be answered: "What is the most important thing you want to learn about the topic?"; "What do you wish/would you like from the other participants in order to achieve your goal?" (Kindström, 2010). We should encourage sharing experiences, the participants' involvement, activate their preliminary knowledge, etc. For successful learning, the motivation for learning, the interpretation system, as well as the activation of the participants' existing knowledge related to the topic are indispensable.

- *Planning and organizing learning* – Learning has to be planned and organized. The participants of the study circle decide about the learning plan and methods together. The plans can be formed on the go flexibly; they should be adjustable to the needs of the participants. The participants plan the work in the study circle and discuss the goals together. They approve and set them, so an active involvement of participants is indispensable. The participants can also change and modify their preliminary plans in a flexible way during the study circle work, since they consider the learning plan as the tool of learning. The members of the study circle are responsible for the functioning of the group and how they achieve their learning goals. They need to define the optimal number of participants. An insufficient number of members or too many of them may decrease the efficiency of the study circle. If the group has less than five members, it is difficult to maintain general conversation. Experience says that if a group is too big, the cooperation and common responsibility are less effective inside it. Namely, the work in the study circles is based on the active participation and cooperation of its members. The ideal number of the members of a study group is from 8 to 10, so that every member of the group is in a communicational relationship with the others and has the possibility of exchanging experiences and opinions. Both in relation to the intergenerational learning and the study circles, it is true that learning is not efficient with very large groups (Kindström, 2010; Larsson & Nordvall, 2010). Intergenerational learning is realized if the proportion of those representing different generations in groups is in balance, each participant of the group feels him/herself important, and the topic can be interesting for various age groups. Furthermore, the work in the online study circles can be efficient if there is the possibility of both synchronous and asynchronous communication.
- *Methods* – With the use of participant-centred methods, for example, generating discussions, making mind maps etc., we can incite cooperation. Cooperation with peer students can help to maintain the motivation for learning as well. Moreover, it can play a significant role in solving learning problems, increasing the efficiency of learning, and developing critical thinking. In the case of certain participant-centred methods (e.g. the method of discussion), it is recommended to call the attention of the participants to the fact that there is no single truth, and many parallel theories may exist. It can encourage critical thinking and point at the vision-weakening features of stereotypes. These methods emphasize that there are individual differences among people, so, generalization is never exact (Kolland, 2008). This is why it is important to make sure that every point of view comes to light, just like various opinions and approaches.
- *Evaluation* – During the learning process, it is necessary to receive supporting and continuous feedback from the other members of the community. When finishing a learning activity, feedback should be provided, there should be the possibility to show, discuss, and evaluate the results, etc. The study circle work usually ends with some kind of a product and does not aim at measuring knowledge. The way and philosophy of the evaluation should adjust to the age specificities of the study circle participants. We should provide the participants with an opportunity to show their results in a form that points out their strengths, not their weaknesses. There should be the possibility of self-evaluation as well. We should provide a positive, close, and if necessary, constructive feedback (Virág, 2017).

In the following table (Table 1), we summarize the general principles of planning study circles on the basis of the above-mentioned directives.

Table 1

*General points of view on planning study circles based on Kindström (2010) and Larsson and Nordvall (2010)*

<b>Who?</b>	The leader of a study circle does not fill the traditional directing role, s/he is there not as an expert or instructor, rather as a supporter, facilitator of the participants. S/he supports forming dialogues among the participants. S/he strengthens the self-confidence of the participants, creates a calm atmosphere and avoids rivalry.
<b>For whom?</b>	It is a free learning, educating possibility: for those interested in things in life, eager to learn, eager to learn at an old age, eager to learn Hungarian, living geographically far, for those having a limited room for manoeuvre etc. The participants can differ from each other as for gender, age, school qualification, marital status, workplace; they can have different preliminary knowledge and working experience.
<b>What?</b>	Study circles mainly build on a personal interest in an exact topic; present-oriented or past-oriented interests. Choosing a topic can be connected to general knowledge, professional knowledge, or a hobby, etc.
<b>Why?</b>	Interest in a topic, diverse spending of free time etc. Its use in the world of work, in everyday life etc. Community aim: belonging to somewhere, creating cultural and social capital.
<b>From what?</b>	Typically, it has no cost commitment. In the case of intergenerational initiatives, the promotion of Internet use can be necessary, especially for older people in this case, e.g. a tender source
<b>Where?</b>	If personal attendance is necessary, in the place of residence or in an easily reachable place In an online learning environment, reaching the content is irrespective of place, for example in the framework of community sites.
<b>When?</b>	In the case of study circles which are built on personal presence, a meeting is to be organized once, maximum twice a week. A typical study circle meets about 10 times for a 2-3-hour session. In an online learning environment, however, time and space can be formed in a flexible way, due to the devices and applications making synchronous and asynchronous communication possible. On request, providing the possibility of synchronous communication (simultaneous presence in the online space).
<b>How?</b>	With participant-centred methods (e.g. the project method, research-based learning, problem-based learning)
<b>With what?</b>	Printed materials, Web 2.0. Computer/mobile info communicational devices, Internet connection, Internet applications, etc.

#### 4 Conclusion

Intergenerational learning can promote the creation of relationships between generations, can widen, enrich social networks, can have a positive influence on the quality of life, can support the exchange of cultural experience, can preserve traditions and values etc. (Kolland, 2008; Coleman, 1994; Putman, 2000). An advantage of intergenerational learning is that the preliminary knowledge and life experience of the adult and older generation and the life philosophy of the younger generation appear simultaneously. When discussing a topic, the representatives of different age groups can enlighten the given topic in many ways. Moreover, participation in study circle work can direct the participants towards new areas: they can be curious about further fields of interest of other participants of various age. Meanwhile, we can experience that the relationships between generations are loosening. In the case of meeting places, it is also true that there are fewer and fewer possibilities for intergenerational meetings (Ludescher & Strempl, 2008). For example, in the life of a small town, taking into account the access to different age groups (local website, online group of the local community, local newspaper, cable television and community radio stations etc.), the means of the local public can efficiently support the call for learning within the communities and generations in particular towns, communities, even in an online environment. We agree that there exist some kinds of fear that the use of the Internet may exclude older people from a part of the communication. Therefore, it is important that the promotion of Internet use, especially for older people, is a part of the plan of the intergenerational programme (Vavřín & Halvorson, 2008).

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## The World of Female Educational Institutions

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### **Abstract:**

**Introduction:** Philanthropism, as it evolved at the end of the 18th century in Germany, wanted to break completely with the contemporary methods persisting in education, with the hegemony of classical languages, and with the study of antique authors' works; instead, it laid emphasis on practical and useful knowledge, on teaching modern languages, on acquiring knowledge based on demonstration, and on an intimate connection to nature. The impact of philanthropism on contemporary Hungarian public education, especially in the first half of the 19th century, can be clearly detected, which can be accredited to study trips to Germany and the Hungarian translations of German works. Salzmann's institution, founded in 1784 was visited by 366 Hungarian educators, among others by Teréz Brunszvik, who also gave an account of her impressions in her memoirs. Yet, we also need to mention Samuel Tessedik, who made good use of his experience gained during his journey to Germany in his school in Szarvas.

**Purpose:** In this study, four 19th century female educational institutions were selected and the presence of philanthropist ideas in the training offered there was investigated. Three of these were established for the education of the middle-class, while one was founded specifically for aristocrats. We investigated whether the presence of philanthropism can be detected in the education offered by these four schools.

**Methods:** In the presented study, we applied source analysis as a traditional research method in history of education.

**Conclusions:** All the institutions under scrutiny have it in common that the founding and contributing educators and teachers were provably well-acquainted with the pedagogy of the philanthropists, and they incorporated several of its elements into their programmes. The preparation for the housewife role, conveying knowledge utilizable in practice, practical approach to teaching content, and the application of the method of illustration were all emphasized. These features show that several philanthropist characteristics can be identified in the educational principles and curricula of these institutions. Nevertheless, on closer inspection, it cannot be stated that they would have taken on an institutional character exclusively reminiscent of the "philanthropinums".

**Key words:** history of education, education, philanthropy, female education.

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## 1 Introduction

In these institutions instruction and the syllabi were determined by practicality, new methodological developments and proximity to real life. The tradition of making students learn by rote was rejected; illustration, playfulness and first-hand experience were made priorities in teaching. The children were often taken on excursions and into the countryside. In philanthropinums, a central role was given to intensive physical education (such as swimming, fencing, rowing, target practice and horse-riding) along with being out in the open and the avoidance of spoiling children. Philanthropists broke with arts education; they neglected the arts and taught their students specific practical skills. Latin was taught only children who intended to pursue university studies, whereas Greek was not taught at all. Children gained knowledge that could be used in everyday life, for instance, they learned to read and write in their mother tongue, and studied mathematics, hygiene, geography, history, and science. Boys had the possibility of entering a career in the trades, commerce, or the military, while girls were trained to be house-wives. Physical work was seen as important for both genders (Tenorth, 2010). Philanthropists laid their trust above all in the power of institutional education, through which children can acquire those virtues that are also useful and important for the society, such as a sense of duty, precision, and the love of work done for the good of the community. The acquisition of these virtues was facilitated by both rewards and punishment (Pukánszky & Németh, 1996). Philanthropists advocated co-education up to the end of primary education. Beyond that, in the case of both genders, training for their social role was in the foreground.

Philanthropism also exerted its influence in Hungary. Pedagogical works by authors of the German enlightenment and the ideals of German philanthropism were popular. This can be explained both by Hungarian students' studies in Germany and by study tours and journeys. However, the presence of philanthropism in Hungarian public education was mostly felt from the beginning of the 19th century. Though the pedagogical ideas of philanthropism were connected primarily to the names of Samuel Tessedik, Gergely Berzeviczy, and Teréz Brunszvik in the relevant literature (Fehér, 1999; Mihalkovicsné, 2006), the contemporary translations of Salzmann's and Campe's works suggest that the impact of philanthropism was more wide-spread.

Although there were no female philanthropinums in Hungary like the ones in Germany, several renowned female educational institutions were in operation in the country – the institutions of Matthias Sennovitz, Gustav Steinacker, Károly Seltenreich, or Blanka Teleki – where the ideals of philanthropism were also probably active. In the paper “Néhány lap a magyarhoni nőnevelés kezdeteiről” (A few pages on the beginnings of Hungarian female education) Ödön Szelényi<sup>1</sup>, beside an overview of female education in the first decades of the 19th century, ranked the most outstanding female educational institutions of the era (Szelényi, 1916). Szelényi remarks regretfully that despite the relatively broad spectrum only a few private educational institutions were truly outstanding. In his study, he highlights three institutions, namely the girls' schools of Matthias Sennovitz, Gustav Steinacker, and Károly Seltenreich. We have supplemented this list of three with Blanka Teleki's female educational institution, and we investigated

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<sup>1</sup> Ödön Szelényi (Késmárk, 12 July 1877 – Budapest, 18 September 1931) – teacher, author in pedagogy and philosophy.

whether the presence of philanthropism can be detected in the education offered by these four selected schools.

## **2 Female education**

Among the philanthropists, it was Johann Heinrich Campe (1746-1818) who most explicitly formulated the principles of educating women in his handbook from 1789 "Fatherly Advice for my Daughter" (Campe, 1988). In its time, the book was considered to be a great success, besides the German editions, it was also translated into numerous languages (Pukánszky, 2011). Campe meant his book for the education of middle-class girls. He was familiar with the position and opportunities for women in the society of his time, which he did not intend to change fundamentally. The righteous path he assigned to women was to accept their social role, and to prepare for this role as diligently and thoroughly as possible<sup>2</sup>. In Germany, there were also private boarding schools founded for women, girls' philanthropiums, such as the institution *Erziehungsinstitut für junge Demoiselles* of Karoline Rudolphi (1754-1811). In her institute, girls learned first to read and write, then they practiced needlework, and as an indispensable part of female education, they learned French. Their curriculum contained English, drawing, playing the piano, and ballroom dancing, however these were taught to them for extra tuition fees. In addition to these, we can also find science classes (geography, natural history, astronomy and mathematics) and religion in the timetable (Pukánszky, 2011).

The pedagogical ideas of philanthropism were also known in Hungary. Teréz Brunszvik<sup>3</sup>, the founder of the first Hungarian kindergarten, was an ardent follower of philanthropist pedagogy. She visited Salzmann's institution in Schnepfenthal, and in her memoirs, she described her impressions and the experiences she gained there (Czeke, 1938). Gergely Berzeviczy, an excellent author of works on national economics, went to the Philanthropinum in Dessau, and he reported on the institution and its work in a highly appreciative tone.

### *2.1 Eperjes (Prešov)*

Matthias Sennovitz<sup>4</sup> and his wife founded an institution in 1794 in Eperjes, which functioned uninterrupted up until 1868. It started out with ten students instead of the planned twelve. From reports given to the parents, we can outline Sennovitz's educational principles, which are similar to those of philanthropism. The aim of the founder was to develop the intellectual capabilities of the girls in a principled way, and to prepare them through practice for their future tasks as house-wives and mothers. He rejected the educational approach that was restricted to teaching good manners and preached the primacy of dancing, drawing, embroidery and playing the piano. Instead, the training he offered focused on useful knowledge and developing character. Regarding physical education, he emphasized cleanliness, a graceful gait and

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<sup>2</sup> This conformity to social convention can also be attested in the case of Basedow, since though his daughter was considered to be an extremely smart and intelligent child, she was predestined to prepare for the house-wife role.

<sup>3</sup> Terézia von Brunszvik (Bratislava, 27 July 1775 – Martonvásár, 17 September 1861) – a pioneer of Hungarian kindergarten education, an advocate of female education.

<sup>4</sup> Matthias Sennovitz (Késmárk, 11 February 1763 – Eperjes (Prešov, Slovakia), 11 August 1823) – teacher, head of the Lutheran girls' school in Eperjes.

articulation, and warned strongly against gluttony and sluggishness. The aim of moral education was to correct flaws and reinforce good traits. He considered strict discipline to be a precondition for this, this is why he only granted admission into his institution to girls between eight and ten; he was convinced that children beyond that age can hardly be shaped any further. The educational methods applied in the girls' boarding school were tailored to individual students, punishment was not used, and the moral education of children was founded on their honesty and self-respect (Szelényi, 1916).

The house rules determined both the daily routine and the system of classes. Lessons took place between seven and ten in the morning, from twelve to four in the afternoon, and from six to eight in the evening. Three times a week, students took part in dancing lessons, or participated in other forms of "ordinary" amusement. They managed their school-related tasks after lunch and supper; the day ended at ten in the evening with prayers. Among the subjects taught, we can find the following: Hungarian, German, ethics, religion, the reading of useful books, ethnography, geography, history, natural history, science, arithmetic, calligraphy, orthography, writing, music, embroidery, and drawing. The number of the students grew year by year. After Sennovitz's death, András Schmidt took over the direction of the institution. Sennovitz's educational institution was criticized by many; for instance, they found that national thought was not emphasized enough. Among other things they also found fault with his selection of subjects, which relied exclusively on the principle of usefulness, and with his lack of consideration of the characteristics of the female psyche. In fact, he intended to substitute and complement private tuition primarily with practical education (Kornis, 1927).

It can be stated that physical and moral education, conveying practical knowledge, and an active use of rewards as a motivational strategy are all elements of philanthropism.

## 2.2 *Debrecen Reformed Girls' Secondary School*

According to the Reformed church of Debrecen, the girls' secondary school was supposed to ensure education above the primary level for girls of Reformed denomination. The aim of the institution was determined in 1830 by the committee set up as follows:

*Beyond common female tasks, whose knowledge is required by the demands, the taste and the necessities of our time, maids who have been educated in lower schools should also learn music, drawing, dancing, and other skills, that are suited to their gender and necessary for social life. Above all, they are to be educated in the duties of their righteous vocation as faithful and pleasant spouses, good mothers, and industrious house-wives* (Fogarassy, 2013, p. 25).

Baroness Miklós Vay<sup>5</sup> recommended Gustav Steinacker<sup>6</sup>, a Lutheran educator, to the city's attention. Steinacker aimed to establish a modern institution for the education of

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<sup>5</sup> Johanna Adelsheim (1776-1862) – wife of Baron Miklós Vay (1756-1824), imperial and royal chamberlain and brigadier-general.

<sup>6</sup> Gustav Steinacker (Vienna, 1 March 1809 – Buttstädt, Germany 7 June 1877): Lutheran pastor, theologian, author and translator. He was the founder of the first German-speaking girls' educational institution in Debrecen, and the author of several Hungarian and German works on

girls, the plans for which he had already prepared. However, he only had the chance to realize these within the frame of the reformed girls' school in Debrecen between 1838 and 1842 (Aranyi, 1989). He emphasized that girls' home tuition should be followed by institutional education. Like Sennovitz, he also disapproved of the fashionable, superficial cultural elements of his age, such as French and English conversation, playing pieces of music, fashion, dancing, or embroidery. Instead of all these, he placed the focus of the training on cultural content adjusted to the specific tasks of women. He was of the conviction that the central focus in girls' schools should not be the teacher, but the education of the student; and that instruction should be determined by the autonomous development of natural talent. For the first public examination, he also published his pedagogical ideas in print (Fogarassy, 2013).

He planned his institution for girls between eight and fifteen, whom he intended to divide into three classes. He meant the first class – which was actually equivalent to primary education – for eight-to-ten-year-olds. Here he supplemented the subjects taught at the level of primary education with Hungarian, German and French. In the second class, designed for those between eleven and thirteen, cultural education followed the lines started earlier, but it was complemented with the natural, earth, and human sciences, as well as with universal history. The third class was attended by girls above thirteen. The syllabus included religion, geometry, Hungarian history, French, German and Hungarian grammar, French, Hungarian and German literature, needlework, house-keeping, singing, music, drawing, and dancing.

Though we can find embroidery, house-keeping, and science in the curriculum, the content of these subjects was broadened concentrically, and beyond the first level, we cannot talk about the subjects only belonging to general knowledge any more. During the training, the contents are supplemented with elements that prepare for feminine social roles, such as house-keeping, embroidery, dancing, and singing<sup>7</sup>.

Classes took place between nine and twelve in the morning; the girls were embroidering from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.; then they studied extracurricular subjects for an hour. Teaching was conducted by Steinacker and his wife, Aurélia Westher, as well as by a governess (Fogarassy, 2013).

In 1842, Steinacker was elected a pastor by the Lutheran congregation in Gölnic, thus he left Debrecen with his family. After the Hungarian Revolution of 1848-1849, he lost his position as a pastor and left Hungary. For a while, he lived in Hannover, before settling down in Weimar, where he entered the circles of Franz Liszt and enjoyed the support of the composer. For the rest of his life he was active as a pastor near Weimar (Szinnyei, 1891).

Besides being the founder of the first German-speaking educational institution for girls in Debrecen, Steinacker is also known as a man of letters and a translator. Many of his works on the theory of education and ecclesiastical polity appeared in Hungarian and German, furthermore, he translated several important literary works of his time into German. He translated Campe's "Väterlicher Rath an meine Tochter" into Hungarian (Fehér, 1999), thus, he was well-acquainted with the pedagogical ideas of the philanthropists.

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education theory and ecclesiastical polity. Till 1838, he worked as the private tutor of Baron Bánffy's daughters.

<sup>7</sup> For more details on educational institutions for women, see Virág (2013a).

Gustav Steinacker reflects on the aim of the secondary education of girls in several of his writings (Steinacker, 1837; 1840; 1841). In his paper “Házi leánynevelésünk állapotjáról, s annak a közleányneveléshez viszonyáról” (On the state of our home tuition for girls, and its relation to public female education) he posits the following as the primary objective of education regardless where it takes place:

*The objective of education as such, thus also of female education, is generally nothing else but the natural development of the physical, mental and moral abilities lying dormant in children, so that they become most perfectly capable of meeting the requirements of their ordinary and extraordinary callings* (Steinacker, 1840, p. 52).

Later on, he provides detailed definitions for the fields of education, and discusses the relationship between the child and both its mother and educator.

In his study “Nőnevelés és nőnevelő intézetek” (Female education and female educational institutions), Steinacker (1841) saw it necessary to establish a two-year female educational institution, which was to complement home tuition. In the homely climate of the institution, the students could acquire, along with subjects based on sciences, the elements of female education.

In his papers, the author outlined the problems of his time and was actively looking for available solutions (Virág, 2013a).

Though Hungary can only be considered a temporary home for Gustav Steinacker, thanks to his educational and literary achievements, he became the most significant figure of his time in the country. He played important roles in advancing the cause of female education, and, through his translations, in introducing numerous literary works<sup>8</sup>.

### 2.3 Pest

As a young man, Károly Seltenreich<sup>9</sup> arrived in Balassagyarmat at the female educational institution of Rozália Beregh – whom he also married shortly after. After they had moved their institution to Pest in 1846, it soon established a high reputation. The German-speaking institution survived the turmoil of the Revolution of 1848-1849, and after Seltenreich's decease in 1855, it was led by his wife alone. The programme of the freshly started institution was published by Seltenreich in No. 5 of the journal *Nevelési Emléklapok* in 1848 (Papers in Education). The educational institution started with three classes; its curriculum consisted of “subjects of general and specialized training”. The “subjects of general training” – which were taught by Seltenreich himself – involved the following: Hungarian language, German language, reading, calligraphy, orthography, writing and composition, recitation, religion and ethics, female activities and house-keeping, science and natural history, general geography (especially the geography of Hungary), history of Hungary, universal history, knowledge of the human body, hygiene, mythology, mental exercise, mental arithmetic and arithmetic with numbers, female domestic science and French conversation. The so called “subjects of specialized training” involved foreign languages, drawing, music, singing and dancing.

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<sup>8</sup> For more details on Steinacker, see Virág (2013b).

<sup>9</sup> Károly Seltenreich (Gölnicbánya (Gelnica), 15 June 1813 – Pest, 8 September 1855) – teacher. He founded a female educational institution in Balassagyarmat with his wife (which in 1846 was moved to Pest). He worked laboriously on generalizing female education.

These were taught by visiting instructors. The language of instruction was partly German, and partly Hungarian. Practice-oriented education was aided by a natural science collection, an art collection, a library and a collection of physical apparatus. Parents paid additional tuition fees for their children's drawing, piano, dancing and French lessons (Szelényi, 1916).

From the 1860s, the institution offered education to girls from the primary level up to the age of 16 – 18, at that point already organised in six classes, and employed 8 – 10 teachers. In the 1870s, the number of students increased significantly; during its existence (until 1884) the institution educated and trained 4.000 students within its walls. Due to its high reputation, even the most distinguished families placed their confidence in the female educational institution of Seltenreich (Kornis, 1927).

During its almost forty years of existence, with its practice-oriented training, its natural science and art collections, and its various school equipment, Seltenreich's educational institution most definitely represented the new pedagogical direction set by the philanthropists.

#### *2.4 The educational institution of the aristocracy*

In her writings, Blanka Teleki<sup>10</sup> drew attention to the educational deficiencies of aristocratic ladies who, raised in a foreign spirit, did not or only barely spoke Hungarian (Teleki, 1845; Teleki, 1846). In her works, she contrasted the potentially distinguished role of female education with its current defects, emphasized the necessity of national education<sup>11</sup> and proposed to establish a national female educational institution herself.

In her educational programme, she laid down the fundamental principles of training in this institution. The training was aimed at girls aged from 8 to 12, to whom the following subjects were taught by a governess and several teachers: universal history, Hungarian history, general and Hungarian geography, nature study, science, calculation on the board and in words, mythology, calligraphy, Hungarian grammar, orthography, French and German grammar and conversation, writing and composition in these three languages, literature, religion, drawing, dancing, and needlework. On the wish of the parents, learning the piano, singing, and Italian language were also available at the institution for additional tuition fees. The language of instruction was Hungarian, but foreign languages were also part of the curriculum. Furthermore, the countess emphasized the importance of physical education and providing a natural environment. She rejected ceremonial and theatrical public examinations; instead, she proposed more frequent, but still public exams in her programme. As for clothes and furniture, she considered simplicity and practicability to be the governing principles (Teleki, 1846).

The school started on the 1st December 1846 with two students. Besides a paying student, the other girl was Erzszi Erdélyi, a girl of humble birth, whom Teréz Brunszvik wanted to train as a Hungarian governess. Blanka Teleki engaged Pál Fejér<sup>12</sup> (later Vasvári) as a teacher for a year. In the contract, he determined the subjects to be taught and the language of instruction:

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<sup>10</sup> Countess Blanka Teleki (Hosszúfalva, 5 July 1806. – Paris, 23 October 1862) – one of the most prominent representatives of Hungarian female education; niece of Teréz Brunszvik.

<sup>11</sup> For the importance of family education, see Oberuč and Zapletal (2017).

<sup>12</sup> Pál Fejér was a 20 years old university student at the time. He descended from a family of lesser nobility with modest financial circumstances. His father was a Greek Catholic priest.

*I, Pál Fejér, take it upon myself to teach the young ladies with whose education Lady Blanka Teleki has been trusted. I commit myself to teach universal history, Hungarian history, general and Hungarian geography, nature study and description of nature, Hungarian grammar and orthography in the most effective way and so that they are easy to comprehend for the students [...] in 14 lessons every week [...] all in Hungarian* (Hornýák, 2001, p. 27).

In December 1846, Blanka Teleki applied for an operating license from the palatine, and the council of governor-general, but her application did not reach the addressees in the end, thus, the institution operated without a license.

In 1847, after the arrival of the new students, the teaching staff was complemented with a natural scientist, a musician, a French language teacher, and a teacher of arithmetic (Hornýák, 2001). Countess Teleki also devoted herself to the students; she read out loud to them and accompanied them on excursions. The institution, which never had more than eleven active students at the same time, was dissolved at the end of December 1848<sup>13</sup>.

The institution of Blanka Teleki differed from those discussed so far in several regards. It was the only institution established specifically for aristocrats, which inevitably left a mark on its operation. Teleki's aim was to re-Hungarianize the non-Hungarian-speaking aristocrats, and provide them with education in Hungary, so that they would not leave to study in foreign female educational institutions. Consequently, the national spirit permeated the institution as a defining principle. The influence of philanthropism can also be detected here in the institute's intimate relation to nature, in its simplicity, in the elements of primary education, and in the optional piano and dancing lessons felt suitable to the female role. The influence can be established, since Teleki's aunt, Teréz Brunszvik, who played a decisive role in shaping the pedagogical ideas of the countess, also visited Salzmann's philanthropinum.

### **3 Conclusion**

In Germany, philanthropism laid new foundations for the development of curricula and educational methodology by taking into consideration the needs of the middle-class, which was gaining strength at the time. The rise of the middle-class in Hungary was relatively delayed, but the presence of philanthropic ideas in pedagogical thinking and writing can be clearly perceived; they were generally available for Hungarian readers.

The present study selected four 19th century female educational institutions and investigated the presence of philanthropist ideas in the training offered there. Three of these were established for the education of the middle-class, while one was founded specifically for aristocrats. In Sennovitz's institution, physical and moral education, conveying of practical knowledge, and an intensive use of rewards as motivation are the elements which are also markedly present in the concepts of philanthropism. In Steinacker's school skills and knowledge, pertaining to housekeeping and needlework are features characteristic of philanthropism. At the same time, the content of the subjects taught is expanded concentrically, and the training goes beyond the level of practical knowledge. Seltenreich's practice-oriented education, natural science and art collections, as well as various teaching aids and equipment also point in the direction of

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<sup>13</sup> On the education of aristocrats, see Virág (2013a).

philanthropist education. During its short life, Blanka Teleki's institution did not incorporate characteristics that are unequivocally inspired by philanthropism, however, through her aunt's mediation, she must have been familiar with them.

All the institutions under scrutiny have in common that the founding and contributing educators and teachers were provably well-acquainted with the pedagogy of the philanthropists, and they incorporated several of its elements into their programmes. Preparation for the housewife role, conveying knowledge utilizable in practice, practical approach to teaching content, and the application of the method of illustration are all emphasized. These features show that several philanthropist characteristics can be identified in the educational principles and curricula of these institutions. Nevertheless, on closer inspection, it cannot be stated that they would have taken on an institutional character exclusively reminiscent of the philanthropinums.

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## Styles of Attachment Determined by the Slovak Version of sEMBU

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### **Abstract:**

**Introduction:** The theory of attachment is widely recognized (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978). This theory is based on four basic types of relationships. The sEMBU questionnaire does not focus on the relationships but parental behavior, however, parental behavior is the presentation of the relationship. Our goal was to determine the types of attachment and to obtain information about secure attachment by using cluster analysis.

**Methods:** sEMBU primarily finds out about three basic patterns used in parental behaviour – rejection, emotional warmth and overprotection. We used the 23-item s(short)-EMBU which previously demonstrated to be satisfactory on the samples of students from Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Italy, East-Germany, and Sweden (Arrindell et al., 2001). The Slovak translation of the original sEMBU was published in 2007 (Poliaková, Mojžišová, & Hašto, 2007). Since relationships are closely related to rejection, emotional warmth and overprotection, we tried to find behavioral patterns based on Bowlby's attachment theory. We did not use standard procedures. Using cluster analysis, we also sorted the sample into four groups based on the presupposed attachment styles.

**Results:** Overprotection (father) has the highest share for classification and differentiation in the cluster. Emotional warmth (mother) has the highest share for classification and differentiation in the cluster. We expected to find out that the secure type of attachment prevails over avoidance both in mothers and fathers.

**Conclusions:** Our results surprised us; in the case of mothers, secure attachment did not occur at all. We suggest to continue in the research of the Slovak version of sEMBU focused on the types of attachment, especially on the secure type of attachment.

**Key words:** (short)EMBU<sup>1</sup>, parental behavior, attachment styles.

## 1 Introduction and methods

On the basis of Bowlby's attachment theory, Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall (1978) identified three major styles of attachment in infancy – secure, anxious-avoidant, and anxious-ambivalent – and, linked them with caregivers' parental behavior. As in our

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<sup>1</sup> EMBU is a Swedish acronym for Egna Minnen Beträffande Uppfostran (My memories of upbringing: My memories as I was raised).

environment, only few authors pay attention to the styles of attachment (Hašto, 2005; Mojžišová, 2006; Poliaková, Mojžišová, & Hašto, 2007; Rozvadský Gugová, Heretik, & Hajdúk, 2014), we decided to apply cluster analysis to factor scores from sEMBU. sEMBU finds out about primarily three basic patterns used in parental behaviour – rejection, emotional warmth and overprotection (Rozvadský Gugová, & Eisemann, 2016). These three factors are not sufficient to determine the type of attachment.

In our research, we used the sEMBU questionnaire. sEMBU consists of 23 questions grouped into 3 subscales – Rejection, Emotional warmth and Overprotection. The questions are answered separately by fathers and mothers on a 4-point Likert scale. Many national standardizations in different countries and samples found general support for the validity of sEMBU (Arrindell, Emmelkamp, Brilman, & Monsma, 1983a, Arrindell, Emmelkamp, Monsma, & Brilman, 1983b; Arrindell et al., 2001; Gerlsma, Arrindell, van der Veen, & Emmelkamp, 1991; Castro, de Pablo, Gómez, Arrindell, & Toro, 1997; Muris, Meesters, & Brakel, 2003). The shortened form of EMBU has been filled in by students in 11 countries in Europe, Asia, Australia and South America within an international study on individual personality and fears evaluation (Arrindell, Sanavio, Aguilar, Sica, Hatzichristou, Eisemann, Recinos, Gaszner, Peter, Battagliese, Kallai, & van der Ende, 1999). The coefficients of internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) for all scales were satisfactory ( $\geq 0.72$ ). Different versions of EMBU have been standardized and translated in more than 25 countries (Rojo-Moreno, Livianos-Aldana, Cervera-Martínez, & Dominguez-Carabantes, 1999; Livianos-Aldana & Rojo-Moreno, 2003; García, Aluje, & Del Barrio, 2006).

### *1.1 Participants and outputs from descriptive statistics*

Our final sample consisted of 970 participants recruited during their external pre-gradual study at DTI University (Dubnica Institute of Technology) in Dubnica nad Váhom in 2010-2014. All participants filled in the Slovak translation of sEMBU (Arrindell, Sanavio, Aguilar, Sica, Hatzichristou, Eisemann, Recinos, Gaszner, Peter, Battagliese, Kallai, & van der Ende, 1999) translated by Poliaková, Mojžišová and Hašto (2007).

The research sample in the study consisted of 507 females and 463 males. The mean age of participants was  $M=31.743$ ;  $SD=8.7317$  (from 18 to 62). The mean score in sEMBU in our study was for Rejection (father):  $M=13.88$ ,  $SD=3.250$ ; Rejection (mother):  $M=14.44$ ,  $SD=3.768$ ; Emotional warmth (father):  $M=14.24$ ,  $SD=3.190$ ; Emotional warmth (mother):  $M=14.24$ ,  $SD=3.214$ ; and Overprotection (father):  $M=18.90$ ,  $SD=3.509$ ; Overprotection (mother):  $M=17.69$ ,  $SD=3.990$ . Our results are higher as the results published by Perris, Jacobson, Lindstrom, Von Knorring, and Perris (1980), who report the following scores: Rejection (father):  $M=11.11$ ; Rejection (mother):  $M=11.78$ ; Overprotection (father):  $M=10.70$  and Overprotection (mother):  $M=11.70$ . But our results are close to the results published by Castro, de Pablo, Gómez, Arrindell, and Toro (1997), their score for Rejection (father) was:  $M=16.32$ ,  $SD=3.00$  and for Rejection (mother) it was  $M=16.38$ ,  $SD=2.74$ .

The internal consistency for the subscales was  $\alpha=.820$  for our factors of Father (without item no.9  $\alpha=.823$ ) and  $\alpha=.856$  for our factors of Mother (without item no.20  $\alpha=.860$ ). The Slovak version of sEMBU seems to be quite reliable. Mean Item-total correlation for Rejection (father) subscale was from .310 to .652; for Emotional warmth it was from .304 to .752; and for Overprotection it was from .411 to .709. Our results for Rejection (mother) subscale ranged from .303 to .762; for Emotional warmth from .371 to .616;

and for Overprotection from .305 to .672. Our results are very similar to the results of other studies (see Arrindell et al., 2001).

## 2 Attachment styles

We conducted K-means cluster analysis to factor scores from sEMBU and principal component analysis (Varimax rotation) was performed (see Table 1a,b and Table 2a,b). The aim was to classify the cases into four clusters based on their factor scores. We analyzed fathers and mothers separately. Analyses stopped after 7 iterations (father) and 14 iterations (mother). The highest share for classification and differentiation in the cluster has Overprotection (father). The highest share for classification and differentiation in the cluster has Emotional warmth (mother).

The extracted clusters represent the following attachment styles:

Secure = ↓*Rejection*, ↑*Emotional warmth* and ↓*Overprotection*;

Fearful = ↑*Rejection*, ↓*Emotional warmth* and ↑*Overprotection*;

Fearful/Ambivalent = ↑*Rejection*, ↑*Emotional warmth* and ↑*Overprotection*;

Dismissive/Avoidant = ↑*Rejection*, ↓*Emotional warmth* and ↓*Overprotection*;

Dismissive (or Dismissive/Denying, more intensive than dismissive) = ↓*Rejection*, ↓*Emotional warmth* and ↓*Overprotection*;

Disoriented I. = ↓*Rejection*, ↓*Emotional warmth* and ↑*Overprotection*;

Preoccupied = ↓*Rejection* and ↑*Emotional warmth* and ↑*Overprotection*;

Disoriented II. = ↑*Rejection* and ↑*Emotional warmth* and ↓*Overprotection* (see Figure 1 and Figure 2).

For comparison, the prevalence rates in a large US national comorbidity survey that used the Adult Attachment Interview were as follows: 59% – secure; 25.2% – avoidant; 11.3% – anxious; and 4.5% – unclassifiable (Mickelson, Kessler, & Shaver, 1997). Here, it is important to say that a direct comparison of our findings with the attachment style classification is quite difficult because these are different methods for measuring adult attachment. Several statistical methods for the purposes of classifying persons according to their attachment styles have been published. In our study, we used the combination of factor and cluster analysis. Shi (2003) used cluster analysis as well but he classified persons to clusters based on the raw scores. We consider the factor scores from Varimax rotation the most suitable. We could not compare our findings with the results of other studies as nobody has used cluster analysis to determine the attachment style types in the sEMBU questionnaire.

Table 1a

*Final Cluster Centers of the sEMBU scales (father, N=970)*

	Cluster						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Overprotection (father)	.986	-.207	-.507	2.069	-.824	.335	1.066
Em. warmth (father)	-.546	.285	1.026	.312	-.786	-1.578	.080
Rejection (father)	-1.466	.683	-.167	-.899	-.545	1.183	1.550

Table 1b

*Final Cluster Centers and ANOVA of the sEMBU scales (father, N=970)*

	Cluster		Error		F <sup>a</sup>	Sig.
	Mean Square	df	Mean Square	df		
Overprotection (father)	121.452	6	.246	958	494.507	.000
Em. warmth (father)	108.498	6	.327	958	332.064	.000
Rejection (father)	110.573	6	.314	958	352.436	.000

a – The highest share for classification and differentiation in the cluster has Overprotection.

Table 2a

*Final Cluster Centers of the sEMBU scales (mother, N=970)*

	Cluster						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Overprotection (mother)	1.421	1.219	-.650	-1.059	.145	.836	-.435
Rejection mother	.926	-1.475	-.541	-.476	.324	1.282	.604
Em. warmth mother	-1.812	.573	-1.638	-.166	-.439	.257	.953

Table 2b

*Final Cluster Centers and ANOVA of the sEMBU scales (mother, N=970)*

	Cluster		Error		F <sup>a</sup>	Sig.
	Mean Square	df	Mean Square	df		
Overprotection (mother)	114.280	6	.291	959	392.364	.000
Rejection (mother)	114.925	6	.287	959	400.115	.000
Em. warmth (mother)	120.652	6	.251	959	479.931	.000

a. The highest share for classification and differentiation in the cluster has Emotional warmth.

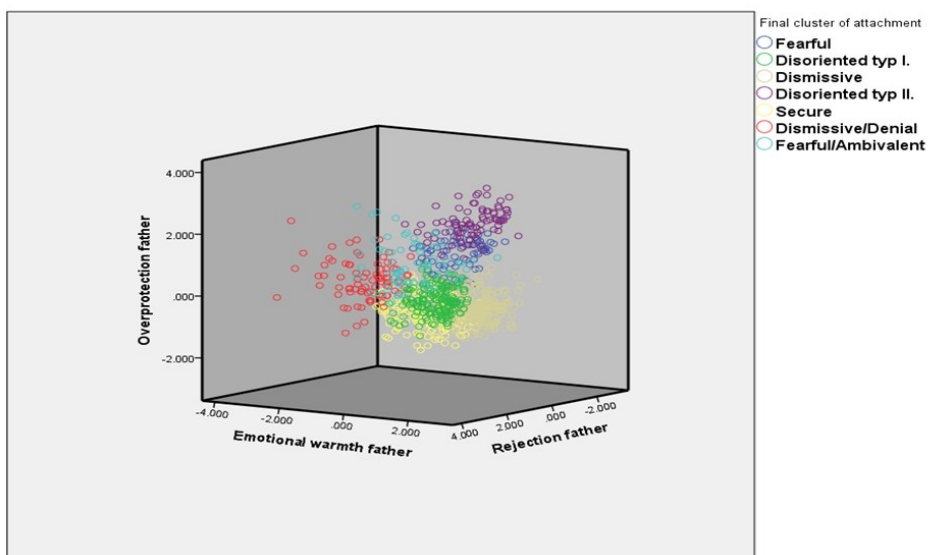


Figure 1. Final Cluster of attachment of the sEMBU scales (father, N=970).

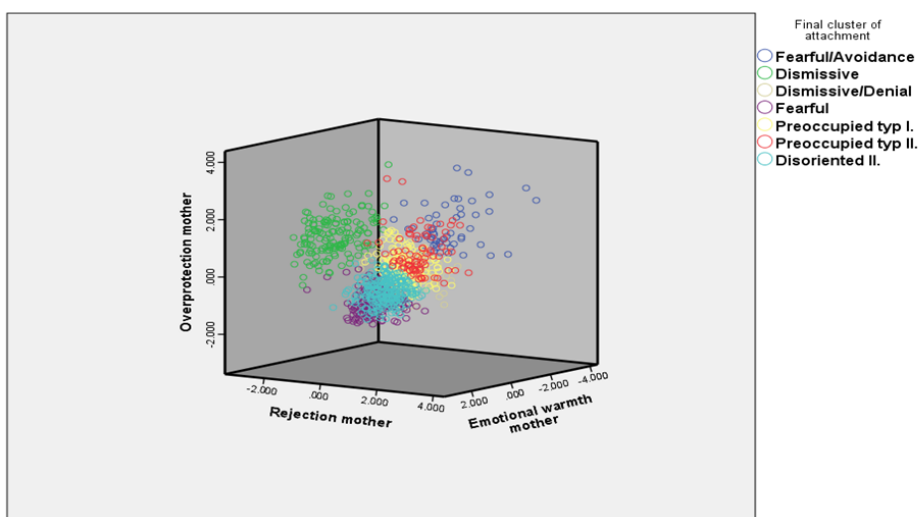


Figure 2. Final Cluster of attachment of the sEMBU scales (**mother**, N=970).

### 3 Discussion

The results of our study indicate that the Slovak translation of sEMBU is a reliable instrument for measuring the existing modelling patterns of rearing in Slovakia. The Cronbach's reliability coefficient of Slovak sEMBU was satisfactory ( $>80$ ). Although three dimensions of sEMBU – Rejection, Emotional warmth, and Overprotection – were originally thought to be independent, most studies find at least a mild correlation between them. Exploratory analyses using forced three-factor solution sorted the items of the Slovak version of sEMBU into relevant scales (Rejection, Emotional warmth and Overprotection). Women rated their mothers higher than men. The extracted clusters represent the following attachment styles: Secure; Fearful; Fearful/Ambivalent; Dismissive/Avoidant; Dismissive (or Dismissive/Denying, more intensive than dismissive; Disoriented I.; Preoccupied; Disoriented II. Our results are shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2. We were surprised by the obtained results – we did not identify the preoccupied type of attachment in the sample of fathers, while in the case of mothers, the secure type of attachment was not present.

### 4 Conclusion

Although our results from previous studies (Rozvadský Gugová, Heretik, & Hajdúk, 2014; Rozvadský Gugová & Eisemann, 2016) prove that the Slovak version of sEMBU is a reliable instrument for measuring the existing modelling patterns of rearing in Slovak families, it is possible to use the questionnaire to determine the types of relationships as well. It would be particularly useful to analyze the relationship between self-reports and interviews based on a behavioral analysis of attachment. It seems that Emotional warmth is an important protective factor and Rejection is a sign of criticizing, shaming and negative expectations. Despite the presumptions regarding the occurrence of the secure type of attachment in mothers in our sample, which was based on cultural practices and the achieved average scores for emotional warmth, we found out that in the case of Slovak mothers in our sample, the secure type of attachment did not occur at all.

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An editor should take reasonably responsive measures when ethical complaints have been presented concerning a submitted manuscript or published paper, in conjunction with the publisher (or society). Such measures will generally include contacting the author of the manuscript or paper and giving due consideration of the respective complaint or claims made, but may also include further communications to the relevant institutions and research bodies, and if the complaint is upheld, the publication of a correction, retraction, expression of concern, or other note, as may be relevant. Every reported act of unethical publishing behavior must be looked into, even if it is discovered years after publication.

***Duties of reviewers***

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Peer review assists the editor in making editorial decisions and through the editorial communications with the author may also assist the author in improving the paper.

***Promptness***

Any selected peer-reviewer who feels unqualified to review the research reported in a manuscript or knows that its prompt review will be impossible should notify the editor and excuse himself from the review process.

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Reviews should be conducted objectively. Personal criticism of the author is inappropriate. Peer-reviewers should express their views clearly with supporting arguments.

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Reviewers should identify relevant published work that has not been cited by the authors. Any statement that an observation, derivation, or argument had been previously reported should be accompanied by the relevant citation. A reviewer should also call to the editor's attention any substantial similarity or overlap between the manuscript under consideration and any other published paper of which they have personal knowledge.

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## Guide for Authors

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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 11, 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.

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

*Abstract.* A structured abstract (15-20 lines) is required as follows:

*a) Research study:*

Introduction:	context of the study, main research aims/questions
Methods:	sampling, design, methods of data collection and analysis
Results:	main findings
Discussion:	relevance of findings
Limitations:	limitations of research (e.g. sample size, range of participants)
Conclusions:	explanations of obtained results, areas of further research
Key words:	3-5 words that describe key aspects

*b) Literature review:*

Introduction:	context of the review, background
Purpose:	main research aims
Methods:	parameters and inclusion criteria, search strategy and procedures, methods of analysis
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