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FOREWORD

Dear Readers, Members of the Editorial Board, Authors, Researchers, and Doctoral Students!

In your hands, you are holding this year's third issue of our Acta Educationis Generalis. Readers can choose from several inspiring, but also professionally provoking scientific studies.

For the Editors, it is encouraging that the professional public (especially from academic spheres) shows a deep interest in the journal. For sure, it is the result of the propagation of our journal abroad, the fact that Acta Educationis Generalis is indexed in 26 databases, but also of its accessibility in the online environment.

What does the new issue bring?

After the Editorial, the journal opens with a study by three researchers from Hungary - András Semjén, Marcell Le, and Zoltán Hermann, entitled "The Goals and Consequences of the Centralisation of Public Education in Hungary". The study contributes to the clarification of the objectives and motives behind the process of centralization in education administration and school finance in Hungary in the course of the present decade. By means of a textual analysis of various legal texts, together with the use of structured research interviews and press interviews with education policy makers and people working in education administration, they uncover the impact of the centralization process. Their findings are interesting and can serve as a basis for further discussions.

Marek Madro, in his paper "Possibilities of Psychological Intervention on Social Networks", points out that currently, more and more people seek help and answers to their questions on the Internet, search for communities or groups whose members experience similar difficulties to theirs. There are online groups that focus on psychological problems, domestic violence, etc. Their members receive instant feedback and at the same time, due to the online disinhibition effect, they do not feel the fear, shame or worries they would feel in personal contact. The group administrator can influence the atmosphere in the group and its content itself. The purpose of the presented research was to find a space to perform professional psychological interventions inside online self-help groups on social networks. Based on the obtained results, the author outlined the possibilities of online field worker interventions. It is a study on a topical issue which can be very useful for readers.

Jana Harťanská and Zuzana Muchálová from the Slovak university environment, in their study "Cognitive Competences of English Language Teacher and Their Impact on Usage of Teaching Methods for Learners at Lower Secondary School" deal with the issues of foreign language teachers' cognitive competencies and the possible impact of cognitive competences on the choice of teaching methods. They focus on their application in practice. In the paper, the most and the least frequently used cognitive competences during English language classes are listed. The authors main findings point out the necessity of using a variety of modern teaching methods and approaches. The authors assert that the topic of cognitive competences and their impact on teaching foreign languages has still not been explored in detail, therefore, further and deeper research is needed in this field.

From the Czech university environment, we are bringing a study by Jana Škrabánková and Martina Martínková entitled "Giftedness as a Possible Risk of Bullying". The authors focus on the possible level of risk in cerebrally gifted pupils in relation to bullying at lower secondary schools and grammar schools. Research suggest that they might be a risky group concerning school bullying. In the Czech Republic, most cerebrally gifted pupils attend ordinary primary schools or grammar schools, they are in daily contact with other pupils. In this context, the question whether it is really possible to think of certain risks in the case of cerebrally gifted pupils in schools arises. Based on the authors' findings, they agree with those authors who consider cerebrally gifted pupils a specific group with their own problems, different values and perceptions, but similar to their peers. There is a group of teachers and psychologists who suggest that there is a special group of gifted pupils which are not identifiable by traditional questionnaires. For further research, it would be worthwhile to consider opting for such research methods that could reveal those pupils.

In the section of scholarly papers, the first article – "Inclusion, Diversity, Equality in Non-Formal Education through the Optic of Youth and Youth Workers" – is by a group of five authors from Slovakia – Martin Brestovanský, Janette Gubricová, Kristína Liberčanová, Naďa Bizová, and Zuzana Geršicová. They deal with topical issues which are among the priorities of the European Union. The aim of the study was to find out what the understanding of relatively new terms coming into the cultures of Middle-European countries – inclusion, diversity, and equality – is from the point of view of young people (n=30) and youth workers (n=16) in Slovakia. Their findings show that the most frequent obstacles for applying these approaches occur in the social, health and religious spheres. The authors also provide information on the understanding, implementation and obstacles to applying the principles of inclusion, equality and diversity in practice.

The last paper comes from the Ukrainian academic environment. Kateryna Ryabchikova in her paper "Development of Intercultural Competence during Pedagogical Practices of Ukrainian Students in Vocational Schools in Slovakia" focuses on the role of practical training in the formation of intercultural competencies in terms of Dublin descriptors. Based on a multi-stage model of intercultural practice, she deals with the intercultural practice of Ukrainian teacher trainees in vocational schools in Slovakia. The four levels of practice in the form of short-term introductory intercultural practice, ethno-cultural educational practice, scientific and pedagogical communication practice abroad, as well as long-term intercultural training correspond to the Dublin competence descriptors in the form of knowledge, skills, communication, autonomy and responsibility. Ukraine and Slovakia are close as for their cultures, which can serve as a launching pad for building deeper competencies. The pedagogical practice of Ukrainian and Slovak students develops the intercultural competencies of both the trainees and the students.

Dear Readers, we will be pleased if you find the papers published in our journal interesting and they will become a source of inspiration for you. On behalf of the Editors, I wish you a successful year 2019.

Viola Tamášová
Editor-in-Chief

STUDIES

The Goals and Consequences of the Centralization of Public Education in Hungary[1]

András Semjén – Marcell Le – Zoltán Hermann[*]

Abstract:

Introduction: A robust process of centralization in education administration and school finance has taken place in Hungary in the course of the present decade. The governance, control, and funding of schools has been taken from local government by the state, and the autonomy of headmasters and teachers has diminished. However, neither the objectives of, nor the motives behind this centralization seem to be completely clear. This paper aims to contribute to the clarification of these objectives and motives, and explores whether the reform has been successful in achieving its declared objectives.

Methods: The clarification of the objectives and motives relies not only on an analysis of the existing literature, but on the textual analysis of various legal texts, together with the use of structured research interviews and press interviews with education policy makers and people working in education administration. Simple statistical methods (including inequality measures and concentration indicators) are employed to determine the impact of the centralization process via the analysis of administrative data on school finances, teacher earnings and student performance.

Results: It was found that while the declared objectives of the centralization included the reduction of inequalities in resource availability and teachers' wages, and an improvement in equality of educational opportunity, in the first two post-reform years there was a significant drop in the level of resources per student, resulting in a slight increase of inequality of resources. A drop in expenditure may in principle indicate a growth in efficiency, but in this instance this seems actually to have been achieved at the expense of shortages and other school-level problems with a negative effect on the quality of education.

Discussion: The usual requirements to be observed in public sector governance reforms were deliberately neglected, and the reform was carried through in the

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absence of any pilot study or systematic impact assessment. This is all the more problematic as the recent literature on the experience of other countries does not provide unanimous support for centralization. Further, given the declared objectives of the reforms, it is rather remarkable that no systematic monitoring of results was put into place.

Limitations: The analysis offered here is confined to the short term effects of the reform. A more complete evaluation of the reform will only be possible later, when the longer term effects of the process become clear. The relatively short time since the reform does not allow the definitive identification and evaluation of the effects of the centralization on student performance. However, the short-term effects on inequalities in school finances and teacher salaries are worth investigating at this point. The limited availability of school budget data from the pre-reform period restricts somewhat the reliability of the analysis of the effects of the reform on school expenditure. A further limitation is that the statistical analysis presented here is restricted to basic schools[2] only, in the interests of simplifying comparisons. However, a preliminary analysis of secondary schools showed very similar patterns.

Conclusions: The empirical results are to a certain degree inconclusive. As far as school funding is concerned, the inequality of funding increased right after the centralization, then stagnated and started to diminish significantly only after 2015. At the same time, from the perspective of school funding per student on the basis of the income of various local authorities, the results seem somewhat more satisfactory, and it is possible to identify some positive effects in this respect.

Key words: education administration, school finance, equality of educational opportunity, inequality of resources, teacher earnings.

Introduction

There has been considerable disagreement over the merits of centralized and decentralized approaches to public service provision in the literature. The performance of centralized or decentralized public management in general is an important and much disputed topic in public economics. Proponents of decentralization usually refer to theories of fiscal federalism: they expect better information at the local level, competition between municipalities, and better incentives, all leading to the more efficient provision of services and gains in efficiency (Oates, 1992). Others emphasize the possible disadvantages: externalities, common pool related problems and greater inequalities, an important concern for education policy (Weingast, 2008). Bishop and Wössmann (2010) set up a model of educational production incorporating the effects of institutional arrangements on student performance, and demonstrated that a lower level of administrative decision-making can lead to more informed decisions, but may also divert spending, due to collusion, the result of close ties with headmasters and school-based interest groups, for example. On the other hand, centralized decision-making and administration may increase monitoring costs and lead to excessive bureaucracy.

As in other fields of public management (see e.g. Shah et al., 2004), the issue of centralization or decentralization remains controversial in the governance, funding and provision of education, as well. It is not difficult to present a case for centralization: one

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[2] See footnote 10 for explanation of the term.

can find a number of countries with fairly centralized education policy decision-making and school funding systems that perform quite well (cf. Green, 1997a; Leung, 2004 or Györgyi, 2015). Based on the comparative analysis of IEA and IALS results for a small group of selected countries, Green (1997b) also concludes that centralized educational systems rate higher in educational achievement than decentralized ones. Both elementary and secondary education exhibited a significant move towards greater centralization in the US under the first and second George W. Bush administration according to Manna (2013). However, in several countries, regarded formerly as examples supporting the advantages of centralized systems, there has been a marked shift towards decentralization recently (see Bajomi, 2013 on France; Leung, 2004 on some East Asian countries, or Lundahl, 2002 on Sweden). In the US there was a subsequent shift towards decentralization under the two terms of the Obama administration: the former punitive consequences for low-performing states and school districts were mostly eliminated, and the "Every Student Succeeds Act" restricted the power of the federal government to impose academic requirements on schools. The positive impact of decentralization on school quality improvement in the US is dealt with in, among others, Cohen (2004) and Bernbaum (2011). There is also an extensive literature on successful decentralized and school-based management systems (e.g. Barrera-Osorio et al., 2009; McGinn & Welsh, 1999; Zajda & Gamage, 2009).

It seems that there is a balance to be struck between the centralized and decentralized elements in public education. Analyzing the behavior of various American states, Manna observes that the three dimensions of education governance along which a state might decide to centralize are the political, the administrative, and the fiscal (2013, pp. 686-687). According to his findings, greater political and administrative centralization is strongly associated with more equitable outcomes via smaller achievement gaps and better achievement, respectively, while the centralization of finances seems to be unrelated to student performance (Manna, 2013, p. 688). Wössmann (2001) provides similar findings after analyzing how various institutional features and policies affect student performance. The conclusion reached is that the setting of school budgets, performance goals and curriculum is best left to the central authorities, while the purchase of supplies or the choice of teaching techniques should be decided at school level, as long as there are adequate monitoring and assessment systems in place.

The present paper analyzes the objectives and results of a policy reform in public education in Hungary which changed a broadly decentralized system of local government-run public education[3] to one governed and run at the national level. It should be noted that the direction of the reform (from decentralized to centralized) is somewhat unusual, given the international trend towards decentralization. Centralization in economic administration is known to be inefficient; in public sector service provision,

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[3] This earlier system was also not free from inherent problems, e.g. there were extreme differences between local governments in their size or revenue-generating potential, and although they had a high degree of autonomy in terms of their expenditures, they had little autonomy on the revenue side. (Central government gave a student-based education grant to each local government to fund their education expenditure partially. However, the student-based grant was not earmarked for education, and there was no obligatory student-based formula for the funding of schools. Local governments were supposed to supplement the grant from their other revenues.) Many small local government units also lacked the necessary expertise and personnel to run local education services smoothly and professionally.

however, a centralized system may perhaps be effective and might further government goals (including a better quality of service and smaller inequality). The question posed here is whether the results of the Hungarian reform support this hypothesis.

The real motives behind centralization are examined by contrasting its actual consequences to expected results. First, the motivation of the central government in introducing this reform is looked at in the context of several explicit policy objectives, including the curbing of public education expenditures in the short run to ensure macroeconomic stability, increasing the efficiency of schools, and decreasing inequalities between jurisdictions. Second, the impact of the centralization reform on the level and distribution of resources (school spending, teacher compensation) and outcomes (student achievement) is described.

The analysis offered here has certain limitations. First of all, in the analysis of school-level financial data the investigation was restricted to the years between 2012 and 2016. Due to the lack of reliable school-level data for the years of the pre-reform era, only 2012, the last pre-reform year, could be used as a basis for comparisons. Even for this year, data were missing or obviously erroneous for many of the schools, so it was necessary to restrict the analysis to those schools which had reliable financial data for 2012 (and also had data for the 2013-2016 period). In the analysis of teacher earnings, based on wage survey data, however, data for a longer pre-reform period (starting in 2009) were available; here, unfortunately, due to some changes in the survey methodology (see footnote 14), 2016 had to be omitted from the post-reform period.

Nonetheless, the results of some simple statistical analyses do illustrate what happened after the centralization. The centralization of education governance and finance was, however, not the only change over the years: the amount of fund allocated to the financing of public education also changed considerably within the post-reform period, and there were some other, less important changes in education administration in the course of these years. In such a situation, it would be extremely difficult to identify and separate the individual effects of the parallel administrative and financial changes. However, the centralization of school governance and the changes in the level of funding may reasonably be considered different parts of the same package. And even if it is not possible on the basis of the calculations performed to claim that the findings in the field of (in)equality of opportunity per student resources or teacher earnings are a direct consequence of centralization, it is possible to say that they are probably the result of the package as a whole. The picture is even more complex regarding the results in relation to student performance indicators, as the changes in student performance can reflect many other factors, and there is likely to be a considerable time lag between changes effected in education administration, school governance and funding and consequent changes being observable in performance indicators. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to believe that in spite of all these limitations there is some utility in examining changes in student performance indicators during the investigated period.

The contribution of the present paper to the literature on the effects of decentralization is twofold. First, evidence on the effects of an unusual shift from decentralized to centralized education governance is provided, while the literature mostly focuses on the impact of a move towards more decentralization. Second, these effects are analyzed in the context of the policy goals of the reform. The re-centralization of Hungarian education administration and funding serves as a case study illustrating that, although there may be certain good examples of centralized service provision in the public sector

internationally, in the absence of a well thought-out system of incentives, abrupt centralization and a military-type organization in public services may quickly lead to manifest failures. It should be stated, though, that the lack of positive results of centralization does not prove that it cannot work; what it does show is that it will not work automatically.

1   Centralization reinvented

Excessive centralization in economic administration was a well-known and much-criticized phenomenon of socialist command economies, and its numerous problems were demonstrated quite early (Kornai, 1959). These centrally managed economies worked through direct bureaucratic control. Once the transition to market economy started together with the change of the economic and political system, most economists, including Kornai himself (Kornai, 2012, pp. 569-570) supposed that this would lose its relevance to economic policy, and would only be discussed perhaps on courses on the history of economic thought. However, after 2010, there came a U-turn in Hungary (Kornai, 2015), where now the topic appears to be once again relevant, and it may also spread to other transition economies flirting with the concept of illiberal democracy.

"The obsession with centralization, which is intertwined in many ways with the aforementioned tendency to nationalize, affects almost all spheres of society", writes Kornai (2015, p. 6). This obsession has certainly left its impact on many facets of life in Hungary over the last 8 years, most notably on the government itself (including local government, see Dobos & Soós, 2014), public utilities (state-owned monopolies instead of privatized utility companies) and public services (health care and public education). The strengthening role of government in the provision of public services and utilities is a manifestation of a broader general trend towards centralization (Rosta, 2014; Kornai, 2015). In a recent online interview, a political scientist and a former FIDESZ MP, Péter Tölgyessy, talks of the permanent centralization of power as a characteristic feature of the present Hungarian political system (plankog, 2018). He sees centralization as a consequence of a political logic that trusts government actions or interventions far more than the invisible hand: "The idea of market capitalism, envisioned in '89, has changed into state-managed capitalism. Results are once again expected from governmental action. The permanent centralization of power is only a consequence of this logic. This permanent centralization, however, continuously trims down the institutional feedback that is essential to government efficiency."

It was no coincidence that Government's Bill T/8888, introduced in Parliament in October, 2012, from which the later "Act CLXXXVIII of 2012 on taking over the control and funding of some education institutions from local governments by the State" evolved, mentioned the facilitation of the establishment of the "Good State" in the first place when listing the main objectives of this piece of legislation in its preamble. The appearance of this term probably reflects the influence of G. Fodor and Stumpf (2007), consciously misinterpreting good governance as a neoliberal paradigm when contrasting it to the good government model. According to this perspective, by emphasizing the rule of law, voice and accountability, transparency, and the lack of corruption, good governance "speaks the idiom of liberalism" (Fodor & Stumpf, 2007, p. 79). They claim that the concept of good governance aims at demolishing the state, by entrusting the provision of public services to the market, emphasizing the role of the individual's own responsibility in the provision for the of old age and taking the principle of economic

rationality valid in every sphere of life (Fodor & Stumpf, 2007, pp. 86-87). Their caricature interpretation of this concept and their views on democracy (a political construction not having any internal value per se, but valued only in as much as it can contribute to the well-being of society) must have influenced the process of re-centralization of education in Hungary. The consequences can be seen in the almost total neglect of the key principles of good governance in terms of those are generally perceived by the mainstream (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011, pp. 21-22; CIPFA & IFAC, 2013, p. 12). This neglect is especially manifest in the lack of definition of the expected social and economic benefits of centralization, in the complete lack of stakeholder participation in decision-making, in the absence of any clear targets and in the resulting lack of accountability. Their views, also echoed by Kákay (2013), are those which probably contributed to the transformation of the centralization of public education into an ideologically motivated ultimate goal, no matter the consequences.

2 Recentralization of public education in Hungary after 2010

2.1 The first phase of the reform

There has been a strong and rapid centralization process in education administration, school governance and education finance (school funding) in Hungary over the last 8 years. The cornerstones of this reform were laid during its first phase, in the first years of the present decade. These are the law on National Public Education (Act CXC of 2011); and a law (Act CLXXXVIII of 2012) on the taking over of the control and funding of some education institutions from local government by the state (i.e. the central government).

The main characteristics of this reform process were the following:

- Educational institutions (schools) were no longer operated by local our county governments but by a central mammoth organization, the Klebelsberg Institution Governance Center (Klebelsberg Intézményfenntartó Központ, abbreviated as KLIK).
- Parallel to the reorganization of public administration through the reinstatement of districts (járás in Hungarian), the work of KLIK was organized according to school districts. However, school districts became completely independent of the district-level public administration, and they constitute the regional branches of KLIK, an independent government agency. Initially, there were 198 school districts, covering the 175 districts of the country and the 23 districts of Budapest.
- Eight-year basic schools providing elementary and lower secondary education (ISCED 1 and ISCED 2 levels), are generally operated by the local branch of KLIK. Secondary schools including vocational schools, vocational secondary schools and academic secondary schools (called gimnázium in Hungarian) offering non-vocational 'academic' upper secondary education programs are usually operated by the county center school district in each county.
- County center school districts had to some extent to organize and control the work of the school districts situated in their county. Nevertheless, most of the important decisions had to be approved by the Centre itself; it had to supervise the operation of each of the 198 units. This organizational structure made the work of the Centre extremely difficult.
- Current education expenses, including teacher wages, became centrally financed by KLIK, the new biggest employer in the country. Central budgetary allocations to

local governments were cut substantially. Local school districts have not become independent budgetary institutions and do not know their "budgets" exactly – so-called 'soft' budget constraints (Kornai, 1986) on local education were replaced by even less well defined, fuzzy ones.

- The previous salary scale for teachers practically set only the lower salary limits for the different categories of teachers (according to their degrees and length of service). This was replaced by a far more strictly regulated universal salary system based on a national career path model.
- As a general rule, the ownership rights and maintenance duties with regard to school buildings remained in the hands of local governments initially. However, for small communities or for those not willing to cover maintenance costs, the task could be transferred to the central level. If a local government transferred its maintenance duties to the center, it was supposed to pay a contribution to the costs of maintenance. This system was a permanent source of conflict.
- The rights and powers (including employer rights, the choice of teachers and school personnel, or the autonomy in dealing with everyday management problems, purchase order placements, etc.) of headmasters or principals diminished drastically. Decisions in trivial matters were often referred up to the Center, which had little information to base a proper decision on. The professional autonomy of schools and teachers diminished considerably. The freedom to use a licensed textbook was severely reduced, and the number of approved textbooks cut drastically. Officially-approved new textbooks contained serious mistakes and were often considered inferior to those previously used by teachers' associations and unions.

It was clear from the beginning that these changes must have far-reaching consequences on the operation of schools, the fairness and equity of school funding, the quality of education, and probably on student performance and outcomes, as well. However, the specific education policy objectives (final outcomes) these legal and administrative changes were expected to serve or supposed to bring about have never been clearly formulated in terms of measurable education performance indicators that would make accountability viable. The objectives of the reform in terms of final outcomes were not communicated clearly to the public.

Given the relatively short time since the most important legislative, regulatory and administrative changes in this centralization process took effect, it is quite understandable that the available Hungarian research literature related to the topic is somewhat limited. Most of the papers encountered in the course of the present research are either speculative or purely descriptive, or they attempt to place the process in an international and/or long-term historical context (see for instance Kozma, 2014; Madaras & Varga, 2014; Péteri, 2015; Fehérvári & Szabó, 2015). Another paper, Györgyi (2015), is mostly based on qualitative research and case studies. As for the level of public support or the quantitative consequences of the changes reshaping education administration, school governance and school funding, little empirical research has been done so far. However, Péteri, 2014; Semjén, 2014 and Brecsok, 2014 do offer some results in this respect.

2.2 The second phase of the reform

It is difficult to tell exactly whether the various steps of this phase were already foreseen and pre-planned at the beginning of the centralization, or became only necessary in order to correct the faults and the unwanted consequences of the first phase. Based on the research interviews (for more on these, see later), however, the authors of the present study incline towards the belief that at least some of the later steps were not foreseen at the beginning of the reforms and were meant to correct the pitfalls of the earlier measures in some sort of a "trial and error" process.

From 2014 on it became increasingly accepted even within the administration that the middle level has to be strengthened and more tasks have to be delegated to county center school districts to make the new system work more smoothly. A pyramid-like structure was recommended at that time, together with the strengthening of the autonomy of the county center school districts. Although unpublished internal reports fiercely critical of the new system circulated within the Ministry, no independent appraisal of its results and problems was prepared and made available to the public.

After some former minor changes, the heavily criticized original organizational structure of KLIK was radically changed. This change took effect at the beginning of 2017. Although the complete failure of the previous organizational structure was definitely not communicated that way[4], the scope of the changes showed that the government had obviously recognized the failure of the 2013 centralization.

The main legal steps of the second phase were the amendment (Act LXVI of 2015) of the existing Vocational Training Act (Act CLXXXVII of 2011), and of another act on Adult Training (Act LXXVII of 2013,) together with some other related acts. Further, there came the amendment of some acts related to the regulation of education and some other related acts (Act LXXX of 2016), plus finally a decree (Government Decree 134/2016. [VI. 10.]) concerning organizations that perform state tasks in public education as school operators, and the Klebelsberg Centre. Here, the focus was on redefining school districts, and revising the problematic original organizational structure of KLIK. The important features of this phase of the reform are listed below.

- The task of overseeing vocational training institutions was moved to the Ministry of National Economy, and thus KLIK's former powers in relation to these schools were also transferred to a newly established organization.
- From the beginning of 2017, the nationalization of municipal schools progressed further and the asset management rights were transferred to the state (in practice to the regionally competent school district). Although local government formally remained the owner of school buildings (often constructed and financed from their own resources), practically they lost their ownership rights over the buildings almost entirely. Moreover, central budget subsidies to local governments were once again cut substantially, since the task of school building maintenance also became a responsibility of central government.
- A so-called solidarity contribution calculated according to the size of the municipality's local tax revenues (Kelemen, 2016) was introduced, and is now

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[4] Although the complete failure of the previous organizational structure was never admitted out loud, and the need for a new design was not communicated to the general public as a consequence of such a failure, in a press interview when a journalist's question suggested that it was a failure, it was no longer denied officially by the leader of Center (see Miklós, 2017).

collected from more affluent local government districts to finance school maintenance expenses partially. Many municipalities found this contribution unfair and some of them turned to the courts, initiating litigation.

- Perhaps the most important feature of this second phase was that the extremely centralized "one center - 198 school districts" governance system of KLIK was completely redesigned. Each former regional branch was transferred to a newly established (bigger) school district. The (originally 58, now 60) new school districts became the employers of school staff, including the teachers. The new school districts are not only much bigger, but, since they also became autonomous budgetary organizations, they got far more autonomy than their predecessors ever had.

- The Center of KLIK was also renamed and remodeled: the Klebelsberg Center (Klebelsberg Központ or KK) now organizes the work of school districts and provides supervision and professional guidance to them, but the decisions are made by the individual school districts themselves. This change was at the same time a further step in centralization (as the number of school districts was reduced drastically), and a massive decentralization at that, as their responsibilities and degree of autonomy greatly increased. Headmasters and teachers did not, however, regain the level of autonomy they had in the decentralized system.

3   The objectives and motives of recentralization

Let us try to explore the objectives and motives of recentralization in the mirror of certain legal documents, research interviews and press interviews. Why is such an approach warranted? Given the scope of the changes in the course of the 2012 reform, one might have expected the government to organize a big public campaign to convince voters that the reform was justified and would serve the public good. Unfortunately, this never happened. The objectives, motives and justification of this centralization were never made completely clear to the general public., Neither the preamble of Act CLXXXVIII of 2012, nor the introductory chapter of the original bill offers a detailed explanation enumerating the reasons why legislators thought that the proposed administrative and legislative changes would be beneficial for Hungarian education or society as a whole.

As already mentioned, the original bill simply referred to 'the establishment of the Good State' as the main objective behind the new piece of legislation.[5] During the parliamentary debate, even the backbenchers from the ruling parties (the government is composed of two parties, FIDESZ and the KDNP) probably felt that this was a rather vague aim, and does not provide a great degree of guidance in matters of education, and, indeed, a new objective was substituted for it. This was the creation of a public education system that provides equal opportunity to children. Press interviews with education policy leaders (e.g. Hoffmann, as cited in Teczár, 2014) or the research

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[5] Here the influence of a formerly-mentioned fashionable school of thought in Hungarian political science literature (e.g. G. Fodor and Stumpf, 2007 or Kákai, 2013) can be clearly detected. Unfortunately, the leading exponents of this school completely neglect the usual requirements of the standard good governance literature, (depicted i. a. in Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007, Kuppens, 2016 or Holmberg and Rothstein, 2012).

interviews which form part of the present work[6], conducted in the 2014-2018 period, indicate that the main objective of this drastic reform was to reduce the unfair differences and inequalities in school finance and student outcomes, and to guarantee an equal educational opportunity to every child. This certainly is better suited to an act dealing with education than the previous reference to a vague concept (the Good State), and it could have been more easily monitored and translated into governmental targets.

The other objectives featured in the preamble to the bill (and the law) are:

- the creation of the operating conditions of a state that provides public services fully;
- the improvement and unification of professional standards in the provision of public education; and
- the achievement of a more efficient and cost-effective system of institutional management.[7]

In most of the research interviews, as also in Teczár (2014), some of the above goals (or goals essentially synonymous with them) are mentioned. The abolition of some anomalies in school funding by local government, the creation of a uniform and more rational funding system, the facilitation of government enforcement of the state's responsibility for education, the raising and unification of professional standards in public education all seemed to be high priorities in the interviews. The people interviewed saw the main reason and justification for the reform in the increased differences in funding, resource availability and student performance occasioned mostly by the differences in the financial means and human resources of various local authorities and in the varying quality of their professional work.

The consequences of the differences between local authorities hit disadvantaged areas especially hard, hindering the ability of the central government to enforce its responsibility for the standards of education. Although the local government system of education funding and governance certainly had its fair share in the problems and failures, and the centralized funding and governance of schools may seem to offer an obvious solution to these problems, it is nonetheless startling that other options were not

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[6] Ten structured research interviews (nine in 2014, one in 2018) were conducted: two with top level (former) education policy makers in various Orbán governments, two with top level ministry officials dealing with public education, and six with the leaders of KLIK, including its president and five school district leaders. As at this stage of the research the focus was mainly on the motives for the reform, the research was restricted to people who played a role in the preparatory phases or the design or implementation of the reform. It is of course entirely possible that they were inclined to remain faithful to the "official" narrative. At a later stage of the research, however, the intention is to interview Opposition MPs dealing with education policy matters concerning their interpretation of the reform, and also school administrators and teachers in terms of the perceived motives and the actual effects of the reform.

[7] In the two decades of decentralized, local government-run public education, some similar objectives (e.g. increasing efficiency by the amalgamation of small schools and encouraging local government cooperation in school provision, decreasing inequalities among municipalities by changing intergovernmental grant formulas and cutting education funding for macroeconomic reasons) appeared regularly on the policy agenda. The national government, however, failed to realize them for several reasons. On the one hand, the broad degree of local budgetary autonomy made supplementary earmarked education grants targeting poor schools ineffective. At the same time, local authorities were capable of resisting the reforms aiming at increasing efficiency.

even considered in the preparatory work on the reform. This happened in spite of the strong international evidence pointing towards the proper use of decentralization in education administration.

Since teachers are paid in Hungary according to a centrally set pay scale that determines the minimum level of salaries depending on the level of the teacher's degree and experience, teacher earnings cannot be set freely. In such regulated labor markets, the pay scale usually has a strong influence on the actual level of salaries. Despite this, the majority of our interviewees (education policymakers, government officials and KLIK leaders alike) were of the opinion that in the public school system run by local governments there existed considerable unjustifiable differences in teacher earnings. In well-to-do municipalities, teachers were paid much better than the minimum level in their wage category, while in poorer municipalities even meeting the centrally-set minimum levels often proved difficult. (A former education policy-maker interviewed for this research did not share this view: he thought that this problem was no more than a pretext, and had been inflated in order to justify the reform.)

Differences in the wealth and income of local authorities did affect the quality of education they provided. Directors of school districts mentioned encountering huge gaps even within a single school district: some local governments paid twice the legally required salary through various allowances and bonuses, while others struggled to pay any overtime. Richer local authorities were also able to hire better teachers and spend more on expenses other than salaries. Only a few interviewees noted that baselining expenditure will not bring about equal opportunities, and that such goal would require further structural changes, like the creation of well-equipped and staffed school centers in areas where poorly performing, underequipped small schools exist.

Although centralization in economic administration is known to be inefficient, one might think that in public sector service provision it may be effective and can further government goals regarding quality and equality of opportunity. Opinions of centralized systems vary considerably across groups. According to an education policy leader, the majority of teachers and principals supported the new system, as it benefitted them financially (Teczár, 2014). Especially teachers in poor, disadvantaged schools received a definite increase in salary. However, Péteri (2014) and Brecsok (2014) show that public support for the centralization was not uniform: it was strong within the population of small local authorities, and the age of the respondents was also an essential factor in determining their opinion of the success of centralization in achieving the desired equity aspects.

The most pressing issue experienced by the directors of school districts was that the districts did not know the size of their budgets at the time of the interviews (more than a year after the reform), making financial planning practically impossible. This fuzziness of budget constraint and a conscious underplanning of expenditures (originating in the lack of trust in the local level) probably played a role in the repeated solvency problems of KLIK and the recurring need for its financial consolidation (acknowledged officially in Miklós, 2017). Too much bureaucracy was also another often-mentioned complaint, as little authority and responsibility were delegated to district level, while the central office of KLIK was heavily loaded with tasks, but had little information as to how to solve them properly. Leaders of school districts complained of difficulties in getting resources from the Center to cover the material expenses of schools.

Many complained that the dividing line separating the tasks of operating and funding public schools (entrusted to KLIK) from school building maintenance (left in the hands of local governments in the default case) was unclear and uncertain. Local authorities were usually co-operative with the newly established school districts, but they tried to push any expense to KLIK, whenever it was legally ambiguous who the responsible party was. This, in turn, led to lags in financing such expenses, as most of these decisions were centralized. Many interviewees expressed their desire for more efficient school governance and task delegation. Unfortunately, autocorrection mechanisms in the system were barely existent, and the need for them was not a priority for the key educational policymakers. Still, the system underwent a process of continual change in the first years of its existence. As already mentioned, government officials found the answer to these issues in taking the centralization process and the 'nationalization' of local government schools a step further, removing the maintenance of school buildings from the duties of local authorities. There was a difference between publicly declared and actual motives here: the centralization of school building maintenance was presented to the general public as a response to the demands of the 2016 teacher demonstrations. However, the aspects of the reform specifically criticized by the demonstrating teachers were completely unrelated to building maintenance duties.

A former Minister of Education, serving now as a mayor in a rich district of Budapest suggested during the interviews that centralization could reflect a general lack of trust in decentralized political processes and the central government's desire for and need to control as many things as possible. (This is just the other side of what Tölgyessy said about the lack of trust in market automatisms, see plankog, 2018). This may well mean that the centralization of education administration is not seen by the government as a means to an end, but as an end itself, an objective per se, having its own, intrinsic value for the government.

Other possible explanations may also be considered. It may be that centralization serves a hidden agenda, or it may help the government achieve some other, undeclared or hidden, objectives. Indeed, many features characteristic to the creation and implementation of the centralization act seem to make sense only if interpreted as the actions of an incompetent government or if the real motives of this act are not those listed in its preamble. There was a complete lack of stakeholder participation in the preparation process. There was no pilot project preceding the general introduction of the new, centralized system over the whole country. A feasibility study and a thorough impact analysis were also missing. Intended outcomes and expected benefits were not defined clearly and translated into targets that could be readily monitored. The resulting lack of accountability was an inevitable consequence of this missing monitoring. These shortcomings led to ad hoc modifications of the system as a response to the occurrence of problems and frequent changes in the top positions of KLIK or the Klebelsberg Center.[8]

In an interview with the then freshly appointed president of the Klebelsberg Center, a journalist from PestiSrácok.hu (a portal with a reputation for being close to the ruling coalition) claims in her very first question that the centralization failed to achieve its declared goals. She further stated that this was because the management of the Center

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[8] There were four KLIK/KK presidents in less than five years: by the time a president got a firm grasp of the operation of the system, he or she had already been replaced.

was inefficient, and it was unable to fulfill its tasks as an economic unit. Despite one consolidation after another, it repeatedly fell into a debt spiral, had severe liquidity problems and, in the end, it was unable to cover even the most pressing expenses of schools (Miklós, 2017). The new president did not even try to deny this. Moreover, he admitted that in 2016 the original concept was revised and "it moved towards decentralization". He also admitted that the Center had had to be stabilized financially in order to avoid a liquidity crisis, further that "the necessity of decentralization is undisputed". However, he mainly emphasized the reduction of the number of school districts and improved communication between the Center and the management of school districts, as also between school district management and schools. At the same time, he did not even mention the financial independence of school districts.

4   Evidence from data

In this section, descriptive evidence on the effect of the reform on school resources and student outcomes is provided. While resources can be reorganized rather quickly to bring them into line with policy objectives, changes in student outcomes are more difficult (and take more time) to achieve. Consequently, the focus here will be mainly on school resources, offering only some preliminary results on student outcomes.

Here only two aspects of schools resources are analyzed, school expenditure and teachers' wages. Teachers' wages deserve particular attention, as these are more directly related to the quality of education than expenditure in general. Both theory and empirical evidence suggest that paying all teachers according to a uniform salary scale hampers equality of opportunity. In the absence of compensating wage differentials or related incentives, most teachers prefer jobs in schools with a more privileged student composition, resulting in positive student-teacher matching: good [bad] teachers work in the schools of good [bad] students (see e.g. Clotfelter et al., 2006, Lankford et al., 2002 and Varga, 2009 for Hungary). However, if teachers working with disadvantaged kids in backward areas are paid systematically less than those working with children with a far more favorable background and living in developed and well-to-do neighborhoods, even a shift towards the uniformity of wage schedules would probably help somewhat to reduce undesirable performance differences between schools.

There exist many different forms of educational institutions within the Hungarian education system. Different education programs (basic school, academic secondary school, vocational secondary school or vocational training school programs) may actually co-exist in the same school. As different education programs obviously have different requirements concerning the qualification of the teaching staff and thus have different cost structures, cost or expenditure levels cannot be directly compared across all schools. It is for this reason that this study narrows the scope of the empirical research to single-program basic schools only, providing education from grade 1 to grade 8.[9] When basic schools are referred to later, it means this school type.[10]

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[9] However, it was also an aim of this research to check whether the main conclusions would hold for some other types of schools, so some of the calculations were repeated for 'pure' secondary schools offering only academic programs or semi-academic vocational programs for students in grades 9-12 leading to a Baccalaureate, thus enabling the students to apply for a place in higher education upon finishing the program. It was found that the average level of current school-level per-student educational expenses in such secondary schools evolved in a strikingly similar way

4.1 Equality of resources and of educational opportunity

Evidently, equity and equality have many faces, and equality of opportunity is only one of them (Le Grand, 1992). A just and fair system of education (or any other kind of in-kind benefits or publicly provided and financed services) does not necessarily mean equality in per capita resources, individual costs, use of services, or outcomes. As Levin writes, "the aim of public policy cannot and should not be equality in the sense that everyone is the same or achieves the same outcomes – a state that appears to be both impossible and undesirable. Rather, a commitment to equity suggests that differences in outcomes should not be attributable to differences in areas such as wealth, income, power or possessions." (Levin, 2003, p. 5) Nevertheless, since the research interviews conducted earlier seem to suggest that decision-makers often tend to translate the complex objective of equality of opportunity into some more easily apprehensible goals regarding the greater equality of per-student school-level resources and teacher remuneration, it is also worthwhile taking a closer look at how these were affected by the centralization of funding.

Equality of educational opportunity (the seminal reference here is Coleman (1968)) is a complex concept. Obviously, many factors that characterize children (gender, time spent in nursery and pre-school education, etc.), the household in which they live (i.e. the income, wealth, social status and educational and social background of parents) and their place of residence can have an impact on a child's educational career, achievement and opportunities. There is some agreement that the educational options and opportunities of disadvantaged children compared to the average child's can serve as a good proxy for equality of educational opportunity.

4.2 (In)equality in per-student resources

In Figure 1, equality of opportunity concerns are combined with equality of per-student resources as the development of per-student school-level educational expenditure is plotted against the personal income tax base of local authorities. The PIT base serves here as a proxy for the average income situation of parents in the absence of the availability of direct income data of families, and thus the figure may be used to indicate whether there has been any change in the government's preferences concerning the distribution of school-level resources, favoring less affluent local authorities.

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to that found in basic schools. There was a stark drop in per-student spending in 2013, which recovered only two years later. The trend of the ratio of averages in the top and bottom quintiles also showed a similar pattern to that of basic schools: this simple inequality index increased greatly in 2013, but decreased below its 2012 level by the end of the period.

[10] This 8-year school type (általános iskola in Hungarian) comprises two phases of education: ISCED1 or primary education in grades 1-4, and ISCED2 or lower secondary education in grades 5-8. (In some texts this Hungarian school type is called the general school, which is the literal translation of the Hungarian term. Here, however, basic school is used throughout the paper.)

Panel 1.A
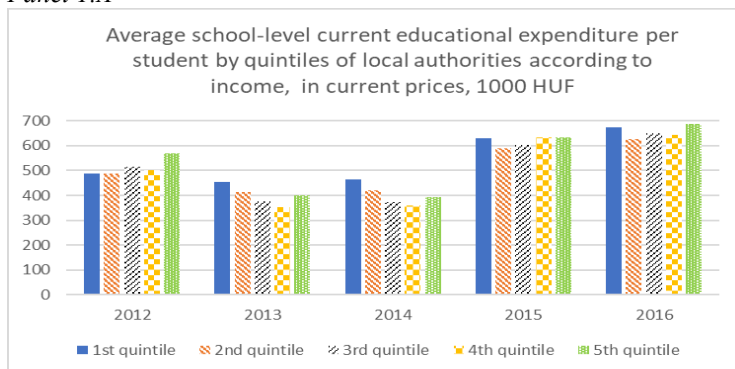
Panel 1.B
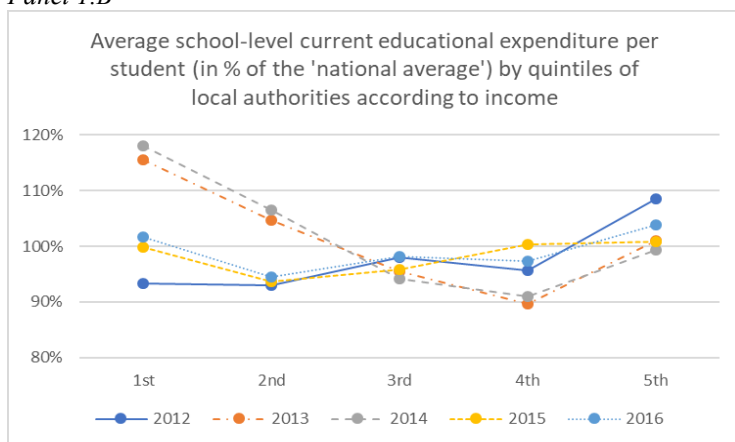
Note: The sample consists of schools that cover only grades 1-8, in operation between 2012 and 2016, were under KLIK management starting from 2013, and had reliable financial data available for the whole period (number of schools: 530). Quintiles of local authorities are defined with respect to their average per capita personal income tax base in 2012. Local authorities are weighted according to the number of students.

Figure 1. Average school-level current educational expenditure per student in basic schools by quintiles of local authorities according to income (thousand HUF, current prices in Panel 1.A and percentage of yearly 'national average' in Panel 1.B), 2012-2016.

Figure 1 shows how the reform influenced the level of average financial resources and thus the average current educational expenses of public basic schools per student by quintiles of local authorities according to the average taxable income of their taxpayers in 2012 (weighed according to student numbers for 2012). Per-student expenses in current prices were well below their 2012 level for every quintile in the first two post-reform years (2013 and 2014) in absolute numbers, due to the drastic temporary fall in resources spent on basic education (Panel A). However, in 2015 and 2016 the level of expenses already exceeded the levels seen in the last-pre-reform year for every quintile.

Panel B shows per-student spending relative to the "national average".[11] While in 2012 current per-student expenditure was above average only in the top quintile, after the centralization there came a shift favouring the poorest local authorities. This shift was especially marked in 2013 and 2014. Relative per-student education expenses in every post-reform year were above their 2012 level in the poorest 40 percent of local authorities. In the second poorest 20 percent of local authorities, per-student expenses were above average in 2013 and 2014 only, and they fell well below average in the last two years of the period. Schools in the third quintile of local authorities spent below the average after the reform (see the dotted lines in Panel B). Basic schools in the second richest 20 percent of local authorities were especially unfavourably affected by the centralization: they show average per-student relative expenses only in 2015, and in the 2013-2014 period they fare much worse relatively than in 2012 (in 2016, however, they are slightly closer to the average than they were in 2012). In the richest 20 percent of local authorities per-student current relative expenses are at the average or above average level throughout the whole period (though lower and closer-to-average in post-reform years than in 2012). All in all, due to the changes at the bottom and top ends of the income distribution of local authorities the centralization was actually capable of diminishing the inequality of per-student spending. Its impact on the local authorities in the middle of the income distribution was more ambigous, and it seems especially unfavourable for the local authorities in the fourth quintile during the 2013-2014 period.
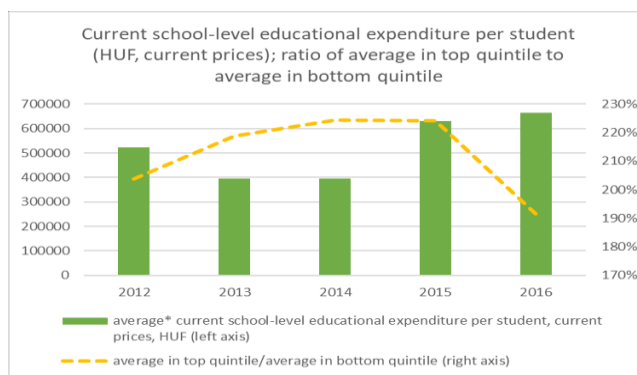

Note: The sample consists of schools that cover solely grades 1-8, were in operation between 2012 and 2016, were under KLIK management starting from 2013, and had reliable financial data available for the whole period (number of schools: 530).

Figure 2. Average school-level current educational expenditure per student (HUF, current prices) and the development of its inequality (the ratio of average expenditure in the top quintile to average expenditure in the bottom quintile), basic schools, 2012-2016.

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[11] The national average is approximated here by the average in our sample (single-program public basic schools with 8 grades for full-time students, providing data for the whole period).

The green columns in Figure 2 show the actual values of average current school-level education expenses per student for each year in the 2012-2016 period in current prices. They show clearly and more concisely what was also obvious in Panel A of Figure 1, that parallel to the implementation of centralization there was a drastic (more than 20 percent) drop in per-student current expenditure in 2013, and there was no visible change in 2014. Then, in 2015 there came a more than 50 percent increase in per-student expenditure, followed by a further slight increase in 2016.[12] It would be reasonable to regard such hectic and awkward changes in the level of resources over such a short period as unhealthy, revealing that sustainability and stability have been in short supply in Hungarian education policy.

Figures 2 and 3 also investigate the development of equality of per-student school-level education spending more directly. The yellow dotted line in Figure 2 represents the ratio of average current school-level education expenditure per student in the top quintile to average expenditure in the bottom quintile, which is a simple but useful index of the inequality of school funding. Figure 3 illustrates the inequality of school funding in a more sophisticated way, with Gini-coefficients, measuring the concentration of per-student current school-level education expenditure in basic schools.

Needless to say, one cannot determine the actual amount spent on an individual student in a given school and year. However, it is always possible to determine the average spending (average current expenditure) per student in a given school and then assign this average to each student in that school. It is then possible to rank the students featuring in the investigation. Thus one can plot a Lorenz curve and calculate the Gini coefficient of per student school-level current eduactional expenditure (represented by the orange line in the figure).

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[12] The severe temporary cut in school resources and expenditure seen in Figure 2 caused serious problems in the smooth operation of the system. This cut can be interpreted as an increase in the efficiency of the system (one of the declared reform goals), but it is also possible to argue that the real motive behind the centralization was not the efficiency gain itself but achieving some short-term budgetary saving – i.e. this may be seen as a hidden objective. If one looks at what happened in the longer run, it can be seen that in spite of its initial decrease, per student current expenditure later started to rise and finally reached a higher level than that before the start of the centralization – so there was no lasting efficiency gain, and the lower cost level proved unsustainable. This suits the second interpretation better than the first one.
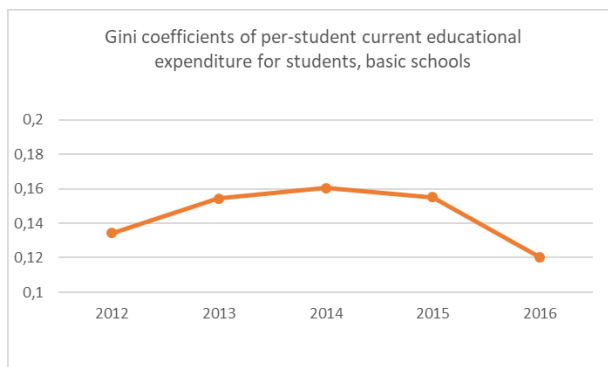
Note: The sample consists of schools (and their students) that cover solely grades 1-8, were in operation between 2012 and 2016, were under KLIK management starting from 2013, and had reliable financial data available for the whole period (number of schools: 530).

Figure 3. Gini coefficients of per-student current school-level educational expenditure for students, basic schools, 2012-2016.

The yellow dotted line in Figure 2 and the orange line in Figure 3 basically tell the same story: in 2013 (right after the centralization of governance and funding) in spite of the declared objective of creating a more equal funding system, both inequality indices displayed sharp increases, and the growth of inequality continued in 2014 as well, although somewhat less steeply than before. In 2015 the inequality indices changed only very little, but after that they fell drastically, to well below their pre-reform levels.

4.3 (In)equality in teacher earnings
Unfortunately, individual earnings data for teachers at school level are not available. There are, however, individual data on teacher earnings in the public sector from the Wage Survey (Bértarifa Felvétel) Database of the National Employment Service. This database contains wage and earnings data for the competitive sector based on a representative survey; however, all employees of budgetary institutions in the public sector are covered by it. The survey also contains information on the occupation codes[13] of the individual employees in the sample. Using earnings data for full-time teachers the development and the inequality of earnings for teachers teaching in basic schools will be investigated. Due to limitations on the availability of data, the analysis is confined to the 2009-2015 period.[14]
Figure 4 shows teacher earnings by quintiles of local authorities according to income, while Figure 5 shows teacher earnings by quintiles of local authorities according to the

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[13] According to the Unified Classification System of Occupations (FEOR-08).
[14] From 2016 on, the city, town or village where a teacher actually works cannot be identified reliably. Before 2016, teachers were assigned in the wage survey database to the local authority where their school actually was. Starting from 2016, they were assigned to the city or town in which the center of the school district (their employer) can be found. As this would make comparisons by quintiles of local authorities (as in Figure 4 and 5) meaningless, 2016 data had to be omitted from these figures.

share of socially disadvantaged children. Both can help the reader to take a closer look at the inequality in a main input of education, teacher earnings. These figures are also relevant from the point of view of the equity-or-equality of opportunity question, as they show the inequality of teacher earnings according to these criteria.
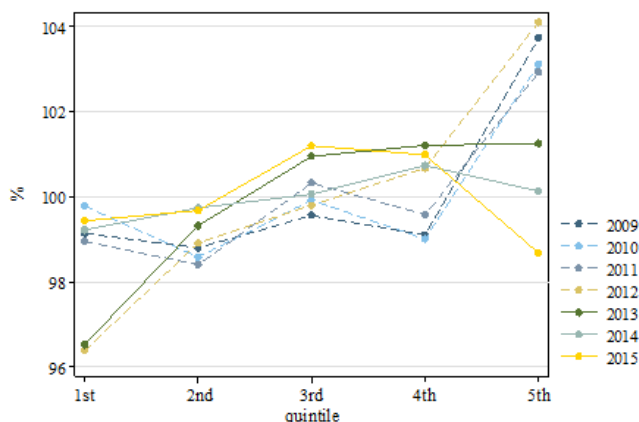
Note: Quintiles of local authorities are defined with respect to their average per capita personal income tax base in 2012. Local authorities are weighted according to the number of students.

Figure 4. Teacher earnings by quintiles of local authorities according to income (for full-time teachers in grades 1-8 [occupation code 2431], as a percentage of average earnings of such teachers, 2009-2015.

In the two poorest quintiles of local authorities, teacher earnings were below average throughout the whole 2009-2015 period. In 2012 and 2013, the difference from the average is rather large in the poorest 20 percent of local authorities. In middle-income local authorities (third quintile), teacher earnings relative to the average were usually above their pre-reform level for post-reform years with the sole exception of 2014. For the second richest 20 percent of local authorities, earnings were higher than average in all the post-reform years, while they were usually (with the exception of 2012) below average in the pre-reform ones. It is also clear that for all pre-reform years (denoted by dashed lines), in the richest 20 percent of local authorities teacher earnings were about 3-4 percentage points higher than the average. Relative teacher earnings moved closer to the average after the reform in the top quintile gradually: in 2014, they were somewhat lower and closer to average than in 2013. For 2015, teacher earnings in the richest 20 percent of local authorities had already fallen below the average. Teacher earnings for the richest 20 percent of local authorities were below their fourth quintile level in 2014 and 2015, and in 2015 they were lower than in any other quintile that year. Right after the reform, teachers were still paid much less in the poorest quintile than in any other (as in the last pre-reform year). Later, however, in the other post-reform years, in this quintile they were paid only slightly below the average, and thus the difference in teacher earnings between the poorest and richest local authorities became quite small. The relative position of teachers in the poor local authorities improved, starting in 2014,

while teachers in the richest local authorities definitely lost their previously advantageous relative position after the centralization.
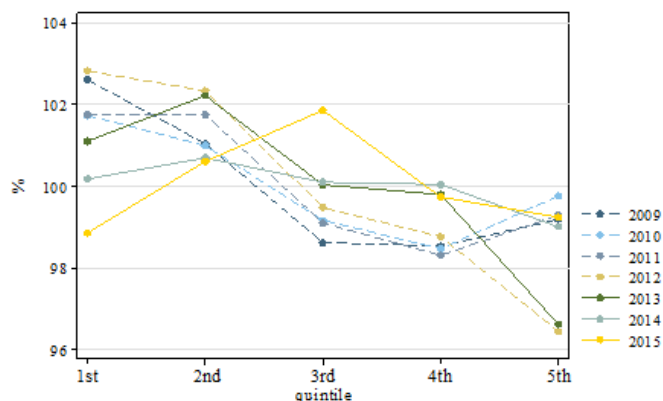
Note: Quintiles of local authorities are defined with respect to the share of socially disadvantaged students in 2012. Local authorities are weighted according to the number of students.

Figure 5. Teacher earnings by quintiles of local authorities according to the share of socially disadvantaged students (for full-time teachers in grades 1-8 [occupation code 2431], as a percentage of average earnings of such teachers, 2009-2015.

In Figure 5 the dashed lines, representing the pre-centralization years, basically decline throughout the first 4 quintiles, meaning that parallel with the growth of the share of disadvantaged children (and the difficulty of teachers' work) teachers' wages shrank. In 2012, this declining tendency was true even for the fifth quintile. The solid lines in the figure (representing the post-reform years) have the shape of a letter M (2013-2014), or an upside-down letter V (2015), meaning that after the centralization there was some positive change in this respect.

Although in 2013-2014 teachers' earnings remained above the average in the two quintiles where the share of socially disadvantaged students was lowest, in the next two quintiles they were below average with a decreasing tendency. In local authorities where social problems affected the highest share of children, teachers' wages remained below average over the whole period, with the lowest points in 2012 and 2013. In the last two post-reform years shown in the figure, however, teachers' earnings in local authorities where social problems affected the highest share of children were somewhat closer to the average level. 2015 was an especially odd year, in which teachers' earnings were the lowest at the two ends of the scale (being also below average in the fourth quintile), with relative earnings reaching their maximum in the middle quintile.

The analysis of the inequalities in teachers' earnings (the relevant figure is not included here due to space limitations) shows that while the inequality of earnings did not seem to change immediately after the reform, in 2014, following a radical increase in teachers' wages due to a salary reform, it dropped considerably. However, by 2016 earnings inequality was higher than in any of the previous seven years, as differences between the top and the bottom quintiles increased considerably, and the bottom quintile remained at the same level as in 2014.

4.4 Inequality of student performance (competency test scores)

As learning is a cumulative process, it is obvious that individual student performance in general and competency test results in particular reflect many different factors[15] and are influenced by the whole educational history of the students. Thus, short-term changes in test scores after a reform reflect not only recent changes in the operation, funding and control of education but a much longer process. It is only possible to evaluate the full effect of these changes on student performance in the future, when the long-term effects become clear.

Nevertheless, a fair system of school funding can only serve as a justification of centralization if there is indeed some link between the centralized governance of schools (furthering greater fairness and equity and the equality of educational opportunity via a centralized funding system) and lesser inequality in student outcomes (including students' performance in competency tests and in the labor market). Thus, one has to believe that the centralization of school governance and funding can and will lead at the end of the day to more equal student outcomes, better performance in competency tests and a lesser degree of dispersion of test results. Needless to say, even in a fair funding system there can be considerable differences in per-student financial resources of schools or inequalities in teachers' salaries and earnings if these reflect factors like the educational need of the students, the quality of work in the school, the qualification, experience, workload and effort of its teachers instead of the wealth of the municipality, the size of its population or the bargaining power of the headmaster.

What kind of changes in competency test results might reasonably have been interpreted as positive outcomes of the reform? Had the reform been successful in increasing the quality of education and reducing the achievement gap, a non-increasing or decreasing relative standard deviations should have been observable in test results in the post-reform years. (It is better to rely on relative standard deviations if the aim is to determine whether the centralization had the intended effect on competency test scores, as the mean scores can fluctuate considerably over time.)

Since many basic school students (usually from more ambitious families with better socio-economic background) transfer to 8- or 6-year academic secondary school programs upon completing the 4th or the 6th grade of basic school, and this skimming can distort the test results in grades 1-8 single-program basic schools considerably, especially in the 8th grade competency tests, here only the 6th grade test scores are used.

Small fluctuations in mean test scores between years may be random and no great significance should be attributed to them. However, if there is a steady tendency, or if the mean scores in every post-reform year are higher than in the pre-reform years, this may indicate a positive change in student performance and the quality of education after the reform. (However, not even this is sufficient to prove that the change was causally related to the reform.)

For KLIK-operated basic schools, 6th grade reading literacy test scores (Figure 6) were always better in the 2013-2015 period than in the last pre-reform year, which is a good sign. (For mathematics, the mean test results were less conclusive.) Unfortunately, as far as the relative standard deviations of reading literacy scores are concerned, the picture is

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[15]   These factors include student ability and motivation, teacher ability, the remuneration scheme of teachers, class size, class composition, the education and socio-cultural background of parents, peer group pressure, methods of education, etc.

less favorable, as these were higher in post-reform years than in 2012, so the intended effect is not to be seen here. (For the math test scores, the relative standard deviation is below the value of the last pre-reform year in two of the four post-reform years, so the results are inconclusive.)
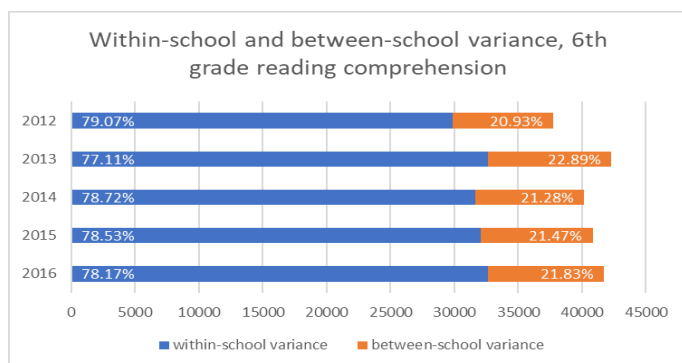
Note: The sample consists of schools that cover solely grades 1-8, were in operation between 2012 and 2016, and were under KLIK management starting from 2013 (number of schools 767, number of observations [students with test results] between 35,000 and 37,000, depending on the year).

Figure 6. Decomposition of total variance in 6th grade reading literacy test scores, KLIK-operated basic schools, 2012-2016.

It can be deduced from the objectives of reducing the differences in educational opportunity that the reform should facilitate the reduction of between-school differences in student performance. Thus, in the decomposition of variance, the intended effect should be an increase in the share of within-school variance and a decrease in the share of between-school variance. (Of course, it would have also been good if total variance had been lower after the reform than before, but as we mentioned already, this was not the case.) Unfortunately, in Figure 6, showing the decomposition of variance of reading literacy test scores, just the opposite tendency is visible. The share of between-school variance grew after the reform and remained higher in the whole post-reform period than its pre-reform level. Total variance was also bigger during the post-reform years than in 2012.

Conclusions

Parallel to what happened in many other areas of life, there has been a strong centralization in education governance and funding in Hungary since 2010. Here, an attempt has been made to identify the main reasons and objectives of this centralization by analyzing legislation and interviewing decision-makers and government officials. According to these sources, the main objectives the legislature and the government wanted to achieve with this centralization include the creation of a public education system that provides equal opportunity to every child; establishing improved and unified professional standards in the provision of public education; and more efficient and cost-effective institutional management.

Although there are undoubtedly some countries with centralized education systems that are quite successful in achieving these goals, based on international evidence it would be difficult to argue that centralization was necessary or instrumental in this, as there are also many successful decentralized systems, and even centralized systems tend to decentralize certain things. So, the choice of prescribed treatment for these problems does not seem to be evidence-based.

The centralization of education governance and funding did not meet some of the basic requirements that are necessary for the making of a successful reform. It was not based on a participatory process, and thus stakeholder engagement was unsatisfactory or missing. Its expected economic and social benefits were not defined clearly, and the goals of increased equality and equity in terms of school funding and educational outcomes were not determined precisely. No targets were determined. Implementation of the reform was rather hasty, and no pilot studies were conducted. Since the main reform objectives were not translated into clearly determined targets that could be easily monitored, the monitoring of the outcomes of the reform was practically missing. In such circumstances, effective accountability is unlikely to be achieved.

These shortcomings made it necessary to analyze the actual impacts of the centralization on per-student school funding, teacher earnings and educational outcomes (competency test results). The focus on single-program basic schools was intended to make matters less complicated. The results were somewhat inconclusive. As far as school funding (measured here by current per-student expenses) is concerned, the inequality of funding even increased right after the centralization, then stagnated and started to diminish significantly only after 2015. At the same time, in terms of per-student school funding according to the income of local authorities, the results are somewhat more satisfactory. In the first two years after the reform, per-student funding was considerably above the national average in the poorest two quintiles where it was below average in the last pre-reform year. At the same time, the relative funding advantage of the wealthiest quintile nearly disappeared. However, later a move towards the return of the old patterns is discernible: the relative advantage of the poorer local authorities disappears, while the wealthiest local authorities regain their advantage. The analysis of teachers' earnings shows that, although in 2014, following a salary reform for teachers, earnings inequality dropped considerably, by 2016 it was once again higher than in any of the preceding seven years. As far as student performance indicators are concerned, the results are mostly inconclusive and far from convincing – but the time span of the investigation is admittedly too short to expect any significant change in performance due to the reform.

All in all, although in some segments the reform brought about a few welcome changes later, its immediate effects often stood in direct contradiction to its declared objectives. Thus, the question arises of whether the whole exercise was a cover for some other agenda. As in the first two years after its introduction there was a rather drastic cut in current per-student expenses, one might think that to achieve a cut in education spending may be at least one of the reasons behind the centralization. However, in the later years, per-student expenditure started to grow considerably, so the savings did not prove lasting.

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Possibilities of Psychological Intervention on Social Networks

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Abstract:
Introduction: Nowadays we are looking for help and answers to our questions more and more often on the Internet. People use social networks to search for communities or groups whose members experience similar difficulties. These are often online groups that focus on psychological problems, domestic violence, etc. Members receive instant feedback and at the same time, due to the online disinhibition effect, they do not feel the fear, shame or worries they would feel in personal contact (Griffiths, 2005). The content of such self-help groups is not always helpful, but may rather induce pathological behaviour. However, the group administrator can influence the atmosphere in the group and its content itself (Niwa & Mandrusiak, 2012).
Purpose: The purpose of this research was to find a space to perform professional psychological interventions inside online self-help groups on social networks. The concept of a field worker was used in this research. The field worker offers helping services to clients in an enviroment natural to them and where the worker can provide the client with emergency help during the crisis and prevent other clients from offering risk advices (Ambrózová, Vitálošová, & Labáth, 2006).
Methods: We have conducted qualitative research using the method of content-frequency analysis. The sample for this study consisted of 10 closed online self-help groups focusing on topics such as depression, anxiety disorder, domestic violence, self-injurious and suicidal thoughts and tendencies, etc. For the purpose of this research we created an online group moderated by professionals, focusing on similar topics of mental disorders.
Conclusions: The reserach results indicated that group members exchanged useful informations (35.43%), described their current difficulties they were experiencing (32,33%), shared their own experiences (10.53%), and also published information on what had helped them manage the difficult feelings and situations they had been experiencing (6.39%). However, we also identified risky statements and threatening recommendations in posts and comments. Based on the results, we outlined the possibilities of online field worker interventions and described techniques of interventions that the professional can use for the benefit of group members.

Key words: online fieldwork, social networks, online communities, adolescent, psychological intervention.

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Introduction

The period of life of young people is sensitive to their development and mental processes themselves. Young people create their own identity, opinions, attitudes, values, convictions. Because of the difficult changes they experience, the risk of developing mental disorders is increasing (Rickwood, Deane, & Wilson, 2007), causing feelings of sadness, depression, anxiety. When adolescents are unable to cope with difficult situations, when they feel overwhelmed, they lose certainty and are stressed. These difficult situations can be, for example, caused by the parental relationship breakdown or by experiencing the feeling of loneliness, by the negativity of their thoughts and ideas about the future, but these challenging situations can be also caused by the feeling of mental or physical pain or suffering from health problems, and so on (Hanuliaková, Hasajová, & Porubčanová, 2016).

For this reason, it is necessary for young people experiencing difficulties to have an expert at their disposal, who can provide them with adequate and professional assistence in the case of difficulties or crises. Nowadays young people are increasingly looking for help on the Internet, and so it is essential for the expert to be available to them also in a virtual environment, where young people naturally talk about their lives (Madro, 2017). Similarly, Brignall & Valley (as cited in Juszczyk, 2015) report that adolescents use the Internet as an important form of social interaction. The reason why young people do not seek help from surroundings or do not visit an expert in person, is their fear of meeting the expert or lack of knowledge about the course of the meeting. Evans, Hawton and Rodham (2015) state that young people with self-injurious tendency need more help than their peers without the tendency. At the same time, they state, that less young people with the tendency to self-injurious behavior actually seek the help out.

Up to 38% of young Slovaks do not seek expert assistance not even in the case of thinking about suicide (Madro, 2016). They do not talk about their problems, they hold problems inside and stay with them on their own, or they look for answers on the Internet. They do so regardless of whether the found online content is useful and helps them to solve or manage their problems, or it is riskier to them (Whitlock, Lader, & Conterio, 2007).

Many adolescents seek help on suicide lines, in online groups or in various organizations. These are the possibilities of help, providing young people with a support system outside their social environment, where they seek help and support during challenging situations (Lenhart, Rainie, & Lewis, as cited in Juszczyk, 2015). However, these possibilities of assistence may also be threatening to them, for example, if there is a content that promotes dangerous or self-injurious behaviour, which may ultimately encourage this style of behaviour among young people (Juszczyk, 2015). Burnap, Colombo and Scourfield (2015) conducted a study in which they found out that people rather look for help from unprofessional sources, such as social network groups or various online discussion forums. They choose this kind of help mainly because they do not want to risk someone else being aware of their problems when visiting a professional service. Burnap et al. (2015) concluded that the Internet may be the first step to finding help personally.

In the first place, young people need to understand the problem they are experiencing or need to understand self-injuring specifically. The Internet provides them with this opportunity while also providing them with information on how and where to get professional help. They search for online communities and their members with intent to

gain emotional and social support, information, or support from someone more experienced than themselves or someone who experienced the same or similar problems as they did (Welbourne, Blanchard, & Boughton, 2009). Houston, Cooper and Ford (2002) state that sharing own experiences with problems they face, can have a positive effect by showing community members they are not the only ones experiencing similar problems. In these communities, they have also the opportunity to experience acceptance and understanding from someone who overcame similar life situation. This enables them to entrust their feelings and problems while acquiring new opinions, views and information on how to deal with their situation. However, there are two types of online groups. Boyd, Ryan and Leavitt (2010) report that there are groups in which the focus is on providing support in management and treatment, but there are also groups supporting self-injurious behaviour, such as content stating the pros and cons of differenet ways of commiting suicide and self-injuring. Internet search for topics related to self-injury was focused more on sites with content supporting the treatment and management (Swannell, Martin, Page, Hasking, & St. John, 2014).

Based on the information above, we decided to conduct reserach with the aim to find space and a way for a psychologist to perform professional psychological interventions in such online self-help groups we can find on social networks.

1 Methods

1.1 Research sample

The research was conducted in 11 online self-help groups on Facebook social network. The members of these groups were Czech and Slovak users of this social network. Our goul was to bring the possibilities of using space of online self-help groups for professional psychological intervention. We identified the specifcs of online support groups in Slovakia, and searched for possibilities of effective intervention in this space. At the same time, we wanted to identify changes in the groups after the interventions. We targeted 10 self-help online groups, content of which covered mental difficulties, their management and domestic violence, and we also founded our own moderated self-help group.

1.2 Measures

The research was carried out with the IPčko civic association. Qualitative research has focused on mapping the behavior of young people in online communities. The survey ran from June to September 2017. The conditions for group inclusion were that the group had to have at least 30 members and the groups had to be still active. We analyzed the group for 30 days, during which we were monitoring mutual interaction between self-help group members. The data received and stated in the research are fully anonymous. This means that it is impossible to identify specific individuals as well as groups to protect the group members. The total number of members in the groups was 7.873. Due to the anonymity of our research, we do not have the age and gender information of the members. To analyze the monitored posts and comments, we have chosen the content-frequency analysis conducted by two experts. The resulting categorization presented in the study was the result of their matching. Analyzed posts were public, which means they were visible to all group members, whether active or passive. An active group member is a member who actively publishes posts or comments

the posts. The passive member only watches the group and does not post or comment on the posts. Two main categories have been created, namely information and emotional support. Next we observed the frequency of occurance of individual categories and subcategories in posts and comments. The main category of informational support consisted of the subcategories "Recommendations and Self-help advice", "Drugs/doctors information" and "General information". The main category of emotional support constisted of the subcategories "Emotional support" and "Valuation".

The other categories stated in our research are "Experiencing difficulties", "Relationships with others", "Work and finance" and "Managing".

2   Results

There were differences in how members interacted with the groups. They also used them in different phases of their problem-solving. The groups featured posts where members wrote about their problem for the first time. This was often the case of them sharing their problems for the first time ever. They were looking for an asnwer to their question whether they needed a professional or other form of help with the problem, or they could manage the problem on their own. However, in the groups, there were also posts by members who solved their problem with an expert, but they wanted to find out how other members managed the problem, what helped them or only needed the support of other members. This means that these groups were also used as a resource of information, for example, about medicines, or to look for support in time between meetings with the experts. Groups also featured posts where members published their own story, problem, the way to solve it and they also included their current mood after solving the problem or situation in the post. In particular, they wanted to ecourage other members to solve their problems or situations. Due to the content found in these groups, we can state that there is space and also necessary need for psychological professional intervention and help in self-help groups like these.

Table 1

Analysis and frequency of posts

Group	Number of posts	Number of comments under the posts	Average number of reactions to a post					Number of group members	Period of observing the comments (days)
			Mean	*SD*	*Min*	*Max*	*Median*		
1	73	1521	20.01	9.82	0	129	12	3234	30
2	8	127	15.85	4.86	6	34	12.5	525	30
3	12	132	11	12.5	0	32	7.5	250	60
4	19	108	5.68	10.94	0	33	1	242	30
5	58	714	12.31	15.19	0	46	8	2164	8
6	20	142	7.1	7.35	0	57	1.5	657	30
7	16	274	17.13	38.31	0	91	12	125	10 months

8	8	181	22.63	2.17	0	158	4	308	30
9	31	446	14.39	10.65	0	79	8	275	30
10	5	9	1.8	1.92	0	5	1	30	90
Moderated	16	126	7.88	3.7	0	53	3.5	63	14

For clarity we also provide a table, which refers to posts divided by a topic. At the same time, it shows the intensity of comments in each category.

Table 2

Intensity of comments

	Topic	
	Least commented	*Most commented*
1	Depression, information, support, family problems	Drug information
2	Depression	Looking for a psychiatrist
3	Help recommendation	Psychological abuse
4	Drug distribution, recommendations, information, acknowledgement, health issues	Physical problems
5	Animals as help, improvement of psychological condition, drug information, acknowledgement, seeking out help, work	Drug information + questions about experience and situations
6	Pleas for advice and conversation, acknowledgements for being accepted into the group, complaint, help recommendation	Pleas for advice/schizophrenia
7	Sharing own experience	Information
8	Self-injuring (picture of a member)	Group of suicides (creation of the group)
9	Support	Sharing own experiences
10	Drugs information	Anxiety, fear, worries
Moderated	Depression, information, support, family issues	Depression

Through the content-frequency analysis we found out that the topic associated with Information and recommendations was the most frequently reported in the posts (35.34%). The least reported was the topic Valuation/Support (1.50%).

Table 3

Categorization of posts

Group	Information, recommendations	Own opinion/ Experience	Valuation/ Support	Experiencing difficulties	Relationships	Work, finance, disability	Managing	Other	Total number of comments
1	22	1	0	32	1	0	13	4	73
2	2	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	8
3	2	0	0	0	9	0	0	1	12
4	9	0	1	5	0	0	0	4	19
5	19	3	0	26	2	1	3	4	58
6	7	0	0	5	0	0	0	8	20
7	6	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	16
8	0	0	0	7	1	0	0	0	8
9	18	12	1	0	0	0	0	0	31
10	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	5
Moderated	8	0	2	4	1	0	1	1	16
Total	94	28	4	86	15	0	17	22	266
	35.34%	10	1.50%	32.33%	5.64%		6.39%	8.27%	

In the comments, we found out that from the main category "information support" were Other information the most common comment (65.66%). It was mostly information about the course of doctor's examination, and so on. We noticed the lowest number of comments in category Drugs/Doctor information (15.70%), most of which was to get information about specific medicines or refferals to doctor in their vicinity.

Table 4

Categorization of comments – information support

Group		Information support			
		Recommendations and self-help	*Drugs/Doctors information*	*Other info*	*Total*
1	Number	62	122	412	596
	%	10.40%	20.47%	69.13%	39.18%
2	Number	20	10	54	84
	%	23.81%	12.34%	64.29%	66.14%
3	Number	13	-	6	19
	%	68.42%	-	31.58%	14.39%
4	Number	20	14	15	49
	%	40.82%	28.57%	30.61%	45.37%
5	Number	73	75	58	206
	%	35.44%	36.41%	28.16%	28.77%
6	Number	13	4	55	72
	%	18.06%	5,56%	76.39%	50.70%
7	Number	19	-	101	120
	%	15.83%	-	84.17%	43.80%
8	Number	-	-	126	126
	%	-	-	100%	69.61%
9	Number	29	10	110	149
	%	0.19%	6.71%	73.83%	33.41%
10	Number	-	-	-	-
	%	-	-	-	-
Moderated	Number	30	-	46	76
	%	39.47%	-	60.53%	55.88%
Total	Number	276	235	-	-
	%	18.44%	15.70%	65.66%	39.48%

In the main category Emotional support, we recorded the highest values in support itself (85.59%). Users expressed support among themselves in their comments under the post,

whether to manage difficult period of life they were experiencing or not to be afraid to seek out a help. There was only 14.41% of Valuation in comments.

Table 5

Categorization of comments – emmotional support

Group		Emotional support		
		Valuation	*Support*	*Total*
1	Number	76	253	329
	%	23.10%	76.90%	21.63%
2	Number	1	23	24
	%	4.16%	95.83%	18.90%
3	Number	5	38	43
	%	11.63%	88.37%	32.58%
4	Number	-	13	13
	%	-	100%	12.04%
5	Number	7	175	182
	%	3.85%	96.15%	25.42%
6	Number	-	22	22
	%	-	100%	15.49%
7	Number	5	50	55
	%	9.09%	90.90%	20.07%
8	Number	3	3	6
	%	50%	50%	3.31%
9	Number	-	24	24
	%	-	100%	5.38%
10	Number	-	2	2
	%	-	100%	22.22%
Moderated	Number	6	9	15
	%	40%	60%	11.03%
Total	Number	103	612	715
	%	14.41%	85.59%	18.86%

In the results of other categories, we recorded the highest values in the category of sharing own opinions and experiences (18.86%). Members shared their views and experience with different goals. They shared for example their experiences to support others to seek out the help, or to give them a hope they will overcome the difficult period of live, too. However, they also shared experiences with the medicine they had taken that were often followed by a call to drop the drugs arbitrarily out.

Table 6

Categorization of comments – other categories

Group		Own opinion/ expercience	Experiencing difficulties	Relationships with others	Work, finance, invalidity	Managing	Other
1	Number	191	114	20	2	19	250
	%	12.56%	7.50%	1.31%	0.13%	1.25%	16.44%
2	Number	1	-	-	-	-	18
	%	0.79%	-	-	-	-	14.17%
3	Number	2	12	53	-	-	3
	%	1.52%	9.09%	40.15%	-	-	2.27%
4	Number	12	16	-	-	4	14
	%	11.11%	14.81%	-	-	3.70%	12.96%
5	Number	76	135	7	30	14	66
	%	10.61%	18.85%	0.98%	4.19%	1.96%	9.22%
6	Number	34	1	-	-	2	11
	%	23.94%	0.70%	-	-	1.41%	7.75%
7	Number	88	1	-	-	-	10
	%	32.12%	0.36%	-	-	-	3.65%
8	Number	35	-	-	-	-	14
	%	19.34%	-	-	-	-	7.73%
9	Number	249	6	-	-	-	18
	%	55.83%	1.35%	-	-	-	4.04%
10	Number	7	-	-	-	-	-
	%	77.78%	-	-	-	-	-
Moderated	Number	20	6	1		5	13
	%	14.71%	4.41%	0.74%		3.68%	9.56%
Total	Number	715	291	81	32	44	417
	%	18.86%	7.67%	2.67%	0.84%	1.16%	11%

In the groups we recorded total of 3,792 public comments, with the highest number of comments in the group focused on depression and other emotional difficulties. The total number of recorded comments is shown in the Table 7.

Table 7

The total number of comments

Group		Total number of comments
1	Number	1521
2	Number	127
3	Number	132
4	Number	108
5	Number	716
6	Number	142
7	Number	274
8	Number	181
9	Number	446
10	Number	9
Moderated	Number	136
Total	Number	3792

Questions in the posts and comments asked by members were predominantly those they were afraid to ask their doctors or relatives. These include, for example, questions about seeking medicine information, seeking information about professionals or other forms of assistance. For instance, if members asked questions focused on drug information, there where moments when they recommended each other to drop out the specific psychopharmacs on their own. Such advices on drug dropout may be threatening to the group members. The presence of an expert in such discussions could ensure users receiving relevant information, for instance, about treatment, medicines, or the risks associated with arbitrary drug dropout.

The second most frequent posts concerned the category of experiencing difficulties. Most of the difficulties were described by members while experiencing depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, and the like. Members also often described their fear of not being able to manage the difficult situation anymore. When we looked for the frequency of the "Experiencing difficulties" category in comments, we found it only in 7.67% of the comments. There were specifically comments containing information on difficulties they experienced, such as fear, but also including recommendations on how to deal with the difficulties. However, there were also posts where one member asked other members for suicide assistance or asked them for information on how to commit a suicide successfully. We even found a group called "Skupina Sebevrahů =P" (The group of

suicidals = P) where the title photo was a photography of wrinkled wrist and blood. This group was created by one member of the online group we were monitoring. This member posted information about existance of the group and urged other members to join. Comments to this post were mostly requests to join the group. There were also comments that sharply condemned such requests and aggresively ecouraged members who were interested in joining the group to finally commit the suicide. Because of the sensitive nature of suicide topic, it is necessary to respond to such interactions highly professionally and sensitively, especially in such mutual interactions. In the research, we also watched another group focused on suicidal behavior. The group administrator posted his own pictures, for example, with a gun to his head. He also published a commentary on the picture expressing hostility toward people in general.

Another administrator of the group published photographs of hands after the fresh self-injurious behaviour sent to him by other group members.

To find out the psychological intervention possibilities on social networks, we have identified 5 forms of intervention:

a) a link to the online counseling for young people IPčko.sk;
b) providing correct information;
c) use of systemic questions in the interview;
d) offering a private conversation via Facebook messages;
e) creating a moderated Facebook group – inviting members of other groups.

Given the results we can state, that publication of the link to internet counseling IPčko.sk is the most effective form of intervention. Through the analysis we found out that in the time of publishing the link and within 2 days since publishing this form of help, there were 74 views from Facebook page on the Internet counselling page and 38 sessions were made, which means they clicked somewhere on the page, read articles, information, and so on. Two chat consulations were conducted from this intervention.

Equally as successful was offering the opportunity to join the professionally moderated self-help group created for the research purpose. We noticed 11 new requests to join this group due to the announcement about possibility of membership in the group. The least successful intervention was offering a private conversation via private social network messages, as we did not notice any reaction to this intervention.

3 Discussion

Through our research we have been able to find out that members use space of online self-help groups during all phases of their problem-solving. It is used when the members want to entrust someone their problem for the first time ever, but also when they have solved their problem and want to encourage other members to solve their problem by their own story.

We assume that members have chosen the possibility to entrust their problems to total strangers for the first time because they did not fear the rejection of group members, felt safe, did not feel threatened by mockery or stigmatization. The Internet also provided them with the opportunity to stay as anonymous as they choose to. They also did not see the non-verbal reactions of people reading their post or comment, what could lead to a significant loss of fear of entrusting. However, as we were able to see in some of comments during the research, all of these reasons contributed to the fact that people also posted comments that were offensive, abusive and insulting.

"Information and recommendations" was the most frequent post topic and based on this finding we can claim that members use these groups to obtain various information, such as drug information, or information about professionals or mental life. According to the results of the content-frequency analysis we can conclude that the information requirement does not remain unresponded, as we recorded the highest rates in the Information support subcategory in the comments, too. In the comments, we have also recorded high number in the Emotional support, particularly when providing support itself. This suggest that members support and understand each other while experiencing challenging times. It also helps them to manage demanding period or feelings, too. Based on our findings we can assert that the presence of an expert in these online self-help communities can be useful to all members. Hatl (as cited in Mátel, 2013) states that the role of experts in such self-help groups can be also providing resources and consultations with aim to help other members to start over or rejoice in case of facing problems they can not overcome on their own.

There are more situations where a specialist in online field work can use the space of self-help groups to provide professional psychological intervention. In a group where members publish posts with topic of suicide, the expert can assess how risky the behaviour and symptoms of the user are and then can sensitively intervene in the way safe for the other group members with self-injurious and suicidal thoughts and tendencies, too. He can create helpful contact with them, provide crisis intervention, or motivate members to seek out professional help. He can also help to eliminate stigma between group members. Reduction of mental illness stigma is considered relevant in the prevention of various forms of mental disorders, including suicide (Niederkrotenthaler, Reidenberg, Till, & Goud, 2014). The specialist may also intervene in those situations where members advise one another on how to arbitrarily stop taking their medicine. In this case, the expert may provide correct information about the medicine, or correct information on what can happen if they drop their medication out without consulting a doctor who prescribed them. However, the expert has the ability to influence the group atmosphere. He can lead the group toward focusing posts on helping to cope with difficulties. This can be achieved by leading the discussion of threatening posts to managing the difficult situation, or by changing the group settings in the way that allows him to approve posts before publishing. This can lead to sorting out the posts with a pathological content. This is confirmed by the analysis by Fayard and DeSanctis (2005), in which they found out that the community of professionals with the same goal and interest in creating a certain rhythm of conversation, allows for the development of sustainable and meaningful online interactions while also revealing dynamics of the online forum. There are different ways for an expert to operate in such groups. He can remain in complete anonymity without using his real name. The expert can work using a nickname or a false name. He can also pretend to be a person with the same problem the members experience, not an expert. However, due to ethics, one can doubt the accuracy of this method. He can also appear in a partial anonymity, which means he presents himself as an expert, but keeps, for example, his name, surname, or nickname in secret. For instance, he can create an "avatar" to explain who he is and what is his purpose. His name can be, for example, Johny Psychologist. He can also use his real name or profile picture. In this case, however, it is necessary to gain trust of the group. It is also possible to create a new group, that gives members the opportunity to decide whether they want to join the group or not.

From the recorded intervention results, we can claim that it is useful to strenghten passive counseling content of helping pages for those seeking help. This includes, for example, articles, blogs, or videos used by experts to help clients. Not everyone has the courage to seek help actively. Therefore, we recommend publishing this form of help on the sites of the experts. We can also assume that an opportunity to entrust the problem anonymously, can contribute to finding the courage to solve problems in young people. This can help to overcome their fear of condemnent. Horská, Lasková & Ptáček (2010) report anonymity as one of the factors based on which a client decides for a certain type of counselling, because of the anonymity the client feels safer.

The fact that adolescent is experiencing a difficult period of life or facing a problem he can not handle himself, can be noticed by his environment. For example, people around can notice change in peer's behaviour. Adolescent might become detached on agressive, even though he or she wasn't like that before. A teacher may also notice, for instance, the sudden deterioration of school performance. Often, it is a teacher or a school psychologist who can first notice that the adolescent needs help, while offering him the help. The teacher or school psychologist can together with the student create space for conversation and create the conditions for adolescent to entrust his problem. In that case, teacher should ensure young peer of trust. Teacher should not doubt or simplify what adolescent brings. He also should not judge or advise young person right away. In such conversation, teacher or school psychologist should not promise the adolescent nobody is going to find out what they were talking about, because if adolescent describes a crime to a worker and the worker has to report it, the young person who entrusted him can perceive this as a breaking his trust. In this conversation, the teacher has the opportunity to encourage an adolescent not be afraid to solve his problem, whether he can be a support or help to him in case of need to involve a law enforcement authority in situation solving. A social worker can also use the Internet for online fieldwork. On the Internet, users are often looking for information about different kinds of social facilities, such as where they can look for its help, or how does a facility like this work. On the Internet often look for help even users who need help or various information, for example, about financial contributions or other information about social counseling. A social worker as an online field worker also has the opportunity to provide such users with adequate and true information from the field of social counselling.

Finally, we recommend conducting more studies to adress the issue of online self-help groups. Based on our research, however, we also recommend dividing categories according to whether their content was useful or risky to members. This could contribute to a better undestanding the distinction of coping strategies, which can be useful in recommending the forms of intervention in these online self-help groups.

Online field workers from internet counselling IPčko.sk join online discussions and groups that can bring serious risks to sensitive people with their interventions, in order to help eliminate these risks and direct participants of online groups toward constructive problem-solving. These are the online groups focused mostly on self-injuring. Our task in these groups is to provide professional and relevant information on mental health and help possibilities so they are understandable to our target group. This gets workers of Internet counselling IPčko closer to young people who are afraid of seeking out professional help they do not trust, although they trust other strangers.

Conclusion

Young people are nowadays looking for help on the Internet in online self-help groups on social networks or discussion forum. Therefore, the presence of an expert in these online communities can be useful to troubled young people. In addition, an expert can provide them with not only safe and correct information in their natural environment, but may, if necessary, provide crisis intervention or expertly assess the risk of self-injurious or suicidal behavior. He can also contribute by helping people, who have not worked with a professional or are worried about seeking him out, to meet the expert and gain experience of coopertiaon with him, in an enviroment safe and natural to them. The fact that the Internet is a space for young people where they usually spend time, whether because of work, school, shopping or entertainment, can make it easier for them to entrust their problem to the expert right there.

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Cognitive Competences of English Language Teachers and Their Impact on Use of Teaching Methods with Learners at Lower Secondary School

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Abstract:

Introduction: The paper discusses the term cognitive competence of foreign language teachers and focuses on their application in practice. It also deals with possible impact of cognitive competences on choice of teaching methods. The paper identifies a list of the cognitive competences which are both expected and needed when conducting English lessons.

Methods: For the purposes of the survey, the qualitative method of direct observation was chosen. To maximise valid information about the taught lesson, identical observation and self-evaluation sheets had to be designed first. The findings are analysed, compared, and conclusions drawn for school practice.

Results: The survey data show which cognitive competences the teachers of English language use the most and the least when the teaching of pre-intermediate learners from two grades was observed at lower secondary school. The main findings also highlight the necessity of using a wider variety of more up-to date teaching methods and approaches suitable for both target grades of learners, in contrast to still prevailing traditional ones.

Discussion: It needs to be admitted that the authors of this paper are not aware of works which deal with similar research of cognitive competences. Though many authors write about social, key and teaching competences in general, cognitive competences are still a kind of Pandora's box. It is recommended both that deeper research be undertaken in this field and that teachers pay more attention not only to relevant theoretical knowledge within, for example, courses of continual professional development, but also to the impact on their learners' performance of the cognitive competences being used.

Limitations: The authors are aware of the limited number of observed lessons due to objective reasons such as the reluctance of some teachers to participate in the survey. The survey sample of four observed lessons is too small to enable definitive, generalisable statements to be made about the use of cognitive competences and the appropriateness of teaching methods. Additional, observed lessons would yield more valuable and valid results.

Conclusion: The survey proves that cognitive competences are a necessary part of teachers' personalities and abilities and their usage can depend on the proficiency level of learners of English language. The authors assert that the topic of cognitive competences and their impact in foreign language teaching has still not been

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explored in detail. It is an interesting area involving active metacognitive and cognitive functions influenced by many factors which tend to change according to the teacher's historical context. This idiographic survey for the purposes of a graduation thesis carried out in a small town school can be regarded as a modest contribution to the topic.

Key words: competence, cognition, metacognition, method, teaching process.

Introduction

The level of learners' knowledge depends on the teacher's abilities and pedagogic mastery (Petlák, 2000; Kouteková, 2015). This is what must be considered when talking about teaching process. Nowadays, a good teacher is expected to be a highly educated, knowledgeable, responsible, creative and skillful professional who bears responsibility for the quality of learners' education. Especially in the last decades, necessary specific requirements regarding these teacher's professional abilities and skills - so called competences - have changed, and their number has increased. Teaching is not about passing on knowledge anymore; it includes improvement of thinking, creativity, communication skills, working on relationships, building self-confidence, reliability and responsibility, dealing with problems, preparation for one's professional future, and so forth. (Magová et al., 2016) Moreover, nowadays, assessment of teachers' competences is considered to be an integral part of the internal quality assurance system of each educational institution (Hašková & Lukáčová, 2017) and carrying out this assessment is one of the head of school's responsibilities (Hašková, Bánesz, & Magová, 2016).

Walker (1992) defines a competence from a general point of view "as the attribute which enables an individual or group to perform a set of tasks to an appropriate level and thus makes the individual or group competent in that role." Various authors differ slightly in terms of their definitions. Kosíková (2011) claims a competence is not only the absorption of knowledge and skills but also the creation of abilities necessary for life or profession. It is a bounded structure of skills, wisdom, abilities, leading, organizing, advisory, and social attitudes, opinions which are necessary for a learner. Gadušová et al. (2014) see a competence in a similar way as a complex of skills and abilities and further define them as specific requirements such as psycho-educational, communicative, leadership, organizing, and advisory. Krásna and Verbovanec (2014) consider competences as a behaviour which leads a person to gain a high achievement. Many scholars deal with teachers' competences. For example, Petlák (2000) highlights the importance of the role of teacher. According to him "the success of a teaching process is not accidental, but it depends on a teacher and his/her approach to work and learners." Teacher's competences can be classified into at least three broad categories. To the first area belong competences aimed at teacher' professionality, professional development and managerial abilities in the educational process. The second category is represented by competences which focus on factors of teaching with an impact on a learner's individuality and development. The third one is represented by competences with a focus on subject content and didactic-methodological areas of the educational process (Lomnický et al., 2017).

One of the most important competences of a teacher is the ability to update own ways of teaching and to adapt teaching methods to the new expectations and requirements of a modern knowledge-based society. It means not only having a responsible attitude to the educational process and an ability to self-reflect to improve its effectiveness, but also

reacting appropriately to learner' ability to integrate the acquired knowledge into other relevant theoretical or practical activities. There is also an emphasis on the importance of managing various situations as well as the teacher's flexibility in reacting to specific individual needs of each learner. Teachers are not only expected to know competences theoretically, and therefore to be aware of the abilities and skills necessary for teaching professionally, but must also demonstrate a certain ability, gift, predisposition or mastery in applying and using them appropriately in everyday school practice too. Also, the question of how to motivate teachers to improve their competences is highly important. The tools for improving, upgrading and developing teachers' skills should be relevant, and appropriate education and training of teachers is necessary. According to Belz and Siegrist (2001) one of the most effective ways of improving teachers' professional competences is group work involving fellow professionals. Groups allow teachers to meet others within the same field of study and with similar needs as well. Hašková et al. (2010) hold the view using electronic educational and teaching materials is not helpful only in teaching and learning process, but is of great help for teachers' self-education too.

Before teachers work with learners in the class, and before choosing the way of teaching, be it method or technique, it is necessary for them to be aware of the psychological and psycho-didactic processes present in the human body. Both emotions and cognitive processes, including thinking, acquisition of knowledge, and perception are important aspects in any teaching process. Cognitive process includes perception, imagination, thinking, memory and attention. The first three abilities create cognitive pictures straight away, while memory and attention do not create these pictures, but are a necessary component of the other processes. Emotions influence thinking and vice versa, and intellectual thinking can calm some emotions in a stormy situation.

In teaching languages all psychological, or to be more specific, all cognitive processes must be necessarily present. The "realization of our own cognitive processes" (Kosíková, 2011, p. 40) is called metacognition. It can also be understood as a "complex of cognitive abilities, personal characteristics and themes". Besides thinking, a learner uses their own metacognitive strategies, logical thinking, solution of problems at higher level as well. It can be said that children's competences to learn and solve problems are influenced and improved by metacognition. Furthermore, creativity and solving problems are key aspects for cognitive competences nowadays, as Krykorková (2004) adds. Cognitive competences are crucial for interaction of the learner with new study material. The process is not only about strategies, but also involves coding and decoding information: organization of the study process is important, too.

Metacognition is essential in learning. Not only is it important in facilitating the absorption of new information and, in general, in the learning of healthy children, but it is also very helpful for learners with learning disabilities. It helps the creation of a good plan or structure for learning information. Moreover, it is proved that if "learners were given a list of strategies that they could apply at their discretion, comprehension was greatly improved". (Pressley et al., 1998, p. 159) Metacognitive strategies include cognitive manners, and as Hnilica (1992) states, learning process is also affected by personal features.

Now, several metacognitive strategies will be presented below which can be used in English lessons at different proficiency levels. These are:

a) PQRST method = is very useful when working with literary texts. The main point of this method is that it helps learners to keep information in long-term memory. The name of it is derived from initial letters: Preview, Question, Read, Self-recitation, Test. The first and the last steps usually deal with the chapter itself and three middle steps are assigned to every part within the chapter. Some authors use "summarize" or "state" instead of self-recitation. This method is one of the most effective and complex methods used in reading comprehension (Veselský, 2004).

b) MURDER strategy = this acronym stands for Mood, Understand, Recall, Digest, Expand/Elaborate, Review. It represents a study technique which can be used in every study field and school subject. MURDER leads to better performance and, moreover, we can use it for improving not only reading and writing skills, but also listening and speaking (Helus & Pavelková, 1992).

c) THINK-ALONG strategy = was in 1983 suggested by Beth Davey, but under the term think-aloud. "During the think-along process, the teacher reads a story aloud to students, who follow along in their copies. As the teacher reads, she thinks-aloud so the students can think-along with her" (Farr, 1989, p. 94).

d) SQ4R strategy = is appropriate for teaching at any proficiency level. This successful and effective strategy has been used since the 60's as a great help for learners in getting useful information from textbooks. The acronym SQ4R represents the following verbs: Survey, Question, Read, Reflect, Recite, Review. Some teachers use different variations of this strategy like SQ3R, SRR, PQ4R which contain some modifications (Duchovičová & Škoda, 2013).

e) COGNITIVE ACTIVITY PATTERN method = teacher uses it when explaining steps of some process. But what is considered as important is that the teacher speaks aloud, so, the learners can hear and see his/her inner thinking process expressed verbally. Things which usually act as indiscernible, cognitive, logical processes are now clearly shown and unmasked (Walberg et al., 2005).

These are not the only strategies in the metacognitive field. Many other variations are used nowadays and not only by teachers, but also by other competent professionals in a range of specialized courses. Nevertheless, the ones stated above can be widely used, they are applicable in English language instruction, and, finally, learners are able to use them independently after some practice.

To understand the term cognitive competence, it is important to know the difference between cognitive and learning styles. Cognitive style is derived from cognition which means from thinking, knowing. Cognitive style is sometimes understood as something like an initial, primary name for learning styles. According to the Educational Dictionary (Průcha, Walterová, & Mareš, 2001), a cognitive style is described as an individual way of receiving and processing information, also as a complex of intellectual, cognitive, and perceptual abilities. Moreover, these authors add that it is also possible to diagnose it. Allport (1937), the first author to start using this term, sees cognitive style as a tool for categorizing personal and intellectual styles. It can also be understood as a way of organizing and controlling cognitive processes (Gardner, 1993). It is important to consider that cognitive style is ascribed to each learner from birth, this implies that it is not possible to change, modify, or influence it. On the other hand, cognitive style is not only the deepest layer of a learning style (Švec, 2002), but it also refers to the way a person processes information internally in a way that is unique to that individual. Not

only for teaching English language, but also for other school subjects and learning courses it is necessary for teachers to be able to recognize the cognitive and learning styles of their learners. Using appropriate methods, motivation, and aids is dependent on a style type.

Receiving and processing information during English lessons depends not only on a learner's learning style, cognitive functions, or teacher's competences, but also on a learner's level of intelligence. Ruisel (2004) claims that there is an important connection between intelligence and how learners visualize their mental objects, pictures or processes. In the past, intelligence was understood only as a result of thinking processes (of cognition). However, it involves an ability to use all the brain's capacities effectively, too. Intelligence has been explored by many authors, inter alia Vygotsky (1978), Herrnstein and Murray (1994), Jensen and Miele (2002), or Gardner (1993).

According to the cognitive features mentioned above, the following cognitive competences were identified for the purpose of the idiographic qualitative survey for the needs of a graduation thesis (Muchálová, 2018): competence to coordinate, competence to explain, competence of keeping attention and interest, competence to work in different ways at the same time, competence to accept other opinions with a view to improving one's own abilities and skills, competence to organize the lesson in terms of time management, competence to put cognition, emotions, and intelligence together and competence to use various methods. The identified cognitive competences were intended to function as a brief review or summary of just a few crucial competences with the focus on the ones which are the most important and the most often applied in foreign language lessons - in our case in English classes. Thus, these cognitive competences of a foreign language teacher are a basis for the empirical survey.

1   Methodology

The study analyses the data yielded by the idiographic survey which was part of a graduation thesis focused on teacher's cognitive competences. The aim was to find out what cognitive competence addressed teachers of English language use or apply in the observed lessons and what possible impact the competences employed have on the choice of teaching methods and techniques in the educational process. Moreover, the influence of learners' proficiency level when applying competences must be considered as well. For the purposes of the qualitative research, direct observation as a method was chosen. Four classes of learners at lower secondary school were intentionally chosen from a small town in the Liptov Region (central Slovakia). The table below shows how the observed classes were divided according to their learners' proficiency level:

Table 1

Division of classes for observation

Pre-intermediate level	Grade	Number of learners	Teacher	Time
1st group (PIL1)	8 A	8	teacher A	9.45-10.30
2nd group (PIL1)	8 B	6	teacher B	11.30-12.15
1st group (PIL2)	9 A	15	teacher A	7.50-8.35
2nd group (PIL2)	9 B	11	teacher B	10.40-11.25

The first pre-intermediate group of eight-graders are labelled as PIL1. The second group of learners of the ninth grade are labelled as PIL2. As shown in the table above, teachers are also marked either with the letter A or B. The learners in grades 9 A and 9 B are more experienced and slightly more advanced. There was a different teacher of English language for each grade, meaning that four teachers were involved in the research in total.

When observing the lessons in grades 8 A and 8 B, both teachers taught the same subject matter. The teachers in the higher classes worked in the same way. The teacher in class 9 A taught the same topic as the teacher in class 9 B. Even though there is only one school year difference between these two grades, the English teachers claimed that abilities of the learners from grades 8 B and 8 A were much lower than those of the older learners' in grades 9 A and 9 B. Thus, we considered these four classes as appropriate survey samples of learners for observational purposes.

All the observed teachers were females. The average length of their teaching experience was 20 and half years. The youngest teacher has been teaching for 14 years, another one for 17 years, the third teacher for 22 years, and the eldest teacher has been teaching for 29 years. We consider this data as an important fact because it can also have a significant influence on the choice of teaching methods, techniques, and the organization of the lesson in general. The impact of a teacher's teaching experience and experience with the methods used will also be commented upon.

Before the observations, all four teachers were informed about the survey intentions and were requested to teach the way they usually do. Keeping the organization of the lesson as natural as possible was crucial for the reliability of the survey, too. After teaching the lesson, the teachers themselves assured the observer that the educational process had been as usual, in their opinion, which means that the learners behaved naturally, as if nobody had been sitting there and observing them. So, it is reasonable to state that the lessons were not influenced unduly by the research. These observations were done in March 2018 with the permission of the head teacher of the school. Two English lessons taught in eight grades were observed on 8th March and two lessons of the ninth-graders were observed one week later, on 16th March.

Before the observation itself, the researcher was challenged to work out an observation sheet for the observer and a self-evaluation sheet for teachers teaching the observed lessons. The observation sheet was partially inspired by and designed according to evaluation sheets which were, at the time of working on the thesis, in the process of being created as a part of a university APVV-14-0446 project called Evaluation of Teacher's Competences. Also, the sheets were supposed to be designed according to the findings being sought. The observation sheet consists of five pages. At the top of the first page, there is a chart for basic information (name of school, date, number of learners, etc.) Then, the sheet is divided into two parts called – "The organization part of the lesson" (consisting of seven questions) and "The lesson from methodological point of view" (including ten questions). The observation sheet and the self-evaluation sheet are nearly identical.

The aim of the sheets was to maximize the level of reliable information about the presented lesson. That is also why it was decided to use two main types of questions. These are: Closed questions (these offer several possibilities and observer and teachers are supposed to choose an appropriate answer) and Semi-open questions (these include

options necessary to choose from, but also space for personal responses or some explanation). This type of question is the one used most frequently.

Both observation and self-evaluation sheets offer various ways of answering. The objective was not to see them as statistical facts only. It was important to get more than just one-word answers. Almost every question gives an opportunity to explain the response given or to write the reason why the teacher thinks so. Moreover, some questions required more space and options for more complex answers, thus making them clearer and more understandable. Charts were designed and applied in the sheets too. To elicit appropriate and usable answers, scales were also designed. Mostly the interval scale type was used with 5 choices. These were: Not at all, Rarely, Sometimes, Most of the time, and All the time. In one question, ordinal scale was designed with points from 1 to 5. These numbers represent the level of agreement, where 1 is "strongly agree" and 5 is "strongly disagree". The last type of question measures the order of importance. A list of 10 cognitive competences, derived from a detailed and thorough theoretical study, was given there, and the teacher's task was to mark them with a number in decreasing order of importance, where 1 is the most applied and 10 the least applied item.

To sum up, this survey is perceived as an idiographic survey conducted at a small town school with a small number of teachers serving as a basis for qualitative analyses. Even though only four lessons were observed, belief is strong that the analyzed data from the lessons provided good material to work with and reflected a real situation in one of the "marginal" schools in our country. On the other hand, concurrently we are aware that the results of the survey could differ if 10 or more classes taught by another age group of teachers from various regions were to be observed.

2   Results

Even though only four lessons were observed, it can be confidently affirmed that reliable results were gained from such a small-scale survey. Two lessons were focused on eight-grader learners and two on nine-grade learners of pre-intermediate level in the lower secondary school. It would be not possible to come to any conclusion without observation and the evaluation sheets that had been designed and prepared in advance. As stated earlier, one of the aims of the survey was to find out whether teachers apply their cognitive competences at all during lessons. Based on the observations, all four teachers applied their cognitive competences in a different way. Some teachers used competence to organize or explain more than others, while some considered competence to use various methods and aids less important than the other teachers. But all four teachers used several cognitive competences during the lesson. Clearly, it is not possible to teach learners and lead a lesson without using cognitive competences. After all, teachers already start using cognitive competences before the lesson. An ability to plan and prepare requires a teacher to think carefully about their learners and their abilities, relationships in the class, topics they have already dealt with before or those they will learn later. Moreover, creativity, intelligence, and emotion are needed when planning the lesson.

Ultimately, the analyzed data show that the most commonly applied cognitive competence was competence to organize mainly due to the fact each lesson was structured well, including time management and disciplinary factors, and the stages were smoothly and logically interconnected. This competence was carried out appropriately in all grades. Next in importance was the competence to explain. It was present in all four

lessons in which new subject matter, i.e. Gradation of Adjectives (grades 8 A, 8 B and the Present Perfect Tense (grades 9 A, 9 B g) were introduced. The teachers applied other competences too, for instance, competence to use various aids. Out of two observed pairs of teachers, there always was one teacher from each pair who used more aids than the other. It is important to highlight the different teachers' use of the interactive white board. On one hand, not all teachers, mostly those who belong to an older generation, choose to work with this up-to date technical aid and are still afraid of using it in education. On the other hand, it is true that not every class in every school has this interactive device. Luckily, the chance arose for observation of a lesson that was very motivating and interesting when using it during nearly the whole time; furthermore, learners truly enjoyed it. Explanation of a new topic is no longer about writing notes, concepts, on the blackboard, but still a lot of teachers keep using this traditional approach.

The other important aim of our local survey was to observe the use of various methods and techniques applied according to teacher's competences. The observation proved that cognitive competences of teachers have an impact on the use of teaching methods. The higher creativity and depth of professional knowledge, the more numerous and varied the methods used in teaching. If a teacher is bored and without enthusiasm, then, in general, fewer methods are employed. The observed teachers used from three to four different methods on average. They usually were using brainstorming or discussion as motivational methods. Then, revision as a method and question-answer were applied. The teachers in the eighth grades used more methods than the teachers in the ninth grades. It can be said they need to apply their competences more and be more flexible and creative than probably teachers teaching learners in higher grades.

Due to the small scale of the qualitative survey, there was no need to state hypotheses. We stated just the survey questions and gathered insights into each of these, in pursuit of the survey aims, as follows:

- *What cognitive competences does a teacher need to have when teaching eighth-graders at pre-intermediate level and ninth-graders at the same level?*

The list of competences designed in the theoretical part of the graduation thesis and stated in Introduction were found to be very useful. All the competences written there are considered important. It is difficult to say which of them are the most crucial ones, but it is also one of the teacher's abilities to manage their competences simultaneously. The most important competences which teachers teaching both grades need to apply are those involving explanation, the of use various methods and aids, competence to coordinate, and competence to arouse learners' interest. As the results show, our sample of teachers is advised to improve their thinking, perception or acceptance of others' opinions constantly.

- *What differences in cognitive competences can be performed when two different teachers teach the same topic at the same grade level?*

We were given a chance to observe lessons of four teachers only. But there were obvious differences in their way of teaching. For instance, two teachers teaching the same topic in the grades at the same level had in common a problem with the competence of choosing appropriate methods. The teachers had difficulties naming the methods, moreover, they used only the more traditional ones. The other difference was seen in the competence to use effective aids. One teacher used the blackboard only, while the other one used an interactive white board, online programme or a song. The competence to

accept others' opinion was examined. Almost all four teachers were afraid of asking their learners for any feedback, or they simply did not want to. It seems reasonable to suggest that this competence needs improvement. Other competences were applied in approximately equal measure.

- *How can the designed observation sheet help the observer to evaluate the results of the research?*

The aim of the thesis was also to design the observation and self-evaluation protocols. From these, we found out what competences the teachers had problems with, for example, competence seek feedback or competence to choose appropriate aids and methods. The protocols also reflected the teachers' approach to teaching methods as such. Thanks to these instruments, we found out that the observed teachers had quite noticeable problems, firstly, with naming methods, and secondly, with using them. Being physically present at the observed lessons was very useful for the observer, moreover, the teachers' opinions written in the self-evaluation sheets completed the realistic view at the level of cognitive competences.

It can be said that answers were found to all three stated survey questions and our survey can be regarded as useful and meaningful. Observing only four lessons inevitably brings limitations. It means that the results garnered may differ from results had the observed lessons been more numerous. The findings lead us to conclude that the topic of cognitive competences has not yet been fully researched and discussed. Together with other competences of a foreign language teacher, they are a necessary part of their professional education. Owing to the on-going APVV project and the efforts of other researchers and professionals in the field, fresh possibilities to conduct more observations in the future with more valid results, seem to be both appropriate and realistic.

Below, the concrete results of just two questions from the self-evaluation sheets have been chosen for presentation in this paper. They reflect and identify teachers' problems with teaching methods. First, the results from the self-evaluation sheets filled in by the teachers of eight-grade learners will be shown and commented upon (Tables 2 and 3). It should be noted that Teachers A and B were teaching the same topic- Gradation of Adjectives. Both teachers had the same teaching conditions including the same teaching aids. Despite this fact, the lessons were different. It needs to be said that the teachers in both grades were using both languages during the lesson - Slovak and English, because the pre-intermediate learners simply required it.

QUESTION:
Fill in the table below with the help of the following questions:
- What teaching methods did you use?
- In what phase of the lesson did you apply each method?
- What was the main point of the method?
- What was the learners' attitude towards it?
- What learners' cognitive competences were improved?
- Which cognitive competences did you use/apply?

Table 2

Methods used by Teacher A

Name of the method	Phase of the lesson	Main aim	Learners' attitude	Improved learners'cognitive competences	Used/Applied teacher's cognitive competences
brainstorming	motivation	to practise new adjectives	children liked it	fast thinking	ability to support learners and accept ideas
description as a method	controlled practice	practising grading adjectives	funny activity for children	creativity	ability to support and help Ls
discussion	controlled practice	practising new vocabulary	children enjoyed the activity	ability to compare	ability to explain
repetition	conclusion	revision of new vocabulary	interesting, they enjoyed it	thinking, understanding	ability to choose appropriate sentences, words

The observers' comments: Each part of the lesson included some method. As mentioned above, teacher A always starts the lesson with revision of tenses. At this stage in the lesson, she chose brainstorming. The learners revised tenses and applied fast thinking. Also, the teacher had to react fast and either accept or not accept learners' ideas. Description as a method was also used. It was a good idea to practise adjectives to achieve the objectives. The learners had a chance to practise gradation on real objects. Next method was discussion. The learners were comparing fashion in the past and nowadays. This method also helped the achievement of aims. At the end of the lesson, the teacher used repetition as a method. The learners repeated the structures used for grading adjectives, in more examples. It can be said that via these methods she achieved objectives in an interesting, amusing way.

Table 3

Methods used by Teacher B

Name of the method	Phase of the lesson	Main aim	Learners' attitude	Improved learners' cognitive competences	Used/Applied teacher's cognitive competences
discussion	motivation part	getting learners' attention	they enjoyed the discussion	presenting own ideas and opinions	ability to lead the discussion
game	1st half of the lesson	practising adjectives	it was interesting for Ls	thinking	ability to coordinate and correct
description of a picture	2nd part of the lesson	practising adjectives	it was a good way of repetition	creativity thinking	ability to accept other opinions
revision as a method	the end of the lesson	revision of comparative and superlative	Ls like it, because they understood it	quick thinking	ability to achieve the objectives

The observer's comments: The second teacher also used several methods to achieve objectives. As said before, teacher B used an interactive board at the very beginning of the lesson. It was a good idea and a way of arousing learners' attention. Then she used it also for a game consisting of matching adjectives and making pairs with nouns. In the second part of the lesson, the teacher improved reading comprehension. However, she was still practising adjectives with her learners. It means that she did two things at the same time, but the learners' progress in both areas was demonstrated. At the end of the lesson, she applied learners' cognitive competence to think fast. Learners were asked to create negatives or questions from the sentences they have already written on the board. In our opinion, all the teaching objectives were reached.

Now, the results of the same question will be shown which were filled in by the teachers teaching ninth-graders learners (Tables 4 and 5). Teachers A and B were teaching the same topic of the Present Perfect Tense. Many learners regard it as very difficult. Both teachers compared this tense with the past simple tense during the observed lessons. The groups of learners are considered good and bright. That is why they did not use their mother tongue during the lesson at all (in both grades). The observer was curious about what up-to-date methods would be used during the lessons. Neither teacher's A nor teacher B's lessons included any more up-to date communication methods (e.g. Phillips 66, Carousel, DIE, Snowball, Mind map, Creative drama, Experiential teaching etc.).

Table 4

Methods used by Teacher A

Name of the method	Phase of the lesson	Main aim	Learners' attitude	Improved learners' cognitive competences	Used/Applied teacher's cognitive competences
motivational dialogue (Where did you go for holiday?	motivation part	-to get Ls' attention -to connect it with past simple	learners were interested in	fast reacting	ability to get Ls' attention
repetition	introduction controlled activity conclusion	-to revise past simple -to get to use new tense -to make Ls understand	-learners were answering the questions -they felt they understand it	understanding thinking perception	ability to revise new tense via different ways
praise as a method	controlled activity	to make learners feel they can do it	learners liked when T told them "very good"	accepting others opinion	-ability to raise the interest in learning -ability to find sth. to praise for

The observer's comments: Teacher's motivational method at the beginning of the lesson was very good. It aroused learners' interest. During the whole lesson she was using repetition as a method. It was necessary and logical because of introducing the new language structure. It helped the learners to remember it better. This was demonstrated at the end of the lesson when the learners successfully created sentences in present perfect

tense and not just in manipulative exercises. Also, they were able to use the structure in freer production when talking about themselves. Teacher A also praised learners a lot which helped them to think they can learn this problematic tense more easily. Teacher A had problems recollecting the names of the teaching methods used. Nevertheless, the observer cannot say that the teacher was not able to apply her competence to use an appropriate method. To become familiar with more up-to-date methods and introduce them in lessons is recommended.

Table 5

Methods used by Teacher B

Name of the method	Phase of the lesson	Main aim	Learners' attitude	Improved learners' cognitive competences	Used/Applied teacher's cognitive competences
brainstorming	motivation part	getting learners' attention	they enjoyed it, because they had a chance to tell their idea	-imagination -presenting ideas	ability to accept learners' ideas/opinions
motivational dialogue	motivation part	to make learners be interested in	it was interesting for Ls	thinking imagination	ability to keep learners' attention
song as a motivation	conclusion	to revise learnt knowledge	learners were happy about the song	ability to work in different ways at the same time	ability to coordinate and to know when and how to correct

The observer's comments: Methods used by Teacher B were in accordance with her cognitive competences. She was improving several learners' competences like thinking or ability to work in different ways at the same time and her own competences such as ability to keep learners' attention or ability to coordinate and to know when and how to correct. At the beginning of the lesson she used brainstorming to elicit learners' ideas and opinions. Then she smoothly moved through a motivating dialogue to explanation of the new tense. The song at the end of the lesson was a very good choice. She was able to apply her competence to coordinate all the activities well. However, she did not apply any of the more up-to-date methods, except brainstorming. Interestingly, even though she did not use them, she was able to keep her lesson interesting. But in the observer's opinion, it would be beneficial to use a more interactive and inductive approach in her lessons.

The fact the teachers had problems to name the used methods is regarded as rather unsatisfactory; moreover, they applied only brainstorming as a more up-to-date method.

As mentioned in the Introduction, a list of cognitive competences of a teacher was designed. This list was included in the self-evaluation sheet too. It is interesting to note the competence teachers thought they had applied the most. First, the answers of the teachers of eighth-grade learners are presented.

QUESTION:
Which competence (marked in the tables as "c") did you apply at the lesson the most? If any from the list, put sign X. Then mark them with a number in decreasing order of importance (1 = the most applied, 10 = the highest number – the least applied).

Table 6

Teacher A's applied competences

1	c. to explain
2	c. to coordinate
3	c. of keeping attention and interest
4	c. to organize the lesson in terms of time
5	c. to use various methods
6	c. to put cognition, emotions, and intelligence together
7	c. to work in different ways at the same time
8	c. to use various aids
9	c. to know when and how to correct
X	c. to accept other opinions so that to improve own abilities and skills

Table 7

Teacher B's applied competences

1	c. to coordinate
2	c. to explain
3	c. to organize the lesson in terms of time
4	c. to use various methods
5	c. to know when and how to correct
6	c. of keeping attention and interest
7	c. to put cognition, emotions, and intelligence together
8	c. to accept other opinions so that to improve own abilities and skills
9	c. to use various aids
10	c. to work in different ways at the same time

The observer's comments: As can be seen in Table 6 above, teacher A did not apply only one competence from the list. She did not use the competence to accept another opinion because she did not ask for feedback as mentioned before. If we have a look at the results put in the table, we can see that teacher A perceives the competences in an absolutely different way than teacher B. There is no same answer. First two competences were put almost at the same level. Teacher A thinks the most applied competence was competence to coordinate. Teacher B, as can be seen in Table 8, put this competence at the second place while the competence to explain is at the first place. And here their opinions differentiate. Teacher A fills in the first five positions with the competence of keeping attention, competence to organize the lesson in terms of time, and competence to use various methods. The third place in teacher B's table is competence to organize the lesson in terms of time, fourth is using various methods, and the fifth is correcting errors and mistakes. This competence was at the last place on teacher A's list of the most

applied competences. According to teacher B the least applied competence is competence to work in different ways at the same time. After teaching the lessons and filling the self-evaluation sheets, both teachers told us it had not been that easy to choose appropriate number of order here because sometimes they would put more competences at the same level.

Below, the answers of teachers teaching ninth-graders are shown.

Table 8

Teacher A's applied competences

1	c. to explain
2	c. to organize the lesson in terms of time
3	c. of keeping attention and interest
4	c. to put cognition, emotions, and intelligence together
5	c. to work in different ways at the same time
6	c. to coordinate
7	c. to know when and how to correct
8	c. to use various methods
9	c. to accept other opinions so that to improve own abilities and skills
10	c. to use various aids

Table 9

Teacher B's applied competences

1	c. to coordinate
2	c. to organize the lesson in terms of time
3	c. to use various aids
4	c. to explain
5	c. to know when and how to correct
6	c. of keeping attention and interest
7	c. to use various methods
X	c. to work in different ways at the same time
X	c. to accept other opinions so that to improve own abilities and skills
X	c. to put cognition, emotions, and intelligence together

The observer's comments: As seen in the tables above, teachers A and B have different opinions about the importance of applied competences within the lesson. Moreover, teacher B marked three competences with the sign X, which means she does not consider them as important as other competences. Teacher A thinks the competence to explain was the one applied most during the lesson, followed by the competence to organize the lesson in terms of time. Then keeping attention and the mixture of cognition, emotions and intelligence occupy the next most prominent positions. Using various aids, accepting other opinions and using various methods are assigned to the last places. And this truly corresponds to reality. All three of these competences were applied with least frequency during the lesson. Teacher B thinks coordination and organization are the most important competences within the lesson. Moreover, using various aids is also crucial. Then

correcting errors, keeping the attention and using various methods are next in order of ranking. As the lessons were different, Tables 8 and 9 also highlight the differences between the two teachers and their ways of applying competences. Competence to ask for a feedback is truly in the last positions and it needs to be given higher value and attention. Also, competence to use various methods was considered less important which mirrors its position in the table of methods in the question before. Teachers do not know the methods, they cannot up-to-date ones and thus they cannot apply them in lessons.

3   Discussion

Many theoreticians view the study of teachers' key competences as important for successful teaching practice. Also, social competences are very often at the core of research. On the other hand, the topic of cognitive competences seems to have fallen out of favour among researchers, so it is difficult to find current research dealing with cognitive competences applied mainly in English language instruction. There is no similar research in Slovakia either. Scholars Rachel and Eadaoin 2012) studied cognitive competences, but from a perspective that differs from the focus of our research. Only critical and creative thinking as basic cognitive competences were described by them as their work was based on Piaget's theory of cognition. Furthermore, they also wrote about metacognition and cognitive style. But after a short general introduction to the topic of cognitive competence their attention moves to the area of thinking in general and then to critical and creative thinking and the relationship between them. The authors were inspired by research carried out by Zhang with Chinese University students and research findings gained by Dewey and Bento. But Rachel and Eadaoin did not conduct their own research at primary or secondary schools and did not design their own self-evaluation sheets either. It may be concluded from this that even though these authors were in part dealing with the same topic as ourselves - cognitive competence - our respective work cannot easily be compared because the survey aims, approaches, methods and fields) are different. It is evident that this area of research calls for greater attention, through a larger range of investigation, and more thorough and complex research carried out in different types of school.

Conclusion

The survey has proved that cognitive competences are a necessary part of teachers' personalities and abilities. All the teachers applied them during their lessons, the differences being in the way they did so. The teachers teaching the eighth-graders applied competences according to the learners' language abilities. Sometimes, they had to switch the two languages during the lesson because the learners did not understand them well. The teachers who taught in the ninth grades had an advantage because their learners were speaking English mostly, but on the other hand, they had to prepare more challenging, varied activities than the teachers in the lower grades. Logically, several competences were applied in the lesson in relation to the lesson phase and activity. The competences used most frequently by teachers were the competence to explain, the competence to organize and coordinate, and the competence to use various aids and methods during the lesson.

We also wanted to find out how much the cognitive competences influence the teacher's choice of method. The table showing methods used and techniques designed at the bottom of the sheets helped to identify clearly all the methods used. This means that the

observer and teachers had a chance to write down the method being used, the phase of the lesson and the reason for using it. It was also considered important to know the learners' emotions, feelings or attitude to the method being used. It needs to be mentioned that not only teachers, but also learners were applying cognitive competences too. That is why the last two columns of Tables 2, 3, 4, 5 are focused on identifying those cognitive competences which improve both learner and teacher. Most often for the learners, it was perception, or the ability to share ideas and opinions, and creativity that were the most improved cognitive competences.

The area of cognitive competences has still not been explored in sufficient depth in our view. It is an interesting area of active metacognitive and cognitive functions influenced by many factors which tend to change according to the era a teacher works and lives in, the quality of education and professional training and personal interest and motivation in further professional development. Further research could herald deeper insight into the problematics of cognitive competences and point to other possibilities for further research as well.

The profession of teacher is becoming less interesting and more challenging nowadays. Teachers are no longer seen as educators who pass their knowledge on to others and help them understand many things and concepts. Unfortunately, for decades they have not been all that much respected and valued by our society. It is our contention that the position of teacher deserves more attention. Practice sometimes shows that the skills and abilities they demonstrate in lessons are more than heroic. Competences which every teacher needs to have, or should have, are necessary for each lesson. The aim of the paper was to inform the reader about cognitive competences of foreign language teachers. The factors presented which influence the application of cognitive competences are considered important. They do not only relate to the preparation of materials for the class. Teachers apply several other competences while planning their lessons, and before and during the teaching process too. Via the survey it has been revealed that teachers use competences to explain, coordinate and to use, in the main, several traditional methods. Some of the observed teachers prepared a more interesting lesson and it was obvious they applied more competences in the process of doing so. Competence to receive other opinions or feedback was the least used, which is quite striking, and it probably reflects teachers' fear of hearing possibly negative comments (as experienced during the observations). It is a pity that there are still teachers who prefer traditional ways of teaching to more up-to-date methods and approaches (e.g. writing on the board for almost the entire lesson is still frequent). Resulting from the findings, there was noticed certain difference between applying competences in the eighth grades and ninth grades of lower secondary school. It can be stated the proficiency level of the learners with a year-of-instruction-difference between the grades may influence the different competences used by teachers, and their choice of methods. Teacher teaching at a lower level must be more creative, teachers' reactions must be faster, and they also need to know how to keep their learners' attention and interest fully. Of the communicative more up-to date methods appropriate for improving cognitive skills, only brainstorming was applied during motivation phase of the observed lessons.

This survey could, in our view, act to stimulate further possible research into the application of cognitive competences in foreign language education. It is impossible for teachers to teach without using their own cognitive competences. So, it is proposed that urgent attention should be devoted to them in the coming years. Extending the depth and

scope of research is highly recommended. More observations at various schools would be beneficial if the time management of future researcher permits. Multiple observations of the same teacher teaching a variety of lessons would demonstrate whether their way of teaching accurately reflects the very first observed lesson. Another possible source of improvement is to pay attention to lesson planning too. The researcher would find out how much effort and how many cognitive competences a teacher needs to apply before teaching. In this case the research could be divided into two parts: cognitive competences applied while preparing for the lesson and cognitive competences applied during the teaching itself. Finally, a summary of the methods influenced by teacher's cognitive competences would be defined.

The results of our survey may also serve as recommendations for future teachers. They should, firstly, realize the importance of knowing a range of teaching methods and techniques. When a teacher recognizes and applies, for instance, four methods only, and uses them again and again, it suggests a lack of interest in improving their knowledge in the field. A good teacher should be able to name various methods and apply them in teaching practice regularly. It is difficult to achieve objectives without knowing how best to do so. Secondly, future teachers should be encouraged not to be afraid of asking their learners for feedback, either after activities or at the end of the lesson. The role of the feedback is not to make teachers depressed, but to allow learners' opinions to help teachers to improve their own competences. And finally, teachers should emulate those mentioned in the quote by an American journalist, Dan Rather: "The dream begins, most of the time, with a teacher who believes in you, who tugs and pushes and leads you on to the next plateau, sometimes poking you with a sharp stick called truth."

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Giftedness as a Possible Risk of Bullying

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Abstract:
Introduction: The paper deals with a possible level of risk in cerebrally gifted pupils in relation to bullying at lower secondary schools and grammar schools. In terms of personality characteristics, gifted pupils form a very diverse group, but some research suggests that they might be a risky group concerning school bullying. In the Czech Republic, the most of cerebrally gifted pupils attend ordinary primary schools or grammar schools and they are in daily contact with other pupils. Due to ambiguous research results, there is a question if it is really possible to think of certain risks in the case of cerebrally gifted pupils in relation to their school environment. Quantitative research tried to answer these questions.
Methods: The research was focused on the perception of selected areas in the class social environment by the diagnosed cerebrally gifted pupils, the undiagnosed gifted ones and the ordinary pupil population. A quantitative research strategy for bullying incidence mapping in primary and grammar schools were determined. As a research tool, a questionnaire was chosen. Gathered data from the initial questionnaire were evaluated by the following methods: dispersion analysis (ANOVA) for data spread by Gauss curve, Kruskal-Wallis test for data with non-Gauss distribution, arithmetic mean, Pearson Chi-Square Test, correlation analysis and contingency tables.
Results: There are differences among the class climate in ordinary classes and the classes with diagnosed cerebrally gifted pupils and undiagnosed pupils. The comparison was at the level of schools, it means among primary schools and grammar schools. It was found out that the cerebrally gifted respondents repeatedly met some form of bullying.
Discussion: On the basis of the findings, the authors assumed that cerebrally gifted pupils (GP) represent a risky group in social interaction with their peers and are more prone to different symptoms of bullying. This has not been statistically confirmed. The overall score was similar in other groups.
Limitation: The views of teachers and the views of some psychologists suggest that within the GP group, there is a special group of GP that is not identifiable by traditional questionnaires. For further research, it is worthwhile to consider opting for such research methods that could reveal those pupils.
Conclusions: Based on these results, it is possible to support those authors who consider GP as a specific group with their own problems, different values and perceptions, but similar to their peers.

Key words: gifted pupils, bullying, social climate, risk.

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Introduction

It is not easy to define giftedness due to a big amount of definitions and models that overlap each other. Giftedness can be seen, in the narrow sense, as an achievement of given IQ value when giftedness is identified with intelligence or cerebral characteristics. In the broader sense, it is perceived as a particular kind of talent of any individual who does not have just intellectual abilities but also personal characteristics. There are more than 113 definitions of talent. Such disunity proceeds from the conviction that the gifted ones create a very heterogeneous group and this multidimensional variability makes determination of complex theory unable (Passow, 1993; Stapf, 2010; Hříbková, 2005). In Czech conditions, the notion extraordinary talent (giftedness) enters this issue and it is stipulated by the § 17 law No. 561/2004 Sb., reg. No. 72/2005 Sb. and reg. No. 73/2005 Sb. (MŠMT, Zákon č. 561/2004 Sb. o předškolním, základním, středním, vyšším odborném a jiném vzdělávání (školský zákon), 2005; MŠMT, Vyhláška č. 72/2005 Sb., o poskytování poradenských služeb ve školách a školských poradenských zařízeních, 2005; MŠMT, Vyhláška č. 73/2005 Sb., o vzdělávání dětí, žáků a studentů se speciálními vzdělávacími potřebami a dětí, žáků a studentů mimořádně nadaných, 2005). In our research, the definition of gifted pupils stems from the conception of rational talent stipulated by the school law § 17 No. 561/2004 Sb., reg. No. 72/2005 Sb. and reg. No. 73/2005 Sb. (MŠMT, Zákon č. 561/2004 Sb. o předškolním, základním, středním, vyšším odborném a jiném vzdělávání (školský zákon), 2005); MŠMT, Vyhláška č. 72/2005 Sb., o poskytování poradenských služeb ve školách a školských poradenských zařízeních, 2005; MŠMT, Vyhláška č. 73/2005 Sb., o vzdělávání dětí, žáků a studentů se speciálními vzdělávacími potřebami a dětí, žáků a studentů mimořádně nadaných, 2005). The key factor for the categorization of cerebrally gifted pupils was carried out based on the pupils' examination in pedagogical-psychological counselling institutions and the reports for schools. From the point of view of personal characteristics, gifted pupils are a very diverse group where it is difficult to work out a general system of categorization of personal characteristics or cognitive specific components. In the past, there was a lot of research focused on these characteristics (Spivack, 1974; Roedell, 1989; Neihart, 2002), but significant individual differences among gifted ones occurred in many areas. The first connection link was a notification of acceleration as in mind processes as in selected personal characteristics. In spite of the huge diversification, some orientation categories of the most typical characteristics were created for making the talent identification easier and so the gifted ones were detected already at their pre-primary age or younger school age. Due to the focus of the topic, cognitive characteristics and recognition of the cerebrally gifted ones are put aside and, on the other side, social and emotional characteristics of intellectual individuals will be highlighted.

Abroad, mainly in the U.S.A., the research trend of personal characteristics has a long tradition. No wonder that a bunch of Czech researchers are inspired by foreign authors, they translated them and apply their research to the Czech conditions. However, it is necessary to consider the difficulties connected to the socio-cultural influences or the semantics of particular notions. Portešová (2002) points out the differences between the of understanding this notion in the U.S.A. and European countries on the example of perfectionism relating to cerebrally gifted individuals. In European countries, perfectionism is understood rather pejoratively, such as putting high targets without acceptation of failure which is accompanied by subjective dissatisfaction from own performance. In the U.S.A. perfectionism is perceived as something positive where

achieving goals is a strong motivation, but a possible failure is taken into account too. Positive energy is highlighted and it can lead to high performances (Hamachek, 1978; Preusser, 1994; Nugent, 2000; Portešová, 2002). It is possible to see the differences between the American and European approaches to social and emotional characteristics of gifted pupils. The American conception (Rimm, 2001; Bain, 2004) is based on the fact that high IQ children (120-145) do not have more social or emotional problems than their peers. On the other hand, they are natural leaders more often and they are accepted by their peers positively. If cerebrally gifted pupils are not popular among peers, it is not for their exceptional talent but for their other personal characteristics that can occur even among pupils from the ordinary population or in the case of under-average pupils. Among the Czech researchers, this opinion is shared by Portešová (2002) or Dočkal (2005). Dočkal adds that gifted child can be both well-balanced or unbalanced, introvert or extrovert just as their peers. Cerebrally gifted individuals are different as for their performances in a wider repertoire of reactions, they live their inner lives more intensively and they need many social impulses for it.

In the research by Laznibatová and Mačišáková (2000) there are not recorded any noticeable differences in personal, social and emotional spheres between cerebrally gifted pupils taking part in alternative education and the ordinary pupils population. They claim that the gifted pupils have their own problems, different values, they feel differently but in the same way as their peers. Slovak authors support the theory of positive personal characteristics of cerebrally gifted pupils – self-confidence, independence, ambition, reliability and also perfectionism of self-criticism (Laznibatová, 2001).

A wide range of research conducted by Ablard (1997); Cornell (1990); Hoge and Renzulli (1993) focused on self-evaluation of cerebrally gifted children. The results showed that cerebrally gifted pupils evaluated themselves more positively than their peers.

The antipole of such a view of the cerebrally gifted pupils points out their higher social and emotional vulnerability that could negatively influence their social integration, communication and relationships with their peers and it can lead to unpopularity in a peer group with the risk of social isolation. Even if it is not possible to work out a list general social and emotional characteristics of cerebrally gifted children for their whole population, certain common characteristics occur in these children more often than in the ordinary pupil population. It can be observed even in the selected definitions of talent. Fořtík and Fořtíková (2007) work with the definition of talent according to which there is an "asynchronous (uneven) development where accelerated intellectual abilities are combined with an accelerated intensity of the creation of inner experience and awareness that are different to the norm by their quality. Such asynchrony increases with the cerebral capacity which makes gifted ones especially vulnerable."

In the framework of emotional and social characteristics, an antagonism is visible among particular research studies and also among the results of research and experiences from the practice. For illustration, the study by McCallister, Nash and Meckstroth (1996) focused on the comparison of selected research results related to social competences of cerebrally gifted children can be used as an example. As emerged from the research, cerebrally gifted individuals are doing well as for their social abilities and their social interactions with their peers. On the other hand, these findings were not confirmed by practicing teachers and psychologists. They claim it that cerebrally gifted individuals

experience certain difficulties in the social sphere. Such conflict can be the result of methodological mistakes and inaccuracy in research, e.g. an inappropriate choice of respondents and badly chosen research tools, projection of a subjective view into the conclusions to the research, disunited interpretation of terminology, e.g. cerebral gift, and last but not least, insufficient attention paid to other variables, such as social and cultural context, gender, etc.

The opposite research results were shown in Terman's (1925) longitudinal study realized on the sample of more than 1500 cerebrally gifted pupils. As emerged from the overall scores in social and emotional areas, these individuals are doing very well. However, Terman made a revision of his conclusions a few years later and he found out that cerebrally gifted pupils with an IQ higher than 145 showed higher risk levels in the social sphere compared to their peers or cerebrally gifted pupils with IQ lower than 145. This fact was confirmed also by other studies, e.g. Hollingwoth (1942); Austin and Draper (1981), Gross (1993); Silverman (1993). The last mentioned found out that as much as 80 per cent of pupils with IQ higher than 160 experience social isolation in the class and they have to face pressure and respond to demands from their peers which can lead to stress development.

Other research dealt with the issues of integration of gifted pupils to ordinary classes where they could be educated with older students in higher classes. The results show that they experienced difficulties in the relationships with their peers and, as a coping strategy, there was a decrease in the quality of their school performances, which lead to their acceptance by more schoolmates. This phenomenon is mentioned by Konečná (2010) who claims that this strategy is used by cerebrally gifted pupils as they find own social acceptance by their peers very important. She calls it the strategy of camouflaging own difference (intentional failure in tests, using less sophisticated vocabulary in the communication with peers, get worse marks which do not correspond with their potential), which can lead to the so-called underachievement.

Contemporary young people enter their lives and they are equipped with rich theoretical knowledge but on the other hand, they are not prepared for the most important things they need in their everyday lives (Geršicová, 2016, Geršicová & Barnová, 2018).

Maureen Neihart (2002) has dedicated her life to the issues of intellectual gifted pupils in the context of the social and emotional area. She points out the fact that cerebrally gifted children are confronted with problems as well as their peers. Her study describes situations which can be a source of risks for the cerebrally gifted pupils' social and emotional development – an asynchronous development in the cognitive, emotional and social spheres; school success as a source of envy and enmity from their peers; perfectionism; social isolation; stigmatism ("labelling approach") of intellectual talent which can lead to the development of an inadequate self-picture, primarily based on feelings of being different in the process of identification of intellectual talent. The fact, that cerebrally gifted individuals are aware of their talent, influences their experiences in their relationships with their peers when they feel different to the extent that they perceive their talent to be a social handicap (Coleman, 2000). It is necessary to mention that a research by Freeman (1979) showed that sleeping disorders, hyperactivity and weaker adaptation in gifted children can be caused by their relationships with peers.

Konečná (2010) introduces the research results of Janos, Fung and Robinson (1985). They found out that an above-average self-confidence in cerebrally gifted individuals can be caused by their peers. It was lower than the self-confidence of the gifted ones that

did not find themselves different. They showed much more problems in relationships with their peers even when their parents did not notice any problems in their behaviour. Neihart (2002) also studied the cerebrally gifted children's inclination to depression and suicides. It was not confirmed. On the other hand, a research focused on incidence of depressions and suicides showed lower suicide rates among intellectually gifted pupils than among their peers. Similar results were obtained by Gust-Brey and Cross (1999). They confirmed that despite of risky factors, it is not possible clearly say whether cerebrally gifted individuals have a higher inclination to suicides or depressions than their peers.

Self-evaluation and self-conception are important personal characteristics. According to Blatný (2001), self-concept is a hierarchically organized cognitive structure that is created in the process of interactions of the individual in his/her (mainly social) environment. The factor of the mental regulation is behaviour and it serves as a tool for orientation and as a stabilizer of activities. It is a facilitating factor leading to achieving goals especially in the school environment. It influences ones's behaviour and the whole perception of the world. A bunch of authors (e.g. Bracken, 2003; Hoge, 1993) relate self-conception to attitudes, feelings, the awareness of own abilities, experiences, and the level of social adaptation. They use the notion of self-concept in the sense of self-evaluation. In the context of intellectual talent, it was found out that there is some relationship between positive self-evaluation and higher academic abilities and better results. On the other hand, negative self-evaluation was connected to lower abilities, poor school performance, and the risk of failure. Pupils with lower self-evaluation underestimate their abilities, they predict failure and they tend to give up when difficulties occur. Due to this fact, positive self-evaluation reflects previous performances and the subjective appreciation of own social and academic abilities (Roberts, 2001).

In her research, Konečná (2010) found out that the levels of self-evaluation by intellectual gifted pupils are significantly different in many areas (self-evaluation in the context of academic skills, abilities and behaviour, and the overall self-evaluation are higher than in areas of social acceptance and moving abilities) from the self-evaluation of ordinary pupils. These results correlate with Harter's (1999) conclusions, according to which cerebrally gifted children show previous differentiation among specific areas of self-conception.

The most frequently listed characteristics can be summarized as follows (Laznibatová, 2003; Škrabánková, 2012):

- Tenaciousness, persistence.
- Various interests, a lot of extracurricular activities.
- Spiritual activity is not tiring.
- Manners and behaviour are focused on the achievement of the set goals.
- Strong motivation with a predominance of inner motivation.
- Unwillingness to accept authorities (parents, teachers, etc.).
- A developed sense of morality and justice.
- Sensitivity or oversensitivity (tearfulness).
- If compared to their peers, gifted individuals give an impression of the emotionally less mature ones.
- An increased need for emotional support and emotional acceptance.
- Intensive experiencing of events around.

- High demands placed on themselves as well as their social environment.
- Impulsivity and expressive speech during argumentation.
- Awareness of being different leads to inconsistent feelings.
- Lower self-confidence and an inadequate self-concept occur less frequently.

Social characteristics:
- Problems with following rules.
- Cooperation with peers can be difficult due their efforts to get attention for themselves and their activities.
- They often have an extreme position in a social group.
- Need for freedom and activities.
- High or extremely low social skills.
- Courage to present own ideas, to use arguments in front of the group.
- Specific sense of humour that may not get positive responses by the environment.
- Looking for older children for communication and joint activities.
- Social naivety and innocence.

Finally, the work of Webb (2005), in which emotional and social problems of cerebrally gifted individuals are divided into endogenous and exogenous factors, must be mentioned. Exogenous problems arise primarily as a result of cerebrally gifted children's interactions with the outside world. There are problems in social and emotional adaptation, risky communication with peers, problems with the integration into the class, individualism, etc. Endogenous problems depend on the personality of the individual regardless the outer environment. These are sensitivity and oversensitivity, developmental asynchrony, perfectionism, unwillingness to run the risks, inadequate self-criticism, etc.

1 Research
In the Czech Republic, the most of cerebrally gifted pupils attend ordinary primary schools or grammar schools, and they are in daily contact with other pupils. Due to ambiguous research results, the question whether it is really possible to assume a certain level of risks in the case of cerebrally gifted pupils in the context of their school environment. The authors attempted to answer this questions by means of a quantitative focused on the perception of the selected aspects of the class social environment by the diagnosed cerebrally gifted pupils, the undiagnosed gifted ones and the ordinary pupil population. The possible differences between the social climate in ordinary classes and the climate in the classes with diagnosed or undiagnosed cerebrally gifted pupils were tested. A comparison was made also at the level of schools, it means among primary schools and grammar schools. Last but not least, the authors were interested in the fact whether the cerebrally gifted respondents repeatedly met some form of bullying or not.

1.1 Research objectives
The research was focused on the link between talent and bullying in primary schools and grammar schools. Its main goal was to map the incidence of bullying in cerebrally gifted pupils in primary schools and grammar schools and to reveal the predominant forms of bullying that the cerebrally gifted pupils met at primary schools and grammar schools.

Partial goals:
- To find out how cerebrally gifted pupils perceive their position in the formal and informal life of the school.
- To compare bullying experiences of the ordinary population and of the cerebrally gifted pupils at primary and grammar schools.
- To compare bullying experiences of the diagnosed cerebrally gifted pupils and the undiagnosed cerebrally gifted pupils.

Tested hypothesis:
- H1: Cerebrally gifted pupils (GP) meet bullying more frequently than ordinary pupils (OP).
- H1.1: Cerebrally gifted pupils (GP) meet physical bullying more frequently than ordinary pupils (OP).
- H1.2: Cerebrally gifted pupils (GP) meet psychological bullying more frequently than ordinary pupils (OP).

2   Methods

A quantitative research strategy for bullying incidence mapping at primary and grammar schools was applied. As a research tool, a questionnaire consisting of the following three parts was used:

2.1 Part A

In the first part of the questionnaire, an evaluative tool for prevention of problems in pupils' behaviour (Vojtová, 2011) was used. It was constructed on the basis of the questionnaire "Attitudes of pupils to the school life" which was standardized and adapted to the Czech conditions. The tool proceeds from a 40-item questionnaire testing the quality of school life on a four-item Likert scale by Williams and Batten (Batten, 1981). The questions proceed from the theory by Binkey, Rust, Williams (1996) that distinguish between six areas of school life: general positive evaluation and feelings, general discontent, perception of feelings concerning interaction between the teacher and a pupil, opportunity, status, identity and performance. In the questionnaire, the prevention of pupils' behaviour problems and the field of social integration in peer groups was added.

The questionnaire looks into the pupils' perception of their own position in formal and informal processes in the school life. It divides the areas of school life into those supporting learning and those being risky. At the same time, it points out the potential incidence of the pupils that are endangered in problem behaviour in the research sample (Vojtová, 2011).

The reliability and the validity of the tool were tested by several methods and the inner consistence and connections with extreme indicators of behaviour were verified. By using the method of factor analysis, the expected structure of particular areas of the class evaluation was found. The value of the reliability coefficient Cronbach's Alfa is above 0.7. The next used technique was a regression analysis where a significant connection between school environment evaluation and self-evaluation at the level of the Pearson correlation coefficient R = 0.5 was found (Vojtová, 2011).

This research tool went through the process of standardization, it was used and repeatedly verified in the research by Němec and Vlčková (2011). They looked into the differences in the perception social climate in primary and lower secondary schools.

2.2 Part B

This part of the questionnaire with the four-item Likert scale arose by recombination of questionnaires by Kolář (2001) and Peterson (2006) and it was adjusted to be compatible with Part A. It involves statements related to the mental and physical forms of bullying that pupils can meet with in the class.

Part B is a revised version of Martínková's (2013) questionnaire. However, it was radically adjusted after the first pilot study (64 respondents) and the following consultation with colleagues from the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Studies.

The original version of the questionnaire was built on the basic principles of the Olweus Method (Olweus, 1993) which was adjusted to the Czech conditions by Kolář and it is still used in practice. The content validity of the tool results was verified with a special strategy and alternative tactics of research (Kolář, 2001). The questionnaire was applied by the Czech school inspection in their inquiries several times. It was used for the purposes of a nationwide research on bullying in primary schools in 2001 (Havlínová, 2001). The questionnaire was completed by items from the research conducted by Peterson (2006) in the USA on the sample of 432 cerebrally gifted respondents. For the first pilot research, there was a random choice of respondents. Respondents were the pupils of a lower secondary school because in western countries, bullying incidence was detected at about the age of 12 (see Peterson, 2006).

The data gathered by the initial questionnaire were evaluated by the methods of dispersion analysis (ANOVA) for data with normal (Gauss) distribution, Kruskal-Wallis test for data with non-Gauss distribution, arithmetic mean, Pearson's Chi-square test, correlation analysis and contingency tables.

2.3 Part C

The last part consists of anamnestic data that can intervene as certain variables to the searched phenomena. Data from the questionnaire were processed and evaluated by relevant statistic methods (programme SPSS 21):

- Chi-square test – hypothesis verification in contingency tables.
- Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality – used in histograms.
- Factor analysis (rotated component matrix) – served for orientation calculation of particular displays of psychological and physical bullying.
- Mann-Whitney U test – non-parametric variant of t-test for independent choices used for hypothesis testing.
- Point graph – graphical projection of regress evaluation used for the whole scale of bullying.
- Descriptive analysis – focused on several levels, e.g. the average distribution of the scale data "the class is a place where" of all respondents, or the average distribution of the scale data "the class is a place where" in the groups of diagnosed and non-diagnosed cerebrally gifted pupils and the ordinary pupil population.
- Wilcoxon signed-rank test for two independent choices – test for non-parametric assessment of median values and the normality tests.

3   Research sample

Pupils are in the focus of the research. The research was focused on particular classes divided on the basis of the presence or absence of cerebrally gifted pupils or non-diagnosed intellectually gifted pupils in a class. Due to the extent of the research results, the paper will deal only with a group represented by pupils themselves, not by particular classes.

The determination of the ideal age limit about 12 proceeded from the retrospective national study by Peterson (2006) carried out in the USA on the sample of 432 teenagers GP. Peterson (2006) pointed out the finding that GP are more often the victims of bullying mainly at the age of 12. Due to low incidence of GP in this age category in primary schools and lower grammar schools, the age interval was widened to the whole lower secondary schools (6th – 9th class). The choice of respondents was deliberate as the categorization to three groups took place there:

- GP – cerebrally gifted pupils in lower secondary and grammar schools, diagnosed by the pedagogical-psychological counselling institution.
- NGP – cerebrally gifted pupils in lower secondary and grammar schools, non-diagnosed in pedagogical-psychological counselling institutions but being nominated by the teacher based on the methodical instructions.
- OP – ordinary pupils – control group in lower secondary and grammar schools.

In the initial consideration, the research should contain pupils of lower secondary school. After a preliminary research where the number of GP respondents was very low, the authors decided to include grammar schools, too. The selected age of respondents was the same for both types of schools. At present, an increased number of GP moving from primary schools to grammar schools is natural. In lower secondary schools, there is only a tiny percentage of these pupils. They are mainly in schools where special attention is paid to the development of GP. On the secondary school-level, it is possible to find adequate care either with various programmes or forms of education (e.g. project education, excursions to CERN, etc.). For this reason, it was necessary to ensure the set of pupils GP, NGP, OP from lower secondary schools and grammar schools at the age of 10 to 15. Only schools where there are GP were selected based on the list of schools created by the author from available information on gifted students accessible on web sites, from engaged professionals, from coordinators in the region and from the members of the work group dealing with the issues of gifted children at the Institute of pedagogical-psychological consultancy in the Czech Republic. From the created list of 40 schools attended by GP, 30 randomly selected schools were addressed. From these 30 schools, three refused to take part in the research because of the load of questionnaires they need to fill in within another research (GP are a very often frequented group). The research was realized in the addressed schools both in the classes with GP and in the classes with NGP and OP. In total, there were 1,768 respondents. The most numerous group consisted of the fourteen-year-olds (503), thirteen-year-olds (435) and the twelve-year olds (418). The research involved 27 schools from six regions (see the Table 1).

Table 1

Total overview of schools involved in the research

	School	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Primary school Ostrava	190	10.7	10.7	10.7
	Primary school Ostrava	56	3.2	3.2	13.9
	Primary school Ostrava	115	6.5	6.5	20.3
	Primary school Ostrava	13	0.7	0.7	21.1
	Primary school Ostrava	58	3.3	3.3	24.4
	Primary school Opava	28	1.6	1.6	25.9
	Grammar School Ostrava	35	2.0	2.0	27.9
	Primary school Opava	29	1.6	1.6	29.5
	Primary school Opava	51	2.9	2.9	32.4
	Primary school Moravský Písek	111	6.3	6.3	38.7
	Primary school Uherské Hradiště	27	1.5	1.5	40.2
	Primary school Olomouc	56	3.2	3.2	43.3
	Primary school Praha	125	7.0	7.0	50.4
	Primary school Vyškov	64	3.6	3.6	54.0
	Grammar School Brno	95	5.4	5.4	59.4
	Primary school Brno	33	1.9	1.9	61.2
	Primary school JMK	119	6.7	6.7	67.9
	Grammar School Pardubice region	180	10.1	10.1	78.1
	Grammar Sch. Mor. Silesian region	87	4.9	4.9	83.0
	Primary school Brno	45	2.5	2.5	85.5
	Primary school Brno	1	0.1	0.1	85.6
	Primary school Brno	31	1.7	1.7	87.3
	Grammar School Brno	37	2.1	2.1	89.4
	Grammar School Brno	16	0.9	0.9	90.3
	Primary school Brno	87	4.9	4.9	95.2
	Grammar School Brno	56	3.2	3.2	98.4
	Grammar School Brno	29	1.6	1.6	100.0
Total		1768	100.0	100.0	

As for the type of schools, there were 19 primary schools and 8 grammar schools participating in the research. Due to the sensitivity of all data, the questionnaire was anonymous and only bigger cities were included in the research.
Refer to Table 1 for a more detailed description of the schools involved in the research.

4   Results

At first, in the process of data analysis, the average scores of all the respondents from the groups of cerebrally gifted pupils (GP), non-diagnosed cerebrally gifted pupils (NGP) and ordinary pupils (OP) both from primary and grammar schools, were introduced. After that, the average values of school environments were analyzed for each group of pupils. Subsequently, the second part of the questionnaire focused on the manifestations

of psychological and physical school bullying which the participating pupils have met will be interpreted.

"The class is a place where…"
The school environment evaluation questionnaire ("The class is a place where") included 35 questions. Pupils had to one of the options on the scale from 1 = definitely yes to 4 = definitely no. The biggest agreement between the respondents from primary and grammars schools was achieved in the context of the statement *"The class is a place where I am looking forward to the break, where I like talking with my schoolmates and now, there is a lot of fun".* Most pupils did not agree with the statement: *"The class is a place where the teachers do not like me and where I feel lonely".* In general, pupils evaluate their class environment rather positively on the scale. There are certain differences among particular sub-groups. In total, it is possible to say that, with some exceptions, the evaluation of school environment shows a similar development in all respondents regardless the type of the school the pupils attend. These results of the whole set of data are very similar to the research results by Vojtová (2011).
On the basis of the mentioned differentiation in the set of primary and grammar schools, the best agreement with the statements of particular groups of pupils is as follows:
- GP: The class is a place where I like to talk with my schoolmates.
- NGP: The class is a place where I am looking forward to the brake.
- OP: The class is a place where I am looking forward to the brake.

The biggest disagreement of the selected group is in these statements:
- GP: The class is a place where teachers do not like me.
- NGP: The class is a place where I feel lonely.
- OP: The class is a place where I feel lonely.

There are certain differences among particular sub-groups that were not statistically significant, however, they are worth mentioning.
1) Analysis of the evaluation in the domain A – success and opportunity. It is evident that pupils see their school as a place for education, they have certain demands related to education in the same way as they perceive their possibilities in achieving good results. Difference can be observed among GP, NGP and OP when the first 2 groups evaluated this statement more positively, which can be explained by their better school results compared to OP. Also, in the first 2 groups, it is evident that there is more curiosity and enjoyment from education than in the group of OP, which is a typical feature of this specific group of pupils.
2) Analysis of the evaluation in the domain C – total satisfaction. Evaluation in the area of total satisfaction is in the middle of the scale, some ambivalence is visible. The total class satisfaction is neutral or the pupils are mildly dissatisfied. More than a half of respondents did not agree with the statement that learning is fun. Only the attitude of teachers and their demands placed on pupils are more positively perceived.
3) Analysis of the evaluation in the domain I – forming (promotion) of identity. In this field, the evaluation is ambivalent, it is mildly positive in all items except self-knowledge when GP have a more negative attitude towards it than the other two groups.

4) Analysis of the evaluation in the domain N – negative experience. In total, this domain gets low scores of negative experience in a class, which is a positive finding. The statement "*where teachers do not like me*" was disagreed mostly by GP. It can be interpreted by the fact that they can be more popular with teachers than the others.

5) Analysis of the evaluation in the domain S – school status. The statements *"The rest of people value me"* and *"I feel important"* were evaluated in the positive part of the spectre. Own importance was perceived the least approved among all the domains. The most disapproving attitude to the statement that pupils differing from others are as much respected as others was expressed by GP, which shows how they, the different ones, are perceived by others.

6) Analysis of the evaluation in the domain T – the teacher-pupil relationship. Items of this part are evaluated more in the positive part of the spectre. The attitudes of pupils are balanced. GP agreed most agreed with the statement *"I can ask the teacher for help when I have a problem"*. The other two groups evaluated this item positively, too, which is satisfying. In general, there is an apparent agreement in this domain – teachers are willing to help all pupils with their problems, they give them advice and marks that pupils deserve. GP and NGP evaluated the statement "Teachers help in achieving good results." Positively. On the other hand, all groups of respondents – with minimal differences – evaluated their teachers as rather unfair in assessment and not listening to them.

7) Analysis of the evaluation in the domain Z – interaction with peers. Almost all the items of the last domain are evaluated positively, except the item *"Where I can join my schoolmates in various games."* – the evaluatin of which is neutral. The item "I am looking forward to the break." was the most approved one among all the 35 items.

"Which of the following situations have you experienced repeatedly?"
The second part of the questionnaire – Part B, is focused on situations that could be repeatedly experienced by pupils in a class. The items were divided to psychological and physical form of bullying with the dominance of psychological indicators. This part contains 17 items and the pupils had to indicate their answer on a four-item scale from 1 = definitely yes to 4 = definitely no. This part also summarizes the percentages of all the evaluative answers in the whole sample of primary and grammar school pupils. It shows the most frequently occurring forms of bullying that pupils of both types of school have repeatedly experienced (sorted by frequency of definitely yes and rather yes): *"My schoolmates were slandering me, they told something which was not true."*, *"My schoolmates (two and more) made fun of me."*, *"I had a nickname that I did not like."*
Based on the above enumeration, it can be assumed that it's worth to examine deeper how pupils perceive particular situations from the point of view of semantics, how they experience various forms of psychological bullying and to what degree it is only teasing.
It is apparent that pupils have the fewest experiences with the items *"My schoolmates (two and more) have already beaten me more than once"* and *"My schoolmates (two and more) forbade me to do something, i.e. go to the toilettes or sit down, etc."*. On the other hand, it is evident that children have experienced physical bullying which could be in the advanced stage.

All the answers concerning bullying in the whole research sample – the diagnosed cerebrally gifted pupils (GP), the non-diagnosed cerebrally gifted pupils (NGP) and the ordinary (intact) pupil population (OP)

On the basis of the above classification, the respondents from both primary and grammar schools most agreed with the statement *"My schoolmates (two and more) made fun of me."* Both groups have experiences with this possible kind of bullying. The biggest disagreement among the GP was in the item: *"The schoolmates groped me but I did not agree (e.g. breasts, genitals, bottom)"*. The groups of NGP and OP had similar attitudes towards the items *"My schoolmates (two and more) have already beaten me more than once"*, *"My schoolmates (two and more) have forbidden me, e.g. to go to the toilette, to sit down, etc."* It can be assumed that when pupils of any group met the signs of bullying, it was more likely its psychological form than the physical one.

In connection with the previous results, bullying was tested only with GP in order to identify the most important signs of psychological and physical forms of bullying in this group of pupils.

The most frequently detected sign of psychological bullying was making fun of someone. As for physical bullying, breaking things, e.g. writing tools, books, pencil cases, damaging clothes etc., occurred.

As previous results show, school bullying is connected to the evaluation of school life. The GP who have experienced bullying, have worse attitudes towards their schools (classes) than the ones who have not experienced it. If a GP meets with bullying, his/her negative approach to school life has an impact on all spheres of school life. Specifically, the negative perception of school life was statistically confirmed at these domains (see Table 2, Figure 1): C – total satisfaction, N – negative experience, S – school status, T – relation teacher-pupil.

Table 2

Test of significance of the total bullying (psychological and physical) in cerebrally gifted ones within particular domains

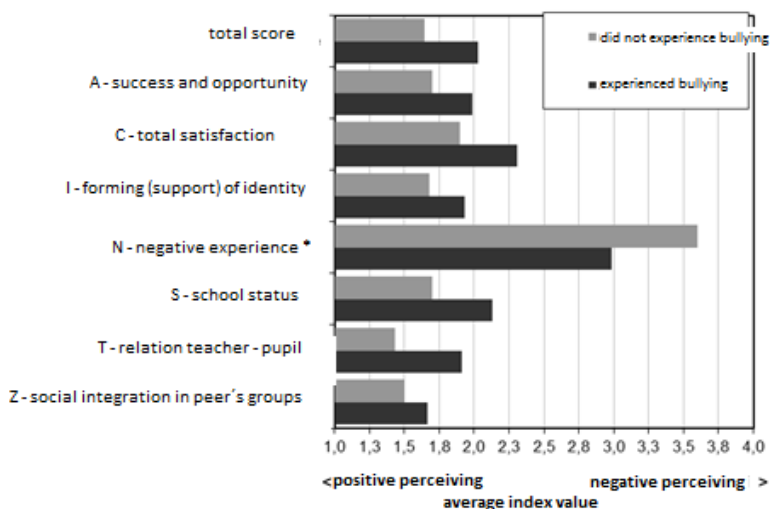|	*Mann-Whitney U*	*Wilcoxon W*	*Z*	*Test significance*
Index_sum	207	262	-2.8	0.004
Index_A	343	398	-1.5	0.145
Index_C	286	341	-2.0	0.042
Index_I	349	404	-1.4	0.164
Index_N	172	4732	-3.4	0.001
Index_S	220	275	-2.8	0.006
Index_T	235	290	-2.6	0.008
Index_Z	414	469	-0.7	0.499

Figure 1. Average values of the total bullying index (psychological and physical) in cerebrally gifted ones within particular domains

Refer to Table 2 for a more detailed description of the test of significance of total bullying (psychological and physical) in cerebrally gifted pupils in particular domains. The average values of the overall bullying index (psychological and physical) in cerebrally gifted pupils in particular domains are presented in Figure 1.

5   Discussion

5.1   Evaluation of research hypotheses

Another phase of the research had to evaluate the selected relationships determined by the hypotheses. The Chi-square test was chosen as a method of inductive analysis (Hendl, 2006).

H1: Cerebrally gifted pupils meet bullying more frequently than ordinary pupils.

As stated in the theoretical part, there was a presumption that GP become a risky group in social interactions with their peers. It is possible to assume that they experienced the selected manifestations of bullying more frequently than OP. Even if in 74% of GP there was a little bullying, in 16% of them, more serious forms of bullying occurred. The total score was similar in other groups, too.

On the basis of the analysed data (see Table 3 and Figure 3), hypothesis H1 was not confirmed, hypothesis H0 cannot be denied. The difference is small and statistically insignificant. From the results it is clear that most children have met selected manifestations of bullying in their school life, however, bullying in the concept as stated in the theoretical part is met by 16% GP, 24.4% NGP and 24.7% OP.

Table 3

Contingent table of the bullying incidence in particular groups of respondents

BULLYING IN TOTAL	Cerebrally gifted pupils	Non-diagnosed cerebrally gifted pupils	Ordinary pupils	Total
Was not experienced	10.0	7.0	11.1	10.8
Experienced in a little extent	74.0	68.6	64.2	64.8
Experienced in a bigger extent	16.0	24.4	24.7	24.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
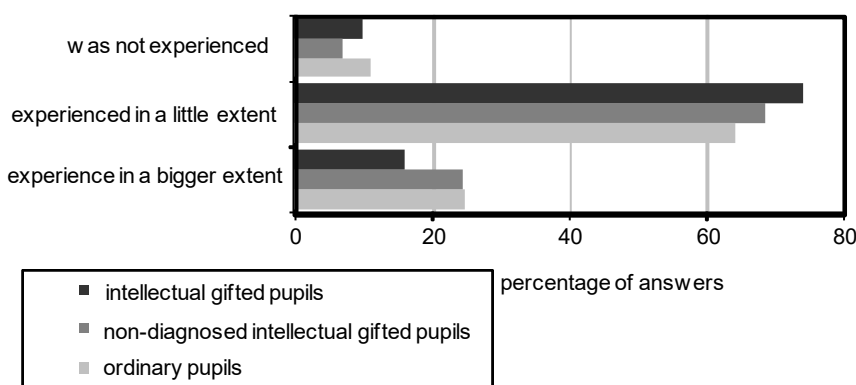
Figure 2. Incidence of bullying in particular groups of respondents.

Refer to Table 3 for a more detailed description of the bullying incidence in particular groups of respondents. Incidence of bullying in particular groups of respondents is presented in Figure 2.

The comparison of similar index values proceeds from the set of questions related to particular manifestations of bullying (the extent of respondents' agreement with various statements related to the given issue was analyzed). The set of respondents' answers to the given set of questions was transformed to a number (e.g. a few numbers) expressing the overall attitude of the respondent to the given issue. The stated numbers are the average values of indexes that proceed from the questionnaire, part B. The questions dealing with the signs of bullying related to particular groups of respondents were based on part B (see Table 4 and Figure 3).

Table 4

Comparison of average index values in particular groups of respondents.

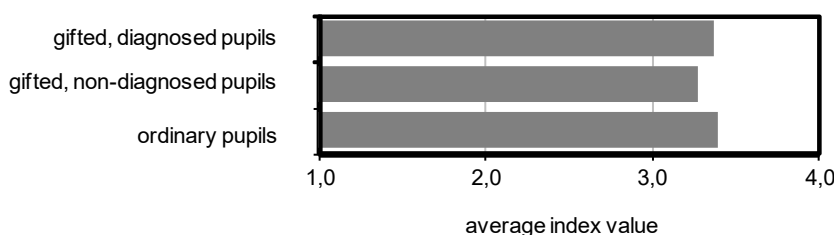| COMPARISON OF THE AVERAGE INDEX VALUES	Bullying in total	Standard deviation
Gifted, diagnosed pupils	3.4	0.5
Gifted, non-diagnosed pupils	3.3	0.6
Ordinary pupils	3.4	0.6
Total	3.4	0.6

Figure 3. Comparison of average index values in particular groups of respondents.

H1.1: Cerebrally gifted pupils meet some form of physical bullying more frequently than ordinary pupils.
Similarly, as in the previous hypothesis, there was a presumption that cerebrally gifted pupils meet this form of bullying more frequently because on the basis of different characteristics related to GP, they are riskier than their schoolmates (OP).
On the basis of the analyzed data (see Table 5 and Figure 4), hypothesis H1.1 was not confirmed, hypothesis H0 cannot be denied as the difference is small and statistically insignificant (see Table 5).

Table 5

Contingent table of physical bullying incidence in particular groups of respondents.

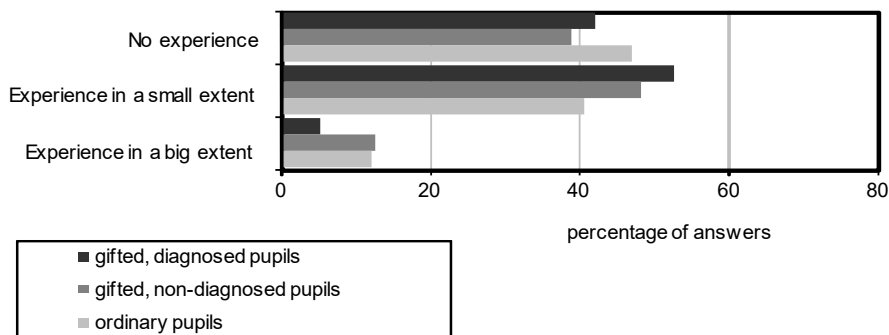| PHYSICAL BULLYING	Gifted, diagnosed pupils	Gifted, non-diagnosed pupils	Ordinary pupils	Total
No experience	42.1	38.9	47.1	46.5
Experience in a small extent	52.6	48.4	40.6	41.4
Experience	5.3	12.6	12.3	12.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Figure 4. Incidence of physical bullying in particular groups of respondents.

Refer to Table 5 for a more detailed description of physical bullying incidence in particular groups of respondents. Incidence of physical bullying in particular groups of respondents is presented in Figure 4.

Table 6 and Figure 5 illustrate the comparison of average index values of physical bullying in particular groups of respondents. Comparison of average index values proceeds from the set of questions related to particular manifestations of physical bullying.

Table 6

Comparison of average index values in particular groups of respondents

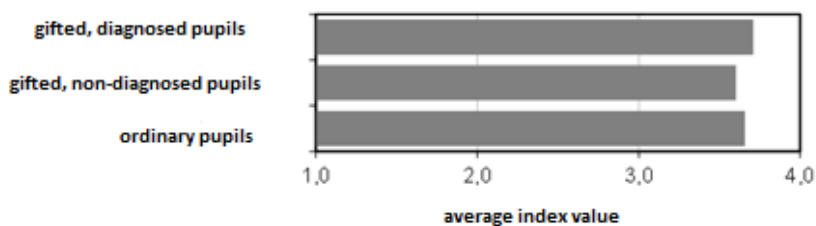| COMPARISON OF AVERAGE INDEX VALUES	Physical bullying	Standard deviation
Gifted, diagnosed pupils	3.7	0.4
Gifted, non-diagnosed pupils	3.6	0.6
Ordinary pupils	3.7	0.5
Total	3.7	0.5

Figure 5. Comparison of average index values in particular respondents.

Refer to Table 6 for a more detailed description of the comparison of average index values in particular groups of respondents. Comparison of average index values in particular respondents is presented in Figure 5.

H1.2: Cerebrally gifted pupils met physical bullying in a bigger extent than ordinary pupils.

Similarly, as in determination of the previous two hypotheses, there was a presumption that GP meet this type of bullying more frequently for their different social and emotional characteristics. They are a riskier group than their schoolmates. However, it was not confirmed, as it is evident from the Table 7, the results on the psychological form of bullying incidence among GP and OP are balanced.

On the basis of the analyzed data (see Table 7 and Figure 6), hypothesis H1.2 was not confirmed, hypothesis H0 cannot be denied, the difference is small and statistically insignificant (see Table 7, column Psychological bullying).

Table 7

Contingent table of psychological bullying incidence in particular groups of respondents

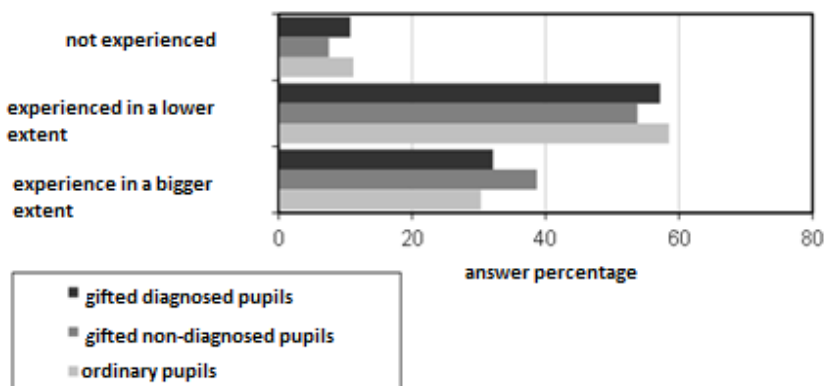| PSYCHOLOGICAL BULLYING	Gifted diagnosed pupils	Gifted non-diagnosed pupils	Ordinary pupils	Total
No experience	10.7	7.5	11.2	11.0
Experience in a smaller extent	57.1	53.8	58.5	58.2
Experience in a bigger extent	32.1	38.7	30.3	30.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Figure 6. Incidence of psychological bullying in particular groups of respondents.

Refer to Table 7 for a more detailed description of psychological bullying incidence in particular groups of respondents. Incidence of psychological bullying in particular groups of respondents is presented in Figure 6.

Table 8 and Figure 7 illustrate a comparison of the average index values of psychological bullying in particular groups of respondents. Comparison of average index

values proceeds from the group of questions related to particular signs of psychological bullying.

Table 8

Comparison of average index values in particular groups of respondents

COMPRARISON OF AVERAGE INDEX VALUES	*Psychological bullying*	*Standard deviation*
Gifted, diagnosed pupils	3.2	0.6
Gifted, non-diagnosed pupils	3.1	0.7
Ordinary pupils	3.3	0.6
Total	3.3	0.6
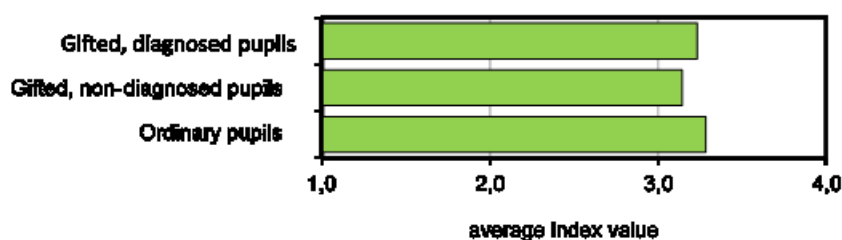
Figure 7. Comparison of average index values in particular groups of respondents.

Refer to Table 8 for a more detailed description of the comparison of average index values in particular groups of respondents. The comparison of the average index values in particular groups of respondents is presented in Figure 7.
Refer to Table 9 for a more detailed description of the statistical significance of bullying incidence – a summary of both kinds of bullying and the total index.

Table 9

Statistical significance of bullying incidence: summary of both kinds of bullying and total index.

	Psychological bullying	*Physical Bullying*	*Bullying in Total*
Value of the Chi-square	3.49	6.92	3.74
Degree of Freedom (Number)	4	4	4
Test significance	0.479	0.140	0.443

It was found out that all groups of respondents met psychological bullying more frequently than physical bullying. If the attention is focused on the group of GP, they met the psychological form of bullying more frequently – 89.2% (see Table 10) – than physical bullying (57.9%) which corresponds to the results of Peterson's research

(2006). She found out that psychological bullying occurs more frequently in GP than the physical ones.

Table 10

Index of psychological and physical bullying at GP – comparison

	Psychological Bullying	Physical bullying	Bullying in total
Gifted, diagnosed pupils	3.2	3.7	3.4
Gifted, non-diagnosed pupils	3.1	3.6	3.3
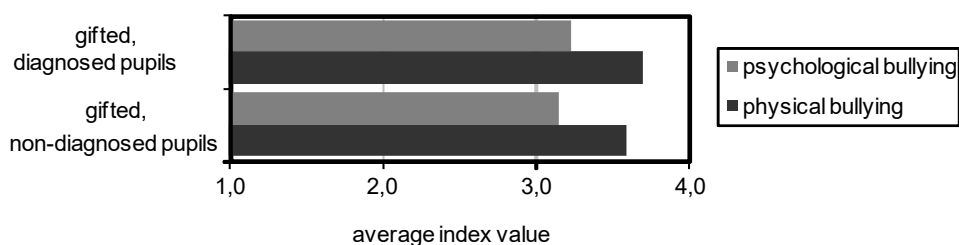
Figure 8. Index of psychological and physical bullying in GP – comparison.

Refer to Table 10 for a more detailed description of the index of psychological and physical bullying at GP – comparison. Index of psychological and physical bullying at GP – the results of comparison are presented in Figure 8.

6   Conclusion

The main goal of the quantitative research was to map bullying incidence concerning cerebrally gifted pupils (GP) in primary and grammar schools and to find the predominant forms of bullying that could be experienced by GP. At the beginning, it was necessary to define terminology related to cerebrally gifted pupils. The respondents were divided into three groups based on this terminology (cerebrally gifted diagnosed pupils GP, cerebrally gifted non-diagnosed pupils NGP and ordinary pupils OP). The research was joined by 1768 respondents from 27 schools, from six regions. 73 classes joined the research.

From the results of the quantitative part, it is evident that bullying of GP in primary and grammar schools was not confirmed on a statistically significant level due to the control groups, e.g. ordinary pupils (OP) and cerebrally non-diagnosed pupils (NGP). It is possible to tell that GP are not a riskier group in relation to bullying than other groups of pupils.

The total number of respondents shows that more than a half of pupils (64.8%) experienced at less serious form of bullying while 24.4% of pupils had to face classical bullying, whose terminology is based on the conception of the Methodical instruction for prevention and bullying solution No.24 246/2008-6 among pupils. In comparison to foreign studies, the range of bullying incidence is diametrically different, the stated

percentage is 13-89%. This data unbalance is given by heterogeneous semantics of the notion bullying which is decisive from the aspect of determine the frequency, forms and the particular signs of bullying. As an example, there is the research from the USA (Orpinas, 2003). It detected bullying in 89% of primary school pupils. The authors explain that these children were the target of at least one aggressive attack (and that is not defined as bullying neither by our authors nor by the Methodical instruction). In a study on a sample of adolescent in the middle-east of the USA (Hoover, 1992), 75% of pupils were detected, but it was a retrospective study and those results were referred to all school years.

In this research, typical bullying was detected in 24.4% of the total number of pupils. It corresponds to similar current researches where the range of bullying detection is between 20-40%, (e.g. Havlínová, 2001; Kraus, 2003; Martínek, 2009; Martínková, 2013; Eaton, 2012; Robers, 2013).

The most frequent signs of bullying experienced by all pupils in both types of schools are as follows: "My schoolmates slandered me (they told something which was not true)", *"My schoolmates* (2 and more) *made fun of me"*, "*I had a nickname that I did not like."*. Based on the list, we can conclude that the most frequent form of bullying experienced by the pupils is the psychological one – 58.2% of a less serious form, and typical psychological bullying in the case of 30.8% of pupils. It is necessary to state that it is worth to search deeper in how pupils perceive a particular situation from the semantic view, how they experience the psychological form of bullying and in what case it is only teasing. Even teasing can have various levels involving the mentioned signs. The subsequent interpretation had to be done soberly with respect to the related events.

The developed signs of physical bullying are experienced by pupils the least frequently, the mild form of bullying occurred in 41.4% and typical bullying occurred in 12.1%. On the other side, it is evident that in chosen minority part of pupils (12.1%) some experience with the physical form of bullying was detected, which can show its more developed stadium. It is possible to state that if pupils of any group meet bullying, it is more likely the psychological one (89%) than the physical one (53.5%). That refers to the higher incidence of the possible initial stage of bullying.

Proceeding from inner differentiation of all three groups, GP and NGP mostly stated that their schoolmates made fun of them and, on the other side, a grope was experienced the least (e.g. breasts, genitals, bottom). In the Peterson's research (Peterson, 2006), making fun and abusing became the most expanded type of bullying. GP were the most teased for their appearance, intelligence and good marks.

On the basis of the presented facts, the authors proceeded from the precondition that GP are a risky group in social interaction with their peers and they are more predisposed to various signs of bullying. It was not statistically significantly confirmed. Even if mild bullying at GP was detected in 74%, in a bigger extent, it occurred in 16%. The total score was similar in other groups, too. On the basis of these results, it is possible to support authors that find GP to be a specific group with own problems, different values and perceiving, but similarly as their peers.

The explanation for why the research with no more differences in emotional and social sphere of GP differs from the opinions of the people from the practice, e.g. teacher's opinions and some psychologists' opinions, is in the fact that inside a group of GP, there is a special group of risky GP which is not detectable by common questionnaires. For the

purposes of the next research, it is worth to consider the use of such research methods which could detect even those pupils.

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ARTICLES

Inclusion, Diversity, Equality in Non-Formal Education through the Optic of Youth and Youth Workers

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Abstract:
Introduction: The aim of the study was to find out what is the understanding of relatively new terms coming into the cultures of Middle-European countries – inclusion, diversity, and equality (hereinafter referred to as IDE) – from the point of view of young people (n=30) and youth workers (n=16) in Slovakia.
Methods: For data gathering, we used a method of focus groups (4 meetings). Data analysis was based on three criteria: consistency in understanding the terms, an overview of types of obstacles that keep young people from self-realisation and an explicit or implicit expression of understanding the basic principles of inclusion in education. The content of IDE terms was mostly from the area of the social field. The term diversity was closely explained in the psychological-personal fields.
Results: The most frequent obstacles for applying IDE approaches were seen in the social, health and religious spheres. From the pedagogical and methodological point of view, the problem is also in the difficulty of preparing the projects based on the principles of IDE while the youth workers proclaim autonomy in solutions and do not trust the possibilities of using general methods because of specific need resulting from the specific context of their work. Also, they proclaim natural applying of the IDE principles and the existence of specific needs in the informal education does not represent any problem for the inclusion of the group members in the activities of the organisation.
Limitations: Work with youth is very varied. Performs in different areas of life and also involves working with different groups of young people. The selected research sample consists of youth and youth workers who are only a partial sample of the sample. It is assumed that in a larger group of respondents (both youth

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workers and youths themselves), respondents' views may differ somewhat in some of the areas studied.

Conclusions: This research provides information on understanding, implementation and obstacles to applying the principles of inclusion, equality and diversity in practice. We believe that the information we receive is very valuable as it opens the imaginative door to the specific kitchens of individual youth organizations where these principles are directly implemented. They show their nature of application in practice, they suggest some risks, as well as a certain bias towards the application of the terms emerging (probably?) from theory. As can be seen from the results of our research, the emergence of specific needs in non-formal education in practice does not pose a problem in the inclusion of group members in leisure activities.

Key words: inclusion, diversity, equality, non-formal education, youth, youth workers.

Introduction

Inclusion, diversity, and equality are the top themes of the current policies in the transatlantic region (Shaw, 2005). Unfortunately, they are often connected to the agenda of certain politic groups and they become a means of politic battle. Because of this, the media are dependent on a specific ideological background and regarding creating a public voice they inform the public in a very selective way (Rončáková, 2015; Wiktorek, 2015; Golan, 2006). A lot of conceptual and methodical sources suggest support of inclusive approach, increasing sensitivity and accepting differences (Pasternáková & Krásna, 2015) to create equality in opportunities etc., mostly in a very committed and explanatory way, but without the pilot question – how the target group explains these terms. In the context of ideologically well-defined opinions, it is interesting to watch how these terms are understood by the youth practitioners and youth themselves.

The research in the field of an inclusive approach in the youth work has been in Slovakia only little saturated (Kováčová, 2007, 2008; Lenčo, 2011; Bizová, 2011, 2012; Brestovanský, 2015). In many cases, there are mostly secondary findings based on a larger research plan (Drnzíková, 2000; Lenčo, 2007; Kratochvílová, 2010). A much more developed is the research and theory of inclusive education in formal education (Požár, 2007; Lechta, 2009, 2010a, 2010b; Lechta, Kudláčová et al., 2013; Slezáková, 1998; Vašek, 2008), but these research studies are mostly focused on the problems of disabled people or the questions of inclusive education of Roma community. Many other fields (see classification in the Strategy) are still not being solved. None of the above-mentioned strategies has dealt with the hermeneutic explanation of the key terms in the context of the youth workers and youth.

The aim of the study presented here was to find out (1) what spontaneous concepts (preconcepts) are coming to mind of youth workers and youth regarding – inclusion, diversity, equality. We examined to what extent are the preconcepts of the practitioners and youth different from the theoretical definitions, the content and extent of these preconcepts in comparison to the content and extent of these terms defined in the key European documents and if the answers covered understanding/not understanding the principles included in the philosophical-anthropological base to inclusive approach itself. (2) The second topic was to get information about the real experience with the inclusive approaches in their own practice (or in the practice of their organisation). And it was not

only about the examples of good practice, but it was also about revealing those moments where the inclusive approach is proclaimed but in reality, it comes to the unintentional exclusion of specific youth groups or a practical negation of a particular principle.

1   Methods

The data gathering was organized in March – April 2016 as part of a wider international project focused on inclusive approaches in youth work, including five countries (the UK, Italy, Croatia, Turkey, and Slovakia).

The template was developed to gain consistent and valid data from various countries. The focus groups were organized with the heads of youth organisations and youth workers ($n_1 = 11$, $n_2 = 5$). For the group of youth workers, a purposive judgmental sampling procedure was used which was based on adequate experiences in youth work practice. The focus groups with young people as youth work organizations' clients included at least two different groups of young people ranging from 15 to25 years of age ($n_3 = 16$, $n_4 = 17$).

From December 2015 to February 2016 the structure of the questions for the focus groups and individual interviews were developed, discussed and finalized. The focus groups started with a short introduction to the aims of the project and the discussion group; participants were also asked to shortly introduce themselves at the beginning of the discussion. They were informed that they were voluntary participants with the possibility to withdraw from the participation whenever they want and that all the content is recorded.

The heads of the organisations and youth workers were interviewed individually and their answers were recorded. Some of those interviews were undertaken face to face or via phone calls or e-mail communication, which was always the most convenient for the interviewee.

The comparison criteria in the content analysis of the interviews in the first and the second group of questions were:
a)   the consistency of understanding the content of the terms inclusion, diversity, and equality;
b)   an overview of the types of obstacles mentioned in the Strategy for inclusion and diversity (European Commission, 2014);
c)   explicit or implicit expression of interiorization of anthropological-axiological conditions and the ethical code in an optimal inclusion model.

In the Strategy (European Commission, 2014, p. 7), the following situations are described that often prevent young people from taking part in employment, formal and non-formal education, transnational mobility, democratic process and society at large.
-   Disability (i.e. participants with special needs): young people with mental (intellectual, cognitive, learning), physical, sensory or other disabilities, etc.
-   Health problems: young people with chronic health problems, severe illnesses or psychiatric conditions, etc.
-   Educational difficulties: young people with learning difficulties, early school leavers, lower qualified persons, young people with poor school performance, etc.

- Cultural differences: immigrants, refugees or descendants from immigrant or refugee families, young people belonging to a national or ethnic minority, young people with linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion difficulties, etc.
- Economic obstacles: young people with a low standard of living, low income, dependence on the social welfare system, young people in long-term unemployment or poverty, young people who are homeless, in debt or with financial problems, etc.
- Social obstacles: young people facing discrimination because of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, etc.; young people with limited social skills or anti-social or high-risk behaviours, young people in a precarious situation, (ex-)offenders, (ex-)drug or alcohol abusers, young and/or single parents, orphans, etc.
- Geographical obstacles: young people from remote or rural areas, young people living on small islands or in peripheral regions, young people from the urban problem zones, young people from less serviced areas (limited public transport, poor facilities), etc.

2   Anthropological-axiological assumptions and ethical principles of an optimal model of inclusion

An optimal model of inclusion should be based on two basic anthropologic-axiological conditions that are human dignity and based on human relationships (relationality).

The term human dignity may be understood in various ways. This term is not perceived just as complying with individual autonomy, marking of morally desirable human action, or as a characteristic quality of a dignified life. Human dignity is attributing to human existence in ontological meaning; it is an evidence of the inherent value of each human individual, each member of a human family. This personal understanding of internal human worth is important in accomplishing other typical human values, because "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world" (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Preamble – United Nations, 1948). The document of United Nations is devoted to the rights of disabled people which introduces "Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons" (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 3a – United Nations, 2006,). It is necessary to mention that as well as the respect of dignity is connected to the situation of personal independence and individual autonomy, it includes the condition of dependence and reliance upon others.

Reliance upon others "refers" to the personal relevance of the relational dimension of being human. The human relationship is the reflection of some duality in unity: the fact that human beings find in the face of another their own appearance but simultaneously they can identify in it their otherness and dissymmetry. Uniqueness, non-repetition, and unpredictability of each human being are the first signs of this otherness. Dissymmetry and relationality are not evidenced only in the phenomena of the unpredictability of other, but it pertains to our internal dependence and human vulnerability. Our vulnerability expresses conditionality of the human condition, which could be hurt, lacking, disabled or exempted from existence. But as the Barcelona Declaration reminds: "vulnerability has been largely misunderstood in modern society as if all vulnerability,

i.e. suffering abnormality and disability should be eliminated in order to create perfect human beings. Respect for the vulnerability is not a demand for perfect and immortal life, but recognition of the finitude of life and in particular the earthly suffering presence of human beings" (The Barcelona Declaration, 1998, C:I:1:6). Taking into consideration the human vulnerability and dependence on others, the relationality that we have in our minds, will include the symmetrical relationships, equal and autonomous relationships, but also asymmetrical relationships that seem to be unequal and dependent on each other. The otherness or disability might lead to the natural dissymmetry of relationality, but it never leads to dissymmetry in acknowledgement of the dignity of involved subjects.

The acknowledgement of each human dignity and understanding of relationality in its symmetrical and asymmetrical connotation is the basis for appropriate inclusion ethics. The central anthropological foundations require the constitution of general ethic principles, which should be applied through pro-inclusive action.

- *The respect of human subject and his/her human condition*

The field which deals with diversity and disability has a norm that acknowledges and honours human existence is inseparably connected with the norm that respects specific human conditions that are undoubtedly individual autonomy, freedom of choice and personal self-sufficiency, but also definitely human reliance on others and human vulnerability and dependence.

- *The respect of diversity in human community*

Especially the experience with disability points to the fact that human dependence is one of the characteristics which are typical for the "condition" of being a human. Autonomous, self-sufficient and independent individuals are just "temporarily abled" (Kittay, 2011, p. 49), because the human life is naturally inferior to regularities, which include the passing through periods or states of dependence. The respect of dissymmetry of relationality means the respect of differences that are brought by these "situations".

- *Responsibility for inclusion of the marginalized*

Apart from disability, the category of difference is tightly connected with categories such as sex, race, health condition, developmental period, religious confession and beliefs, actual life phase or times of need. Under the term periphery, we understand physical, material and social periphery as well as cultural, moral, juridical or spiritual periphery. Responsibility is a duty of caring for other beings which becomes a "concern" when their vulnerability is endangered (Jonaas, 1979). Responsible action is a concern about fragile individuals, who are exposed to displacement, but also an active concern about incorporating them into the common space, from which they were physically or mentally, consciously or unconsciously excluded.

- *Pro-sociability and social justice*

The emergency of pro-social approach is looking for the response on the individual level as well as on the institutional level. The civil society and the government should participate in application of this kind of justice with their own parts, which would not be based on the egalitarianism (Rawls, 1971) that is forgetting the issue of disability, but it would remarkably reflect the differences that flow from unequal capabilities of human individuals. The social justice is becoming an inclusive justice if the society choses as its criterion the inclusion degree of disadvantaged people into the environment that has

always belonged to them, but it is still waiting for to be given to them again (Šuleková, 2016).

3   Findings

3.1 Understanding the terms - inclusion, diversity, and equality

Regarding understanding the inclusion we encountered a proclamation in the group of youth workers that inclusion represents a natural part of their everyday work while specific stress on diversity is understood counterproductively: *"Inclusion is so natural to us that pointing out that this is inclusive makes the differences."*

In general, the inclusion represents the principle of diversity: *"Inclusion is about connection." "In connection with something that is diverse but at the same time equal. (...) We try to strike a perspective that not everything that is different is also bad. It is only different without the evaluation part. (...)"* or *"Inclusion is about connecting various aim groups: Christians with a different religion, young people without religiosity, people from the mixed national environment, Roma communities, disabled people and people from the socially disadvantaged environment..."*

There are not specific youth answers that could be related to standard content of the word inclusion, however, some of the answers partly include the inclusive approach: *"When a new member comes to our social group, we do not follow our standard programe, but we adapt the programe (all the group), and we try to know the new member and leave a space for him/her to share something with us."* The observed terms are in practice blended, and the participants did not know to name it separately. For example, in an answer of one female participant in the voluntary group working in the transit camp for refugees we could identify all the three terms: *"Also among the volunteers, there was not only the majority of the population. There were former prisoners, alcoholics, addicts. And all the differences were not anymore present... There was only one important thing: to warm up people who came there so they could survive in the bad conditions for at least 24 hours, despite night, cold weather, rain, snow."*

Similarly it was with the associations to equality, where mostly it was the process (inclusion) than the result (equty), for example during meeting the chances in the social field: *"...these children that live at the block of flats unit are not excluded, we do not have to bring them to society. It comes of the specific families they come from. It is more about their life experience in comparison to their mates; they do not have enough money to visit leisure courses, to have toys or their parents are so overwhelmed with their own problems, so they do not have time to do the homework with their children. It is more about leveling the chances of these children."* Also in the answers of youth, we can follow that those who were involved in non-formal leisure activities understood the word equality especially in terms of equal opportunities or availability of the offered activities for all those who were interested.

A straightforward cultural difference in comparison to western countries is observable in the term "diversity". While in the West (or more in English speaking countries) this term has an active character, in the middle European countries (culturally) the term diversity is an expression of individual differences. The participants did not understand the diversity as an obstacle but as an opportunity. Despite the fact that some clients could understand the diversity as a potential source of conflict formation, the youth workers dismissed this supposition. *"We have here various children. We have a good experience with that that the children are so different. We resolve conflicts only very little that arise*

from this diversity. Various other conflicts are solved everyday but not because of this reason.” or *”Our clients are from different social classes and therefore it is so “colourful”. We would not like to identify our clients as problematic. We would rather prefer our activities to be preventive so that under our influence the children will not result in problems”.*

The diversity of the clients lays higher requirements on youth workers and also on the activities. Because the clients come to organisations with various needs, it is necessary to update the offer of programmes quite often, regarding the specific needs and requirements of the clients “*the activities are adapted to clients, sometimes it is very natural, sometimes we need to work more with that. But we do not see that as a problem. It is set on low threshold principles. But sometimes it happens that the needs are very variable and then it is not possible to cover all the clients’ needs. But we try to settle a system where everyone can get a certain space to function.*: The diversity is also seen in youth workers groups: *“Our clients are very different. Also, the workers are different, so there is the parallel on both sides.”*

In comparison to youth workers, the youth placed the term diversity into psychological-personal field: *“I only see the difference that some are introverts and some extroverts”* or *“...some do not have the problem to prepare a performance or activity or to share what they experienced during the week and to enrich the others. The others have more the feeling of threat and seclusion, they are rather calm and will not solve anything*” or *“...sometimes there is a problem and there always comes someone who does not fit into the group and must be “excluded”.”*

Both of the focus groups identically stated that in practice they do not separate the terms of IDE but they understand them as closely connected. The youth workers mentioned that they do not put the observed phenomena isolated in the documents, but they are implicitly grounded as a part of their basic documents, regulations, and guidelines of the organisation: *“We have this in the ethical code, principles, philosophy.”* They very often implement them spontaneously, based on a previous experience, without official policies: *“We do not have it formalized, but during each action, we suggest certain rules that we write and hang. It is also about experience with examples. The younger ones see that in the older ones as we communicate together and that is an important source for them. We do not have a formal education in this field, but we try to implement it through experience. It is a part of the organisation’s philosophy.”*

3.2 Observed obstacles of inclusion

In general, we can say that the answers of the youth workers do not include higher mentioned complex classification of the obstacles for selfrealization of youth. We suppose that (1) the participants have not met some of the categories of the obstacles in practice, (2) the inclusion of youth was very natural and therefore they did not mention that field, or (3) they do not realize those reasons for exclusion. Most of the participants’ expressions were related to the social shpere: poverty, disadvantaged environment, age, sex, culture, national and regional as well as language relevance.

The answers of youth workers addressed social and health disabilities: *“No one is excluded. But it is very difficult to include some groups, for example Roma youth, disabled (handicapped) or mentaly disabled youth.”* The organisations try to overcome these obstacles by redirecting the clients to an organisation that specializes in inclusion with more segregation character. *“We had encountered a situation, where we had to*

reject a child on a wheelchair because it was a physical camp and we knew we would be going on motor boats and we redirected the child to a camp where we worked with childre on wheelchairs."

The obstacles are also present in the whole character of the institution's activities where the offer of the insitution could not satisfy a specific need of the youth: *"In a dancing camp there were disabled people excluded and they would not even try to get there."* An interesting finding is that the youth workers as well as the youth themselves give the reason for obstacles the young man himself/herself or his/her family, for example the prejudice related to value differences between an organization and a family: *"My parents did not let me come here, because you would wash my brain with values that the family does not honour."*

Quite strongly were reflected economic obstacles: *"I did not visit the camp, because we did not have enough money and my parents are divorced."* or *"We have camps which take one week and cost 50 Euros. We know that if a family wants to send 3-4 children 5-18-year old, we need to find donors…"*

We also recorded some obstacles in cultural or religious barriers: *"I think that if someone refuses to eat something because of the religion, it is not our problem. I do not think that we should provide the food according to someone's specific lifestyle. It is different to provide suitable food to celiacs than to someone who has religious reasons. I wanted to say that this work should not adapt to her but she should adapt to it!"* Based on these answers, we can suggest that the youth workers have their own hierarchy of values which is in controversy with the complex implementation of IDE in the work with youth.

A specific problem is also certain labels: *"We understand them as risky because they live in a specific environment and they do not have as many stimuli as they should have. But not everyone of them has something that can already be called a problem."*

Certain proclamations do no correspond with the above-mentioned problems. As the basic principles of "choice" of the clients the youth workers named the principles of equality and voluntary participation of the clients in the work of the organisation. That means in practice not to exclude from the organisation's activities any clients. *"Because it is anonymous, it is open, so the restrictions are minimal and I do not think that exclusion has ever happened."*

A specific problem is the dynamics of inclusion. In the work with excluded groups, there are arising specific solutions that are by their nature not inclusive but they can be understood as a step to inclusion. As the youth workers have mentioned, a good strategy in practice is to look for individual possibilities for excluded groups, how to change their situation as for example to create scout troops of the excluded young people: *"in 2010 the Roma scouting started to grace Roma children in the East Slovakia. They are thought good manners, and there have been some Roma troops established."* This approach seems to be a step back, somewhere between segregation and integration (comp. Levels of inclusive approaches, Scholz, 2007).

Finally, a similar approach is observable in formal education where the schools create classes based upon pupils' dispositions regarding the best interest of a child and suppositions for an effective individual approach.

The centre of perceiving obstacles is in understanding of the youth workers moving from the category of external factors (as mentioned in European Commission, 2014) to the

category of personal approach and possible solutions for the youth worker or the organisation.

The answers of the youth workers were recorded in a not satisfactory capacity of the institution and absence of professional staff. *"I remember one boy. He could not work in that small space and this is also related to psychiatric diagnosis, ...we also have a border in our professional competences. Then we rather send our clients to other institutions…"*

An obstacle in implementation of the inclusive approach is the unsatisfactory legal policy:*"Regulations, documents and legal materials that do not respect individual life stories."*, that means the existing services are not available in some situations because they are not offered in the form which the client needs. Inclusive activities are often stopped by parents. There used to be a meaning that in work with youth, there are more important local regulations and policy implementation. The next obstacle was financing, where *"sometimes a not consistent idea means that we cannot guess the number of financial help that they get from the state; that means in practice that a well-started project can also disappear after its completion."* In terms of personal approach, the youth workers suggested as a good personal feature of a worker to be creative and flexible: *"He/she has to accept the youth opinions and look at their things from their point of view…"* The need for flexibility is related to the character of activities with the youth (especially with risky clients) which are planned and focused but also very changeable, unstable, involving a lot of risks. This results in frequent changes of the planned activities. As the next common feature we recorded was empathy *"...because understanding is the first step to work together."*, or tolerance: *"No difference should disturb the activity. All those things can be discussed or respected."* or ”*Some parents wanted to have their child in church on Sunday, in our troop we had about 30 girls and all the troop went to the church, and who did not want to go was not there, the others were waiting in the park outside."* There were also other proinclusive features such as responsibility, patience, friendliness, sense of humour and truthfulness. Delivering truthful information was interpreted by the youth workers as building a mutual trust, sometimes very fragile, but essential for working with the clients. In the group of youth, we noticed a frequent feature of the youth worker purposefulness and this feature was not present in the group of youth workers. All other features were identical.

The inclusive approach has a specific importance in the period of adolescence. The youth workers focus their attention especially on building relationships, ability to communicate, active listening, accepting someone else's point of view: *"I like being no expert but only a guide... to guide a young man/woman on the right path."*; *"All the activities that we prepare..., it is about building relationships and these relationships can help a young man/woman to develop."*; *"the age is not important, important is to be on the same wave.“* or ”*...we have to go the way ourselves that we want them to go."*

Accepting diversity is in the youth worker mirrored in respecting individualities of a client, supporting his/her selfrealization, development of gifts and talent, sensitivity to needs and requirements. The requirements on youth workers predict using IDE principles with youth.

The next important feature of the youth worker was the ability to lead a group, to work with a team, to have experience with terrain work and experience of own activities as a young man/woman. On the other hand, there was the need to create a distance from the clients' problems: *"...a youth worker is a good leader, he/she can bring people to the*

finish line stated the beginning." In connection with the statements of youth workers, this may be a paradox as they understood their role as a "guide".

In the last group of obstacles, we focused on identifying the missing important sources and approaches necessary for the inclusive approach in youth work. The answers of the youth workers were oriented only on methos and guidelines to specific work they provide, they were no special for IDE, despite repeatedly used questions focused on IDE: *"We have an accredited system of the Ministry of Education for youth workers who do not havepedagogical education. A specific part for inclusion of people with specific needs is not mentioned there."* As a reason for absence of guidelines for implementing IDE principles the participants mentioned that they consider these specfic guidelines focused on IDE as excessive, while the IDE principles are included in the value system of the organisation: *"We have a lot of courses, methods, and guidelines, We do not have those principles so specified but because we are a Christian organisation, it is only called differently. Our starting animator is 15 years old and I think he/she could not identify it this way. Maybe equality. If we had a particular situation we would have to explain it."* They would rather appreciate the recommendations regarding IDE principles as an integral part of work with specific groups of the youth. Similarly, in the answers of youth we found the absence of guidelines focused on IDE principles. *"They did not provide us anything like that."* Acquiring the IDE principles is realized by a personal example, or in workshops and courses: *"We had a course during our early intervention and they thaught us the basics, because not every volunteer is someone who studied humanities, we have all completed a one day course that was focused on early intervention in work with people."* Most of the courses and workshops are focused on the work with majority population and on general needs of running an organization. *"I was taught to prepare projects in project management."* or *"We do not focus specifically on specific needs, but in the organisation we have the General Assembly, and we talk there about what we do, what we need, we do not talk about this problems, we talk about activities that need to be organized."* The question is if the youth workers themselves understand the training and methods related to IDE implementation as necessary. They prefer experience and personal example: *"We do this with the evangelism concerts, we involved a music band, we had a speaker, and we showed the youth that we can live as Christians without any limitations."*

The youth workers do not consider as necessary to train specifically the members regarding the inclusive approach unless it is a larger organization. They very often initiate schooling based on current necessity: *"We organize courses in the way that we think about something that could be interesting and we look for someone who could teach us. So we initiate the course and find someone, a professional, to lead the course. The experience shows the necessity…"* They also consider as an important thing to acquire IDE in a natural environment of the particular organisation based on personal experience given from one worker to another: *"I do not think that creating a formalized structure for IDE is necessary, I do think that it could be even counterproductive, they could be discouraged… we try to define the things too much and these definitions sometimes curtail the process of inclusion. We sometimes pay more attention to terms than to the process itself in practice."* An approved approach seems to be a good cooperation in the organisation focused on intergenerational passing of experience and cooperation with other organisations: *"We create methods, we have cooperation with a man in emergency – the Czech Republic where this kind of education works."*, but there

is also an inspiration from other organisations at home or abroad: *"We create own activities, but we are also inspired by activities from abroad. IDE – in the cultural-ethnical display, it is strongly represented also in our country. Inspiration is always welcomed. A man always has something to learn."*

3.3 Implicit understanding of the inclusion principles
It seems that among the Slovak youth workers there is a common understanding in the question of man's dignity and a basic respect for the human subject.
But it comes to the collision of societal values and individual differences in values of individuals. We do not find acceptance of active inclusion of marginalized groups. Apart from organisations specialized in looking for excluded groups in the rhetorics of regular youth groups we find only a passive approach of waiting to *"request"* or *"expression of interest"* from the marginalized groups: *"When someone comes (...), we will adapt..."* or *"I do not know anyone who is disabled and is afraid to come."*

4   Discussion
We did not notice any kind of thinking coming of the stable classifications of the diversity across race, cultural, language, religious and other diversities. This situation can be also caused by the fact that in Slovakia there still live only few people of other races, culture or language. Similarly, also the religion of most Slovak people is relatively consistent (mostly Christian-Catholics), although the authenticity of religion or living the religion is various. Very often we encounter more proclamations of values. Current cultural changes in a transatlantic region (for example rise and popularity of radical political movements) are also present in the Slovak political and cultural life, while the religion is very often misused by the radical representatives.
On the other hand, the most active youth organisations are Christian organisations or organisations established by Church. We think that this could be one of the reasons why the participants of the research did not mention the diversity in the religion or youth do not reflect the classification of diversity and therefore do not need to express themselves in this problem.
The interview analysis resulted in several findings which mirror the current situation of implementing IDE in the practice of youth workers and youth. Perceiving inclusion as a natural part of work and principle of uniting diversity can be understood as a very positive finding that comes into contrary with the experience of youth workers from the formal education environment. The question is the difference between reality and proclamation. The organisations declare the inclusive approach also by that the IDE principles are in practice not separated, they understand them as closely connected and implicitly grounded in the basic documents, regulations, and internal rules. Their inclusion into specific regulations in the organisation is perceived as counterproductive.
Understanding obstacles in implementing IDE in the youth work is closely related to disabilities and economic obstacles. Many other fields are left unnoticed, despite the fact that they are present in practice. This moment is probably related to the focus of organisations on quite specific clients (a certain way of exclusion) and the second group, larger and broader organisations do not have a proactive inclusive policy or strategic documents for supporting IDE. In general, only some larger organisations are active in organising courses for more effective work with the youth (none of them is preferentially

focused on IDE). Outcomes, processes, and effects of this further education are not objective and not reliably evaluated.

When considering the term youth worker, it seems clear in all four categories of answers that the emphasis is put on a spontaneous approach in practice based on experience and the relationship with young people. In contrary, there is observable a certain implicit distruth against the formal education in youth work. A further common sign of youth workers in practice is an exclusive status, preferring personal qualities of a youth worker. On the other hand, other competencies as for example administrative-organisational, financial, didactic, diagnostic, selfevaluation and planning selfdevelopment, social overview, etc. (compared to Starr et al., 2009) are completely absent.

It is not clear, if those competencies are considered by the youth workers so natural that it is not necessary to verbalise them, or are aware of them only partially and they do not take them seriously. One of the most important findings of the research was the absence of the term yout worker as a professional (although it is defined in the national qualification system, there is no appropriate study programme offered by universities). Many activities are performed by young volunteers.

The organisations are confident about the quality of their practice and they do not perceive the necessity of further professional development that the costs (time, energy, staff) related to further professional development are compared with the profit disproportionate. According to us, this problem is to large extent associated with a voluntary nature of youth work. The decision for voluntary service is, in general, fragile and the management of the citizens' associations should sensitively consider a range od demands against the volunteers. However, we can say that within non-formal culture of the organisation itself, there are performed many activities of inclusive character with an effective impact on the clients. The inclusive culture has certain limits in the organisations that could be defined such as: we accept almost everyone if they adapt to our regulations. Though, the organisations only rarely conform their own rules to the reflexion of the interest and needs of excluded young people.

Conclusion

The understanding of IDE principles differs in youth workers and young people especially regarding a degree of abstraction and diapason of offered classification of obstacles related to their adherence. The development of implementing IDE approaches is more or less spontaneous, based on experience with solving particular situations and needs. The youth organisations in Slovakia have neither formal policies, nor special tools or a system for further training and education.

The activities in youth work are to great extent organised by volunteers and therefore there is no excessive pressure on their professional development. The IDE approaches are only implicitly and not clearly defined in the proclaimed personal qualities of a youth worker with the emphasis on his/her personal, managerial, and practical skills.

Nevertheless, implementation of IDE principles is considered by both focus groups as important, but they do not encounter "schooling" or training necessary skills for their work in practice; young people are not familiar with any sources or documents that could help them implement IDE principles in practice. The youth workers are satisfied with a given situation, do not perceive the necessity to be specually educated in this field.

In implemetation of IDE in practice, youth workers have their selfevaluation processes poorly developed, despite this fact they claim that they try to apply the IDE principles as proved by arguments in which they declare their efforts to overcome the obstacles associated with a successful IDE implementation in youth work.

We want to point at a certain reservedness of youth workers in the question of further education, for example by courses specifically focused on IDE, or achieving other sources for practice itself in a form of methods or documents particularly aimed at this research field.

Research findings also suggest that young people know the following terms: inclusion, diversity, equality, but the understanding of them is more implicit.

They do not understand those terms separately, as in the practice itself the implication of such terms overlaps. They reflect the obstacles, but also the possibilities of implementing IDE principles in youth work. They can name examples of good practice and also the ways how to use them in organisations.

They can not tell them about it in isolation, because even in the practice they work together. They reflect obstacles and opportunities in applying IDE principles to working with young people. They will be able to give examples of good practice and ways to work in organizations in this area. As a drawback in the research problem we can understand the absence of specifically focused sources (training, methods) for youth work. The IDE principles represent for young people the only possible way how to use services provided by youth organisations.

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Development of Intercultural Competence during Pedagogical Practice of Ukrainian Students in Vocational Schools in Slovakia

Kateryna Ryabchikova*

Abstract:
Introduction: In the presented paper, the role of practical training in the formation of intercultural competencies is considered in terms of Dublin descriptors on the basis of educational intercultural practice.
Methods: For the purposes of the study, a multi-stage model of intercultural practice was developed. The method of comparative analysis showed the correspondence of the model to the main descriptors. The study is based on the results of intercultural practice of Ukrainian students in vocational schools in Slovakia.
Results: It has been shown that the four levels of practice in the form of short-term introductory intercultural practice, ethno-cultural educational practice, scientific and pedagogical communication practice abroad, as well as long-term intercultural training correspond to the Dublin competence descriptors in the form of knowledge, skills, communication, autonomy and responsibility.
Discussion: The results of the research show the directions in the formation of intercultural competencies of students. Close cultures such as the Ukrainian and the Slovak can be a launching pad for building deeper competencies. The pedagogical practice of Slovak and Ukrainian students develops the intercultural competencies of both the trainees and the students.
Limitations: The study was conducted in a limited number of educational institutions in Ukraine and Slovakia. It is expected to increase their number on the principles of reciprocity in order to develop intercultural competencies in the students of the two countries.
Conclusions: The model is practically implemented in the process of the teaching practice of Ukrainian students in selected schools in Slovakia. An increase in the level of intercultural competencies was observed both in the Ukrainian students and in the students of Slovak schools.

Key words: intercultural competence, pedagogical practice, Dublin descriptors.

Introduction

A common approach to the formation of the content of education in modern conditions is the process of forming of professional competencies (Dobrovská & Andres, 2016; Tamášová, 2015). In terms of Dublin descriptors, such professional competencies are

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understood as a set of knowledge, skills, communication, autonomy and responsibility of the educator.

Taking into account the global civilization changes, the reality of student and professional mobilities, the orientation of young people on professional activities in other countries or cultures, it is very important for the graduates to have a special competence, which, in many sources, is interpreted as intercultural competence (Yarosh, Lukic, & Santibáñez-Gruber, 2018; Nascimbeni, Burgos, Aceto, Stefanelli, & Eldeib, 2018).

Educational internationalization is considered here as an obligatory part of the training of a specialist, and the intercultural competence is considered a complex component, including the need for learning a foreign language and building communication skills, but also knowledge, skills, and actions (Huang, 2018).

The formation of intercultural competence represents a significant pedagogical problem due to its breadth and depth, as well as the novelty of its relevance (Sobre, 2017).

The practice of intercultural education is becoming one of the most important issues in the multicultural Europe. Typically, for the formation of the intercultural competence, special courses are usually offered for the fields of study related to education, international relations, and business (Golubeva & Guntersdorfer, 2017). Constant social changes require intercultural training of professionals from various professions.

Theoretical models of teaching about the intercultural relationships, as a rule, include a number of consistently emerging competencies (Dimitrov & Haque, 2016). At the same time, in our opinion, competences can be best developed in the process of practical training. Some experiences from introducing intercultural practices to students are described in several works (Kilgo, Ezell Sheets, & Pascarella, 2015; Barreto & Haydar, 2016). It seems to us that the system of intercultural practices aimed at necessary competencies has been not fully developed.

Dunlap and Mapp (2017) drew attention to the fact that international internship increases intercultural sensitivity, professionalism, and the growth of information about the impact of the culture on professional activities. However, to achieve these desired results, targeted training is required. The authors of this work recommend an additional training course for students preparing for international internships. The curriculum of this discipline is aimed to help students increase their self-awareness and critical attitude towards their culture, develop their perception of cultural values and peculiarities of the organization of professional activities in the destination country, and study the practical aspects of travelling and living abroad.

Mody, Gordon, Lehto and Adler (2016) argue that the benefits of intercultural and personal development, obtained during the course abroad, have a significant indirect effect on student entrepreneurship. Such foreign practices considerably facilitate the immersion in the life and culture of another country. The impact of the educational practice abroad in countries with small and big cultural distances is considered.

He, Lundgren and Pynes (2017) considered the issues of developing a short-term study program abroad and concluded that such practices should develop not only the intercultural competence but also professional skills and beliefs.

Buchanan (2017) points out the importance of previous theoretical training in the field of cultural research before the practice. An analysis of the work of teachers in a different cultural environment showed that they had to understand the new organizational and

cultural environment in the course of practice. The paper discusses the possibility of normalizing the transitional stage in the course of the practice in a different culture.

Andryukhina and Fadeyeva (2016) proposed an approach in the form of creative practices that are planned as integrated forms of learning to enhance the intercultural competence. At the same time, practices are integrated into special intercultural tasks and standard approaches that ensure the formation of intercultural competencies.

The aim of this work is to modify the system of practical training of students in terms of the development of their intercultural competence based on the stages and levels of academic practice within the framework of cooperation between Ukrainian and Slovak universities.

1 Model development

Considering any practice as an element of the learning process, it is necessary to identify certain features and stages of this process. The formation of a certain component of competence provided by the stage of the educational process will be projected in the form of a step-by-step process.

1.1 Staging

In the process of preparing for the practice, it is necessary to understand the problem that will be solved during it. We must realize that the actual development of competencies should be realized in the process of practical activities. A student must overcome the difficulties that arise in real life. Therefore, perhaps in the process of designing a task in practice, the teacher must foresee certain situations.

1) *The stage of conceptualization* involves the development of abilities that determine the unity of understanding the basic concepts and definitions that should be used during practice.

2) *The stage of formulating goals* includes the practical comprehension of the student's desired result of practice. The formulation of goals should be consistent with the trainees' level and the level of practical training.

3) *The stage of motivation* is determined by the student's interest in the results of the practice. Such an interest can be in the form of
    a) situational interest – when the student is motivated to continue in his/her education and the subsequent formation of the intercultural competence;
    b) stable interest – when the student realizes the importance of practical training for gaining professional intercultural competencies; and
    c) interest as an attitude when the student recognizes the importance of the acquired competencies in terms of life and non-production activities in conditions of other countries.

4) *The material stage* of the practice involves the implementation of the main actions to achieve the goals.

5) *The stage of reflection* is determined by students' self-esteem and the degree to which the results were in accordance with the set goals.

In order to form practical skills in shaping the intercultural competence of future teachers of practical training in the Ukrainian Engineering Pedagogical Academy (UEPA), it is envisaged to conduct multi-level training practices during education (Figure 1).
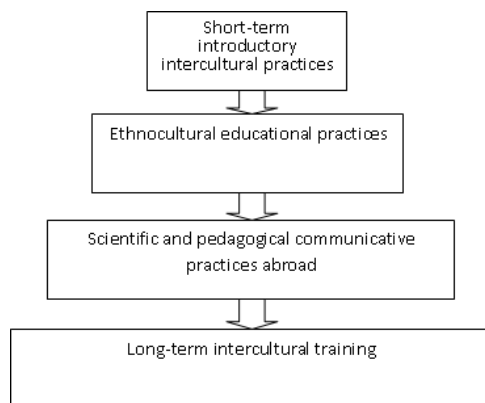
Figure 1. Intercultural practice levels practice (developed by the author).

Short-term practice at universities and enterprises abroad offers the resolution of the contradiction between the traditions of national education and the Pan-European and world-wide approaches.

The next stage in the formation of the intercultural competence is represented by ethno-cultural educational practice in different European countries, which include designing, technological actions, taking into account the existing ethno-cultural norms, and developing respect for their culture in the world system of cultural values, and determine the ability to perform basic design activities both in the native and foreign cultures.

Table 1

Characteristics of levels of intercultural practice (developed by the author)

	Kind of practice	Goals	Materialization	Reflection
1	Short-term foreign practices at universities and enterprises	Short-term goals. Preparation of the students for the perception of further competences, awareness of the place of their own culture.	Acquaintance with the peculiarities of studying abroad, organization of labor and educational processes.	Self-identification of differences in approaches to teaching and design with national peculiarities
2	Ethno-cultural educational practices in other countries	Medium-term goals. Formation of readiness to represent its cultural identity in a global world	Designing, technological actions taking into account ethno-cultural norms	Ability to perform basic designing activities in the native and other culture
3	Scientific pedagogical communicative practices abroad	Medium-term goals. Preparation for implementation of real tasks, acquisition of communication skills with representatives of other cultures.	Conducting test lessons in a non-cultural and foreign-language audience	Effectiveness of communication actions in the process of transfer of information with representatives of other cultures
4	Long-term professional internships	Long-term goals. Formation of persistent intercultural competences with direct possibility of work in the intercultural environment	Realization of realistic tasks in designing or teaching in a multicultural environment.	The ability to perform practical tasks independently or manage group leadership.

The next level of practical training is the scientific pedagogical communicative practice abroad, which, for example, is realized on the basis of an agreement with the Vocational School of Economics and Business in Prešov (Slovak Republic). In the course of conducting classes for students in foreign educational institutions, communication skills are formed. Communication skills are developed in foreign language audiences (considering that English is not their mother tongue). A respect for cultural specificities of other countries and the ability to use these features at work are promoted.

The highest level of pedagogical training of the teachers of practical training can be realized in the form of long-term professional internships. Such internships, in particular, may be realized on the basis of the world youth organization AIESEC. Such practices develop the ability to perform realistic design or teaching tasks in a multicultural environment.

The goals and the possibilities of materialization in the process of the formation of the intercultural competence are given by the stage of practical training. The characteristics at different stages are listed in the Table 1.

A comparison of the proposed levels of practical training with the known descriptors that determine the formation of competences allow us to form a scheme of accumulation of descriptors in the process of practical training (Figure 2).
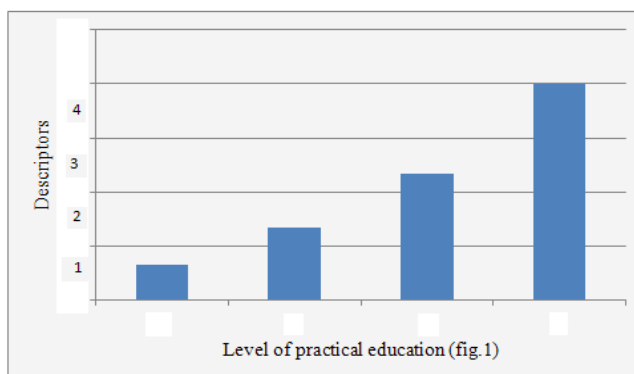

Figure 2. Formation of descriptors of intercultural competence during practical training. 1 - knowledge, 2 - skills, 3 - communication, 4 - autonomy and responsibility practice (developed by the author).

Figure shows compliance of the levels of practical training with the main descriptors of intercultural competence.

2   Practical realization

The given model of the formation of the intercultural competence in the process of practical training was tested during the training of students in the field of study "Vocational Education. Design". This field of study requires the use of both general cultural and ethno-cultural features, familiarization with the achievements of other countries and peoples, the basics of communication in different languages.

In order to introduce this approach, educational institutions in Slovakia, as a country close to the Ukrainian mentality and cultural traditions, were selected in the first step.

The Ukrainian Engineering Pedagogical Academy in Kharkov has a great experience in cooperation with universities and vocational schools in Slovakia. The orientation of the training at UEPA provides the graduates with an opportunity to work as teachers in vocational technical schools.

The reform of education in Ukraine, which is currently taking place, is aimed at bringing the European education system closer. In particular, in Ukraine, it is supposed to create an analogue with the educational institutions known in Slovakia as "Secondary School of Business".

Figure 3. Students of the Ukrainian Engineering and Pedagogical Academy during their pedagogical practice at the Secondary School of Business.

All these arguments predetermined the verification of our assumptions in Slovakia during the pedagogical training of Ukrainian students in educational institutions of Slovakia.

For the above purposes, a contract was signed with the vocational business school in Preshov (Stredná odborná škola podnikania, Prešov). The preparatory phase included working out a cooperation agreement, a contract on the practice of students from the UEPA in Slovakia, and a plan for the practice. During online communication with professionals, action plans were clarified, cultural and educational features of Slovakia were studied (Figure 3).

Figure 4. Conducting classes by UEPA students with students Secondary School of Business.

In course of the practice, a number of lessons were conducted by UEPA students; during classes, the cultural features of the two countries were taken into account (Figure 4). It should be noted that classes were held in English, which is neither the Ukrainian nor the Slovak students' mother tongue.

The practice has lead to an increase in the level of intercultural competencies of the Ukrainian students as well as the Slovak students.

After finishing the practice, the average level of the students' intercultural competence – both the teacher trainees' and the vocational school students' – was measured. This level was considered the overall indicator of the level of foreign language proficiency, the level of psychological compatibility, and the level of cultural intelligence of the professional intercultural level.

The results of the comparison of the percentages of different levels of intercultural competence before and after the practice for students and pupils are shown in Figure 5.
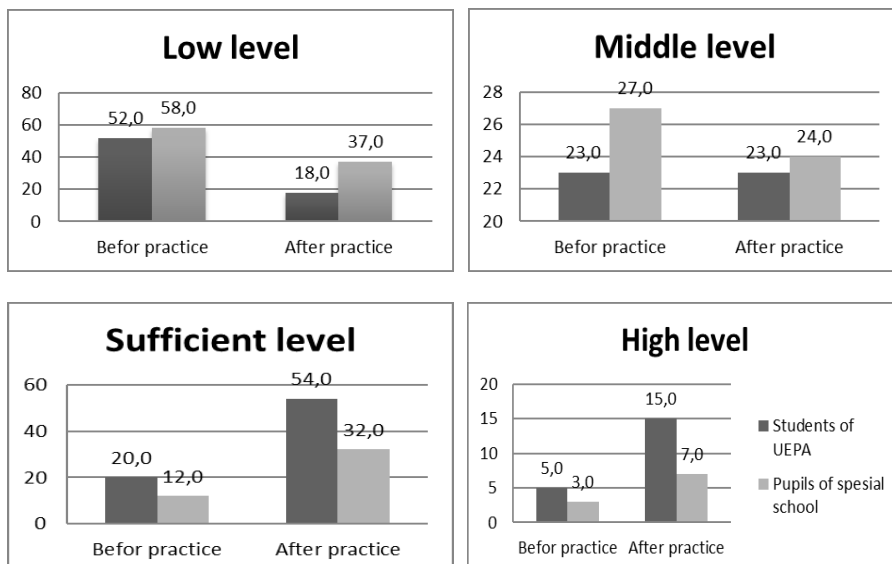

Figure 5 Changes in the level of the intercultural competence before and after the practice (developed by the author)

It is important that an increase in the level of intercultural competence was observed not only among Ukrainian students. This is the main purpose of the practice. The level of the intercultural competence among pupils at the vocational school, where the students were practicing, increased, too. Thus, such a form of the organization of pedagogical practice is mutually beneficial to all parties.

Conclusion

The basic role in the development of the intercultural competence should be played by the practical training of university students in other coutries.

The four levels of practical training include a short-term introductory intercultural practice, ethno-cultural educational practice, scientific and pedagogical communication practice abroad, and long-term intercultural training.

These levels correspond to the basic descriptors of the intercultural competence – knowledge, skills, communication, autonomy and responsibility. Thus, the proposed model can fulfil the conditions for the formation of this competence.

As a first step for approbation of the model, it is rational to choose close cultures, such as the cultures of Ukraine and Slovakia.

The real experience of passing intercultural practices by students of the Ukrainian Engineering Pedagogical Academy in vocational schools in Slovakia has shown a significant increase in the level of the intercultural competence, both for students of Ukraine and for students in Slovakia.

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