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Editorial

Journal of Teacher Education and Training (JTET) welcomes all the readers, authors and Editorial board on the publication of second issue of JTET.

On behalf of establishers I express a genuine appreciation to the contributors, Editorial board and printing house for effective cooperation, open-mindedness and thoughtful support to the continuation of this periodical.

This year the appearance of JTET is celebrated together with the 1st International JTET Conference “Sustainable Development. Culture. Education” – which lays a foundation for a new tradition – the joining of the journal publication and international Conference dedicated to this event. The Conference is organized by the Daugavpils University in cooperation with the European Network of the UNESCO/ UNITWIN project by the York University “Reorientation of teacher training to the sustainable development” (May 11-14, 2003). The conference is hosted by six universities: Daugavpils University (Latvia), Tallinn Pedagogical University (Estonia), University of Joensuu (Finland), University of Fechta (Germany), Rhodes University (South Africa), and York University (Canada). All the host universities took part in the creation of the second volume of JTET both through the membership in the Editorial Board and submitting the articles. It is not coincidence that the majority of articles in this issue is still oriented to the idea of sustainable development in education. Many articles included in the second volume of JTET represent the most valuable and original contributions from the Conference participants.

Editorial board for this issue has been extended with twelve new representatives from six countries. The geography of Editorial board has been broadened now including also the representatives from Estonia, Finland, New Zealand, South Africa, and UK. The geographical diversity among the authors is maintained also in the second volume of JTET. The contributors from Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Finland, UK, and Canada create an international forum for the ideas on sustainability education, professional development of teachers, day-to-day educational process and child as a focus of educational ideas.

The readers will notice the changes in the lay-out and format of journal articles which were suggested and approved by the members of Editorial board. The journal will appreciate any suggestions and propositions regarding the further improvement of its format and content of articles.

The next Conference of JTET will be organized by Tallinn Pedagogical University (Estonia) in May 2004 (for contact: Veissonm@tpu.ee), but the establishers of JTET kindly invites all the potential authors to submit their articles for the following issue of JTET and hope to meet you next year in Tallinn.

Editor-in-chief: **Anita Pipere**

Ecofeminism as a Viable Perspective for a Sustainable Model of Education in Latvia

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Abstract

This article discusses the essence of the ecological and feminist movements and denotes the connections that exist between both movements and discovers how ecology and feminism, brought together in the unified perspective of ecofeminism, can become a viable perspective for designing a sustainable model of education. Ecofeminist thinkers envision new relationships between men and women, between humans, between humans, the Earth and God. The principles of a sustainable model as formulated by ecofeminist thinkers are brought into light. They envision how one ought to live in relation to self, others, God and the natural world. This article relates ecofeminist theory to education in order to derive some basic principles from ecofeminist thought and applies them for building a more sustainable model of education in Latvia. Ecofeminist theory offers rich resources for education in many ways. It forms a background for formulating pedagogical principles and educational methods. By offering a radically different approach to the world, humans, and their interconnections, ecofeminism has a potential for developing the new perspectives for a sustainable education.

Sustainability encompasses not only environmental studies, but also refers to the political and societal structures, systems and practices so as to render them sustainable in own rights. Sustainable development includes the aspects of sufficient distribution of power and resources within the society. Therefore, sustainable education should be viewed within a sustainable community. Sustainability also means empowerment and grassroots participation. Thus, principles and insights formulated by ecofeminist thinkers become a base of sustainable ecological model for education in Latvia.

The purpose of the study is to reclaim the women's place in the educational realm of school, so as to recognize women's experiences and voice in building a more adequate, inclusive, and sustainable model of education in Latvia.

This research contends that, when women have no place in the educational thought, educational policy suffers, the society's devaluation of women's lives and experiences is reinforced, and the field of educational thought itself is diminished.

Key words: ecofeminism; feminism; sustainability; inclusivity; relatedness; interdependence; spirituality.

The choice of the ecological and, particularly, an ecofeminist perspective for building a sustainable model of education in this study was determined by the following factors:

First, an ecological perspective has impressed itself upon a contemporary understanding of the world. It has become increasingly difficult to think of persons and events as disconnected. The world is an interconnected web of life that is better understood by reference to its complex relationships rather than by a detailed description of its isolated components. An ecofeminism that can be defined as a relational perspective “is essential to approach a person and a world” (Howell, 2000: 8).

Second, feminism is a movement originating in discontent with patriarchal, hierarchical relationships and emerging as a constructive enterprise imagining new forms of relations to the self, others, God, and the Earth. Ecofeminist guidelines for education is crucial for liberating relationships and “nurturing context for the emergence of women’s selfhood” (Howell, 2000: 9) that was oppressed in the patterns of relatedness existing in dominant models of education in Latvia.

Third, ecofeminism is a movement that recognizes and makes explicit the interconnections between all systems of oppression. Ecofeminism continues progression within traditional feminism from attention to sexism to attention to all systems of human oppression. It acknowledges the structural interconnections between sexism, racism, and classism and call for elimination of all oppressive systems.

Fourth, ecofeminism, as a political movement, encourages to build a sustainable classroom community that extends to a sustainable model of society honoring the self-determination of women as well as men, and locating the well-being of human societies within the well-being of the entire Earth community. It seeks to transform the social and political orders that promote human oppression embedded in social practice.

Fifth, as a spiritual movement, ecofeminism draws to practices and orientations that nurture experiences of non-duality and reverence for the sacred whole that is the cosmos. The importance of raising gender and environmental concerns is essential in building a more sustainable model of education. For the justification of the importance of both issues the authors point to a wider contexts.

Gender Concerns in Education as Viewed within the European Context

Currently there are no formal or societal barriers in Latvia that would place girls at a disadvantage to boys in terms of access to basic education, since it is a culturally accepted norm in Latvia that girls should receive the same amount of education as boys (Educational Law, 1998). Latvia has always been the country that formally recognized the principle of gender equality. Since 1919 education has been mandatory for girls and boys between ages of six and sixteen, and this has allowed young women to pursue further opportunities in education and labor sectors of society (Thorborg, 2000). After the restoration of independence in May 4, 1990, Latvia has accepted the convention of United Nations about the prevention of discrimination against women (Parsla, 1997). For Latvia to become a successful member of European Union, a number of laws ensuring equality need to be adopted. The equality in obtaining education has become an important issue in Europe. The United Nation’s recommendations on the women’s decade and world conferences have established the foundation for official institutions in various countries such as equal opportunities commissions and policies. These initiatives have also contributed to the improvement of social statistics by including gender, and they have given the

impetus to women's research. A number of documents and policy areas have been drawn up in recent years in European Community: "*The Resolution to Promote Equal Opportunities For Girls and Boys in Education*" (1985, June 3), the "*Second Medium Term Program on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men*", and a newly proposed network "*Gender and Teacher Education*" (in Arsen, 2000: 22).

The "*Resolution to Promote Equal Opportunities for Girls and Boys in Education*" (1985, June 3) is the first commitment to action in this field by the council of Ministers of Education of the European Community. The Arsen & NiCharthaigh (1987) project was also of special significance in raising concerns and initiating research on gender issue in education among the educators of eleven European countries.

The environmental concerns also need to be addressed in designing a more sustainable educational system. The concept of sustainability is a complex one, as O'Riordan & Voisey (1998) suggests:

Sustainability can never actually be attained, or at least cannot be envisioned by people because of the immense and fundamental changes in our society that it entails. . . The sustainability transition, therefore, is the process of coming to terms with sustainability in all its deeply rich ecological, social and economic dimensions. The transition is as much about new ways of knowing, of being differently human in a threatened but co-operating world, as it is about management and innovation of procedures and products (p. 14).

Environmental Concerns in Education

The importance of ecological concerns in designing educational curricula in Europe and in Latvia as well is linked with the awareness of the ecological crises. The damage done by the crisis is more visible in the Eastern part of Europe than in the West (Vischer, 1992). The almost systematic neglect of the problem, extending over the years, has meant that in many places the disaster is evident. At this point, too, the centralistic system of socialism has shown its inability to constructively tackle new developments. The challenges posed by the ecological crisis have notoriously been overlooked. Now, after regaining its independence, in Latvia, and in other Eastern European countries the changes have also taken an ecological dimension. Globalization processes in Latvia require a reorientation of the education in Latvia according to the requirements of European Union. A number of international statements and mandates of EU have pointed to the key role of education in creating new patterns of behavior of individuals, groups, and society as a whole towards the environment. Both, "*The Fifth Environmental Program*" (1992) and "*The Resolution Program*" (1998) of the European Union are aimed toward the education and training in achieving sustainable development (in Oepen, 1999). "*The Fifth Environmental Program*" (1992) sets out a new approach to community's environmental policy (in Oepen, 1999). As it is underlined in the program, the changes in social behavior are needed of all actors concerned (public, authorities, citizens, and educators). To achieve the necessary behavioral change, integration of the environmental dimension in the educational policy is identified as a key to success.

Both ecological and gender concerns should become an educational concern. Ecofeminist thinkers offer a viable perspective for designing a more sustain-

able model of education. For better understanding of the connectedness that exist between gender and environmental movements the authors briefly explore the development and origin of both movements.

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The Origin and Development of Ecofeminist Thought and the Ecological Movements

The origin of ecofeminist and ecological movements is marked with the publication of two books in the USA – Rachel Carson’s (1963) “*Silent Spring*” and Betty Friedan’s (1971) “*The Feminine Mystique*”. Carson’s “*Silent Spring*” brought to public attention the already existing discussion on the disintegration and slow destruction of the environment. Although “*Silent Spring*” was primarily concerned with the biological damage humans were doing to the world and, particularly, to themselves, Carson’s book was also an indictment of our arrogant conception of our place in the larger scheme of things. This view was powerfully reinforced just few years later in a now-famous paper by White (1966) “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis” which critiques Christianity as an anthropocentric religion that bears a huge burden of guilt for the ecological problems resulting from people’s mastery over nature. Friedan’s “*The Feminine Mystique*” provided its share of excitement among women over the whole world. Friedan and Carson gave the starting signal; two movements were called into being, gathering all forces in political life. Two movements, environmental and feminist, emerged and have had a number of aspects in common from the very beginning. It was Françoise d’Eaubonne who coined the term “ecological feminism,” arguing that the destruction of the planet was due to the profit motive inherent in male power, and that only women could bring about an ecological revolution. As women thinkers began to turn their attention to the environment, feminists in this movement began to look also at the social dimensions of the ecological issues.

Ecofeminism is an emerging tradition – a movement that is scarcely twenty years old in the formal sense, but one that has brought women and men together with common concern for the Earth. Ecofeminists represent diverse traditions (Eaton, 1996). As a result of the movement, women come together to act, to protect life, and to seek alternatives for policies and practices that destroy human life and the Earth. The roots of ecofeminism are clearly drawn from many sources. These include the experiences of women with oppression, feminism in its many forms, and postmodern analysis.

Today ecological feminism is an international movement, global in concern and multi-disciplinary in approach that comprises analysis, critique, and vision. It is a study of and the resistance to the associated exploitation and subjugation of women and Earth. There are two key directions in which current work of ecofeminists is progressing. First, there is the examination of the roots of the ecological crisis and their entwined linkages. Ecofeminists expose the ideological foundations of the historical and theoretical constructs of “women and nature” formed in Euro-Western cultures. At the beginning stages of ecofeminist work is an analysis of agency – namely, gathering data and insights on who, what, why, where and of how is causing the global socio-ecological crises. Second, ecofeminist theory envisions alternative philosophical frameworks based on relations among humans with the Earth, as replacing existing systems of domination (Eaton, 1996).

The key category of analysis for ecofeminists is “nature,” particularly the interrelated dominations of nature and of women. The concepts of nature and ecology became central terms to be redefined. Just as within feminism, there are differences in ecofeminism. As there is no one version of feminism, there are not only differences in the analysis of the woman/nature connection, but also differences on such fundamental issues as the nature and solutions of women’s oppression, a theory of human nature, and the conceptions of freedom and equality (Warren, 1996). However, four basic claims with which all ecofeminists agree can be identified as the following: (a) There are important connections between the oppression of women and the oppression of nature; (b) an understanding of the nature of these connections is necessary to any adequate understanding of the oppression of women and the oppression of nature; (c) feminist theory and practice must include an ecological perspective; and (d) solutions to ecological problems must include a feminist perspective. Clearly, all ecofeminists agree that there are important connections between the oppression of nature and the oppression of women. Furthermore, since the connection between the oppression of women and nature are basically conceptual, they believe that what is necessary is a reconceptualization. Finally, ecofeminists in general agree that ecological principles become the basis for critique of the patriarchal framework, which gives rise to the hierarchical thinking responsible for fostering patterns of domination.

There are other distinct features of ecofeminism, such as its (a) pluralistic nature, (b) process character, (c) inclusivity, and (d) relationality.

The following section demonstrates how feminism and ecology brought together in the unified perspective can become a viable perspective for building a sustainable future.

The Intersection of Ecology and Feminism

There is much in common for both, feminism and ecology. Etymologically “ecology” refers to the study of the *oikos*, or the home. The term “ecology” comes from a biological science. As a science, it is concerned with the study of the interrelationships of organisms in the environment. In the expanded sense, including a combined socioeconomic and biological aspect, it has emerged in the last decades to examine how human misuse of “nature” is causing pollution of soils, water and air. As a philosophy, it can be distinguished in two broad approaches, such as the reformistic approach, which is concerned with an environmental ethics, and more radical critiques, which raise questions concerning the very philosophical and theological foundations of Western industrial society so as to seek new ecologically-informed ways of understanding and practical living.

Ecofeminist thinkers point to the connection between ecology and feminism, emphasizing a complementarity of both movements. According to Ruether (1975), the women’s movement and ecology are intimately connected. She writes:

Women must see that there can be no liberation for them and no solution to the ecological crisis within a society whose fundamental model of relationships continues to be one of domination. They must unite the demands of the women’s movement with those of the ecological movement to envision a radical reshaping of the basic socioeconomic relations and the underlying values of this society (p. 204).

Thus, the ecological movement has a special significance to women because of the oppression that women share with nature. Likewise, feminism has a distinct and indispensable contribution to make to ecology. Ecology explores the interaction and interdependence of all life forms contained in the great web of life we call creation, while feminism focuses on the full humanity of women in the structural institutions, religious and cultural systems and concepts of the human person that hinder this across the world. Ecofeminism also contributes to an understanding of the connections between the domination of persons and the domination of nonhuman nature. Ecological science holds that there is no hierarchy in nature itself, but rather a hierarchy in human society that is projected into nature. There are a number of other aspects that are common to ecology and feminism. First, women revolt against cultural and economic limitations that stand in the way of developing their human potential. At a global level, this comes down to a resistance to paternalistic thinking and patriarchal structures that only tell women “what is good for them.” The ecological movement stresses the links between humanity and nature, and views humankind as participating in nature and no longer as dominating it. Second, both movements resist a hierarchical thought patterns imposed from above and oppose a linear thought pattern, which ignores the much complex reality both in individual people themselves and in nature. Both movements critically oppose the costs of competition, aggression and domination, which are the result of modern thinking. Third, both movements are aimed at re-imagining new social structures that are no longer based on domination of women and nature as merely supportive resources but on the complete expression and development of the talents of both women and men (Halkes, 1989; Warren, 1995).

The principles for a more sustainable model of education proposed by ecofeminist thinkers is an alternative to static, mechanistic, and hierarchically structured model of education. These principles can become a base for building a more sustainable model of education. These are: 1) the principle of inclusivity, 2) principle of community, and 3) principle of spirituality.

The Principle of Inclusivity

The principle of inclusivity signifies the diversity and significance of every voice and experience. Feminist educators suggest that silence or ignorance of one’s voice has been the key of women’s powerlessness. They associate silence with oppression. That’s why as a primary step they see reclaiming women’s’ voice in the classroom setting.

The second pedagogical step in regaining one’s voice is “remembering” (Harris, 1987) or “reflective observation” (Harris, 1987). That is the process that allows women to engage in exploration of silences in their own lives. It involves the work of recalling and renouncing. The power of this process is that women allow words to be communicated. It is also a process of affirmation, liberation and transformation. After discovering that one’s voice has been kept silent, and then through reflection on one’s own history and the history of women’s oppression, the next step in one’s journey towards gaining one’s voice is called “artistry” (Harris, 1987) or “abstract conceptualization” (Harris, 1987). She suggests different artistic ways for developing and reclaiming one’s voice, such as storytelling, journal and biography writing. Therefore, Harris uses a metaphor of voice in describing women’s journey from

silence to listening to their voices, towards finding one's inner voice, and finally, integrating one's voice with others. The feminist vision is inclusive of both men and women. The process of finding one's voice implies not only striving to reclaim women's voices, but also the voices of others, "and the voices of entire peoples" (Harris, 1987: 104). It enables an educator to realize that curriculum is silent not only about women, but about many others without political power. Ecofeminist religious educators expand the term "oppressed" to include all those without power, such as the poor, Third-world people, persons with mental and physical handicaps, and they draw parallels between women's oppression and the oppression of non-human nature.

The Principle of Community: Relatedness as an Essential Human Condition

Community, as a synonym for relatedness and interdependence, is the other basic principle of a sustainable model of education in Latvia. This principle underlines a vision of a classroom as a community of learners, based on values of inclusion and connectedness, interrelatedness and interdependence.

One of the characteristics of a classroom as a community, viewed within a larger community, is diversity – diversity of voices, experiences, both religious and the experiences gained in the process of socialization within other interlocking meso-systems. A classroom as a smaller community can demonstrate how the ideal of universal community can be realized on the micro scale of the small group (Moran, 1979). As the author argues, classroom can be defined as a genuine community only then it works toward "greater diversity in wholeness" (Moran, 1979: 132). He concludes that classroom, as a micro-system, in order to be called a genuine community, has to move in the direction of the ideal and universal community. Classroom also has its social, economic and a political aspect, developing qualities and skills necessary to work for justice and peace. Such classroom becomes important not just as a place from where students feel connected and supported, but it is also a solid base from which students move into the world. Therefore, subject matter should be designed in a way that teaches students a responsibility towards the world as a bigger community (O'Gorman, 1989). The curricular response in building a classroom as a community of diversity is manifold:

- (a) First, a value of diversity in the classroom or a school as a bigger community can be fostered by attending to language both in the context and the process of teaching a subject matter (Harris, 1987). Having recognized the importance of using inclusive language in referring to human persons in the classroom and in a wider community, students gradually will learn to use inclusive language in regards to all nonhuman life.
- (b) Second, classroom community that values differences can be built by including persons who are excluded by ethnic, racial, or gender criteria. Such befriending acknowledges and accepts differences.

This curricular task can be realized by fostering the value of receptivity, that is, the ability to listen not only to those persons who are oppressed, but also to the voice of the entire Creation. It leads towards including the voices of the non-human world, thus, implying a planetary perspective. Thus, classroom community will expand to the local, regional, and global communities. By respecting, accepting and

promoting diversity in the classroom community, the teacher builds a unity, what Moran (1979) calls “unity in diversity”. The soviet educational system in Latvia is a good example how diversity and autonomy was denied for the sake of community. Ecofeminist educators encourage promoting both autonomy and also a sense of community in the classroom. Moran (1979) points to a dialectic character of “interdependence,” which can describe this paradox, when students are encouraged to develop their individuality within a community, and also when “the interaction of black and white, men and women, old and young takes place” (p. 124). The implications of being in solidarity with other students are integral to the radical transformation necessary for interdependence. Interdependent living means developing a strong sense of self in relationships with others, since the process of becoming an individual happens through relationships with God, others, and the world.

Another curricular task in promoting a value of diversity is developing students’ responsibility. O’Gorman (1989) stresses that curriculum should be organized in such a way that it teaches learners that the responsibilities of humans extend further than their neighbors, to all life on a planet. This involves family, school, and a wider culture assisting the child in his or her meetings with other and with the creation; taking seriously the role of education towards responsibility; and teaching to be responsible *to* and *for*. Moore (1989) also highlights the role of families and schools in teaching children *responsibility for*, by leaving the *responsibility to* unattended. Therefore, school should encourage all agents – family, school and a wider culture – to get involved more in teaching responsibility towards all things and all people:

- 1) Inclusion, as feminist educators (Moore, 1998; O’Gorman, 1998; and Harris, 1987) point out, is an essential quality of a classroom as an ecological community. It means that all students belong; it means that all students are accepted. According to them, community includes the following: security, open communication, mutual thinking, shared goals and objectives. Security means that classroom is a place where one can feel safe. Such community fosters the processes of growth and exploration. In such communities it is possible for students to take risks, then showing people who they really are, as well as asking for help and support, delighting in accomplishments. A cohesive and inclusive community also makes open communication possible. Students can share freely what is happening, what they need, and what they are worried about. In safe, accepting communities, students’ individual differences and different needs are openly acknowledged. The classroom becomes a place where everybody’s experiences and opinions are valued.
- 2) Interrelatedness and interdependence as a basic principle of an ecological model of education, an also as an essential quality of a classroom as a community of learners. Educators, such as O’Gorman (1989), Moore (1998) and Harris (1987), define the characteristics of interdependent and interconnected classroom as follows: teachers remain attuned to the connection between classroom climate and learning, teaching and learning are viewed as reciprocal processes, interdisciplinary connections are created whenever possible, attitudes and perceptions are incorporated as elements of the learning process. By designing the classroom as a community, ecofeminist educators have challenged women and men towards new ways of relating in the classroom and new ways of being in the world.

The Principle of Spirituality

Spirituality links all principles of the sustainable model of education. Spirituality is a subtle subject, difficult to define, and often difficult to defend. Many people reject it because of its traditional association with institutionalized religion, which is the case in Latvia. In a traditional Christian context spirituality – *spiritualitas* – was closely connected with the celebration of the Christian mysteries; it was linked with Christian ideals of holiness and perfection preached by the gospel (King, 1998). In addition to dualistic thinking, there are two other potentially destructive aspects of traditional modern spirituality: a narrow focus on tradition and its exclusive character. According to King (1998), spirituality is exclusive to one particular faith formulated in particular teachings; and as spiritual disciplines, which emphasized holiness rather than wholeness. Ecofeminist thinkers stress a relational ecological understanding of a person, world and God, and propose a postmodern spirituality that defines relations as internal, essential, and constructive. Unlike dualistic modern spirituality, postmodern spirituality promotes a sense of kinship with others, and also a non-human world, which are viewed as having their own experiences, values, and purposes. The postmodern sense of oneness with nature differs from that of materialistic modernity, in which oneness means deterministic and relativistic reductionism. Postmodern spirituality is consistent with feminist spirituality. As a feminist spirituality it is critical towards cultural assumptions about women's role, and it encourages autonomy and self-actualization of all women and men (Conn, 1986). Ecofeminist educators start with the personal aspect of spirituality, particularly to holistic and ecological understanding of one's spirituality. To acquire one's personal integrity requires the process and patterns of self-transformation (Zappone, 1991). For a student it means a search for personal power, namely, the ability to affect changes in oneself, others, and the Earth (Zappone, 1991).

- (a) The first aspect ecofeminist educators suggest to start building a sustainable model of education is the personal aspect of spirituality, particularly holistic and ecological understanding of one's spirituality. To acquire one's personal integrity requires the process and patterns of self-transformation (Zappone, 1991). For a student it means a search for personal power, namely, the ability to affect changes in oneself, others, and the earth (Zappone, 1991).
- (b) The second aspect of ecological spirituality is communal. Many traditional modes of spirituality have focused initially on inwardness. Ecofeminist educators claim that inward and outward realities are not opposed to each other, but are complementary (Zappone, 1991; Moore, 1998). Thus, a spirituality that begins in intensive inwardness is not opposed to extensive outwardness, on the contrary. Although it is deeply personal, spirituality is not necessarily individualistic because in the relationship to God, it touches on everything: one's relationships with others, community, and the World (Moore, 1989; Zappone, 1991; Suchocki, 1989). Eco-spirituality then can be described as holistic, encompassing one's relationships to all creation - to "others", to society, nature, and God. It insists on building right relationships with God and neighbor, and all creation. Eco-spirituality with its global focus can be defined as inclusive to all and invites all the oppressed groups to conversion. It encourages developing ecological awareness where each self is essentially related to the community of life on Earth. For religious educators this can mean

- fostering teaching and learning in the classroom that extends across cultures and in conversation with the planet. This implies enlarging the understanding of the world, acknowledging and respecting differences, being present to our selves and others, and participating in supportive communities (Moore, 1998).
- (c) The third aspect of ecological spirituality is justice (Moore, 1998). This facet of ecological spirituality is praxis oriented and calls for transformation of societal structures. Feminist spirituality implies making connections of personal and political. Out of this awareness of connection women can recognize their spirituality as equally embedded in the personal and the political. It implies a complex and enlightened way of seeing how oppression, racism, economic exploitation, and the ecological crisis are interconnected. Ecofeminists put forward transformative agendas and strategies for sustainable living. For Latvia, this means framing progress in terms of sustainability and connectedness, in both levels – personal and institutional. On personal level this can be done by encouraging students to change their personal values and rethinking their place and responsibilities in the world, on institutional and structural level – by bringing changes in the political, economic, educational level and designing more sustainable structures of living.

Summary

Ecofeminism as a postmodern movement provides educational grounding for building a sustainable model of education in Latvia. Ecofeminist principles becomes a base and a challenge for educators in Latvia in developing an ecological consciousness in which the value and the experience of all human and non-human beings are respected and the interconnectedness of all things is recognized.

A vision of a more sustainable education in Latvia should be informed by ecofeminist thought. The significant contributions of ecofeminist educators to the educational enterprise include defining the principle of inclusivity which recognizes women's differences, the principle of relatedness, the principle of community, and the principle of spirituality.

- (a) Ecofeminist educators suggest the pedagogy appropriate for voicing and exploring perspectives of those who are marginalized. They call for a reimagining, renaming, and reinterpreting one's voice and experience. To build a sustainable model of education means including one's experience and a voice, and constructing a pedagogy that is inclusive to the experiences and voices of all marginal and oppressed.
- (b) The communal principle advocated by ecofeminist educators require that the educational process should consistently encourage students to discover the authority of their own experience, and "to place that experience in dialogue with other differing experiences of the world" (Zappone, 1991: 7). They define the role of education in enabling students to move beyond themselves towards active participation in the classroom and also in the larger community.
- (c) Ecological spirituality is a bonding force of the sustainable model concerned with a person as embodied spirit that is related to self, others, and the Earth. The ecofeminist spirituality defines as its goal the transformed relationships to a person, God and the Earth.

The principles of sustainable model of education designed for Latvia has its role of reclaiming not only the voice, value, and the experience of women in the educational realm of school, but also those of men and other marginal and oppressed, including a non-human nature and the Earth.

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Sustainability Education and Teacher Training in Scotland

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Abstract

This article explores the relationship between sustainability education and teacher training in Scotland. It considers recent developments in national education policy and the UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation) initiative to 're-orient teacher education towards sustainable futures'. The School of Education of the University of Edinburgh is involved in this initiative and this article explores the policy and practice of the School in relation to this and other national and international initiatives.

Key words: sustainability; education; UNESCO; teacher training.

Introduction

In the Spring 2001 issue of *Environmental Education*, Charles Hopkins outlined the work of UNESCO in 'Re-Orienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainability'. In this article he mentioned the involvement of Scotland through the University of Edinburgh, and England through the University of Bath. Whilst neither organisation would claim to be the sole proponent of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) both have made a significant commitment to addressing this issue and are involved in the UNESCO project (Hopkins, 2001). The purpose of this article is to outline the status of ESD in Scotland and discuss the constraints, implications and opportunities for teacher education. We further discuss the response of our own institution to this issue. Whilst the term Sustainable Education (SE) is now frequently used in preference to ESD, the latter is retained in this text as it is used in a number of the programmes and publications cited.

The purpose of the project undertaken by UNESCO on behalf of the United Nations (UN) is to 're-orient teacher education to address sustainability'. Moray House Institute, which is now the School of Education of the University of Edinburgh, is one of the primary locations for teacher education and associated disciplines in Scotland. It has been involved in the project since 1997 and was one of the original ten teacher education institutes in the world to make a commitment.

The following report sets out the UK context for the project, its significance for the University of Edinburgh and other teacher education institutes in the UK. It also proposes several research projects and developments for the School of Education.

National Policy on Sustainable Development in Scotland

In the UK there is a clear government commitment to sustainable development and several key documents explicate that policy. Sustainable development is a matter of widespread public discussion and the Deputy Prime Minister of the UK has responsibility for the policy and its implementation. Whilst this is an indication of the political profile of the issue in the UK, there are particular circumstances which relate to the situation in Scotland.

In July 1999 a Scottish Parliament convened in Edinburgh for the first time in almost 300 years. Whilst Scotland remains a part of the UK a wide range of responsibilities and powers have been devolved to this parliament which include a number of policy areas central to education for sustainable development. These include environment, education, transport and health. However some important policy areas such as energy and some fiscal measures are not devolved and this gives the parliament less room for manoeuvre.

As a signatory to Agenda 21 the UK government and hence Scotland is committed to its principles. These have been identified in Scotland through publications such as 'Down to Earth: A Scottish Perspective on Sustainable Development' (Scottish Office, 1999a), which endorses the social, economic and educational aspects of sustainable development; and through the publication of the report of The Secretary of State for Scotland's Advisory Group on Education for Sustainable Development (Scottish Office, 1999b) which focuses specifically on education.

In February 2000 the Scottish Parliament passed a motion committing itself to placing sustainable development at the core of its work and in August 2000 the Scottish Minister for the Environment published a draft comprehensive environmental strategy. Although given credit by commentators for its attempt to open up discussion on sustainability issues, it was roundly criticised for a 'business as usual' approach and a lack of practical ideas. This is not to suggest that until now there has been no policy on sustainable development, rather that it has been piecemeal rather than integrated. Consequently the general public has largely remained unaware of public policy in this area.

In March 2001 the Scottish Minister for the Environment announced his retirement and the First Minister decided to spread the work of the ministry through other departments in the parliament. Whilst this may be seen as an attempt to integrate environmental policy most commentators fear that the lack of profile will be detrimental to both environmental and ESD policy.

Education and National Sustainable Development Policy

There is no explicit linkage between the educational system and the national sustainable development policy, and although in general terms the importance of education for the success of the policy is recognised, there is no mention of its role in the August 2000 draft environmental strategy. Although aspects of education for sustainable development are to be found in a number of places in curricular guidance in Scotland these neither permeate the curriculum nor are they gathered together into a single integrated ESD theme. Although individuals in schools and higher education institutions are committed to ESD the lack of policy direction leaves the area vulnerable.

Teacher education has no explicit recognition in the national sustainable development policy. However, in numerous policy statements the importance of education is fully acknowledged in enabling government policies to be realised.

The true drivers of educational policy in Scotland are *standards* and *inclusion*. There is concern that the educational achievements of school students in Scotland are not as high as they might be and consequently there is a publicly stated government commitment to raising standards of achievement in schools. The first Bill to be passed by Scotland's parliament was concerned with raising educational standards: targets are being set and education authorities and schools are expected to evolve and monitor the implementation of clear policies concerned with the enhancement of standards. The standards being invoked relate to literacy, numeracy and performance in national end-of-school examinations.

Following recent pay and conditions negotiations between teachers unions and the Scottish parliament there have been significant improvements in these conditions. As part of the 'package' additional expectations relating to in-service training etc. have been written into teachers contracts, again with the intention of raising national standards of achievement.

The commitment to raise standards is taken to extend to the whole of the school population and not just to the most able students. There is a powerful government commitment to removing the obstacles that impede educational progress and which prevent young people from taking full advantage of the educational opportunities provided. Whilst extensive provision also exists for informal education, similar national themes are pursued and there appears to be little emphasis on ESD.

Structure of the Educational System at National Level

It has been said that education in Scotland is a partnership between central government, local government, and schools. It is the purpose of central government to determine the nature of educational provision, to prescribe the conditions under which education is provided, and to determine the resources that will be allocated to sustain it. It is the function of education authorities, of which there are 32 in Scotland, to ensure that appropriate provision is made for education in their area and to ensure that it is in line with national requirements. It is the responsibility of schools to deliver to students in a particular locality an appropriate education in line with the national guidelines as mediated by education authorities.

Whilst there is no national curriculum prescribed by statute, there nevertheless is a national framework which is universally acknowledged to constitute an appropriate curriculum (5–14 Guidelines). That curricular framework in the primary school covers the following: language studies; mathematics; expressive arts; environmental studies; and religious and moral education. In the secondary school the curriculum framework covers: language, mathematics, social studies, science, technology, physical education, and religious and moral education. These areas of study are not legally binding on schools: nevertheless, there is a strong professional consensus that these represent the major domains of human enquiry and reflection, into which all pupils as a matter of right, are entitled to be initiated.

National standards of achievement are established by ensuring that there is a single examining body - The Scottish Qualifications Authority - which sets on an annual basis examinations that are taken by all pupils at age 16 and again at age 17/18.

Performance in these end-of-school examinations provides the basis for entrance to higher education.

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Teacher Education in Scotland

In Scotland teacher education is based in six centres, all of them with a very considerable tradition of specialist work. The largest and oldest of these centres, at Edinburgh and at Glasgow, trace their roots to the early years of the nineteenth century. Five of the centres were for many years independent bodies which formed together a separate sector of higher education in Scotland. However, partly in response to intensifying financial pressures, and partly in response to the need to enhance the quality of their work, these teacher education centres are now all formally part of universities as departments or faculties and confer university degrees and other awards to those who successfully complete their studies. Each centre offers a full range of training opportunities for work in primary schools and in secondary schools, although there are some areas of specialist provision with, for example, physical education training and further education training being restricted to certain institutions.

All programmes of teacher education in Scotland have to comply with national guidelines, which are issued from time to time by the Secretary of State/First Minister, who is responsible to Scotland's Parliament for the quality of education in Scotland. These guidelines are intended to reflect a professional consensus on the skills and understandings and other capacities teachers need to acquire if they are to contribute effectively to the work of the schools.

Another significant feature of teacher education programmes in Scotland is that they all require to be accredited by the General Teaching Council for Scotland. That body, which has as members the majority of practising teachers, has been the voice of the teaching profession in Scotland since 1965. It, in effect, controls entry to the teaching profession in Scotland and therefore is entitled to satisfy itself that programmes offered in the various centres are in line with professional expectations and with the changing needs of schools, as well as being sufficiently rigorous to earn university awards.

While programmes require demonstrating that they are compatible with the national guidelines before they can be taught, there is scope for variation between institutions on the nature of the curriculum they provide. Nevertheless, embedded in the guidelines is a set of competencies based on a functional analysis of teaching. Every aspect of a teacher education programme has to demonstrate how it fosters the competencies, and in granting a teaching qualification an institution is affirming that students have demonstrated the required competencies.

Education for sustainable development forms part of the guidelines for teachers in Scotland. These include two specific references to teachers being knowledgeable about sustainable development and competent to contribute to ESD. Although Environmental Studies is one of the areas listed for study, this is an umbrella term for a range of subjects which are taught between the ages of 5 and 14 and which, in broad terms, deal with knowledge about the environment rather than ESD. 'Education for Sustainable Development' is listed as an *option* which teacher education institutions may make available. Therefore it is left to the individual teacher education institutions to determine how much emphasis is to be given to 'Education

for Sustainable Development', either as a separate programme or as part of 'Environmental Studies'.

In Scotland a strong partnership has developed between the teacher education institutions and teachers in schools. Indeed, all aspects of initial teacher education involve close collaboration between TEI staff and schoolteachers. It is inconceivable that an aspect of a teacher education programme would be found to be incompatible with the curriculum of a school.

Structure of Teacher Certification

Teaching qualifications in Scotland are of three types: Teaching Qualification (Primary), Teaching Qualification (Secondary), and Teaching Qualification (Further Education). The national guidelines stipulate the length of each qualification and its general content. There are two routes into primary or secondary education: a student may take a four-year degree leading to a Bachelor of Education resulting in a qualification to teach in a primary or a secondary school (the *concurrent* route), or a teacher may, first of all, complete a degree programme and subsequently take a one-year programme of professional education (the *consecutive* route). As has been made clear, the national guidelines ensure that the national government controls to a very significant extent the content of initial teacher education.

To date, there is no requirement for the periodic re-certification of teachers. Nevertheless, as part of the recent settlement on pay and conditions of teachers the government is committed to the development of a framework for continuing professional development for teachers. That will consist of a number of standards as follows:

Initial Teacher Education Standard

(Status on successful completion of teacher training);

Fully Registered Teacher Standard

(After qualifying and after two years' of successful experience as a teacher, teachers are *registered* with the General Teaching Council for Scotland);

Expert Teacher/Advanced Professional Teacher Standard

(Achievable upon successful application by experienced teachers who have demonstrated a commitment to continuing professional development);

The Standard for Headship

(Achievable upon successful completion of appropriate further training).

It has been proposed but not yet fully endorsed that in the years ahead, in order for a teacher to retain his/her registration status with the General Teaching Council, certain professional development activities will have been undertaken.

It will be apparent from the above that the structure of programmes is determined by the regulatory bodies and so teacher education institutions can be as innovative and flexible as they wish, so long as their programmes are fully compatible with the national guidelines. All programmes are subject to regular review, at least every five years and opportunity is normally taken of these review periods to introduce changes. The room for manoeuvre is limited but the certification system could create greater opportunities for ESD if the guidelines were modified to make that compulsory.

Teacher Education Programmes at Pre-Service and In-Service Levels

As noted above, there are two categories of teacher: those entering to undertake a four-year programme must complete courses, which the guidelines require. This severely limits the extent to which students can take programmes from other parts of their university. On the other hand, those who first of all complete a degree programme before embarking on a teacher education programme will have had ample opportunity to sample a range of university studies prior to their professional training, but in the course of their professional training their work is sharply focused.

ESD components take different forms in different teacher education institutes. In some, there is fully fledged programme of Education for Sustainable Development; in others this forms part of a wider programme on Environmental Studies. It is for the teacher education institution to determine the most appropriate approach.

For example, at the University of Edinburgh the aspects of ESD noted above are included in the general training of teachers. However, there are several courses, which have a particular emphasis. The BEd (Primary Education) includes a first-year residential fieldwork week with an ESD element and a further module in ESD at the end of the fourth year. The postgraduate students (of geography) have two fieldwork weekends with the emphasis as above, and an assessed part of their course, which specifically addresses the role of geography in teaching for a sustainable future. The School of Education also runs programmes of outdoor education, which have a strong ESD element. These include a Postgraduate Diploma/MSc (Outdoor Education) and a BSc (Outdoor Education with Environmental Studies).

As a result of a conference on the environment in teacher education in 1995 all teacher education institutions in Scotland committed themselves to the development of the BEd (Primary Education) module noted above. The application of the module and its key elements has been variable and whilst only one has adopted the full module (Strathclyde), others have included relevant sections into their programmes whilst others have chosen a permeation model.

The Learning for Life Group and Other Developments

For some time in Scotland attempts have been made to mobilise professional support for ESD. Following the publication of the *Learning for Life* report (1993), whose major theme was sustainable development, a 'Learning for Life Group' was convened. This continues to meet regularly (2 or 3 times a year) and consists of representatives from all of Scotland's teacher education institutions, together with representatives of a wide range of environmental agencies. Professor John Smyth, whose committee was responsible for *Learning for Life*, is also a member of that group. The group recently prepared a document explaining the place of ESD in Scottish Teacher Education Institutions (available from the authors).

That group has developed resource materials for use in initial teacher education programmes, and has also developed a significant resource compilation for serving teachers. The Learning for Life Group was a key member of a group of institutions and individuals which the European Union funded to develop an in-service programme and materials for Sustainability Education in European Primary Schools (SEEPS, 1997).

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This significant project and other resources produced are not binding on institutions. They were prepared as ways of fostering collaboration, of minimising the duplication of work at a time when resources are scarce, and as a way of stimulating teacher education centres to devote more time to ESD.

The Strengths and Weaknesses of the Scottish System

The Scottish system is well established and is an extremely compact educational entity. It has in place well established arrangements for the management of teacher education at national level and for assuring the quality of that provision through the various approval levels through which programmes have to move before they can run. The Learning for Life inter-institutional group has undertaken a great deal of work, generating resources at pre-service and in-service levels. The co-operation between the Teacher education institutes and the environmental agencies has enabled bids to be made to the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council and to European funding agencies to develop resources to support initial teacher education programmes and programmes of continuing professional development for teachers in the field of ESD.

The key weakness of the Scottish system is that there is insufficient commitment at national level to support a decisive advance in ESD. Besides, the teacher education curriculum is under such pressure that ESD has been given less priority than it deserves. The central weakness is that no matter how much goodwill there may be in the teacher education sector to make substantial provision for ESD, the fact that so many other requirements are stipulated makes extended provision in ESD in present circumstances extremely difficult.

UNESCO

The United Nations has a number of 'agencies', which take responsibility for aspects of its general work. These include well known organisations such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). UNESCO exists to secure 'the right of everyone to education, without which science, culture and communication cannot move forward' (UNESCO, 1999: 1). It is a highly decentralised organisation, having around 80 offices world - wide and its headquarters in Paris. It has a range of stated objectives which include assisting countries to ensure the smooth running of educational, scientific and cultural institutions; aiding in drawing up pertinent national policies; strengthening institutional research; and facilitating contacts and the creation of networks.

UNESCO and Education for Sustainable Development

The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro resulted in the agreement of participating nations (including the UK) on a number of environmental issues which all would address. A central commitment was the adoption of Agenda 21 (UN, 1992), an action plan for progress. The importance of education to this plan is indicated in its presence as a theme in all chapters of the document, a chapter devoted to it (Chapter 36) and its frequency of use. In the document 'education' appeared only second in frequency to the word 'government' (Smyth et al, 1997: 173).

At Rio, in addition to Agenda 21 a commitment was made to draft and subsequently ratify a 'Convention on Climate Change' a 'Convention on Biological Diversity', and to establish a 'Commission for Sustainable Development' (CSD). This was as a result of awareness that each of the UN agencies (WHO, FAO, etc.) has a 'sustainability' remit, but that 'sustainability' requires integrated action. The purpose of the CSD is to ensure that 'sustainable development' is a core element of the work of each of the UN organisations.

Under Agenda 21 one of the four priorities identified was 'Education, Public Awareness and Training for Sustainability'. The task manager for this process and conducting the educational work of the CSD is UNESCO. One of its key responsibilities is teacher education, which it sees as one of the most significant areas for action. Hence the task of 're-orienting teacher education to address sustainability' is a direct result of decisions taken by governments at Rio. In order to co-ordinate the work UNESCO has appointed a Chair and Secretariat. Further background to the project is outlined by Hopkins (2001).

Scottish University Involvement in UNESCO

Due in part to the commitment of certain individuals and to a number of initiatives and other circumstances, Scotland has, for some years enjoyed a reputation for its commitment to 'environmental education' and 'education for sustainable development'. A number of notable individuals and agencies (including governmental and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)) have produced significant reports (e.g., Learning for Life (Smyth, 1993)), teaching approaches and resources which have led to Scottish efforts being recognised as pioneering the field.

Perhaps as a result of this reputation a representative of Moray House Institute (now the School of Education) was invited to the UNESCO meeting in Thessaloniki in Greece in 1997. There were ten Universities/teacher education institutes from around the world present at that preliminary meeting, at which participants made a commitment to reconvene two or three years later to discuss progress and begin the process of writing guidelines for ESD in teacher education (UNESCO, 1997). The meeting in Toronto was the venue for this event, which is described in detail by Hopkins (2001).

The Work of the Toronto Conference

All participating institutions attending the conference agreed subsequent actions, the principles of which are described by Hopkins (2001: 9) and summarised below. Whilst each institution is free to decide on its own actions there is a commitment to short and long term objectives of the UNESCO project. The *Short Term* objective is 'to undertake research and experimentation on different approaches to reorienting teacher education towards sustainability, using a common research framework to allow comparison of results'. The *Long Term* objective is 'to develop suggestions and guidelines for reorienting teacher education and associated realms of pedagogy, curriculum and evaluation'.

Implications and Proposals for the University of Edinburgh

It is clear from the outline of teacher education in Scotland that room for manoeuvre is limited. However, within such constraints the School of Education of the Univer-

sity of Edinburgh is now committed to a number of projects designed to satisfy the above commitments. The following are a selection of the most significant:

Project 1 –

BEd (Primary Education): To undertake an audit of the Environmental Studies course to see whether the ESD element can be enhanced. Within the Year 4 Option on Science, ‘Technology and Sustainability’ is being developed for delivery in 2001/2002. The ESD element would provide a useful case study for other teacher education institutes.

Project 2 –

School of Education Courses: To review the curriculum of these courses to indicate where ESD can be strengthened.

Project 3 –

BSc (Outdoor Education with Environmental Studies): To incorporate best practice from the field of ESD into this undergraduate programme.

Project 4 –

Postgraduate Study: To enhance provision for ESD in the existing Postgraduate Diploma and MSc in Outdoor Education, and extend provision through the Postgraduate Certificate in Environmental Education.

Project 5 –

Centre for Outdoor and Sustainability Education: To establish a locus whereby existing expertise in the faculty and the rest of the university will be co-ordinated and enhanced.

Project 6 –

Sustainability and Environmental Advisory Committee: To continue to raise the profile of ESD through this university committee.

Project 7 –

Website: To update and modify the faculty website ‘Educating for a Sustainable Future’ (This has been achieved in a collaborative project with Manchester Metropolitan University).

Project 8 –

Collaboration within the UK: To work with the ‘Learning for Life Group’ in Scotland to ensure that information is shared and collaborative projects are developed. To work with other UK teacher education institutes towards these common goals.

Concluding Comments

There can be little doubt that ESD is finally moving up the political agenda and must eventually become an imperative for the work of teacher education institutes. Whilst there are real reasons why significant change is at present very difficult to achieve, we believe the above are some ways of effecting this change at an institutional level and thereby having positive effect on our students and in reorienting teacher education to address sustainability.

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The New Systems Theory of Early Childhood Education and Preschool as a Frame of Reference for Sustainable Education

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Abstract

In this paper the philosophers/pedagogues' educational thinking is analysed in historical aspect. It is pointed out that their thinking is of systems character and it is modelled. After that the early childhood education definitions from Finnish preschool textbooks are given a closer look. They are analysed and problematic issues are pointed out, while a new preschool definition and a theoretical frame of reference are created. This theory is based on history's great philosophers/pedagogues' systems-oriented educational thinking.

Sustainable education can be included into the new preschool model as a part of early childhood education and preschool. The model gives education four central dimensions, according to which the following aspects must be considered, while developing sustainable education: a) practice, b) research, c) contents of teaching, and d) educational thinking. The real contents of sustainable education give these processes their substance. In early childhood education and preschool the substance of sustainable education must be integrated with the processes of a) taking care, b) educating, and c) teaching children.

This paper is a continuation of the author's presentation, delivered in Daugavpils in 2002. The theory makes it possible to extend logical adjustment to all central issues of early childhood education and preschool – like sustainable education, as it can be seen in great philosophers' and pedagogues' course of thinking.

Key words: early childhood education; preschool, primary education; sustainable education; systems theory; philosophers; pedagogues; Friedrich Fröbel; Alexander Neill.

Introduction

In Finland preschool is understood as an early childhood education for the six years old. The newest national preschool curriculum was adopted in 2000. Early childhood education means care, education and teaching for children from birth to seven years of age. The school-going age in Finland is seven years.

Early childhood education in Finland is based on Fröbelian pedagogy, but in addition to that several other philosophers/pedagogues have had considerable impact as well, Alexander Neill being one of them. It is important to study the thinking of the philosophers/pedagogues, because they speak of the education and teaching phenomenon more sensible, including not only development as it is in developmental psychology. Their educational thinking is comprehensive and productive also today.

For the past 30 years in Finland several textbooks on early childhood education and preschool have been published. They include developmental psychology knowledge (Piaget, Vygotsky, Bronfenbrenner), references to philosophers/pedagogues' thinking, new research information on specific phenomena and definitions on early childhood education and preschool. In these books it can be seen what kind of definitions the authors have conceived about early childhood education and preschool.

Sustainable development is a global goal, set in order to ensure the survival and continuation of life on earth. "Sustainable development is development in which real long term needs of both present and future human generations are met as optimally as possible. This means that not only the basic individual biological needs, but also real economical, cultural and social needs ought to be met" (Åhlberg, 2003). Åhlberg writes that "there are three strands in Environmental Education: 1) education and learning about environment, 2) education and learning in environment, and 3) education and learning for environment. The last one comes nearest to Education for Sustainable Development. In addition to ecology, economics, quality improvement, organisation development, peace education, population education, human rights education, etc. are important aspects of Education for Sustainable Development. Education for Sustainable Development, when it is best, is integrating best theories and practices, testing constructed new theories both theoretically and empirically when it is possible. I agree with Åhlberg in these ideas and I understand sustainable education as education for sustainable development (see Åhlberg & Filho, 1998).

One aim of sustainable education and training is also to prepare teachers, who are sensitive to environmental issues. Children can also learn this sensitivity at an early age, if only the adults and teachers knew how to bring them to this sensitivity and support their own aspirations. After studying the question scientifically, the conclusion is that there is a need for theories of education and training. The theories should be versatile and extensive in order to be applied to the issues in question.

Developmental theories, learning theories and the mere general didactics alone are not sufficient in educating preschool children and training their teachers.

This study is aimed at finding out about the contents and the structure of humanity's great philosopher/pedagogues' educational thinking. A question is also asked about the definitions of early childhood education and preschool, which are used by the authors of Finnish early childhood and preschool textbooks. The questions asked are, in this way, furnished with answers and they are assembled in this article, emanating from different studies. The purpose is, firstly, to point at the systems character of the new early childhood education and preschool theory and, secondly, to note that in education it is necessary to outline practice and theory as well as the subjects and contents of our thoughts.

This article is not focused on the specific issues of environmental education or sustainable education. The aim is to develop such a theory of early childhood education and preschool, which would serve as the theoretical frame of reference for them. Therefore, while developing the theory, not all the details are analysed in relation to environmental education or sustainable education. The article features a model of the systems theory and underlines its significance to environmental education or sustainable education on a quite general level.

The author has been working for a long time on developing a new early childhood education systems theory. That is why there are numerous references to the author's studies.

Methodologically, the principles of objective hermeneutics are implemented (Oevermann et al., 1979; Oevermann et al., 1983; Puolimatka, 2002). The texts are considered as been generated from evolution-developed objective reality. The texts are interpreted subjectively, but, according to the so-called realistic assumption, the interpretation can help to reach the reality reflected by social grammar. Social grammar is the hidden logic of social interaction. The texts are interpreted through the prism of content analysis and principles of semiotics. The ideas of pedagogical philosophers are taken and interpreted from the textbooks on the history of pedagogy and some from their original texts. These sources are much more difficult to understand than the brief and clear textbook definitions provided by the modern education experts. The author has acquainted with a number of historical sources so that the texts could be compared and more definite results reached. Moreover, miscalculations are dispelled by the extensiveness of classification categories of philosophers/pedagogues' texts. The definitions, owing to their nature, reveal their contents and field of operation through the terms used (Härkönen, 1996a: 90-114, 246-261)

On the Early Childhood Education Philosopher/Pedagogue Friedrich Fröbel's Educational Thinking

This chapter is devoted to the ideas of a well-known philosopher of education and practical educator. He is the German Friedrich Wilhelm August Fröbel (1782-1852). Fröbel has had a great impact on the education of the very smallest of children. Fröbel has even been called 'the Father of the kindergarten' as he is the founder of the kindergarten. Fröbel has influenced education in Finland as well. The Finnish kindergarten pedagogy rests soundly on Fröbel's ideas and his methodology is well known in Finland to this day. But his influence was at its best in Germany (Barrow-Bernsdorff et al., 1977; von den Driesch & Esterhues, 1964; Fröbel, 1951; Günther et al., 1973; Sandström, 1975; Thier-Schroeter, 1977). Below, the author brings Fröbel's pedagogical categories, referred to in her research, and gives a concise description of each (Härkönen, 1983; 1988; 1991; 1996b).

World outlook. Fröbel's world outlook included the ideas on certain laws: the eternal law, the law of contradictions, and the law of mediation. All these laws outline the world. It was understood that everywhere there was an aspiration toward harmony and unity. Everything rests with God. The purpose of everything is the appearance of godliness and development in everything.

Concept of man. Human beings were thought to possess the spark of godliness. Humans had also the instinct for action. Humans act in interaction with the nature and then the external becomes the internal and the internal - the external. Humanity's task is to understand unity and abide by the laws that outline the world.

Concept of society. Fröbel had an aspiration for a bourgeois-democratic and humanistic society and educating all people. It was thought that people could change the society through consciousness.

Concept of knowledge generation. Fröbel thought that acting leads to observation and observation will make it possible to generate knowledge. Action had great significance attached to it in learning and procuring knowledge.

Concept of education. According to Fröbel, education is the unchaining of the godly spark in person, independently facing the phenomena of the outside world by relying on exercising the instinct for action.

Main method of education. Fröbel called the acting on person's own initiative the main method of education.

Practical pedagogical process. Fröbel has said a lot about practical education. Central categories here are play (Spiel), hobby crafts (Beschäftigung), work (Arbeit), educator (Erzieher) and teaching (Unterricht). In addition to this, the pedagogical theory includes the views on some other topics that can be related to the category of 'other'. All these things had philosophy-based theories attached to them. For example, the Fröbel's bricks embody the important philosophical notion of the universe.

As a researcher of work education (Härkönen, 1983; 1988), the author has specifically studied the contents of work category in Fröbel's practical pedagogical process. Its sub-categories are the following: *principles of work education, goals of work education, work education forms of activity and work education realisation principles*. Besides, the work education theory offers views on several other topics that can here be referred to the category of 'other'. There is abundant theoretical support to all categories.

Fröbel revered nature. In his opinion children's work in natural surroundings enhances their esteem towards nature. Also Fröbel's philosophy of society is closely linked with sustainable theory today, though Fröbel didn't use this kind of concepts.

On the Educational Thinking of the Early Childhood Education Philosopher/Pedagogue A.S. Neill

The other philosopher/pedagogue under scrutiny is the Englishman Alexander Sutherland Neill (1883-1973). His Summerhill Education has become widely known. Neill's ideas of free education (Neill, 1969; 1970a; 1970b) spread in Finland in the 1970s to all spheres of education. Summerhill still carries on. The Internet websites (www.google/search/summerhill, 8.3.2003) inform that Summerhill is the first school in England where inspectors have to take into account children's opinions in the evaluation of the school.

Below the author brings her (Härkönen, 1991; 1996b) findings in reference to Neill's educational thinking categories and gives a short description of their contents.

World outlook. According to Neill, the purpose of life is happiness and it means affection and goodness. The opposite is war, violence and oppression. He says that religion and foremostly, the notion of original sin bar humans from freedom and happiness. He saw that there is a conflict within religion – a clash between believers and non-believers. Neill thought that love would save humanity, not violence or faith.

Concept of man. According to Neill, the human nature is good and the original sin does not exist. The child is good, sincere, wise and realistic by the virtue of birth. The child is self-regulating by nature and only a child knows a child best. Love is important to the child.

Concept of society. Neill criticised the consequences of the 20th century industrial revolution in England. He thought that the society is patriarchal, culture is conservative and hostile to freedom. He believed the world social consciousness is still primitive and that people think that they are free, but they are sprockets in the

wheel and submissive at that. Neill wanted to educate people, who would not give in to the society, but liberate it.

Concept of knowledge formation. According to Neill, humans acquire knowledge and the concept of transformability of knowledge through freedom-based self-regulating activities.

Concept of education. Education is the natural impact of biological, psychological, and social reality on the child's self-regulating development.

Main educational method. Neill's main educational method was freedom. He said that 'freedom is efficient'.

Practical pedagogical process. In his books Neill has told about practical educational work. In my studies, pointed out as central categories are the following: free play (meaning a prolonged childhood), free work, hobbies and arts, school education (only for the eager, but without teaching religion; sexual instruction obligatory), and the teacher category (the teacher must be a free human). In addition to that the pedagogical theory should include visions about some other topics that could be referred to the category of 'other'. All these issues were substantiated by a theory in line with Neill's educational philosophy. For example, if children break a window, they will suffer from cold and have to correct their mistake. Freedom teaches responsibility.

As a scholar of work education (Härkönen, 1983; 1988), the author has paid special attention to the contents of the work category of Neill's practical pedagogical process (Härkönen, 1991). It has the following sub-categories: *principles of work education, goals of work education, forms of work education activities and principles of work education realisation.* In addition to that, the work education theory includes references to some other topics that could be referred to the category of 'other'. There are lots of theories pertaining to all the categories.

Neill spoke not only about an individual's freedom, but also his or her sense of responsibility and obligation, in regard to the environment.

The Discovery of the Systems Character of the Philosophers/Pedagogues' Educational Thinking

The discoveries made through the analysis of Fröbel's and Neill's educational ideas were the following: 1) the perception of general categories of educational thinking in literal texts, even though in no text were the issues presented in this order and arranged according to a common logic, 2) the contents of the categories became evident only placing the issues in their classes, 3) the connection between the categories was observed after finding the inter-connection between different contents, 4) the systems character of the entity was discovered.

The systems character of Fröbel's and Neill's educational thinking can be seen in the fact that 1) educational philosophy forms internally logical entity, 2) educational philosophy in general influences the educational practice in general, moulding it in accordance with philosophical principles, 3) each part of philosophy influences others, 4) each part of educational practice influences others, 5) all parts of the entity influence all others, 6) influence of part has a certain direction, 7) the direction of influence reveals a certain hierarchy of the parts, 8) as a rule, more general category influences more particular one, wider one – narrower one, more

valued one – a less valued one (evidently), more theoretical one – more concrete one, etc., 9) the system entity holds inside it's philosophy and a number of different "theories" of educational practice, 10) by means of philosophy and "theories" it is possible to conduct an analysis of Fröbel's and Neill's entire educational thinking and through its contents rediscover its systems character and possible internal contradictions in their thinking.

The mentioned educational thinking systems principles remain true, even if the historical era, social circumstances and stages of development are different.

In their philosophy there are differences in principal ontological and epistemological approaches. In the implementation of practical educational process there are differences as well. But, there are points of convergence too, and a great number of them. Similarities and differences can be explained through the categories of content analysis. The common nominator is the systems character of thinking. A central finding was to notice that between educational thinking and educational activities there was both unity and separation (Härkönen, 2002a: 29).

Both Fröbel's and Neill's ideas have already at their time been related to environmental education. At the beginning Fröbel was a natural scientist and applied his knowledge to education. Both men attach great importance to work, the nature and protection of life.

The author has studied the educational ideas of several other philosophers/pedagogues as well (Barrow-Bernsdorff et al., 1977; von den Driesch & Esterhues, 1964; Günther et al., 1973; Sandström, 1975), using the same research methods. Adding also Fröbel and Neill to this common list, drawn up by the year of birth, we meet the following personalities: Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827), Friedrich Fröbel (1782-1852), Georg Kerschensteiner (1854-1932), John Dewey (1859-1952), Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), Maria Montessori (1870-1952), Alexander Neill (1883-1973), Helen Parkhurst (1887-1959), Célestin Freinet (1896-1966), Vasili Suhomlinski (1918-1970) and Loris Malaguzzi (1920-1994). Historically we move from the 18th century to our days. The results of research authenticate the mentioned above, so the credibility and validity of results has been verified on several occasions (Härkönen, 1983; 1988; 1991; 2002a; 2003a). Based on pedagogues' thinking it is possible to create a theoretical background also for sustainable education and environmental education.

The General Systems Model of Educational Thinking

Great philosophers/pedagogues have presented the contents of their educational thinking in written form in several works. Researchers and educators later have given their evaluations of these ideas.

The author has determined the general categories of educational thought. Separate contents of thinking may differ from each other. Speaking in modern terminology, it is the question of the philosophers/pedagogues' *concepts*. Concepts encompass assessments, scientific information, commonplace wisdom, beliefs and other factors. The concepts are subjective, but they take shape within a socio-cultural context (Härkönen, 1996a). Concepts relate to both philosophical principles and elements of educational practice. The educational thinking systems model is presented in Figure 1. It has been drawn up on the basis of the philosophers/pedagogues' educational ideas and complemented with certain categories of edu-

cational practice (like basic activities, celebrations and outings) and important branches of science together with a mention of curricula. In Figure 1 the model of educational thinking refers namely to early childhood education and preschool.

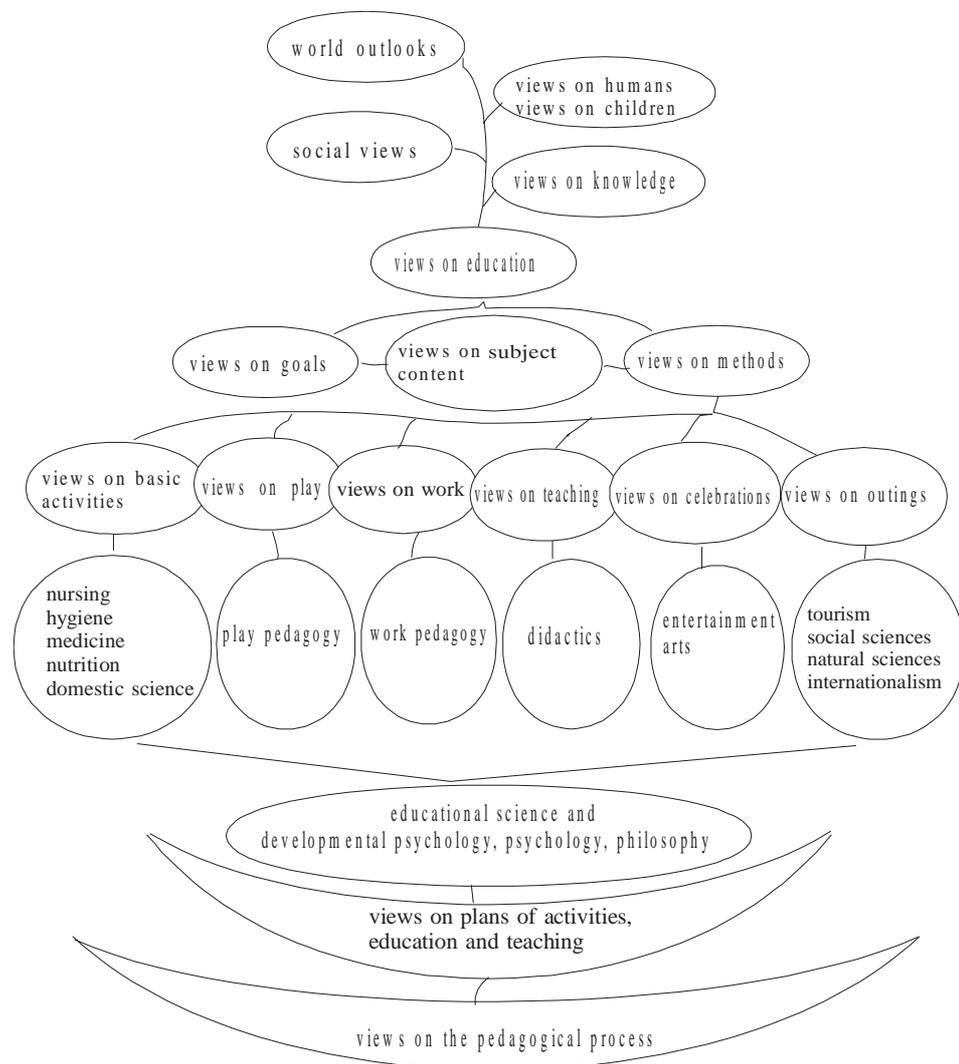


Figure 1. General systems model of educational thinking

The usefulness of the model (Figure 1) covers the following aspects:

- It is a systems model that underlines the nature of education and educational thinking.
- It is an educational model for describing its object – an education.
- It asserts the presence of educational thinking.
- It refers to different educational thinking contents that in this model are referred to through the concepts.
- Concepts of teaching, childcare, other methods and factors become components of a wider educational entity.
- The model is applicable to the analysis of educational concepts related to the children of preschool age.
- It points out the existence of different scientific points of view and allows the other different views to come forth as well.

- The model refers to a constructivist interpretation of educational thinking.
- It makes it possible to empty the contents and re-build them through creative thinking.
- The model can be used for the analysis, comparison and building of parts of education.
- The model is helpful in reflecting upon, comparing and developing subjective visions.
- The model allows not only for the individual, but also for the community to study and develop ideas in historical perspective.

Owing to the fact that the above model can be used for the analysis of parts of education, for their comparison and building, it is also applicable to the analysis, planning and evaluation of sustainable education. Nevertheless, it is the question about a model of *thinking* and therefore it is still the question about clarifying the issue of realistic educational practice and realistic teaching contents. What can we think about them?

Modern Preschool Ideas and Discussion

The author has studied the general early childhood education, early childhood pedagogy, preschool textbooks and a number of articles printed in Finland over the past thirty years which have been written by specialists of early childhood education. In these works the author's attention was focused on the definitions of early childhood education. In all works preschool was included into early childhood education. The early childhood education concept in every definition was modelled. These models were then used as the basis for the ensuing concept of preschool models. It is the question of concept analysis and interpretation of meaning.

The results of author's research regarding the concept of early childhood education have been reported to the Daugavpils Conference (Härkönen, 2002c) and described in two articles (Härkönen, 2002b; 2003a). Here only the *preschool concept* is discussed through the prism of six different models. The models are listed by letters from A to F with a reference to a corresponding work. Early childhood education is abbreviated as ECE.

The work A concept of preschool can be transformed into the two-dimensional model of the concept of preschool. The first dimension: preschool as a part of the ECE field of science. It consists of theory and research. The other dimension: preschool as a part of ECE practice. It comprises three areas, namely the care, education, and teaching. The dimensions are interactive amongst themselves.

The work B concept of preschool can be transformed into the one-dimensional model of the concept of preschool. The dimension is called Preschool as a part of ECE practice. It comprises care, education, and teaching.

The work C concept of preschool can be transformed into the traditional three-dimensional model of the concept of preschool. The first dimension: preschool as a part of ECE research area. The second dimension: preschool as a part of ECE subject. The third dimension: preschool as a part of ECE practice. It includes care, education, and teaching. No interaction between the three dimensions has been observed.

The work D concept of preschool can be transformed into the modern three-dimensional model of the concept of preschool. The first dimension: science-based

preschool as a part of science-based ECE. It covers one area – research. The second dimension: preschool as a subject and as an area of teaching shapes a part of an ECE subject and a teaching area. The third dimension: preschool as a part of ECE practice. It includes three factors that are care, education, and learning. The definition assumes interaction between the first and the second dimension.

The work E concept of preschool is based on three dimensions that can be called the newest model similar to the one in question. The first dimension: academic preschool as a part of an academic ECE. It includes two clear points: as a part of a field of an academic ECE science, and as a part of a field of an academic ECE research. The second dimension: preschool as a part of an ECE subject. The third dimension: preschool as a part of an ECE practice. It has three components that are care, development and growth in interaction with education; and learning in interaction with teaching. The definition carries no reference to any interaction between the three dimensions.

The work F concept of preschool is based on three dimensions and an administrative aspect. The first dimension is that of science, more exactly, the field of pedagogy and didactics. The second dimension: preschool and primary education as a subject in teacher training. The third dimension: preschool as didactics and didactical practice, including, among other things, care and education, as well as teaching, studying, and learning.

In general, it can be said that in all preschool definitions preschool has been understood as having three dimensions: **practice and science** and beginning with the 1980s – **a subject**. The contents of the dimensions reflected in different definitions have suffered gradual changes. Preschool, the dimensions and their contents have always been defined as **parts of early childhood education** and their changes have been in line with the changes in early childhood education. Preschool practice and preschool as a subject have always been distinct phenomena, though preschool does not exist as a separate field of science. Preschool is seen clearly as a part of early childhood education science, though in Finland the latter is often thought to be just an element of pedagogy, not a separate field of science.

The changes in preschool definitions reflect the shift of focus in the theories of pedagogy, psychology and developmental psychology, as well as the fashionable currents. In the spirit of constructivism and child-centeredness there is more talk about development, growth and learning than education and teaching. At the same time there has been a shift in inter-science ratings, not to say ‘confusion’. It is more demanding to define the connection between different factors than to see the distinctions.

The definitions of preschool and its models do not solve the issue of mutual unity of different dimensions, but leave them separated. The eternal questions are as follows: why do theory and practice never come together and how does a subject relate to science and practice? Are we insensitive to our noblest spiritual aspirations? It is not beneficial either for sustainable education if theory and practice remain separated. The philosophers/pedagogues teach us, if only we are ready to learn.

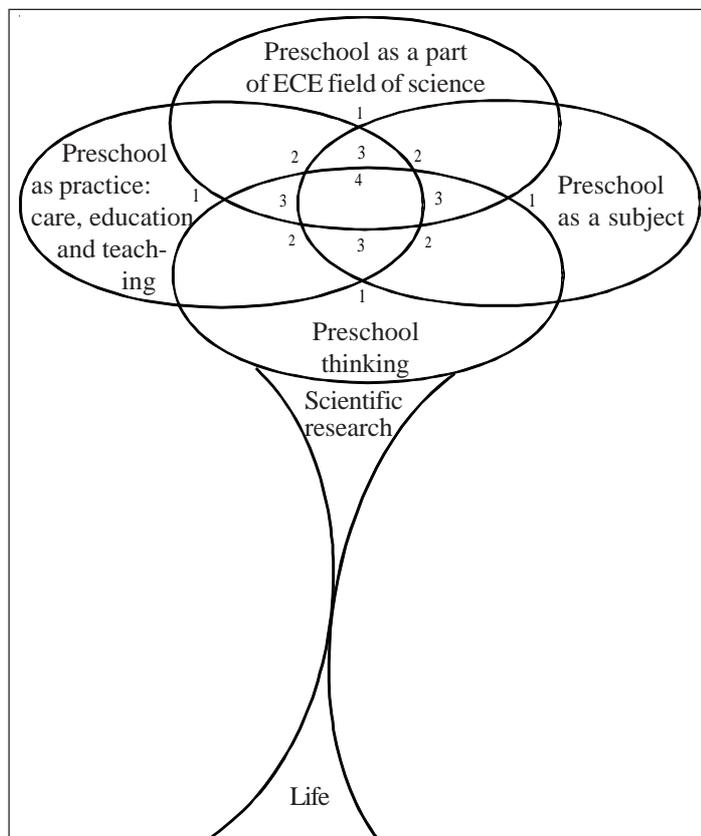
The Fourth Dimension of Preschool

The philosophers/pedagogues' educational thinking features such a concept as *educational thinking*. In the definitions, elaborated by the early childhood education specialists of our time, there is an idea of *concepts*, leading further to *understandings and meanings*. Lately, it has become trendy to study any person's or group's *subjective understandings* and *traditional understandings* of different things. These lines of departure push to the forefront of **educational thinking** or in the case of preschool – **preschool thinking**.

Educational thinking is an activity of human mind and in pedagogy it must be focused on the *contents of thinking*. The contents of thinking about education may be any person's traditional thinking, subjective opinions, impressions, beliefs, doubts, etc. It can be developed or undeveloped thinking.

Educational thinking takes place in connection with educational practice, while planning educational activities, fulfilling educational functions or later on. Thinking while acting has been left without due attention. The contents of thinking about education also covers subject planning, whether it happens on the basis of science or practice or both. The contents of thinking, touching upon philosophical knowledge, scientific knowledge, theories or research, belong also to educational thinking.

Nevertheless, educational thinking must be split off into its own dimension, while, on the other hand, it unites all other dimensions. The transformation of educational thinking from traditional thinking into a scientific category is characterised by the problems that have been mentioned above. Next, there is the new four-dimensional systems theory model as applied to preschool (Figure 2).



ECE = early childhood education

Figure 2. Systems theory four-dimensional model of the concept of preschool

The thinking of philosophers/pedagogues points to the **systems character** of educational thinking. According to Gochman (1968: 489), every concept is a system. Thus, the preschool concept is a system. Every dimension deduced from the definitions and their contents is a system. In relation to the preschool system they are its part-systems and part-systems' part-systems. Part-systems form different one-factor entities or two, three or four-factor combinations. The numerous inter-combination relationships can be studied. The numbers in Figure 2 refer to these combinations. Scientific research may be focused on all these factors as well as on itself. In Figure 2 this has been illustrated by the concept 'life'.

The Usefulness of the Systems Definition for Sustainable Education

Preschool is a part of early childhood education, but it is vitally connected to primary education. In any case, preschool can be defined as a phenomenon too. This is based on 1) the analysis of psychological theories on early development, learning theories and didactic theories, 2) the ideas of philosophers/pedagogues, and 3) modern early childhood education specialists' preschool definitions analysis that allows to present a new systems definition of preschool. **Preschool is a preschool practice, preschool-oriented science, preschool subject and preschool thinking united in a comprehensive system.** The systems model facilitates the determination of an object for research, helps to develop preschool theory, plan preschool teaching, develop preschool practice and outline preschool thinking. The new dimension of the preschool concept – preschool thinking – will be a link between theory, practice and the subject in a way that will exclude any contraposition between them. The problems that will be observed within the mentioned phenomena can be solved through the contents of thinking, because thinking influences all other dimensions.

While working on new visions and practices it is worthwhile to study the old models, like the thoughts of philosophers/pedagogues, and extract their precious gist to serve as a starting point for something new. Thinking will allow coming to a transforming and changing, creative and sustainable preschool. Old definitions remind to us that, for example, preschool encompasses three important pedagogical elements: 1) teaching, 2) education, and 3) care, even if nowadays some scholars have dropped them from their texts. Teaching alone is not sufficient, even though the school didactics is just about that.

Sustainable education can be placed in the centre of the systems model of preschool (pos. 4) and it must be discussed:

- What is the function of sustainable education in preschool practice?
- What is sustainable education as science, related to preschool?
- What is sustainable education in the preschool subject in teacher training?
- What does sustainable education mean as the contents of thinking in each separate dimension?
- Is it possible to plan how scientific research can be focused on any of specific model-based combinations according to the needs emerging from the issues of sustainable education?

The context of life allows to include into the picture the historical, social, community, and personal dimensions. All this supposes that an analysis has to be made of the actual phenomenon with its side effects that lies in the background of the need for sustainable education. The goals as well must be analysed. Only then will it be possible to create a credible picture of the future that is worth to aspire for.

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Teacher Professional Development in the Context of School Reform

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the common features of the context of in-service teacher education in Europe and addresses the main problems of the professional development of teachers that the schools in different countries are confronted with in the process of implementing educational changes. It defines the existing models of in-service teacher education and training as well as the existing types of institutions.

The paper also deals with the issues of centralization/decentralization of in-service education and describes the changes, which the Lithuanian in-service education system has undergone. Some aspects of relevance of the Lithuanian in-service teacher training system and unresolved problems are being discussed.

Key words: teacher professional development; in-service teacher education and training; models of in-service teacher training; centralization/decentralization of in-service education; relevance of in-service teacher training system.

Introduction

During the past few decades European societies as well as societies in other parts of the globe have been confronted with rapid social, cultural, economic and technological changes. There is a widespread agreement that high quality education and training has to become a lifelong provision, where high quality teachers and teacher education are main components in making high quality education and training a reality.

The representatives of different professional groups are experiencing great pressures of rapidly changing social and professional life. Teachers are no exception.

The aim of this paper is to analyze the general context of education and in-service teacher training in Europe and in Lithuania.

What is the General Context of Education and In-Service Teacher Training?

Changes in values, the processes of globalization of life, economy, organization of labor, a rapid development of new information and communication technologies are the factors which greatly influence the context of education and training in all the world. Despite a great number of diverse and interrelated changes of the context of education observed in different countries, some *common features* may be traced.

They are:

- The *rapid speed* of changes;
- Their *impact on most spheres of a human life* and

- An increasing *complexity* of social, cultural and economic contexts, which imply that the education and training in the 21st century should equip individuals, organizations and communities with knowledge and skills to deal proactively and effectively with all the multiple changes and problems people in the world are confronted with today.

In this changing context the teacher education is understood as an open and dynamic system and as a continuous process consisting of the closely interrelated components:

- Initial teacher education;
- Induction into the professional culture of school or/and training-on-the job;
- In-service teacher education and/or continuous professional development;
- Self-education of teachers and further education of teachers;
- School development and improvement and
- Research.

These changes have a great impact on professional tasks and roles of the teaching profession and call for redefining of the professional tasks and roles of teachers and teacher education.

Traditional role conceptions, where teaching is understood as a teacher-dominated *transmission*-oriented practice, no longer correspond to the needs of rapidly changing society, in which different groups holding different interests and power are interconnected in a number of complex systemic relations to the educational sector and teacher education.

Why are Teacher Education Reforms Focusing on Initial Teacher Education?

Due to demographic changes (the decrease of birth rate and decreasing number of students coming to school) fewer new teachers in Lithuania enter the profession. Taking into consideration that only some 3%-5% of newly qualified teachers per year enter the teaching profession, changes and improvements so much expected by reformers and society may have a rather delayed impact (e.g., the average age of schoolteachers in Lithuania is 42). At the same time the investment of huge resources (about 90% of all the resources invested into the entire teacher education system) goes into the period of initial teacher education.

It is becoming more and more obvious that in building or rebuilding the professionalism of teachers most attention should be given to:

- **Learning** the skills and developing those abilities and attitudes that in reformers' opinion are necessary to meet the *professional tasks* of the teaching profession *competently, reflectively, successfully* throughout all of life's career;
- **Unlearning** the practices and beliefs about students or instruction that have dominated their entire professional lives and
- **Developing the capacity** of schools and teachers to sustain successful learning-centered and learner-centered teaching practices.

Teachers, who think of teaching as something that is basically easy, something that is mastered at the beginning of their professional career and which they later

know how to do for the rest of their life, get poorer results than those teachers, who see teaching as something very important, intrinsically difficult, who through constant reflection see teaching as something in which improvement and change are always desired and necessary (Rozenholz, 1989). It is also difficult not to agree with Hargreaves (1997) who says that pupils learn to become good learners only in the classes of those teachers who are good learners themselves, who actively work for the creation of a new learning society.

Unlearning the practices and beliefs about students and instruction, which have dominated for a long time in school teaching, is no longer questionable. Although teaching has changed dramatically in recent years the pre-professional archetypes of teaching remain pervasive in our school cultures (Sugrue, 1996). For most often one learns to teach watching others do it, first as a pupil, then as a student teacher. Later through trial and error one learns how to teach and how to manage the class. These pre-professional images continue to influence understanding of what really good, professional teaching is. In a technologically complex and culturally diverse society teaching also becomes complex and difficult.

Educational reforms have intensified teachers' work, adding huge burdens to a job, that is very much demanding. Only continuous professional learning can help teachers to deal effectively with all the challenges that we face in this rapidly changing world and become better teachers over time. And as Hargreaves (1997) writes, if you do not change for the better you get worse. Then developing the capacity of schools and teachers to sustain educational quality, meeting the needs of the time, becomes problematic.

What Kinds of Professional Development can Enable the Implementation of Difficult Changes Expected of Teachers and Students?

The increasing demands on the teaching profession aiming both at preserving and sustaining the existing quality of the school systems and at improving it, calls for *increased* as well as *new competencies* which large numbers of teachers need to constantly up-date.

Since the mid-sixties of the twentieth century the introduction of different models of in-service education in many countries may be viewed as an important step in the development and improvement of teacher education system. In the meantime, a variety of different models of in-service education of teachers have appeared (Green Paper, 2000). They are:

- ***Deficit models*** based on traditional conceptions of knowledge transmission focusing on needs of individual teachers;
- ***Professional autonomy models*** focusing on developing professionalism of individual teachers;
- ***School-based and/or school-focused models*** addressing the needs of individual schools;
- ***Formal in-service education*** provided by universities and colleges (e.g., re-qualification study programs);
- ***Informal professional learning*** which goes on in informal settings and may have different forms of self-education of individuals or teacher groups;

- **Professional development profiles** (provision of in-service education addressing the specific needs of the teachers that are in the different phases of their professional career);
- **Project-based learning** (e.g., cross-European in-service education programs supported by European Commission SOCRATES, COMENIUS, the European School Network);
- **The World Wide Web** has become a powerful means of in-service education and self-education of teachers.

The analysis of the content of in-service education in Lithuania gives evidence that there is a tendency to move from deficit and professional autonomy models to school-based and school-focused models. Though the number of teachers entering re-qualification and Master study programs is increasing, only 78% of secondary teachers are qualified teachers having higher education.

At the same time the introduction of institutions, providing in-service education for teachers only, and separated both from initial teacher education and education research and also from schools and school improvement may be viewed as a very positive step and as rather problematic. Once established as state-run pedagogical institutes in some countries and teacher education centers in the others, they are used by the State as tools to keep control over teachers' professional development, their in-service education and also as instruments for implementing educational policies aimed at educational change. This has brought to light one more important question to answer:

Does Centralized or Decentralized In-Service Education Better Address the Needs?

The in-service teacher education and training in Lithuania underwent the same route as in other countries. Up to the mid-nineties there was a state-run Lithuanian In-Service Teacher Training Institute, the only in the country organizing different courses and workshops for the teachers and head-teachers. These provisions were mainly aimed at perfecting their teaching methods and subject-teaching skills. This **instrumental learning** equipped teachers with modern tools which could be successfully and immediately brought into the classroom. This satisfied the needs of individual teachers rather than the needs of educational politicians, viewing the teacher as the main performer of school reform, or the needs of the school itself, autonomously struggling to solve day-to-day problems.

It becomes obvious that in order to address those needs the existing in-service education system has to give more attention to organizing **communicative learning and transformative learning** aiming at transformation of teachers' values, their old assumptions and existing misconceptions about teaching and professional autonomy (Bulajeva, 2000, 2002).

The decentralization of the existing centralized in-service education system in Lithuania has brought into existence over 60 regional, non-governmental, school-based, etc. in-service teacher training centers. They made it possible to bring the in-service training geographically closer to the teacher but at the same time they have created new problems such as:

- Insufficient quality of provided courses;
- Incompetence of staff working at the centers;

- Lack of management skills;
- Poor financial support.

Now the State does not regulate the functioning of these institutions directly, it just sets the standards and tries to control the quality through the increase of the competitive financing of those in-service programs, which meet the competition requirements set by the Ministry of Education and Science of Lithuania best.

The recently conducted educational research, focused on in-service education in Lithuania, provides a lot of interesting data. In that respect worth mentioning is Kaminskas (2003) who has analyzed the relevance of the Lithuanian in-service teacher training system. His analysis of research data shows that the decentralized system of in-service teacher training has become a self-regulating system, which still develops. But the hypothesis about the relevance of this system to the needs of modern society and pedagogical community was only partly proved. In his opinion the educational reform aims would be effectively achieved if the system of in-service education and training had new components, dealing with information analysis and quality assurance of in-service institutions.

The relevance of the system going through the process of modernization is increasing as the components of the system (in the conditions of market economy and decentralization) overtake the responsibilities themselves. The system management does not come from outside, it is neither hierarchical, nor subordinated, the system is managed through its self-commitment to the quality and the legal normative basis ensuring its independence (Kaminskas, 2003).

Unsolved Problems

The in-service education in Lithuania (most likely in other countries too) is facing many common *unsolved problems*:

- Professional development is not viewed as *a professional responsibility*;
- *It is not* counted as an integral part of teacher's *work load* and teacher education;
- Should in-service education be considered *compulsory or voluntary*?
- Issues of *quality control and evaluation* of in-service education programs and in-service institutions;
- Who has to cover the *costs*?

How is Lithuania Going to Deal with These Problems?

The recently drawn up draft strategy for the development of Lithuanian educational system for 2003-2012 focuses on the main principles of national education and the tasks and goals of its development, aimed at ensuring the quality of education.

This strategy document also sets forth the essential tasks for further improvement of in-service teacher education:

- In 2003-2004 there should be created a transparent system of financing of in-service teacher professional development. Professional development programs may be financed from three sources: state, local government and school budgets. The money may be used for both formal and non-formal improvement of teacher qualification.
- By 2005 in-service teacher professional development should become accessible to every Lithuanian teacher.

- By 2007 continuous and compulsory in-service education of teachers should be legitimized.
- In 2003-2006 the system of accreditation of institutions, providing in-service education, should be developed.
- In 2004-2010 the initial teacher training system and in-service teacher training system should gradually be coordinated. A unified certification system and acknowledgement of teacher qualifications (also of newly acquired ones through formal and non-formal in-service education) should be created.

It is expected that in a coming decade this draft strategy would provide for an effective functioning of the entire educational system as well as in-service education, which will ensure a lifelong learning and will create conditions for the establishment and development of knowledge society in Lithuania.

Conclusion

Globalization of life, economy, organization of labor, a rapid development of new information and communication technologies are the factors which greatly influence the context of education and training in all the world and have a great impact on professional tasks and roles of teachers.

Adequate financial support should be given to in-service education of teachers so as to promote educational changes and a personal change process.

It is necessary to help teachers and schools create a professional development model, which meets their personal needs, the needs of school community and the growing demands of society at the best.

The decentralized in-service education system in Lithuania has become a self-regulating system, which still develops.

To deal with existing problems essential tasks for the further improvement of in-service teacher education in Lithuania for 2003-2012 are set by the draft strategy.

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Professional Development of Teachers: Reflecting on Goals

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Abstract

In the process of continuing educational reforms in Lithuania several documents on the educational policy have been developed in order to identify both the main aims and strategies so that they may be used for implementation. This paper is dedicated to a closer exploration of the situation of teachers (in particular – foreign language teachers) and the role of the professional development system that will help a teacher to reflect on the philosophical foundations and plan innovations in the context of requirements of the Lithuanian system of education.

The area of professional development consists of several parallel processes: reflection on the new information, self-determination/decision-making, planning and implementation. The identification of these processes is of crucial importance, in order to make informed and conscious decisions. Therefore, the themes of this paper include a clarification of the foundations of teaching profession, identification of these foundations through reflection and an exploration of the possibilities for planning of pedagogical activities.

The aim of this paper is to analyze the congruency between teachers' philosophical foundations and the planning of pedagogical activities in the light of Lithuanian educational policy documents. Results of the research, which has been carried out in 1998-2002, are also presented in the paper.

Conclusions about the relation between philosophical foundations and planning are presented with an emphasis on the reflection and role of the system of professional development in order to compensate for identified problems.

Methods for this research consist of literature and document analysis together with a method of structuralized and in-depth interviews.

Key words: pedagogical activity; learner; teacher; aims; methods.

Background

Globalization and the expansion of the European Union account for a large number of activities and measures that are taking place in the Lithuanian educational system today.

Lithuania together with other Baltic countries undertook the processes of change more than 12 years ago. Policy documents for the reform in education, which identify the tasks for teachers' activities, are considered as one of the aspects analyzed in this paper.

Nationally, we can identify a number of issues that were discussed. The year 1988 is considered as the beginning of Lithuania's educational reform, when a clear conception of a reformed general education school, better known as the concept of a National School (i.e. Tautine mokykla) was declared. The basic principles of education were identified in 1992.

At that time presented Concepts of Education have been adopted since then and the main values of education in Lithuania according to them are:

- Humanism: the affirmation of the absolute value of the individual and his/her freedom and responsibility in making choices;
- Democracy: the learning of democratic values and the ability to rest one's life on them; the establishment and application of democratic relations in education; universal access to education; and the recognition that morality is fundamental to democracy;
- Commitment to Lithuanian culture and the preservation of its identity and historic continuity; education must protect and promote a pluralistic culture that is enriched by national minorities;
- Renewal: openness to change and critical acceptance of novelty, while retaining universal norms of morality and core values of the national culture.

The Concepts of Education, the Education Act (2003 – project of the new edition), General National Curriculum and Standards (2002) identify a number of tasks for the teachers and also foresee a new attitude towards teachers. One of the main features of this attitude is transference of the responsibility of developing pedagogical activities from an educational system towards the teacher (Jarvis, 1992). This means the transference from the system, in which one must obey the system, to one that one has to create. That sort of development of pedagogical activities suggests freedom requiring the pluralism of possible changes within the educational system. The variety of possible directions of changes, together with a variety of educational tasks identified in the requirements, make the development of pedagogical activities complicated. This shift asks for a change of the strategies and time, i.e. "a conscious utilization and application of knowledge as an instrument/tool for modifying patterns and institutions of practice" is needed (Bennis, 1969).

As an extreme example of this complicated situation during a period of transition, the authors have chosen to discuss the situation of English language teachers. Sub-competencies of the competency of communication (i.e. linguistic, socio-linguistic, discourse, strategic, socio-cultural and social) are identified in Lithuanian Standards (Lietuvos bendrojo lavinimo mokyklos bendrosios programos ir standartai XI-XII klasems, 2002). According to the policy documents, teachers should assist their students in the acquisition of the mentioned sub-competencies. A variety of sub-competencies accounts for the variety and complexity of educational goals. In order to fulfill this task, the teacher should not only be aware of the complexity and variety of systemic pedagogical activities (Linkaityte, 1999) but should also be free to make self-determined decisions that are related to it. This is a prerequisite for systemic pedagogical activities and therefore for systemic educational reforms, which in turn conditions the reorganization of the foundations of educational system (Zelvys, 1998).

The authors of this paper have introduced the area of professional development. They suggest that it is difficult for teachers to move from the old (post-soviet)

educational system to a new one by themselves, because this process involves reflection on an individual's philosophical foundations and a certain level of self-determination. Adult educators should assist teachers in their period of transition providing the possibility to identify the teacher's personal goals and philosophical foundations in order that teachers may consciously change and take a responsibility for their pedagogical activities.

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Research Questions and Methodology

A review of the contexts in which a pedagogical activity of an individual teacher takes place reveals the importance of the teacher's awareness of philosophical foundations. The authors formulated the following research questions:

- Are teachers aware of their own philosophical paradigm?
- Is there a congruity between teachers' individual profiles of philosophical foundations and planning pattern of their pedagogical activities?
- What is the role of the interrelation/congruity between the above variables in the light of requirements?

The methodology of the research is based on the work of Ozmon H.A. and Craver S.M (1986) and nine philosophical paradigms discerned by them: i.e. Idealistic, Realistic, Oriental, Pragmatic, Existential, Reconstructional, Behaviorist, Analytical, and Marxist. An outline of these trends is presented in Table 1.

Two tools were developed in order to identify the teachers' attitude towards their philosophical foundations and they are as follows:

In the **first tool** there were nine statements representing nine philosophical trends mentioned above. The respondents were asked to choose the most acceptable statement in relation to their pedagogical activities.

In the **second tool** there were 108 statements. These were divided into four groups of statements. Each group consisted of 27 statements, according to the following four aspects of analysis: 1) aims and purposes of education; 2) the learner; 3) the role of a teacher; 4) curriculum and methods of teaching.

Respondents were asked to evaluate each statement by a five-point scale.

The research methodology was based on idea of practical research. As P. Jarvis states, "learning is the process of the transformation of experiences into knowledge, values and attitudes" (Jarvis, 1999). Practical research enables one to complete the parallel processes i.e. learning and research take place at the same time. Therefore, the context of teachers' professional development was chosen for this research in order to enable teachers not only to report on their philosophical foundations, but also to reflect on them, that is to "generate a hierarchy of knowledge claims" (Barnet, 2001).

Research Stages and Results

I stage – preliminary study (1997 – 1998); this stage was dedicated to a preliminary exploration and recognition of philosophical foundations; at this stage students were interviewed and the educational sources were analyzed.

Table 1. Philosophy of Education: nine attitudes towards pedagogical activity

	Aims and purposes of education	The Learner	The role of a Teacher	Curriculum, methods of teaching
Idealism	The highest aim of education is the understanding of true ideas; thus education is orientated towards the search for truths.	A person is a thinking being. The Mind is an essential part of each individual.	A Teacher is the central figure. He/she guides students in the right direction.	Idealists are inclined to deeper studies that encompass the whole and not only separate things. Methods: discussions, lectures.
Realism	Education is a way to achieve economical and political power of a state and to reveal its most rational powers.	An individual is a social and political being. In order to survive and to contribute to one's further development one has to acquire knowledge.	A Teacher has the most important knowledge and his/her duty is to help a student to know the universe.	Basic facts are introduced and basic skills are emphasized; Methods: lecture
Analytical philosophy	The aims of education depend upon what is considered to be most important during a particular historical period.	A person is a conscious being who understands himself/herself through language.	It is essential for a Teacher to know how to use language in an appropriate way because; all teaching is done by means of a language first of all.	A person's consciousness and perception of her/his behavior is the most important in a teaching programme.
Existentialism	Good education should emphasize individuality and encourage self-cognition and understanding.	A Human being is a holistic being, a being that thinks, feels and lives; an individual is free to choose values. Freedom obliges one to be responsible for oneself and the world.	A Teacher is a facilitator who helps students examine and reflect upon the universe. A Teacher helps students to reveal their possibilities.	A teaching programme is individualized. Ways of teaching should give the possibilities and help one to get to know oneself and one's existence in the universe better.
Behaviorism	Education should be a stimulus to improve behavior; whereas control should be effectively orientated towards the aims.	A person is similar to a machine: he/she is a mechanism of stimulus and reaction. He/she may be controlled by means of scientifically proven methods.	A Teacher is a designer of students' behavior. A Teacher is able to use a number of inducements and punishments (praise, smite, touch).	A teaching programme should make students learn complex models of behavior by means of encouragement and punishments.

	Aims and purposes of education	The Learner	The role of a Teacher	Curriculum, methods of teaching
Pragmatism	The aim of education is to teach children to live, i.e. give some experience of learning, to show them the possibilities in life.	A person is partly a product of her/his environment.	A Teacher has only to encourage a child to take interest in a sphere that the latter is preoccupied with and give the necessary knowledge so that a child finds an answer himself/herself.	Teaching is orientated towards the solution of problems that are important. One learns in practice.
Marxism	The main aim of education is the formation of social consciousness and the creation of a new society.	A person is a result of social relationships. One's consciousness changes due to changes of one's material existence, social relationships and social life.	A Teacher has to form collective instincts, a well-considered philosophy of life with clear aims and an image of the unstable changing universe.	The teaching programme should consist of mental, physical and technological training. Factual students experiences influence the contents of the method.
Reconstructionism	Education is a means of changing the world. It is the most effective means of achieving rational, democratic and human changes.	One's future depends on one's aspirations and wishes. A person has to be self-confident and able to control and direct oneself.	A Teacher is a radical reformer of education. He/she has a perception of a better life. A Teacher looks for new possibilities and initiates changes.	Priority is given to a global teaching programme in which much attention is paid to social problems.
Oriental philosophy	A spiritual way of education is significant. Everything depends on a person's attitude to life, thus it is very important to form such an attitude.	An individual's inner life and harmony with the environment and higher existence are most important.	Students respect their Teacher for his/her wisdom. A Teacher is one who has already gained knowledge and who can lead them along the way of finding truth.	One learns by following one's Teacher. A student changes during his/her communication with a Teacher.

Three hundred respondents were interviewed in Lithuania and the USA. A nine-statement tool was used and the results revealed

- that a majority of respondents/teachers identified themselves either with Idealism (up to 70 % in some groups) or Existentialism (up 90 – 95 % in some groups);
- that most teachers did not take a philosophical position. An interpretation of the results enabled the authors to conclude that a majority of respondents did not have a philosophical position towards pedagogical activities and the need for further investigation was identified (Cernius, 1998).

The works of two Lithuanian educationists were also analyzed, namely the works of S. Salkauskis (1886-1941) (Salkauskis, 1998) and those of L. Jovaiša (born in 1921) (Jovaiša, 1989; 1997, 2001), in order to recognize their attitude towards pedagogical activities according to the consistency among the four aspects of pedagogical activities, i.e. the aims and purposes of education, a learner, the role of a teacher, curriculum and methods of teaching.

The philosophical foundation of pedagogical activities that was identified by the mentioned authors themselves was compared with the attitudes that were identified in the research after the four-aspects analysis of pedagogical activity. In both cases, after the analysis of aspects of pedagogical activities, it was found that there was a correspondence between the philosophical foundation and the attitude of respondent. The concept of pedagogical activity in the works of S. Salkauskis is based on a philosophy of neo-tomism. L. Jovaiša claims that he has built a system of pedagogical activities based on Christian 'Weltanschauung'. The foundations of both authors are very closely related and so the attitudes, as it was recognized after the analysis of the four aspects of pedagogical activities. This analysis also revealed that the modern educationist L. Jovaiša has combined more philosophical trends than his predecessors.

The analysis of educationists' works showed that the analysis of the four aspects of pedagogical activities allows identification of the attitude towards pedagogical activity.

II stage (1998 – 2002) was dedicated to the exploration of the relation between the individual philosophical foundations and teacher's ability to plan the pedagogical activities; and to outline the possible study directions in order to identify the congruency of an individual's foundations in the light of the requirements. Therefore, the reflection and discussion sessions were designed as an integral part of the study.

First phase (1998 – 2001) was devoted both to the identification of individual philosophical foundations and a reflection/discussion of them. A 108-statement tool was used to interview 129 respondents (aged between 24 – 56; 123 female, 9 male respondents). These teachers were involved in taking advantages of the continuing educational services at Vytautas Magnus University. The main motive of their studies was their professional development.

The results revealed that the profile of every individual was unique. The reflections on these profiles showed that this process leads every individual to an in-depth understanding of oneself, one's goals and educational paradigm. Reflection also increased awareness and, therefore, a better understanding of teaching profession.

Second phase (2001) was committed to a more in-depth investigation of individual paradigms and the relationship between the profiles of an individual's philosophical foundation and the planning of teacher's professional activities. A qualitative research and in-depth interview were employed in order to spot the pattern between the congruity of profiles and planning of activities. For the in-depth analysis four plans of pedagogical activities were selected according to the consistency of the plans (i.e. four out of eight). Researchers evaluated these plans according to their adequacy regarding the aspects emphasized in the tool, e.g. aims and purposes of education, a learner, the role of a teacher, curriculum and methods of teaching. For the evaluation of the consistency of plans a SWOT analysis was employed. The results revealed that planning the pedagogical activities teachers employ the possibilities provided by a number of philosophical trends. However, two different cases were identified:

- A. In most individual plans the priority is given to one particular trend of educational philosophy.

For one teacher the Pragmatism prevailed, for another it was Existentialism. Both plans were consistent and teachers seemed to be ready to implement them in their pedagogical activities. The most important conclusion was that the congruity between attitudes in individual's profiles of philosophical foundations and attitudes that were evident in individual plans was observed (Figure 1).

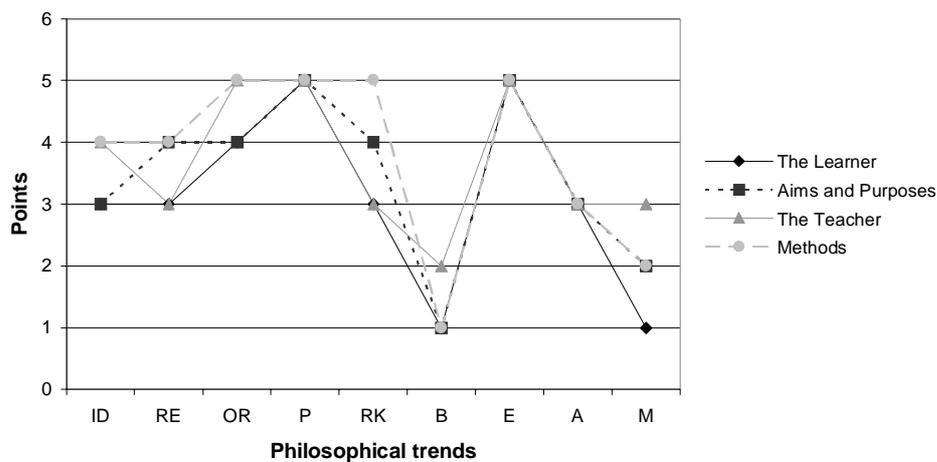


Figure 1. A consistent profile of philosophical foundation

- B. Plans seemed to combine several philosophical trends.

There was a plan where six trends were combined. In the second plan researchers failed to identify trends because four aspects (aims and purposes of education, the learner, the role of a teacher, curriculum and methods of teaching) were not discerned clearly. Therefore, the researchers observed that indistinct philosophical profiles coincided with indistinct attitudes in the plans (Figure 2).

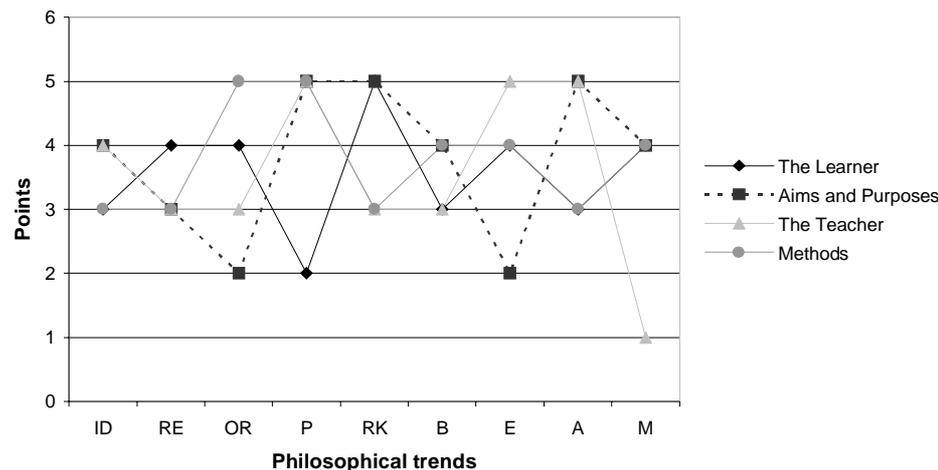


Figure 2. An inconsistent profile of philosophical foundation

The results revealed that:

- Teachers should discern the four aspects (aims and purposes of education, the learner, the role of a teacher, curriculum and methods of teaching) in their pedagogical activities more distinctively;
- The presence (priority) of one philosophical trend in a plan and an individual profile of philosophical foundations enabled the teachers to plan their pedagogical activities more consistently. The researchers suggest that an awareness of these philosophical foundations is a prerequisite for conscious and reflected decision-making in pedagogical activities and planning.

The statement above should also be employed in a further investigation. It is strongly suggested in this research that congruency between the philosophical foundations and planning of pedagogical activities is an important prerequisite for successful planning in the light of requirements of the system of education. This statement was employed as a working hypothesis in the next phase of the study.

Third phase (2002) was devoted to the investigation of what are the possibilities for foreign language teachers to plan their pedagogical activities consciously in the light of requirements. Thirty-two English language teachers (age 24 – 44; 30 female, 2 male respondents) were interviewed and second tool (108 statements) was employed in the research. In five cases of individual profiles one or two philosophical trends were identified as dominant. Therefore, a specific attitude was recognized. In other cases three or more trends were combined, or all the trends were evaluated as equal (i.e. all of them were either acceptable or no judgment was indicated). It was difficult to identify a definite attitude. In the light of variety and multitude of educational tasks (expressed by a number of sub-competencies of communication competency: linguistic, socio-linguistic, discourse, strategic, socio-cultural and social), researchers concluded:

- Teachers with a visible preference of philosophical trend are better prepared for independent and reflective planning of pedagogical activities;
- Further investigation is strongly recommended and essential in order to determine, whether foreign language teachers who have not expressed their preferences have difficulties in planning their pedagogical activities.
- Due to the lack of definite priorities, promotion of awareness of philosophical foundations and a reflection on them is also highly recommended and neces-

sary. Therefore, this dimension of pedagogical activity should be emphasized within the system of professional development because of the changing nature of Lithuanian educational system and the requirements (see Figure 3).

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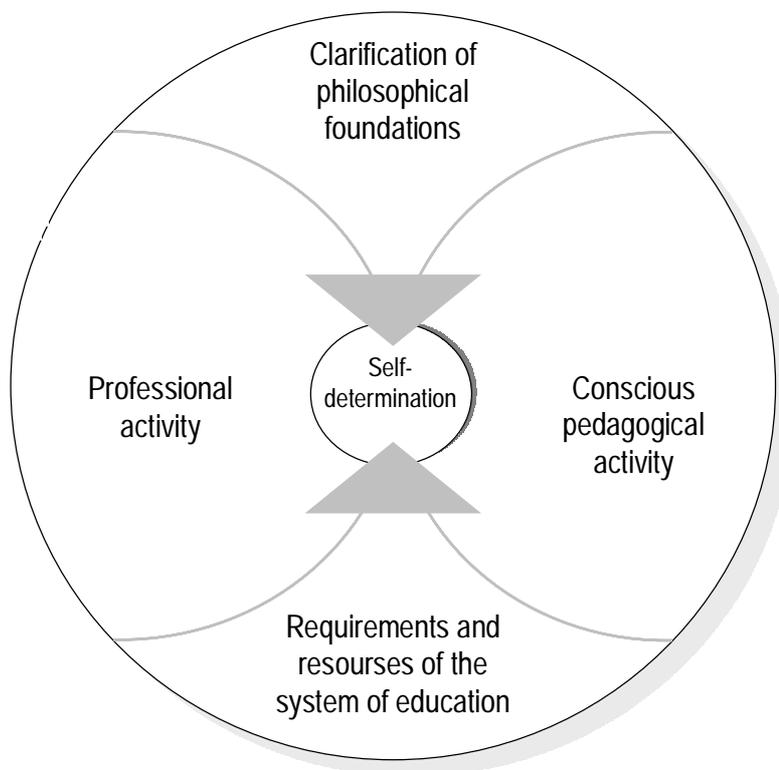


Figure 3. A sphere of professional development in the system of education

Conclusions

Interpretation of the results enabled the authors to conclude:

- Regarding the first question as to whether teachers were aware of their own philosophical foundations, it seems that teachers were not aware of the foundations and they reportedly admitted the crucial importance to examine their attitudes against the philosophical trends.
- Regarding the second question as to whether the congruity between personal profiles of philosophical foundations and planning patterns were observed, it was found that the relationship of these two variables could be judged against the identified criterion of congruency:
 - If there is a consistency in the profile then the same consistency is observable in the plans of pedagogical activities;
 - If there is no consistency in the profile then the plans of pedagogical activities are also inconsistent.
- It is therefore strongly suggested that an awareness of philosophical foundations should be a prerequisite for conscious and reflected decision-making in pedagogical activities and planning.
- Research shows that teachers, whose profiles of philosophical foundations are inconsistent, find it difficult to plan their pedagogical activities.
- A system of professional development should be enriched with additional recourses and measures that help teachers to increase the awareness and

reflection of individual philosophical foundations, in order to make a self-determination and to plan more consciously in the light of requirements of the system of education.

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Pedagogical Education of Vocational Teachers in the Context of Life Long Learning (Lithuanian Case)

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Abstract

The article analyses the issue of vocational teacher pedagogical education, based on the Lithuanian model. Talking about the sustainable development of teachers (which can happen in formal, informal, non-formal or experiential ways), it is necessary to develop a systematic approach that includes the evaluation and assessment of learning results acquired formally or informally. Analysis of the research shows that teachers having no formal accreditation of their pedagogical qualification acquire pedagogical competencies during the years of experiential practice at school. The aim of this article is to open the discussion on the issue of prior learning assessment in initial and continuing teacher education in other Baltic States – Latvia and Estonia.

Key words: vocational education and training (VET); teacher training; informal learning; recognition of prior learning; Life Long Learning.

Introduction

Continuing professional development of vocational teachers continues to develop an identifiable character, finding ways to increase effectiveness of this process by saving time, human, financial and other resources. Non-formal and informal education is becoming a very important challenge for vocational teacher training institutions.

D. Schugurensky (2000) clearly defines the concepts of informal and non-formal learning. *Informal* learning can be defined as any activity involving the pursuit of understanding, knowledge or skill which occurs outside the curricula of educational institutions, or the courses or workshops offered by educational or social agencies. Informal learning, then, takes place outside the curricula provided by formal and non-formal educational institutions and programs. In the processes of informal learning there are no educational institutions, institutionally authorized instructors or prescribed curricula. It is also pertinent to note that we are saying ‘outside the curricula of educational institutions’ and not ‘outside educational institutions’, because informal learning can also take place inside formal and non-formal educational institutions. In that case, however, the learning occur independently (and sometimes against) the intended goals of the explicit curriculum.

Non-formal education refers to all organized educational programs that take place outside the formal school system, and are usually short-term and voluntary. This includes a wide variety of programs. As in formal education, there are teachers (instructors, facilitators) and a curriculum with various degrees of rigidity or flexibil-

ity. Unlike formal education, these programs do not normally demand prerequisites in terms of previous schooling.

According to the statistical research, the majority of vocational teachers in Lithuania do not have their formal pedagogical qualification. However, the same research shows – less than a half of them have pedagogical experience in vocational schools for more than 20 years. This fact lets us presume that during the experiential practice in school, teachers could have learned in non-formal, informal and/or experiential ways. According to the future conception of vocational education in Lithuania, all vocational teachers must have formal pedagogical qualification. In this place there appears the cut and thrust of foreseen policies and existing situation. In order to obtain the formal pedagogical qualifications, teachers must take formal education courses that demand time and financial resources. Teacher education courses within formal institutions are offered the same level and intensity for beginning teachers as they are for teachers with significant experience. Therefore it is essential to be able to define the prior learning results of vocational teachers, gained non-formally and informally during the years of pedagogical experience, in order to design their initial and in-service pedagogical training in the most efficient way. For maximally effective results, pedagogical training should begin with the assessment of competencies, gained in formal, non-formal and informal ways in the process of life long learning.

Research on Vocational Teacher Needs for Pedagogical Education

During 2001 research on the pedagogical education of vocational teachers was carried out in Lithuania. The aim of the research was to draw a picture of present-day teachers, working in vocational schools in Lithuania. In other words the object of the research was – to clearly define the target group and design and develop the initial and continuing system of pedagogical education for vocational teachers.

The research consisted of two parts: quantitative research on formal pedagogical qualifications (approved by diplomas and other formal documentations) and real pedagogical competencies (appearing in teaching performance, observed in classrooms, as well as revealed during the interviews with teachers themselves).

Analyzing the results of the research on vocational teacher formal pedagogical qualifications we can assume that in Lithuania there are presently more than 38 percent of teachers whose pedagogical experience in school is more than 20 years, while having no formal pedagogical qualification. This fact lets us speculate about the possibilities of non-formal and/or informal (experiential) on-the-job learning, that could have occurred during the years of pedagogical practice. The other results of the same research let us know about the real pedagogical competencies of vocational teachers. 47 % of vocational teachers have competence of setting teaching goals and skills in the teaching content, methods, evaluation criteria, etc. Less than 70 % of vocational teachers maintained relationships with employer organizations and are interested in labor market changes. About 30 % of vocational teachers are aware of the roles their learners perform in the lesson. 42.8 % of vocational teachers face learning achievement revision and evaluation problems (Palinauskaite & Pukelis, 2001).

The research suggests the following important conclusions:

- Vocational teachers in Lithuania have tremendous need for formal initial and continuing pedagogical education.

- During the years of practice in school, vocational teachers gain their valuable pedagogical competencies in non-formal, experiential ways, learning from colleagues, in various seminars, study circles, reading professional literature, etc.

One problematic issue derived from the results of the research is that no system of evaluation or accreditation of pedagogical competencies exists concerning non-formal or work experiences. And so far there is no systematic approach towards initial teacher education, in-service education and continuing evaluation of teaching progress.

Life Long Learning and the Necessity to Recognize Prior Learning in Teacher Education

The issues surrounding teacher education cannot be discussed without taking into consideration the processes of change in society. The scale of current economic and social change in Europe demands a fundamentally new approach to education and training. Changing processes influence the organization of education, the world of work, the needs of the labor market, and the competencies needed. One recent event in Europe has raised the political profile of education. The EU Memorandum of Life Long Learning has shown the importance of sustainable education, as human resource development. The document draws the basic guidelines for policy and practice of vocational education in Europe. The six key messages suggest that a comprehensive and coherent life long learning strategy for Europe should aim to:

1. *Guarantee universal and continuing access to learning for **gaining and renewing the skills** needed for sustained participation in the knowledge society* (LLL Memorandum, 2000). This memorandum emphasizes that the process of gaining new or renewing skills should be seen as the response to the challenges of changing society. The new conditions of living and working change the content and the adaptation of old skills to the labor market and social surrounding (Buck, 2002).
2. *Visibly **raise levels of investment** in human resources in order to place priority on Europe's most important asset – its people* (LLL Memorandum, 2000). This will require creating motivating mechanisms for enhancing the accessibility of education (especially adult education).
3. *Develop effective **teaching and learning methods** and contexts for the continuum of life long and life wide learning* (LLL Memorandum, 2000). This means developing various curriculums and encouraging life long learning. There appears to be a need to develop and apply student-centered methods. Today the role of vocational teachers is changing. This changing role continuously results in the need to know and to apply new, active learning methods, and to give and take consultations. The development of technologies and education raises new requirements for teacher education. The flexibility of applying various active teaching methods leads to loosening the borders between formal and non-formal grounding of different subjects.
4. *Significantly improve the ways in which learning **participation and outcomes** are understood and appreciated, particularly concerning non-*

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formal and informal learning (LLL Memorandum, 2000). This message should be understood as a provision for conditions of evaluation, based on mutual trust and respect for any kind of education that could happen in different situations. The recognition of learning becomes more and more important, as the diplomas, certifications and documents are seen as strong datum-line. It is very important to develop a system, which could provide valid assessment and accreditation of the experientially or informally gained competencies.

5. *Ensure that everyone can easily access good quality **information and advice** about learning opportunities throughout Europe and throughout their lives* (LLL Memorandum, 2000). The aim is to assure that each person is able to get well-presented information about the possibilities to learn all across Europe. To assure the mobility of studying teachers it would be significant to systematically assess and recognize their competencies obtained during study trips and other possibilities for self-education.
6. ***Provide life long learning opportunities as close to learners as possible, in their own communities and supported through ICT-based facilities wherever appropriate*** (LLL Memorandum, 2000). This point stimulates and supports the whole idea of life long learning and extends the accessibility of vocational education.

As seen from the outlined messages, the Memorandum encourages the personal and professional development in the wide sense, which includes formal learning as well as accidental, non-formal, informal and experiential learning.

The Memorandum has raised the goal “to open the discussion in Europe on the life long learning strategy in individual and institutional levels in all ranges of public and personal living” (LLL Memorandum, 2000). The individually learning person has become the spotlight of each educational system. Up to date vocational education was orientated towards performing the tasks appearing from the place of work, paying less attention to the individual personality. Traditionally it is not an easy task for vocational education and training to orientate to the *idée* of life long learning. Today, as life long learning is grounded on realizing personal potential, one of the main goals for vocational teacher is to unchain this potential and transform it for implementing new ideas.

Due to the changes mentioned above, the objectives and roles of the vocational teacher have also changed. Vocational teachers have to realize the meaning of life long learning, be aware of didactical principles, and change the traditional attitude to vocational education and training. The significance of planning, cooperation and coordination in vocational education and training undergoes a rapid increase. The following roles of vocational teachers gain more importance in the light of mentioned changes (Laužackas, 2002):

- Learning facilitator and developer;
- Learning instructor and organizer;
- Career consultant;
- Curriculum developer;
- Developer of schools as learning organizations;
- Participant of national and international networks.

Vocational education and training is now mostly orientated towards the maintaining the complexity, autonomy and coordination of the educational processes. The role of vocational teachers includes “the regulation of cognitive processes, evaluation, consultation, motivation, use of teaching technologies, collaboration, spread of innovations, and continuing up-grade of qualification” (Rutzel, 2000).

In the new information age, it is increasingly obvious that the vocational teacher, to engage in sustainable development, must become a learning teacher. In this case, sustainable development of vocational teachers gains in importance. Hence the competencies acquired in the process of informal and non-formal learning also gain in importance. The progress of informational technologies increases the circulation of knowledge and innovations. Accordingly it becomes easier and easier to correspond the learning needs, deriving from the requirements of the world of work, in a non-formal or experiential way. Consequently, the non-formal upgrading of qualifications, inclusive of the life long self-education, assumes wider possibilities in sustainable, “holistic learning, where formal, informal, non-formal experiential learning supplements one another” (LLL Memorandum, 2000). On the other hand, life long learning demands certain support and the perfection of learning processes. The question is, how to consistently recognize the learning results, acquired in formal, non-formal and experiential ways.

In 2001, CEDEFOP has carried out research on how European countries implemented the idea of life long learning in practice (CEDEFOP, Euridyce, Nacional Actions to Implement Lifelong Learning in Europe, 2001). Based on the analysis, six mentioned challenges of life long learning were announced. One of the initiatives for the facilitation of qualifications recognition and assuring the mobility of learners is the recommendation “Regarding the mobility of students, learners and teachers” signed by European Parliament, European Council on the 10th of July, 2001. It proposes to maintain the mobility of learners, to exchange the examples of successful practice, regarding the international mobility, to capacitate the accessibility of information about the studies, teaching, giving teaching services and to encourage the mobility of the employers.

In 1998 there was established the European Forum on Transparency of Vocational Qualifications, aiming to improve the transparency of qualifications and to embolden the exchange of opinions, experiences and initiatives between EU countries. The mentioned Forum has offered to establish the network of National Reference Points on Qualifications – NRPQ, which would include the EU countries and associated countries. These reference points would spread out information concerning the recognition all-level national qualifications, and the providers of education certifications. The reference points would provide information about the conformation and formats of all kinds of educational certifications, their annexes, length and content of vocational education, the evaluation systems and possibilities for continuing education. Starting in 2003, mentioned reference points will be established in EU countries (Jovaiša, 2002).

Conclusions

Results of the scientific research on teaching performance show that teachers gain not only their pedagogical competencies in formal ways, but in experiential and non-formal ways as well. Non-formally acquired competencies are not being evalu-

ated or recognized in the process of acquiring initial or in-service pedagogical education.

The recognition and assessment of prior learning in teacher training is necessary for several reasons:

- For saving the time and money, i.e. for not acquiring the same competence twice, but directly go towards gaining new skills;
- For developing more efficient curriculum of continuing teacher education;
- Experienced teachers could be helpful in the process of teacher-student pedagogical education, in practical and/or experiential sense;
- The unified system of teacher pedagogical training as well as assessing qualifications would encourage the mobility of continuously developing teachers.

Recommendations

As pedagogical education of vocational teachers in the Baltic States does not have deep traditions, it is very important to explore the experience of EU countries. The aim is to adapt the recognition, assessment and accreditation of prior learning (RAAPL) methodology for vocational teachers' pedagogical education needs in the Baltic States as well as in other countries having the same needs.

For best study and adaptation of EU experience on RAAPL it would be very useful to prepare joint development projects between the Baltic States on unifying concepts and methodologies of recognition, assessment and accreditation of prior learning aiming to design, pilot, evaluate, adjust and disseminate the developed system.

In order to create the unified system of RAAPL in the Baltic States, it is necessary to have a standardized and unified system for competency based pedagogical education of vocational teacher, as the basis and the starting point for recognition, assessment and accreditation of prior learning.

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Further Education of Teachers Working in Rural Areas of Latvia

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Abstract

The paper contains results of investigation in the field of further education of the teachers working in rural areas - compulsory and vocational education establishments. Schools in rural areas are cultural and educational centres. Teachers' role grows up. They are pedagogues not only for their pupils, but they are (or can be) educators for adults as well as study and career counsellors both for pupils and adults. Using the methods of case study, polling and analysis of personal experience the author reflects on the present situation and shows some tendencies of development of further education of teachers in the context of European integration.

Key words: teachers in rural/urban areas; further education; lifelong learning; ecocentrism; anthropocentrism.

Introduction

It appears that it isn't necessary to discuss the role of further education for teachers as creative personalities in today's postmodern world. A century ago, teaching was mastered mainly by gaining experience, without any formal theoretical professional training (Russel, Korthagen, 1995: 187). Nowadays the teachers are involved in extensive and various processes of further education. Further education of teachers can be referred to the sphere of adult education, which have three sectors (by Rogers, 1996: 2): *formal, extra-formal and non-formal*.

Riga, the capital of Latvia, as well as regional centres offer a large-scale of short and long time courses, seminars, discussion forums and university extensions. But there is a difference between possibility of *urban* and *rural* teachers to go into a system of further education. Participation in further education usually requires from rural teachers much more time and extra expenses in comparison with urban teachers. In this present investigation the author uses the term *further education* to include the *in-service training of teachers*, because in praxis teachers perceive both terms as a whole.

European integration is the context for the development of education in Latvia as well. About 55 per cent of teachers (questionnaires designed by author: year 2000/ 2001, N=190) in rural areas are concerned about Latvian identity, and about the future of our educational system in a new Europe. J.Field (1994) stresses: "European educational policy does not exist. The most important constraint on joint educational policy measures is the perception, that education lies at the heart of a state's sovereignty."

Since the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 education is a priority in the common policy of the European Union. Against this background European Union realizes the

education assistance policy. For example, SOCRATES and LEONARDO DA VINCI programmes since 1998 have provided a great possibility for active teachers in Latvia to realise their further education.

A Memorandum of Lifelong Learning (2000) – the document of the European Commission is an important theoretical base for development of a *learning society* in Europe. The author's experience shows: the teachers in rural areas themselves are continuously in the process of life long learning. They are the main providers of the life long learning possibilities for members of the local society today and should do even more tomorrow.

There are more than 600 comprehensive full-time schools and 38 vocational education establishments in rural areas of Latvia (Statistical Board of Latvia, 2001). Historically each of them was cultural and educational centre for local society. Today the role of school in rural areas is growing up for many reasons:

- In many cases school is the only centre where the local society comes together on public holidays;
- There are various interest groups (parents, women, farmers) coming together;
- Sport activities;
- Amateur performances;
- Library;
- Internet connection;
- *Local centre for lifelong learning.*

Outstanding difference between living standards in urban and rural areas of Latvia determine the situation in the rural environment. L. Pēks (2002: 5-6) emphasizes the role of teachers in rural schools in the development of the fortitude of pupils. He stresses the essentiality of these processes in the context of growing poverty and some features of the existential crisis in rural areas.

To promote the development of the pupils' fortitude teachers must have the fortitude themselves. One of the features characterizing the fortitude of teachers is the level of self-awareness. The processes of further education of rural teachers like an inexhaustible wellspring serves to enhance their self-awareness.

The content of different courses and seminars often isn't the main gain of teachers, but the idea: I can do the same or even better than others! Another conclusion: the problems of the pedagogues are common in our country.

Author's experience visiting several schools in Sweden, Norway, Germany and United Kingdom as well as discussions with colleagues who have similar experience show that using less financial and material resources teachers in Latvia can achieve the same results as their colleagues in the economically developed countries.

The author also would like to emphasize the significance of ecocentric approach to educational processes and curriculum design for rural comprehensive and vocational schools. *Ecocentrism* searches the ways to harmonize the life and its supporting system; both of them are complementary in ecosystem (Salīte, 2002: 5). It is essential to preserve and develop ecocentred thinking because nowadays anthropocentrism dominates in our society. *Anthropocentrism* overrates the role of the human being in ecosphere... (Salīte, 2002: 5). The rural environment is a natural ground for the development of ecocentred thinking of pupils. But primarily this kind of thinking and approach must be understood and accepted by teachers themselves through the process of further education.

Everyone is Learning in Our School

Where is your teacher now? Today and tomorrow she isn't at school. She is studying for two days. Everyone is learning in our school - a little boy from the fifth grade says seriously and runs away.

There is an average country school in the central part of Latvia. 172 pupils and 15 teachers are together five days (or more) a week in educational processes. It is self-evident for the pupils at this school that teachers are for a full time running in further education. Some numbers in the Table 1 reveal tendencies of the development of teachers' further education in the school mentioned above.

Table 1. Development of the competences of teachers in some rural elementary school

	Indicator	1994	2002
1	Number of pupils	176	172
2	Number of teachers	15	15
3	Number of teachers with higher education • Those with higher pedagogical education	14 6	14 13
4	Master degree in Pedagogics (Mag. paed)	—	4
5	Studies for Master degree in Pedagogics	—	3
6	Studies at higher level in Pedagogics	—	1
7	Studies to acquire the 2nd or 3rd speciality	1	2
8	Studies to acquire the 2nd or 3rd foreign language	1	3
9	Computer skills (Microsoft Office & Internet)	—	15

Further education of teachers is an essential part of their professional development. But there are some problems and difficulties on the way of further education activities for the rural teachers. Expenditures for transport, living expenses and other costs have to be covered from the teachers' own budget every time.

The inquiry of teachers in agricultural and rural primary/secondary schools in 1997, 1998, 2000, 2002/2003 (organised and realised by author of present investigation) shows one and the same situation: 98 - 100 per cent of teachers would like to continue their education, 75 - 80 per cent are doing it presently, but the main obstructions for realising further education of rural teachers are economical difficulties and a lot of work at school (see Table 2). In the context of present investigation the data have only informational, not representative character.

School Administration, Local Authorities and Teachers' Further Education

In the questionnaire mentioned above 90 - 95 per cent of teachers respond that school administration supports their further education, but 75 - 80 per cent of respondents tell about support and positive attitude of local authorities (see Table 2).

Support and auspicious attitude by school administration is an important prerequisite for successful processes of further education of teaching staff. The author's experience shows: both the teachers and school administration realize the value of their further education. It is a complementary process.

But it isn't easy from the point of view of the school administration. Administration must ensure the replacement of teachers. And it is "a never-ending" process.

Table 2. Teachers' attitudes to their further education, obstructions realizing their own educational aims and support of further education by the school administration and local authorities (in percents)

	Indicator	Comprehensive rural schools N = 150*	Vocational schools N = 144**	Comprehensive schools in Riga N = 50***
1	Teachers: • would like to continue their education • do it at present time	100 80	95 72	100 no data
2	Obstructions: • on financial background • a lot of work at school, no time for educational activities There are no obstructions	75 54 2	60 30 10	50 67 8
3	Support and positive attitude on the part of: • school administration • local authorities	93 78	95 88	no data no data

* Polling organised and realised by author in 18 schools (1998 - 2002).

** Polling organised and realised by author in seven schools (1997 - 2002).

*** Polling in Riga organised and realised by I.Markausa in 15 schools (2002: 37).

There are some internationally recognized strategic measures (In-service training of teachers..., 1995) which are used to avoid the problem of replacement and to maintain opportunities for further education:

- Exchanges of lessons with colleagues or within the limits of timetables;
- Authorization for absence without replacement for courses lasting one to three days;
- Arrangements for participating in training courses, partly during and partly outside school time, in the case of relatively long courses;
- The development of opportunities for training outside school time, including summer universities and distance learning;
- Correspondence courses, in particular for qualifying training;
- Agreements on days of the week set aside for different subjects;
- The distribution of training activities over several weeks on different days;
- Coordination meetings between teachers of the same subject in one school.

Discussion

The new significance is obtained for further education of rural teachers in the light of the *Lifelong Learning Memorandum*.

First: the teachers in rural areas themselves are continuously in the process of life long learning. They are good examples for other members of local society.

Second: the teachers themselves are very good examples for their pupils. Teachers must often and openly discuss their further education: aims, success, difficulties, etc. The author's experience shows positive influence of these activities on learning process.

Third: in *Lifelong Learning Memorandum* it is said about education possibilities as near to the place of residence of learners as possible. Rural schools and vocational education establishments have a potential to be local educational centres for realising life long and life-wide education. Human resources (teachers) play a main role in that process.

Fourth: one of the main ideas of *Lifelong Learning Memorandum* is about the role of counselling. Author's point of view – it is a very important factor. There isn't a common system of study and career counselling in Latvia. The teachers in rural areas can and should be guides for their pupils (and other members of local society) helping to find possible ways in learning/study or work in the future.

Fifth: Education is a fundamental principle for sustainable development of European as well as Latvian society. Teachers play the main role in this context.

Conclusions

Great majority of teachers in rural areas both from comprehensive and vocational schools are involved in the processes of further education, but lack of finances and a lot of work at school are main obstructions for rural teachers to realise their further education. In spite of obstructions the process of further education for rural teachers is an integral part of teachers' message from the point of view of teachers themselves. The teachers in rural areas themselves are continuously in the process of life long learning. They are the main providers of the life long learning possibilities for members of the local society today and should do even more tomorrow. The message and role of the *urban* teachers are the same, but the social background and (in predominance) inferior material provision in rural schools request higher fortitude and optimism from the teachers and more significant support from the state.

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Teaching International Study Tour Courses: The Perspectives of the Professor, Two Guest Instructors and Their Students

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Abstract

Since 1997, the principle author of this paper has been leading a group of University of Ottawa students to Greece for an international study tour credit course. The objective of this course is to provide a unique means to learn and earn credit. More specifically, the intent of this course is to use novel on-site teaching techniques to disseminate a body of knowledge comparing two cultures. This paper examines the perspectives of the professor, two guest instructors and their students. The results of this paper reveal that international study tour courses are an excellent means for imparting knowledge to students and for allowing both students and professors the opportunity to achieve personal growth. It is recommended that more international study tour courses be offered to expose both students and professors to a greater body of knowledge and alternative teaching techniques.

Key words: international study tour courses; Greece; teaching perspectives; professors; students.

Introduction

The 1990s was a decade of rapid evolution in teaching and teaching education techniques (Papanikos, 2002). The rapid progress of technology, including the use of electronic technology for the dissemination of teaching resources, helped shape the teaching industry into what it is today (Ikpa, 2002). The Internet, audio and video teleconferencing, and multi-media techniques not only made the dissemination of knowledge more accessible, but also spread information beyond borders to an international milieu.

Although all of these electronic teaching techniques are beneficial in spreading a broader degree of knowledge internationally, major limitations exist. For instance, by not being physically present in the environment of learning focus, the student cannot fully absorb all necessary aspects of learning. Unless one is physically present, the learning opportunities cannot be enhanced (Karlis, 1997). One need to touch, smell, hear and see first-hand what is being taught.

Perhaps the best available means to fully enhance the learning and teaching process is to integrate both the teacher and the student in the learning environment

of focus (Karlis, 2002; Karlis, 2000). Such is the purpose of international study tours. The focus of the international study tour experience extends beyond learning through the experience of a particular culture; it also concentrates on bringing the students and all of their learning senses (touch, sight, scent, hearing and taste) to the learning environment.

Since 1997, the principle author of this paper has been leading groups of University of Ottawa (Canada) students to Greece for a University of Ottawa credit study tour course. The most recent course took place in May 2002 and consisted of 48 students, one professor and two guest instructors. The intent of these study tour courses was to integrate students from Canada into Greece in order to study Hellenic culture and, more specifically, the implementation and administration of Greece's cultural and tourism services.

This paper seeks to examine the perspectives of the international study tour experience of the professor, two guest instructors, and the students who participated in the 2002 University of Ottawa International Study Tour Course in Greece. To fulfill the purpose of this paper, the main body of the paper is divided into four parts: (1) perspectives of the professor, (2) perspectives of the first guest instructor, (3) perspectives of second guest instructor, and (4) perspectives of the students.

Learning Through Experience: A Theoretical Base

International study tours provide a means to learn through experience. Research from the discipline of education that provides knowledge on learning through experience acts as the theoretical base for this paper. The opportunity to visit a site, and to learn first-hand through experiencing the visited site, is an important part of learning through experience.

As only few universities offer study tour courses, it is no surprise that little research has been written in this area. However, what has been written focuses on learning through experience as an essential component of the study tour experience.

For Loughheed (2002), international study tours offer an opportunity to learn from first-hand experience. The international study tour course is a physical experience, whereby one integrates into the host culture, and learns directly from the education systems from that culture. Learning through experience takes place simply through the interaction that occurs between the teacher from the host culture and the visiting student.

According to Hickman (1999), the study tour offers a chance to learn from the experience of the visiting culture. Learning is not only confined to the classroom, but also extends to digging behind the scenes. Learning through experience takes place through the travel experience as a whole and the exposure one receives to the people, land and resources of the host culture.

Research by Kern (2000) posits that role-play and hands-on simulation enhance the learning experience. In his research, Kern (2000) had students assume roles and stimulate transaction to start a business. Students learn through experiencing a "real-life" situation. By the same token, students who take international study tour courses learn by experience simply through simulation of the "real-life" experiences of the host culture. Classroom and on-site lectures incorporate role-play exercises as a means to learn about the host culture.

Recent research by de Caprariis, Barman, and Magee (2001) examine the benefits of active learning experiences in introductory courses. Focus was placed

on integrating a collaborative, active learning experience in a traditional lecture-based introduction course. It was revealed that the active learning experience is a successful means that adds variety in education. This means of learning extends beyond the traditional and helps one to learn through experience.

Perhaps one of the most important devices that entice learning by experience in study tour courses is the opportunity to learn through the arts. Learning through the arts is not a new educational approach. Research by Elster (2001) highlights the artist-teacher-institution collaboration that takes place while learning through the arts. The study tour presents this type of an environment as a collaborative relationship is established between the education system of the host culture, the artists of the host culture, the teaching supervisors of the course, and the institution whereby the course is held.

The study tour experience is a cultural experience. It is the learning by experience process in which two cultures are brought together. Learning by experience happens not only for the university students, but also for the education systems and participants of the host culture as they are learning through the interactive experiences with visiting students and their professors. If traditional forms of schooling need to be enhanced (Ainscow, 1998), learning by experience opportunities offered by international study tours may indeed be a start.

Perspectives of the Professor

Since 1997 I have instructed the University of Ottawa's International Study Tour Courses to Greece. Over the past five years I have had an opportunity to evaluate and assess the overall effectiveness of the study tour experience for the students. Upon thoughtful consideration, I have been able to reinforce my belief that international study tour courses are an extremely effective means for students to learn.

I will proceed to explain my perspectives on the teaching of international study tour courses in two parts. First, I will focus on why I feel international study tours are an excellent means for a university professor to implement different teaching styles and techniques. Second, I will present reasons as to why I feel international study tours are beneficial means for students to acquire knowledge.

A. Implementation of Different Teaching Techniques

When one is teaching away from a typical classroom environment, one cannot help but be innovative. This innovativeness extends further when a professor decides to teach in a foreign country. While teaching abroad, the professor not only has to adjust and adapt to a new educational environment, but also has to look for different means to efficiently and effectively pass on the required body of knowledge to the students. This process poses challenges for me each year that I teach an international study tour course.

The experience of teaching international study tours allows the professor the opportunity to experiment with different teaching means and techniques. The teaching means and techniques that I have used are as follows: (1) poolside and beachside lectures, (2) hotel (conference room) lectures, (3) transportation lectures (on bus and cruise ships), (4) on-site lectures, (5) field trip workshops, (6) guided hiking trips, (7) conventional classroom teaching, (8) integrative classroom teaching, (9) professional (workshop) lectures, and (10) cultural activity presentations.

Poolside and Beachside Lectures

The study tours that I conduct are in Greece in the month of May. The average temperature is sunny and 25 degrees Celsius. The springtime weather makes classroom teaching difficult, as it is hard to sit indoors for hours while the weather outside is sunny and nice. For Canadian students it is extremely difficult as winters are long and summers are short, so the temptation to be outdoors lingers. Poolside and beachside lectures present a favorable environment for teaching because they allow students to learn and enjoy the pleasant weather in beach attire. I often conduct the lectures with my back to the pool or beach. As a result, the students have a view of the pool and beach, a relaxing way to take down notes.

Hotel (Conference Room) Lectures

Hotel lectures held in conference rooms are similar to conventional classroom lectures. One difference, however, is the limited availability of audio-visual aids. At a minimum, most hotel lecture rooms have an overhead projector. The availability of an overhead projector is useful as it helps the professor to diversify the means used to pass on knowledge. The most important benefit of hotel (conference room) lectures is that students are placed in a professional environment, one in which professional conferences are held. By simply having the professor behind a podium, the students automatically perceive the serious nature of the lecture.

Transportation Lectures (Bus and Cruise Ships)

Bus and cruise ship lectures are difficult to conduct because the “classroom” is constantly moving. Not only are there a number of distractions with changing scenery and bumpy roads, there is also the risk of motion sickness and the inability to take good notes. My experience indicates that bus and cruise ship lectures are best suited for informal lectures that do not require note taking. For instance, lectures that are summative or descriptive of passing sites are effective while in transport.

On-Site Lectures

On-site lectures are perhaps the most exciting and inspiring teaching methods employed in international study tour courses. On-site lectures allow the professor and the students the opportunity to touch, smell, hear and observe first-hand the actual site of the topic of discussion. For example, what better place to learn about the philosophical achievements of Plato and Aristotle than at the base of the Acropolis. Furthermore, what better place to learn about the healing work of Asklepios than at the site of the Ancient Theatre of Epidavros.

On-site lectures are also useful because different professors can be relied upon for the transmission of knowledge. In addition to my lectures on-site, local professors and instructors assist in teaching. At times, local professors present in their native tongue (Greek) and I act as a translator. This technique of including local instructors is useful because the depth of subject matter passed on to students is enhanced as materials presented extend beyond my lecture notes.

Field Trip Workshops

Field trip workshops are an excellent way to learn. Students are given an assignment and are instructed to explore a site alone or in small groups while completing the assignment. For example, in the ancient city of Mystras, students were instructed to observe the outlay of the city while examining implications from the

viewpoint of the contemporary tourist. The students, while working in small groups, made their way through the site, brainstormed implications based on observations, and kept a detailed record of accounts. Later, students were required to present the results of their field trip workshop to their classmates.

Guided Hiking Trips

Guided hiking trips are used to provide a first-hand understanding of the eco-tourism resources of the country studied. By walking through hiking trails, local eco-tourists teach while in motion. Focus is placed on doing visual-presentations that include walking through areas under examination. Eco-tourists who come from the country studied also provide a comprehensive overview as to how hiking trails are being managed and administered. For instance, one of the most popular trails hiked in our University of Ottawa study tour is the E4 trail that extends from Scandinavia through Greece and ends in Africa. The administration of such a trail requires international collaboration. Our eco-tourist leader conducts a detailed on-site lecture about the administrative aspects of the trail and thereby takes the learning experience of the hike beyond the aesthetic level.

Conventional Classroom Teaching

No course would be complete without conventional classroom teaching. The University of Ottawa study tour course to Greece begins with three conventional classroom lectures in a University of Ottawa classroom. The study tour then proceeds to Greece where conventional classroom lectures are also provided. For example, classroom facilities are used at the Independent Science and Technology (IST) Studies University where lectures are conducted in typical lecture halls.

Integrative Classroom Teaching

Integrative classroom teaching refers to the bringing together of professors and students of two institutions in one classroom. This aspect of the study tour takes place when students from the University of Ottawa are brought to the classroom setting of the Technical Educational Institute (TEI) of Crete. A professor from TEI and I conduct a lecture to our mixed group of students. This co-taught lecture is an effective way to learn as both groups of students are exposed to each other's professors and the subject matter knowledge of each.

Professional (Workplace) Lectures

The collaborators of the University of Ottawa study tour course include officials from the public, private and non-profit sectors. Presentations are conducted in office settings in each of these sectors. For instance, the Economic and Social Council of Greece, the Greek National Tourist Organization, and the Organizing Committee of Athens 2004 all conduct professional (workplace) lectures for the University of Ottawa study tour group. Students are transported to these office settings, and through the use of their facilities and resources, personnel of the various entities conduct lectures.

Cultural Activity Presentations

This form of learning is one that is animated, fun and entertaining. A course such as the University of Ottawa's International Study Tour makes it possible to utilize animated means as a method to disseminate knowledge. One example is

through the instruction of Greek cultural dances. A Greek cultural dance instructor teaches students not only how to dance, but also the meaning of each dance and the significance of traditional costumes.

B. Study Tours as a Beneficial Means for Acquiring Knowledge

From the aforementioned ten teaching means and techniques it becomes obvious why international study tours are a unique and effective way for students to learn. International study tours provide students with exposure to a diversity of teaching styles. Through the use of different instructors, different settings, different aesthetic environments, different classrooms and different sites, students are constantly engaged intellectually and therefore remain focused. The routine and sometimes bland nature of a traditional university course, held in the same classroom and in the same building on campus, does not exist.

Also, by traveling from site to site students have little choice but to stay alert and be attentive. It is exciting and entertaining to change locales through travels and to learn in different environments. Students not only see different sites, they learn about these sites as well. The ability to stay alert and focused enhances the students' magnitude for absorbing knowledge.

Students also expand their knowledge by learning from different presenters. Typical courses lack exposure to a plethora of presenters, as guest lectures are less likely to make a trip to a classroom without an honorarium. With an international study tour course, however, this is not the case as the entire classroom (group) relocates to the setting of the guest lecturers. As a result, the diversity of presenters to students of the study tour is great.

By integrating with students of the host society students also learn in and out of the classroom. They build on information passed on in the classroom simply by talking with one another. Students also learn from each other while being "at leisure," away from the classroom.

All in all, the international study tour experience involves an intensive course in which students are in a learning environment twenty-four hours a day. The learning environment is provided not only during lectures and on-site visits, but also through constant accessibility to instructing professors and each other.

Perspectives of First Guest Instructor

Teaching international study tour courses is fundamentally and qualitatively different from either traditional classroom teaching, or even from distance learning teaching formats. Much as international travel itself is an education, teaching on the road in "foreign" settings provides an excellent forum for reflexive thought on both teaching and learning.

The University of Ottawa's 2002 Study Tour to Greece, under the direction of Dr. George Karlis, offered me the opportunity to appreciate the dual meaning of the Greek verb *pethevo*, the root word of pedagogy (*pethagogia*). In the original Greek language, the verb has a two-way connotation, as opposed to the traditional notion of "teaching" or "lecturing" that implies only a one-way method of imparting knowledge. Specifically, in the Greek, we have the aforementioned "imparting of knowledge" from professor to student in the verb *pethevo*. However, we also have the flip side of the coin, *pethovome*, wherein the "teacher is taught," and learns in

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this interactive process. That is, through problematizations that arise in teaching, in the form of questions, discussions, or debates, the professor himself learns to view – and thus teach – familiar concepts “in new lights, in new ways.”

In the international study tour context, I experienced this interactive process at various levels: (a) the personal, (b) the lecturer/translator, and (c) the spectacle. Each level, which I will briefly delineate, provided qualitative and quantitative opportunity for both sides of the pedagogical coin - teaching and learning. This result held true, not only for the students, but for the professor and instructors as well.

At the personal level, the international study tour brings together students, most of whom are traveling abroad for the first time in their lives, with professors in what can be called “foreign” or “exotic” settings, at least in the minds of students. This environment automatically sets into motion a process of social bonding where the group begins to unite and to develop a collective identity. Of the most fundamental aspects here is that we all *live together*. We travel together, eat together, relax together, work together and we attain personal familiarities that are unattainable in traditional classroom or electronic settings.

The closeness of the *personal* level yields some of the most robust insights into what the students are experiencing, fearing, or yearning. What is important, however, is that it goes beyond the subject matter and lectures. As an instructor, I was better able to understand what I can only call the students’ “mindset,” which serves as context, or backdrop against which the more formal presentations and travels occur. It goes without saying that a myriad of interpersonal dramas take place over the course of a study tour, and that these ultimately are the most memorable and *learning* aspects of the experience for both student and professor.

On the *lecturer/translator* level, the international study tour afforded me the opportunity to literally “take my show on the road.” I lectured and/or translated on-site at historical monuments, poolside or beachside, and most commonly, in space provided by our hotels. How does this differ from the traditional classroom context? Essentially, this more transient context forces the professor to maximize the verbal articulation of the subject matter. That is, the instructor has to more heavily rely on his communication skills and less on multimedia gadgets and programs. It is a “back-to-basics” approach in terms of teaching.

The professor lecturing or translating abroad is also constantly emphasizing and pointing out differences between the “familiar” and the “foreign” or “exotic.” Again, it is context that students need so as to be able to situate their experiences in valuable ways. Special care must be taken, however, so as not to be judgmental, arrogant, or in the extreme, ethnocentric, when comparing and contrasting cultures, countries and people. These are after all, “apples and oranges.”

Finally, at the third level, what I call *the spectacle*, students and professors stand side-by-side in awe and wonder at the various historical sites. There is a shared learning that, while occurring at radically different levels, serves to inspire both students and professors to wonder and appreciate. Pages of history textbooks jump out at you, and conversely, you are thrust into these pages, contexts, and environments. It is much different to be able to touch, smell and actually see these places with your human senses. The awe is quite contagious, and even the least interested of students find themselves asking questions they never would have cared to think about.

The *spectacle* is also the level where students can see their professors' love of subject matter, of discipline. Professors demonstrate their fundamental love and desire to learn even more, right in front of their students. Student-professor "role distance" is shattered, and suddenly it is more acceptable and "human" to love learning and asking. Here, students see that their professors are truly "students for life".

At the *personal*, *the lecturer/translator*, and *spectacle* levels of the study tour pedagogy, students are afforded maximum time, multiple contexts, and unmatched degrees of freedom to frame and ask questions about a myriad of topics, ranging from the topic specific to the more philosophical and practical issues of life and career. For professors, this poses challenges and opportunities because students' questions here are more thoughtful, developed, and applied.

Our University of Ottawa 2002 Study Tour group became a "family." As *cliché* as it sounds, the bonding, closeness and love that developed among the group cannot be better labeled or described. I taught and was taught. Just as international travel and culture shock our engines of learning, the international study tour offers both students and professors a mechanism for learning and teaching that is difficult if not impossible to match.

Perspectives of Second Guest Instructor

We were 51 individuals embarking on a journey of self-discovery shrouded in a cloak called LSR 3101A and LSR 3101B. For fourteen days beginning May 8 and ending May 21, 2002, 48 students came together to earn six credits towards their university degrees. The professor and the two guest instructors were there to assist them. The story begins there. Truly, the events of the University of Ottawa International Study Tour Course in Greece 2002 unfolded like chapters in a book or scenes in a movie. There was a beginning, middle and an end. In the beginning the characters were introduced, yet except for their name, place of birth, and brief description of their university majors or reasons for participating in the study tour they remained relatively undefined. It would only be during the events of the study tour that the characters would form and take shape. Our study tour had a plot, a climax, and a happy ending. More importantly, however, our study tour left the participants feeling like life would never be the same – it would be better because they lived something that few people ever have the opportunity to experience.

During the study tour, I had the opportunity to experience being part of a group where the individual members (all from diverse backgrounds) came together to fulfill a single common purpose and in the process were able to redefine themselves, strengthen old bonds, develop new friendships and create memories that will last a lifetime; memories that will only truly be appreciated by those who partook of the group experience. For me, it was an educational experience that I never had the opportunity to experience when I was in university. It is an experience I will draw upon for years to come.

A. Obvious Benefits

When I agreed to participate in this study tour as a guest instructor, I immediately understood and appreciated some of the benefits such a course would have for the students. One obvious benefit was that unlike a course taught in a traditional classroom setting, the material taught on-site in a study tour comes alive. For in-

stance, it is one thing to read about the recreation, sport and wellness services of the Ancient Theatre of Epidavros, and quite another to experience them firsthand. A second obvious benefit is the amount of time it takes to earn six credits in a study tour is condensed from several months into two weeks. A third obvious benefit is that an international study tour course enables students to travel to a foreign land – in this case Greece – and travel alone is an education in itself. The obvious benefits aside, however, I would argue that the true value of this international study tour course lay not in the obvious benefits but rather in the tangential benefits received by the students between lectures.

B. Tangential Benefits

Opportunity To Make Contacts

In a world that increasingly adheres to the notion that it is not what you know but who you know that really matters, making contacts and establishing professional networks is a key to success for most university students. This study tour course provided students with the opportunity to make useful contacts on multiple levels. First, the students were provided the opportunity to make contacts with numerous individuals in our host nation. These individuals included professors from several Greek universities, members of the Organizing Committee for Athens 2004, the Mayor of Ancient Olympia, and numerous other individuals from government offices, educational institutions, private businesses and other organizations.

Second, this study tour provided students with the opportunity to establish long-term contacts with the professor and the guest instructors. In a normal university environment, there is a limited amount of time that students have to interact with professors. Unless a student serves as a teaching or research assistant for a professor, the only time they have to make themselves known to the professor is during office hours, before or after class, during breaks, or at the occasional school function. During the study tour, however, the professor is accessible to the students for the duration of the trip. As such, students have ample opportunity to speak to the professor and establish a relationship. This opportunity for the students can result in more meaningful letters of recommendation or references, advice on career paths or graduate programs, employment prospects, and the development of a lifetime mentor.

Third, during the study tour students had the opportunity to make contacts with each other. The study tour afforded students a chance to meet, study, eat and travel with people they might not otherwise have known. In the time it took to complete the study tour, friendships were inevitably formed with the concomitant result being that future contacts were set in place. The students are invaluable resources to one another because, as soon to be university graduates, they have bright futures and many will seek careers in businesses, governments or in various professions.

Exposure to Various Cultures

A second tangential benefit provided by the study tour was the students' exposure to various cultures. There were two primary methods by which the students experienced culture on the study tour. First, students were exposed to all aspects of Greek culture including language, food, way of life, music, dancing, weather, fashion, shopping, ideologies and history. From the moment they stepped on the plane for Athens to the moment they landed back in Canada, the students were

doing their best to live as Greeks. Second, the study tour provided an opportunity for cultural exchange from the perspective that the 51 individuals on the study tour constituted a mini-United Nations. Not only did we have individuals from all parts of Canada (including a Native Canadian) and the United States, but we also had students that were born and raised in Taiwan, Jamaica, the Cayman Islands and India. In addition we had students from various faiths and students from Irish, Italian, Lebanese, English, French and Greek family backgrounds. This exposure served, at a minimum, to broaden the students' understanding and appreciation of the people and the world we live in.

The Lessons Learned between Lectures

A third tangential benefit is that unlike a traditional university course where the class ends and all the students leave to go about their lives, the students on the study tour remained together as a group for the two-week period. As such, before and after the lectures they had an opportunity to discuss the material being taught as well as engage in other meaningful discussions. The substantial amount of time spent together increased their comfort levels and trust, and consequently increased the depth and intensity of their discussions. The exchange of ideas and dialogue that occurred while the students were on the bus, in the hotel lobbies, in the dining halls, in a coffee shop, or during the hike were as important to the students' educational experience as the course material taught during the lectures.

The Opportunity for Self-Reflection

Lastly, the study tour provided students with an opportunity for self-reflection. It is not often during university life that students can calmly contemplate their futures, come to terms with their shortcomings, and look within themselves to identify their innermost hopes and dreams. In a traditional university setting, students are too busy attending classes, studying for exams, completing term papers, working part-time jobs and attending social functions to be able to think about their lives in a "big picture" sort of way. On the study tour, however, despite the intense schedule, there was ample opportunity for self-reflection. Sometimes this self-reflection was inspired by a conversation, by an individual, by the scenery during a bus trip or by a place like the Oracle of Delphi or the Parthenon where people have been evaluating and analyzing themselves for thousands of years.

In sum, participating in the study tour provided the students, the professor and the guest instructors with an opportunity for personal growth. As a group we learned to be patient, to forgive, to apologize, to laugh and to understand that education is a lifelong process that does not begin or end with a university degree.

Perspectives of the Students

During the most recent University of Ottawa international study tour course conducted in 2002 the 48 students were asked to fill out a "Study Tour Student Survey." As a part of this survey, students were asked to provide their perspectives on the international study tour experience. Below are a few quotes of comments provided by these students.

- "The study tour provides an excellent means to learn as it provides direct hands-on experience and we learn a lot using this method since the intangibles are key to the total learning experience."

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- “An experience such as the study tour is a far more effective tool for learning than listening to a lecture on the Internet.”
- “It helps to understand culture-history, economy, traffic, the lifestyle of the islands.”
- “Living with a group helped improve my knowledge and education as a whole.”
- “You learn more than you can ever learn in a classroom and the students learn more about themselves and others.”
- “An experience that has changed my life.”
- “It gives students the opportunity to reflect, learn culture, and create social and academic networks that are priceless.”
- “It was an amazing learning experience.”
- “I cannot express how good of an experience it is being able to see the culture and lifestyle of Greece on a one to one basis.”
- “It helps you learn about other cultures, experience theories taught in class, and establish connections with people.”
- “Great way to experience another culture and compare it to your own.”
- “No matter how much you read about the history and culture of another country, it will never be the same as seeing/experiencing it first-hand.”
- “You learn much more in two weeks than you learn in an academic year on campus.”
- “It is a wonderful experience to get first-hand information about another culture.”
- “This was a unique chance to study abroad and learn from a hands-on experience. You can take so much more with you in terms of finding out who you are as opposed to a classroom setting on campus.”
- “I learned more about myself, a culture, and others than I did in the last three years at university.”
- “I learned to be honest with myself and others.”
- “This course allows students to immerse themselves in a culture and learn more about it. Hands-on learning. Putting theory into practice ensures that the information will not be forgotten.”
- “One of the best overall learning experiences of my life that I will continue to benefit from.”
- “The study tour course makes the foreign culture one great classroom of constant learning.”
- “You learn so much about life, culture, people, and yourself without knowing it. You work hard and have a good time at the same time - life is not all about being stuck in a classroom.”
- “Being on the sites is a much better learning tool than being in the classroom on campus.”

- “I cannot put into words the amount I have learned from lectures, classmates and the overall experience.”
- “It is an amazing learning experience which opens up doors to other prospects. The education you acquire is something that can’t be understood if not on site.”
- “Traveling abroad as a course is the best education you can get...it’s hands-on life experience.”
- “Provides an opportunity to get to know your professors and to learn more from them.”

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Conclusion

The perspectives of the professor, the two guest instructors and the students of the University of Ottawa’s International Study Tour Course in Greece 2002 tend to agree on one thing: the study tour course is an overall and total learning experience. They also agree that learning by experiencing culture firsthand provides an opportunity like no other, an opportunity that cannot be matched on campus or through the use of the Internet.

Without doubt, the international study tour course is a unique learning experience. It is one in which instructing professors rely on unconventional means of teaching. It is also an experience in which students are integrated into a course fully for two weeks, as they are constantly exposed to the learning materials and sites, classmates and professors.

As some students attest, knowledge acquired from the international study tour course is information that will remain a lifetime.

International study tour courses offer an excellent means of learning through experience. The theoretical background addressed in this paper discusses how role-play, hands-on knowledge (Kern, 2000) and the arts of a culture (de Caprariis et al, 2001) can assist in the passing on of knowledge. Students who enroll in international study tours are exposed to these teaching techniques while being integrated into the host culture.

Although the international study tour examined in this paper consisted of Canadian students learning through experience in Greece, it should be noted that each country offers a unique opportunity to learn. The information presented in this study provides an understanding as to how knowledge is passed on to students through international study tours courses. The findings may have practical implications for the creation and implementation of further study tours in countries such as Latvia.

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Teacher's First Year at School: Problems and Solutions

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Abstract

In the context of the professional development of teachers, induction is the transition from student-teacher to full-time professional, when teachers are adapting to their chosen profession. It is a period of profound importance in the professional development of young teachers. It is at this stage that the realities of work in the classroom are experienced and adjustments are made between the limited opportunities to practice that are provided by initial teacher education and the professional responsibilities that attach to full-time, self-directed practice.

The article provides empirical research of 300 Latvian teachers about the problems they encounter during the first year of teaching. The analysis conducted promotes the necessity to involve the structured support and guidance in order to provide help for novice teachers.

Key words: professional socialization; novice teacher; school environment; problem solution; induction.

Introduction

No period is more important to teachers than the initial induction into their profession (Hargreaves, 1994). There is a need for a structured induction process that will both smooth this transition and render it as beneficial as possible for the newly qualified teacher.

The first year of teaching is a period when experience of a vivid and formative nature is built up, and perhaps at a faster rate than may ever occur again throughout the teacher's career. In particular the characteristics of the school culture, as well as the unique nature of each individual pupil, of each teacher-pupil relationship, indeed of each personal encounter, begins to be realized at this stage.

Changes in education are very rapid nowadays, particularly in school programs and these changes create difficulties, even for experienced teachers. Young teachers adapting to the new circumstances at the beginning of their career need additional efforts to help them to cope.

The quality of the teacher's experience during the early years of teaching is critical in developing and applying the knowledge and skills acquired during initial training and to forming positive attitudes to teaching as a career (Vonk, 1983; Bullough et al., 1991; Cole, 1990). The entry of newly qualified teachers into working life is widely acknowledged as problematic. In some other professions new graduates learn from more experienced colleagues in a structured environment, whereas newly qualified teachers are required from the first day to work as classroom teachers in isolation from their colleagues.

The newly qualified teacher has to deal with doubts, stress and the practical realities of teaching as well as the expectations of more experienced colleagues. The negative experiences thus encountered can have a lasting effect on the young teacher's morale and self-confidence (Dunham, 1985; Veenman, 1994; Huberman, 1993).

Problem

Induction for many teachers, according to Michael Fullan (1985), is a period of anxiety, fear and isolation where the most prevalent feeling reported is one of being totally on their own with little or no help. The researches completed during the last 15 years in the USA, Canada, the United Kingdom and another European countries showed the need to involve support programs for newly qualified teachers (Tickle, 1994; Cole & McNay, 1989; Calderhed & Lambert, 1992).

There is quite a degree of understatement to claim that in Latvia the systematic induction of teachers into the profession has been a neglected area. The school administration is starting to realize the need for significant changes in the initial career development of teachers. Many tutors and administration at universities also accept this need, as indicated in the following research.

Sample, Methods and Results

During the year 2001 three hundred Latvian teachers of different ages were asked to review their first year of teaching at school and answer questions on the problems they had with their pupils, administration, parents and colleagues.

The teachers' responses were analyzed quantitatively. Table 1 shows a distribution of respondents regarding the existence of problems. As we can see, the problem with pupils is in the first place. Table 2 introduces not only the mode of existing problems, but also gives content categories, which were faced by the teachers in their first year at school.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents regarding the existence of problems (N=300)

#	Mode of problem	Had problems (%)	Had not problems (%)
1.	With pupils	76	24
2.	With colleagues	46.7	53.3
3.	With administration	48.3	51.7
4.	With parents	68.5	31.5

Table 2. Rating and structure of problem content categories in each mode of problem

#	With pupils	%	#		%
1.	Discipline: • misbehavior • truancy • relationships with class leaders	33.3	2.	Communication: • establishment of relationships • conflict resolution	23

3.	Acceptance: • ignorance • trivial attitude • familiarity	18	5.	Teachers' personal problems: • fear • shyness • emotional pressure • internal conflicts	8
4.	Instructional skills: • unmotivated pupils • failure to understand each other • knowledge about age differences	17			

#	With parents	%	#		%
1.	Teachers' individual problems: • low confidence • low self-esteem • fear	27.0	4.	Communication: • poor skills of dialogue • different values	15
2.	Acceptance: • age barrier • distrust to the younger person	23.7	5.	Problems of management	6
3.	Low level of engagement	16.7			

#	With administration	%	#		%
1.	Teachers' individual problems: • fear • low confidence • shyness	48	3.	Acceptance: • distrust • continuous critique	13
2.	Communication: • failure to understand each other • lack of communication • lack of interest	15	4.	Management style: • authoritarian style • over-control • rejection of ideas	12.4

#	With colleagues	%	#		%
1.	Acceptance: • distrust • age barrier • competitiveness • envy	32	3.	Teachers' personal problems: • low self-esteem • psychological obstacles • fear • low confidence	22
2.	Communication: • poor involvement • values of different generations • conflict resolution	30			

Analysis

Whereas the well-established teacher can rely on the wisdom of experience to deal with the many crises that arise in classrooms, without the benefit of this experience the new teacher can begin to feel stress and worry.

New teachers can also feel under pressure. This pressure, whether real or imagined, comes from the view they have of what is expected of them. Newly qualified teachers feel under pressure to deliver a quality of work as good as any experienced teacher and to be in control of their situation as well as any other teacher. Indeed, very often these are the expectations of the Principal, other staff members and parents. In the initial stages, the newly qualified teacher can also suffer from the isolation that most teachers experience. Most experienced teachers have learned to cope with this isolation and have developed effective strategies to deal with it. A well-structured induction program would help considerably to offset the negative effects of this isolation and to complement the professional development of teachers, begun with their pre-service training.

Many beginning teachers solve their problems independently using strategies discussed during initial training. However, research has demonstrated that, when faced with difficulties they revert to “safe” practices, with their enthusiasm for new ideas submerged in what can be characterized as the cynicism and apathy of the staff room. The willingness to innovate and experiment is often frustrated when the plans and ideas do not work out in the classroom. Without a more experienced and supportive colleague in these circumstances, this can lead to feelings of inadequacy, self-doubt and in extreme cases, stress (Dunham, 1992).

There is a need for the newly qualified teachers to master a broad range of new knowledge and skills. They have to acquire classroom management skills, better understand the internal organization of school, the curriculum and how it might be applied to students of different abilities, to deal with problems of discipline, to motivate and challenge students and to assess student progress. They also need to establish methodologies for assessing their own performance in addition to learning to cope with the many other problems and challenges that arise in the day to day life of the modern teacher.

In many European countries there are a number of schools at present helping young teachers ease themselves into the profession of teaching. Many teachers throughout these countries are helping their junior colleagues by giving them the benefit of their experience and supporting them in other ways. Principals are also playing their part in this endeavor. It is hoped that all this support will continue even in the context of a formal program.

A good induction program will provide teachers in their first full year of teaching with the opportunities to apply the knowledge and skills acquired during initial training and to master a broad range of new knowledge and skills. This sort of program will underpin the socialization of the newly qualified teacher both into the school and into the profession.

Schools must be encouraged to promote the collegiality and the sharing of professional expertise. Induction programs will only succeed where school communities provide stimulating, creative and supportive learning environments. Schools must therefore become learning organizations, where good practice can be observed and emulated. For induction programs to be successful the profession itself must make a giant leap forward and demonstrate its willingness to provide the struc-

tural change, personnel and support services which will be required to provide a nation-wide induction network.

It would be necessary to meet new teachers frequently, to discuss progress and difficulties, to raise issues and to provide them advice and support.

Conclusion

One of the indicators of successful induction into the teaching profession is the individual teacher's ability of problem solving through reflection, problem identification and the systematic exploration and testing of solutions.

Induction should serve to support the newly qualified teachers to become confident and competent in their work as classroom teachers, as members of a teaching staff, and of an educational community.

In many countries which have successfully implemented the induction program in their schools (e.g. the USA, Canada, England, Ireland, Germany, etc.), this practice has shown remarkable results (Cole & McNay, 1989). During the last three years, working as a school psychologist in Latvia, the author of this paper has created and realized the support program "*The ABC of New Teacher*". The program has proved that teachers' experience in groups develops their self-confidence, helps them to learn from each other, creates at least temporary support system and allows them to be more successful at school. Having analyzed the experience and the results of this program's practical implementation, the author recommends the following about the necessity and usefulness of the induction programs in Latvian schools:

The development of a good induction program would contribute greatly to improvement of the quality of teaching force and would promote a greater sense of professionalism among beginning teachers.

A good education program will provide teachers, in their first full year, with the opportunities to apply knowledge and skills acquired during initial training and to master a broad range of new skills, including a deeper understanding of the internal organization of schools, the curriculum and its application to different acidity groups, classroom management skills and system of assessment and reporting.

Clearly, the objective of any such system would be to bridge the gap between the theoretical knowledge base and the reality of daily work in the classroom. It would be reasonable to assume that there is agreement on the need for such a system. The latter, to be successful, should be carefully planned and structured, and will require much consultation and discussion.

It is necessary to accept that both teacher educational institutions and schools should support the newly qualified teachers. Teacher educational institutions would maintain links with the newly qualified teachers by providing additional opportunities for learning to supplement those already provided in the initial training course.

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Teacher Understanding of Knowledge and Knowledge Acquired by Students

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Abstract

Nowadays, when not so much what we know counts but how successfully we use what we know, it is crucial to adopt teaching practices that foster creation of such practical knowledge. It is impossible without a change in deeper understanding teachers have of what knowledge is. This article is grounded in the experience of working at school and at university-college levels and gives a personal interpretation - in the light of theoretical background - of this problem. It links knowledge of the teacher and knowledge of the student and attempts to show that inability or unwillingness of the teacher to respond to changes in educational needs may hamper the development of a personality ready to learn, work and live in the changeable modern society. Study of theoretical sources and work on the article is intended as a preparatory stage for doing a research in the field of knowledge management in education.

Key words: information; knowledge; student; teacher.

Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.
John Dewey

This is the truth to which we as a society often are oblivious; we traditionally look at education and assess its quality in terms of how well it prepares a person for life. If we agree with John Dewey – and with life long learning being an issue, especially nowadays, it is hard not to – then the desire for a very good life and hence also the desire for quality education is natural for anybody, irrespective of one's age, nationality, social background and/or social roles. Failure to satisfy this desire of ours entails a further dissatisfaction with the work or services of those who are accountable for providing this quality life or quality education. We could place the blame on a wide range of persons or institutions, but teachers are the most likely candidates, and not without grounds.

There is a direct link between the body of knowledge the student acquires and the knowledge of the teacher; moreover, the level of teacher knowledge may create a ceiling effect to how much a student can learn. Unfortunately, the situations when the low ceiling or knowledge of the teacher are impediments for student knowledge (it entails also personality growth) are not rare, which is very sad. This sadness is frequently voiced as lack of talented teachers or ill-performing or failing schools or teachers, but possibly the situation with educational quality could be improved by clarifying our - teachers' - understanding of some of the basic concepts of education, the concept of knowledge being a crucial one. Moreover, it is not only a possibility, but also a must since "there is one cardinal rule of change in human condition,

it is that you cannot *make* people change. You cannot force them to think differently or compel them to develop new skills. (...) deeper change in thinking and skills” is a precondition (Fullan, 1993: 23).

With no research done into what teachers understand behind knowledge and the end result of their work, i.e., what they try to teach to their students, it might seem impossible to give any valid account of existing teacher values and beliefs, and hence practices. At the same time the experience of working both at school and university may give grounds for and facilitate the emergence of a *personal theory* (Fish, 1995: 66) or a *personal philosophy* (Connelly and Clandinin cit. in Court, 1991), a personal interpretation of the world of education and knowledge. This article might be an attempt to achieve this, and to do so in the light of theoretical background and with, as it were, a hidden insight into educational problems in Latvia, since this is the context the casually obtained data - food for interpretation - come from.

The present interpretation is expressed in the form of *doubts*. I am allowed to “come out of the closet with doubts about ourselves and what we [educators] are doing” (Fullan, 1993: 13). After all, ‘to doubt is to think,’ has said St Augustine of Hippo, our colleague of the fourth-century North Africa. To start with, we might doubt whether the assumptions teachers have of what knowledge is match the requirements and expectations of this changeable and complex world.

Among the countless attempts to define what knowledge is, basically priority belonged to philosophers and educators. Nowadays, in the midst of an information revolution, knowledge as a philosophical category has extended its field of activity and has even become a buzzword in the management industry as well, which now has its Mr Knowledge, the title given to Professor Mr Nonaka, who was one of the first to argue that “much of a company’s knowledge bank has nothing to do with data [information]” (Berkley, 1997). P.A. Willax in his article refers to the management guru Peter Drucker, who has “asserted that knowledge is not just one resource among traditional, principal factors of production (...) but it is the only meaningful resource” (Willax, 1999). In the abundance of textbooks and information when, “so much knowledge has been available to so many”, it is easy to get confused and even lost; the question posed by T.S. Eliot, “Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?” (Baker, 1994) could be a good start to find a way out.

Knowledge being an end product of education is assessed as to its quality, usually in the form of tests and exams, the tasks and design of which can be regarded as a good indicator of what educators understand behind knowledge. I doubt whether, by and large, it goes much further than the assessment of the acquired or memorised *information*. Avoiding the discussion on the quality of tests and exams, we will concentrate on the teaching or instruction part. ‘Old habits die hard’ – also in T.H. Huxley’s time in England (nineteenth century) students were said to be working ‘to pass, not to know’ (Huxley, 1874). Can we state the opposite about the general situation nowadays, when the major part of knowledge echoes the key instruction methods and is a reproduced and/or memorised knowledge. The conclusion emerging from the debate in education and knowledge theory is that in this situation ‘knowledge’ is not the most appropriate word for it, but just ‘information’. I doubt whether all teachers would approve of this assumption. Besides, teachers cannot restrict themselves to merely transmitting such ‘knowledge from one generation to the next’ (Lefort, 1998) because of one simple reason – even this

kind of knowledge is not static; with every year the world becomes more and more polluted with information, this 'at best worthless garbage' (Sveiby, 1998). The problem we arrive at is that many students concentrate on maximising the size of their knowledge of this kind only to realize that they eventually fail to succeed in studies and real-life situations.

But information *becomes* knowledge if contextualised (Kalniņš, 2003), which entails another assumption that knowledge, even standardised, is not a single body. Interaction of different contexts - personal, historical, local, previously experienced, social, etc. - makes knowledge, which develops from one and the same body of information, different and rich in colour, in its appearances. The great variety of the modes of knowledge and absence of clear boundaries between them might have been one of the reasons for appearance of many new theories on what knowledge is, with a general approach of differentiating between explicit and tacit knowledge (such as theories of Kanaka, I., Sternberg, R.J., Wagner, R.K., Polanyi, M.), where explicit knowledge is the one we traditionally have in textbooks and either teach or acquire, and mostly feel satisfied.

The other component of the knowledge body is tacit knowledge, and the ruling assumption among scholars is that it is the crucial type of knowledge; it is in individual heads and includes also one's practical know-how, values, beliefs, the thought, and is hard to verbalize ('we know more than we can tell' (Polanyi cit. in Court, 1991)). Tacit knowledge is the one through which students (or anybody) differ in how successfully and skilfully they are able to use their explicit knowledge in different contexts. Not rare are cases when a comparatively smaller body of explicit knowledge or memorized information may suffice and produce better results provided the student knows how to use it. Perhaps we even could say that tacit knowledge is this very ability to use or manage our explicit knowledge. The doubts I have are whether a shift of focus in teachers' minds has taken place from working on expansion of students' explicit knowledge to development of their creative and practical knowledge and understanding. Such ignorance may lead to being ill-prepared for life, work, and the very process of education itself not only of students, but also of teachers.

Only by accepting this truth will the whole process of education evolve, or as the beautiful metaphor of David Hargreaves specifies, 'seeds of professional knowledge creation,' (Hargreaves, 1999: 4) will yield crops. Thus it is wise and grounded to expect that interaction of explicit and tacit knowledge of both parties involved in the process of education will create a higher quality knowledge – creative and practical knowledge or intelligence (Sternberg, R. J.); these are the abilities that allow a person to use explicit knowledge creatively under novel conditions. Not only knowledge assessment but also teaching in such situation is a real challenge, and it is important for us as teachers to see and accept this challenge and design the process of education accordingly.

Education has always been about teaching and learning, about a dialogue, relationships between the teacher and the student. Nowadays, with the learner-centred approach to education, the latter 'component' is of a higher importance, though seemingly rather widely ignored by teachers as well as by students themselves. "A lot of students have an amazingly little interest in themselves!" (Kalniņš, 2003). Have little interest in their knowledge!? If what knowledge students acquire depends on how teachers teach it, how students learn also depends on it. Memory

learning and analytical learning are common in our schools while I really doubt the great popularity of a balanced combination of analytical, creative and practical learning. It is the successful application of this 'triarchy' that fosters development of creative and practical *intelligence*, or *abilities*, or *knowledge* (Sternberg, 2003), which eventually allow the student to do well, not only in school, but also in life.

How well they succeed to a very great extent depends on the facilitator of the knowledge creation process - the teacher. But it must be admitted that without accepting the core belief that information and data *are not* knowledge teachers may feel no real need to change their practices, may feel no necessity to lay emphasis, irrespective of the subject they teach, on creative and practical instruction methods. Knowledge of a student feeds on knowledge of a teacher; only if and when the teacher is ready and competent enough to 'change the rules' (Sveiby, 1997) or mental models (Kalniņš, 2003), the student is more likely to at least arrive at or understand them, or even question them, to be able to 'do as never before' (ibid). That it is impossible, I doubt; a positive doubt at last.

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Preschool Education as a Background for Further Coping at School

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Abstract

The role of preschool education and its influence on child's further coping at school has become an important issue, especially in the Nordic and Baltic countries, where the start of compulsory school attendance is relatively late as compared to many other countries and things taking place at preschool stage have not been sufficiently well regulated at national level.

The Framework Curriculum of Preschool Education accentuates teaching activities proceeding from the child, but teachers often have a different understanding of child-centeredness, and give in to the pressure to develop children skills in reading and arithmetics first and foremost. In Estonian families and child care institutions an assumption prevails that in order to achieve a better future one needs to take a maximum effort since the very early childhood. While increasing the tension we actually put our children health at risk, the consequences of which may occur after years.

It has been considered by the Ministry of Education and the Government to introduce compulsory preschool training in order to prepare children for school. It is important to be able to arrive at the stage where every child will be guaranteed an opportunity to receive an appropriate preparation for school.

Key words: child; kindergarten; preschool, development; readiness.

Overview of Estonian Preschool Situation

In the Estonian Republic children start school at the age of seven. The influence of preschool education and its role with children further coping at school has become an important question in the Nordic countries where the compulsory school education starts relatively late compared to many other countries. Although the network of kindergartens is well developed in Estonia, there are presently no national regulations of preparation of children for school. Such preparation might include: 1) enabling each child to participate in preschool preparatory groups before compulsory school attendance and 2) obliging kindergarten and school teachers to collaborate with each other and proceed from the same goals and educational assumptions. The Ministry of Education of the Estonian Republic has initiated a discussion on this topic. What kind of preparation does a child need before starting school? Parents, teachers, education administrators and other involved parties can express their opinion in the press, media, specially organised discussion groups, etc. about what skills and qualities a child starting school should have.

One problematic issue in Estonia concerns parents and kindergartens making an effort to provide pre-school children with the skills of reading and calculating. In

order to achieve this goal, the principles of child-centred pedagogy are preferred. The most important of which appear to be learning through play. Reading drills and calculation skills gradually replace the ways of learning and communicating natural for children. This results in fatigue and school stress of children already in their first years of school and in the growing number of pupils dropping out of the basic school.

Early advance teaching is related to educational stratification at the initial position, which brings about social tension in the small Estonian society. In order to create equal educational opportunities to all children starting school, it is necessary to consider the question: what kind of preparation does current Estonian school expect from a child and what is regarded as important by teachers in the process of preparation for school?

The conditions of child-rearing environment at preschool age can be treated as a microsystem that has specific physical, psychological, social, cognitive and emotional features. These features need to be taken into account when creating a learning environment. At the transfer from kindergarten to school the influences of these two microsystems get integrated. A smoother integration is realized when the zone of child's proximal development is more effectively taken into account (Vygotsky, 1978). Without doubt, the leading role in the management of children's mental and ethical development belongs to the family and childcare institutions. Many parents are not able to provide their children with a rearing environment that would meet contemporary requirements. Such reasons could involve being too busy with their work, socio-economic hardships, etc. The state system of education should offer versatile help in this area and grant every child with an opportunity to receive a proper education.

The Aims of Preparation for School

Researchers of the Tallinn Pedagogical University and Helsinki University have both begun to study questions related to preparation of children for school. It is helpful to compare their objectives and activities. The most important differences they have found are the following:

- accessibility of preschool education for 6-7 years old children. In Finland every child has a right to get, free of charge, advanced tuition for one year prior to the compulsory school attendance. In Estonia a discussion on this topic has been initiated. According to the current version of the draft there is a plan to make it compulsory for all children starting school, although the possibility of making it free has not been mentioned. The voices of parents and teachers can already be heard asking why it has to be compulsory and whether or not all parents are able to pay for it.
- A second difference is the Education Act of Finland, which emphasises the objective of preparation for school as a part of preschool education and promotion of children's learning abilities before entering formal schooling. In the basics of the National Curriculum it has been stressed that the main task of preparation for school lies in creating favourable conditions for the child's growth, development and learning. Physical, psychological, social, cognitive and emotional development of a child is supported and monitored so that potential problems can be prevented. It is important to sustain child's healthy

self-respect through positive learning experiences and to offer opportunities for versatile communication with other people. In preschool groups equal opportunities are granted for children to learn and start school.

The objectives of preschool education in Estonia are similar in many ways to those described above. The difference lies in the fact that the words *self-respect* and *positive learning experience* are missing in the Framework Curriculum for Preschool Education (1999). It does not necessarily mean that these qualities are not taken into account in everyday educational activities. The main difference rests in the emphasis that Estonians try to focus more on concrete skills, whereas Finns concentrate on creating developmental environments for children proceeding from their needs, where learning mainly takes place through play.

The principle of child-centeredness is also considered important in Estonia. The same way as in Finland, Estonian kindergartens promote children's individuality as well as develop their skills of cooperation. Child-centred education is based on honouring individuality and on the ideas of equality between individuals: each child is good in the way he/she is. John Dewey (Dewey, 1963) and Finnish educational scientist Juhani Hytönen (1999, 2002) have most clearly represented this child-centred approach in their pedagogy. According to Finnish researchers (Hytönen & Krokfors, 2002), the principles accentuated by teachers of preschool groups are related to general educational objectives. The highest means of summarized scores (scale 1-5) occur in accepting altruism and differences (4.24) and in self-image and feelings (4.20). Ethical upbringing (4.14) and activities related to physical activity (4.05) are also highly assessed.

Educational Objectives of Kindergarten Teachers

In Tallinn, there is presently a study of educational objectives being conducted concerning kindergarten teachers working with preschool groups. Analysis of the data has not yet been performed, but a questionnaire carried out among approximately 300 teachers showed that the following proportion of the teachers completely agreed with the statements below (scale 1-5):

- Learning in preschool groups is an active process (54.2 percent);
- Within a year children should master letters and numbers (54.5 percent);
- Learning environment reflects teacher's attitude towards learning (57.8 percent);
- In preschool groups children do not realise how they learn (48.7 percent);
- The preschool curriculum promotes learning (59.3 percent);
- Teaching should take place under disguise of play (24.7 percent).

In the assessments given by the kindergarten teachers the objectives of preparation for school are related to achieving specific results that are expected by parents and schools. In their assessments of statements related to learning teachers often appear uncertain, which is expressed by frequent selection of optional answers "I am not sure" or "I more or less agree".

Teachers often find themselves in a difficult position where the National Curriculum for Preschool Education sets rather high requirements for physical, mental and social development of children. The curriculum precisely defines the required skills in certain areas, which teachers interpret as an obligation to achieve these skills

by the time children start school. They often decide that the best way to accomplish these results is to continuously drill the required skills. But if the training and drill is in contradiction with learning styles and learning abilities of respective age, children do not achieve the results prescribed by the curriculum. It should not be forgotten that the skills developed in preparatory groups will be advanced in school. It is not uncommon for the first year program to produce disappointment. However, they learn exactly the same things in kindergarten.

Required Results of Children Starting School

The author will give some examples from the Framework Curriculum for Preschool Education (1999), which defines the required results of children starting school in physical, mental and social development.

Physical development. A child is physically active; follows the rhythm of singing and moving, coordinates his/her movements with other children, coordinates his/her rhythm of movements with the specified rhythm, etc.

Mental development. A child purposefully observes and compares, and distinguishes important facts from unimportant facts. He or she is able to use appropriate words in order to express his/her thoughts, explain situations; give reasons for answers, and observes connections between cause and result. The child knows the names of the most frequently used units of measurement (such as meter, litre, kilogram, kroon (Estonian currency), and cent). He or she knows how these units are used in everyday life and is capable of ordering and grouping objects and phenomena according to size, position and time characteristics.

Social development. Proper social development involves the child behaving according to generally accepted norms of behaviour. He/she is capable of analysing his/her behaviour in comparison to other children. The child can follow relatively complex oral instructions from adults and, when necessary, correct his/her activities. He/she can maintain positive relations with his/her peers, and wish to communicate with adults.

The examples given above demonstrate general expectations of children entering school. It was also shown that these expectations are realised at the same level on different children. When they start school these skills are developed. Therefore, there is no reason to worry if the level in one skill or another is not up to the prescribed standards. It is more important to preserve the child's interest in experiencing the joy of action and learning.

Parents' Engagement

Educational objectives of preparatory groups are realised with active assistance of parents. Preschool teachers can help parents get interested in the development of their children and to not worry about their coping at school. In larger towns of Estonia, especially in the capital city, parents are trying to pre-teach children the programme of the first school year, with the hope of ensuring a better starting position for their children. Although a formal notion of an 'elite school' does not exist in the Estonian educational system, certain so-called 'stronger schools' have emerged throughout the years. Not surprisingly, parents are eager to have their child enter

these schools. Formally school entrance tests are not accepted, but partly due to the pressure from parents, schools have introduced them in order to be able to select the best students. The existence of such school entrance exams have become the cause of great concern among both teachers and parents who worry whether or not their children will be able to enter the school of their choice.

Year after year the number of parents entering their children in these preparatory groups opened at the schools, or those hiring a private tutor, increases. Each year there are more parents who take their children 'to measure their level' at several schools and make their choice among the schools their child has successfully entered. It frequently happens that children are not able to compete with children of the same age and go to school nearest to their home. These children do not necessarily find themselves in a worse position than those who have successfully passed entrance tests. Teachers of regional schools cooperate with the teachers of pre-school groups and each child is especially welcome in the first grade of the school near his/her home. There children meet peers they know from their days in the kindergarten and the environment of their home, which makes their adjustment at school less painful.

Issues Around School Readiness

School entrance tests are not carried out only to guarantee children with better preparation and admittance to more prestigious, competitive schools. The majority of mainstream schools also implement school entrance tests in order to find out about the level of skills and knowledge of children entering the first grade.

Irma Virkunen (Virkunen, 2002) has studied the opinion of school teachers concerning school entrance tests. She interviewed teachers of 43 schools all over Estonia. It appeared that special testing of children was carried out by 26 schools of the 43 questioned. The reason schools give for testing is a need to find out about the level of children. This gives rise to a question: what do teachers gain by this advance testing? The level of skills and knowledge of children quickly becomes clear in the process of teaching, and teachers can rely on this in their work. Dividing children in bright, intermediate and poor even before they have begun school causes stress in both children and their parents. Out of the 43 schools questioned 29 were satisfied with the level of school readiness of children, seven schools were not at all satisfied with school readiness of children and the rest of them did not give a clear assessment. For some reason the school entrance tests are based on checking knowledge related to mother tongue and mathematics, not on psychological and social readiness of a child. Schoolteachers want children to practice the skills of reading and writing, mathematical skills and self-expression at a higher level in the kindergarten. It brings us back to the question of what actually constitutes the essence of school readiness and how we, as educators, can measure it. In the curriculum for the first school year the development of reading skills is considered very important, but it is believed to be quite normal that not all children achieve this skill at a desirable level during the first school year. A child is given time to adjust to the new situation and to arrive at the expected result gradually, step by step. It is essential to maintain child's self-respect and positive attitude towards school. This makes us ask the question: why do children have to be able to do things at school entrance which stand in the programmes for the first school year and what is the teacher going to fill their time

with in the first grade? The objective of such testing should be early identification of children with special needs. Timely intervention and proper assistance should then be provided.

The Estonian system of education tries to avoid including children in special classes, because early 'labelling' can inhibit a child's later chances in life. Sometimes parents think that children get more ready for school when they stay in kindergarten an extra year. It also has been discussed that boys should enter school later than girls, due to the fact their developmental indicators lag behind girls at that age.

Delayed school entrance is clearly more harmful for children from poorer families, because their rearing and learning environment remains unchanged and school readiness will not be achieved by the following year either. Studies (APA, 1985) show that tests may be used to discover medium and more complex special needs. But the tests should not be used in order to prohibit school entrance for some children. The solutions for children with special needs could be:

- placing them in opportunity classes from the very start;
- leaving them in kindergarten for an extra period.

Conclusion

Confusion concerning assessing school readiness is not characteristic of Estonia only but also of many other countries. Various definitions suggest at least three groups of children who face the risk of not succeeding at school:

- 1) shortcomings in social skills;
- 2) mental disorders;
- 3) cultural restrictions (e.g. mother tongue different from that used at school).

Estonian educational circles have begun to give more thought to how to make the objectives defined by the Framework Curriculum for Preschool Education reach every child at the school starting age, because it has such a crucial influence on the further education of a child.

This article has reflected some aspects of discussion on Estonian preschool education. We are continuing the research examining the effectiveness of preschool education and the transition from preschool to school.

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Intellectual, Linguistic and Social Development in Early Childhood

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Abstract

The **aim** of the study was to compare and find relations between intellectual, linguistic, social development and creativity of children participating in the longitudinal study, children in regular pre-school and *Step by Step* program groups. **Methodology:** Three groups participated in the study: longitudinally tested children (N=180), 88 children from *Step by Step* groups and a control group of 115 children. We used Wechsler's test (WPPSI-R) for measuring three to five years old children's intelligence. When children were five years old, we used the test on social skills, a questionnaire *I as a parent and educator* and Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking. All children were tested individually. **Results:** Children participating in the longitudinal research have higher IQ, better motor and verbal abilities than other children in the research. The dynamics of the development is uneven. There are no significant differences in the developmental indicators of three and four years old children, results of the five years old are significantly higher compared with other age groups. Intelligent children are more creative and have better social skills.

Key words: early childhood; children; intellect; language; creativity; development.

Questions about a correlation between educational environment and person's intelligence still interest scientists. It seems that in Estonia parents hold two main assumptions: one group of parents strongly support the child's progress, constantly looking for new opportunities to develop their child, the second group of parents tries to allay other parents by telling that children will develop anyway. What do scientists say?

Torrance (1998) describes the changes in a family and especially in parent-child relationships in connection with modernisation. The family has lost its productive function. Children are not given birth to in order to reproduce. The family has also lost a significant part of its educational functions, as since 60s more children have attended school for a longer period. An educational institution – a pre-school or a school has taken over educational functions. Today due to economic conditions more and more parents send their infants to nurseries. As mothers return to work earlier, their role in child's education decreases. This gap is filled in by the pre-school curriculum. Modernisation has also some positive facets. It has strengthened the emotional role of family. Parent-child relationship is deeply influenced by the decision to have a child. As having a child becomes more and more planned and in many cases postponed, the love, emotional satisfaction and interpersonal influence

become important key words in parent-child relationship. Child's achievements are important for parents.

Due to modernisation family's expectations are controversial today. Parents expect to have an affectionate relationship with their long-awaited child. While staying at home it is important to enjoy the time spent together. Parents take "time out" to enjoy their new role, experience love and just spend time together. However, very soon the expectations of society toward the child start to influence the parents. The child has to become a successful, competitive and highly educated person with a high social status. On the one hand parents enjoy seeing their children grow, on the other hand they feel obliged to teach children more. Here the questions arise: What more to do with my child? What should I teach to my child at this age?

According to Geary's (2002) social competition theory, parents play an important role in what the child will be in the future. When humans started to dominate over other species, they became the biggest competitors of their species. In order to achieve success, social groups based on kinship were formed. These groups competed with other groups. Due to competition between and inside these groups, people started to think and solve social problems. Parents do not only satisfy children's basic needs, but they also prepare their children for social competition, passing on their social and intellectual skills. One of many things that people compete for is a social status.

Parents are very sensitive to their child's social status. Social status is like a key to a better and happier future. By offering better education to their children parents guarantee better job opportunities and salary for the child, this, in return, gives the child a higher social status in society. This is also one of the reasons why intelligence is still considered one of the most important components of child's life. A child with higher IQ scores copes better at school, this, in return, guarantees better education to a child. Children need parents. Parents train, educate and show how to compete in a society. This has been defined by evolution.

Caldwell & Bradley (1979) consider most important the ways parents organise physical environment at home and communicate with children. Both, physical environment (books and other study materials at home) as well as social environment (child-parent common activities) influence child's development. Researches also consider an emotional aspect of the home environment important.

Home can be an ideal developmental environment, with being and acting together as key words, where people enjoy each other, where a parent knows and wants to be with his/her child, where teaching-learning process involves emotional satisfaction as well as acquired skills and facts. If being and acting together is emotionally satisfactory, the child most likely learns more.

Fagan (2000) is of the opinion that intelligence means an ability to process information, not what has been taught to the child. IQ score is based on the amount of knowledge a child has as compared to the knowledge of his/her peers. Based on Fagan, intelligence is a process of processing information and this process can be measured by elementary cognitive tasks. Our knowledge depends on our information processing skills and on experience our culture has provided us with.

According to Gail (2002), each gifted child should be approached individually. There are no universal programmes for teaching gifted children. Even if these existed they would be of no use as talent can vary a lot. The researcher gives an example, where children were chosen into a programme according to their reading

skills. But many very gifted children can't read before school. At the same time Gail (2002) thinks that the amount of material to be taught to gifted children is not so important; the important thing is to find the best teacher. Besides satisfying children's needs for new knowledge as well as their curiosity and academic needs, it will also be important to pay attention to other needs.

The **aim** of the present research was to find out how the development of intelligence of three, four and five years old children participating in longitudinal research depends on their educational environment, what is the dynamics of the development in the course of three years and how intelligence relates to giftedness, creativity and social development. As the **research hypotheses** we assumed that 1) children participating in the longitudinal study are more intelligent than children in ordinary pre-school or Step-by-Step groups; 2) intelligence quotient of children in the longitudinal research is increasing year after year; 3) children who are more intelligent are also more creative and socially better developed.

Method

The sample

Three groups of children participated in the study: 180 children who had been participating in the longitudinal research since 1996, 115 children in ordinary pre-school groups, who work according to the traditional preschool program, and 88 children in Step-by-Step pre-school groups, who work accordingly to activity centres principles.

The instruments

Wechsler Pre-school and Primary Scale of Intelligence (1990), Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (1974), test on social skills and a questionnaire *I as a parent and educator* (developed by M. Laane and M. Veisson) were applied in the sample groups.

Procedures

Wechsler's test was carried out individually with the same children at the age of three, four and five. Torrance Test of Creative Thinking, social skills test, also the questionnaire was carried out when children turned five.

Results

The study showed that the intelligence quotient of three and four years old children was almost the same (respectively 116 and 114). The intelligence quotient of five years old was significantly higher (IQ 126). Five years old children showed also significantly higher results on the motor scale and verbal scale.

The comparison between longitudinal research group and ordinary pre-school group children's IQ shows that children in the longitudinal research group show significantly better results (see Figure 1). We can also claim that children in the longitudinal research group have significantly higher results than the children in the Step-by-Step groups. There were no significant differences between the results of the children in the Step-by-Step and ordinary pre-school groups. This shows that children in the longitudinal research group have significantly higher IQ than children in other groups.

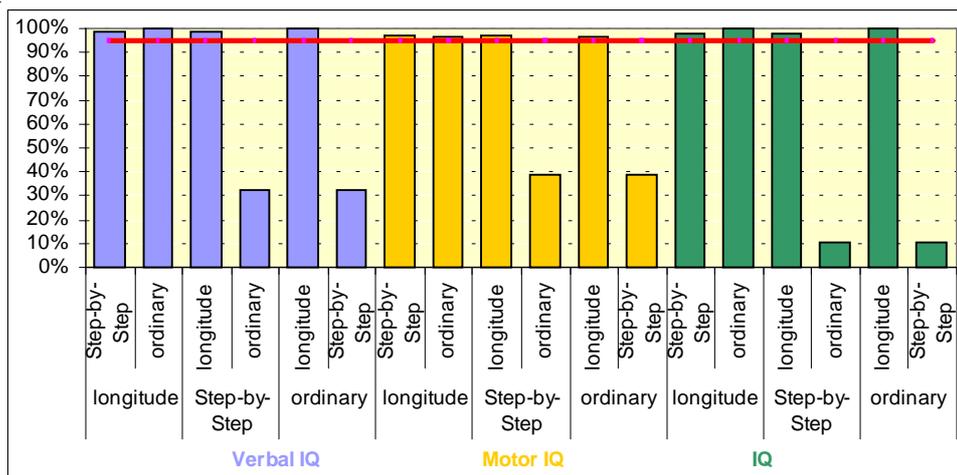


Figure 1. Differences in verbal, motor and general IQ comparatively in longitude research, Step-by-Step and ordinary pre-school groups

Analogous results were received regarding the verbal and motor skills. So we can say that children in the longitudinal research group have higher verbal and motor IQ than children in the ordinary or Step-by-Step groups. Children in the longitudinal research group showed better results than children in the Step-by-Step groups in several sub-tests: puzzle, information tasks, arithmetic, picture completion and similarity tasks.

Significant correlation was found between intelligence and verbal scale scores ($r=.897, p<.001$). Also the correlation between general intelligence and motor scale results was high ($r=.831, p<.001$). There is also a significant correlation between verbal and motor scale results ($r=.586, p<.001$).

The study also analysed the correlation between the general intelligence, verbal and motor intelligence and originality, speed and completion of thinking. The analysis shows that there is a significantly high correlation between general intelligence and originality of thinking ($r=.414, p=.015$). There was a significant correlation between verbal IQ and thinking originality ($r=.354, p=.04$) and motor IQ and thinking originality ($r=.356, p=.039$). Mental speed and completion does not correlate with different IQ indicators.

Children's intelligence quotient correlated with parents' level of education: the higher the level of education of parents, the higher the children's IQ, verbal abilities and motor abilities. Children's high intelligence also correlated with reading books and stories. Based on parents' opinion there was also significant correlation between children's high intelligence and their good verbal self-expression. Furthermore, children with higher intelligence have better skills in mathematics, better attention and concentration abilities. Good verbal expression correlates with attention and concentration abilities, social skills and intra-psychological abilities. Children with good musical skills have at the same time high attention and concentration abilities, they show good results in manual activities. Based on parents' opinions, reading books and stories lays a foundation for the abilities to differentiate between good and evil in the future. Grandmother's presence in the family correlates with better social skills ($p=.019$).

The research showed that children in towns have higher IQ, verbal and motor skills than children in rural areas. Children in towns also read more, but children in rural areas have better imagination. Parents think that both favourable educational environment and well-targeted development of children are important in the development of abilities.

Comparing the results between boys and girls, we can claim that girls have better motor skills and higher IQ than boys (see Figure 2).

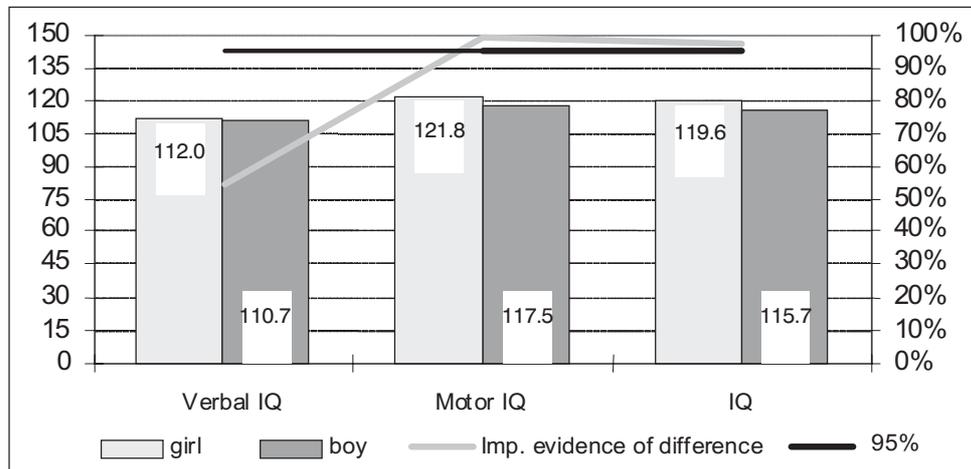


Figure 2. Verbal, motor and general IQ

Discussion

In conclusion, we can say that the first hypothesis was proved. Children participating in the longitudinal research have higher IQ, better motor and verbal abilities than other children in the research. The dynamics of the development is uneven. There are no significant differences in the developmental indicators of three and four years old children, results of the five years old are significantly higher compared with other age groups. So we can say that the second hypothesis was not proved. Since we found that intelligent children are more creative and have better social skills, so the third hypothesis was proved.

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