

Mitja Krajncan (Ed.)

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Preface

The power of educational novelties is certainly in their eclecticism. The integration of multiple disciplines represents a scientific challenge and simultaneously a tension in finding a balance between science, society and the subtle areas of learning and teaching.

The monograph *Educational Sciences in Postmodernity* is a presentation of scientific works of researchers at the University of Primorska, Faculty of Education. It represents a variegated walk through novelties in the area of educational sciences.

Thus the first paper analyses the development of geometric concepts. The development of concepts is, then, a process of abstraction and generalisation. Recently a number of models have been designed on the basis of these theories around the world. It is important these theories are both cognitive psychological as well as didactical: they offer a model for developing certain cognitive schemes and depending on the structure of these schemes teachers can organise the learning process in their math classes.

The next article presents the significance of participation in educational work. It presents the founding element of social pedagogic orientation into individual's lifeworld and means opening various opportunities for developing social skills, building identity, acquiring self-confidence, self-awareness, developing pro-social behaviour, potential for cooperation, co-organisation, and empowerment of the individual.

Further we are dealing with the analysis of pedagogical skills in conjunction with the attitudes of the professional staff towards gifted pupils. We highlight more specifically the results of the survey that point to the following topics: inadequately informed education staff in the field of detection and work with talented students; poor self-assessment skills of teachers in the field of knowing personality characteristics of gifted and appropriate use of teaching strategies in dealing with them; great need of teachers for further education and professional training.

The next area deals with the field of blind and partially sighted through example of cross-curricular integration in teaching blind and partially sighted children with the objective to create in students comprehensive, more understandable, and more useful knowledge that would serve them in their further work and teaching in inclusive classes.

With the next contribution we wish to shed light on preschool teachers' planning of work in endeavours towards elements of quality. We have analysed elements of preschool teachers' preparation, with special attention being paid to the format and use of the objectives in the preparations themselves. Stating the analysed elements of preparation allows preschool teachers quality work and evaluation, which forms the basis for further planning and provision of quality educational activities in preschool.

Presenting interventions in the development of giftedness the authors point to three basic reasons (motives) for dealing with the phenomenon of giftedness: enriching the syllabus (the curriculum), grouping according to abilities, and school acceleration.

Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of children with special needs. Outcomes of research study emphasise teachers in Slovenia estimate they have little knowledge or are poorly qualified for inclusion; in subject teachers' ratings the two dimensions scored pronouncedly low. Teachers do, however, have positive attitudes to inclusion and with the aim of implementing it they are ready to change their ways of work.

Adapting physical environment of learning space for inclusive education presents further research in the field. The results presented according to external and internal physical learning space for various needs of children and pupils indicate open and flexible learning space, adequate lighting and colours, flexible furniture, information and communication technologies, animals and plants inside and outside schools, and playgrounds with adapted playground equipment are what has been found to be the most important.

Occupational/career choices of persons with special needs are the next topic. Results have indicated there has been a shift in the thinking in the direction in the treatment of persons with special needs it is necessary to bet on their priority personality traits – the strengths, even though disorder and illness still play an important role in decision-making, especially in rural schools, where the idea of inclusion and integration has been less noticeable.

In the article the authors highlight the significance of recognising and managing stressful situations that appear as the consequence of circumstances and working conditions at workplace. In parallel they also present the impact of work stress on the professional development of individuals, specifying both positive and negative consequences and explaining both positive (eustress) and negative stress (distress). The key findings of the study are that the majority of respondents perceived the role of responsibility and the nature of the

work itself as a potential source of stress, while family in conjunction with work is also a very important factor or stressor.

The last contribution presents the ways in which a class teacher and other teachers who teach the class can contribute to the development of class community. First we present the principles of forming the class as a community and the factors that affect this, developing a positive classroom climate, on which the cohesion of the pupils in the class depends to a large extent, being presented more in detail.

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Abstract

The article deals with teaching of geometrical concepts in primary school. Geometry is considered to be very abstract, and therefore difficult to be taught. Teachers usually explain the geometrical concepts in a very abstract and formal way, thus pupils have difficulties in understanding. In maths classes pupils should acquire knowledge of concepts and symbols, develop the related skills and get acquainted with strategies. It is meant that in learning geometric shapes (for example the square, the triangle, the circle), they must first be able to distinguish shapes, to then assimilate new concepts. Shaping concepts means understanding, differentiating and identifying the common characteristics of things or phenomena.

Key words: *Geometry, geometric concept, theoretical and empirical concepts, van Hiele theory of development of geometric representations*