

УНИВЕРЗИТЕТ „ГОЦЕ ДЕЛЧЕВ“ – ШТИП  
ФАКУЛТЕТ ЗА ОБРАЗОВНИ НАУКИ  
UNIVERSITY “GOCE DELCEV” SHTRIP  
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES



**ОБРАЗОВАНИЕТО ВО XXI ВЕК  
– СОСТОЈБИ И ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ –**

**МЕЃУНАРОДНА  
НАУЧНА КОНФЕРЕНЦИЈА  
– ЗБОРНИК НА ТРУДОВИ –**

**EDUCATION IN XXI CENTURY  
– CONDITIONS AND PERSPECTIVES –**

**INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC  
CONFERENCE  
– PROCEEDING BOOK –**

Штип, 24 – 25 Септември, 2015  
Shtip, September, 24-25, 2015

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## LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, DEAR GUESTS!

With great honor and pleasure I welcome You on behalf of all teachers, associates, employees and students of the Faculty of Educational Sciences at the University "Gotse Delchev" in Shtip and I wish You pleasant moments during this solemn event organized to mark 20 years of university education of teachers.

But in fact, the Faculty of Educational Sciences basis its twenty years of existence on 146 year continuous development of formal education of teachers and preschool teachers in the region. The achievements of the Pedagogical-Seminary school founded in 1869, the existence of which is linked to the name of the creator of the first primer and the first textbook for teachers - School Pedagogy - Josif Kovachev, and to the name of the great teacher Gotse Delchev, followed by the School for Teachers established in 1946, Higher Pedagogical School founded in 1959, and the Pedagogical Academy (1961) are woven into the tradition and development of our Faculty.



In 1995 the two-year formal education of teachers and preschool teachers developed into four-year university studies.

In 2007 the Pedagogical Faculty became part of the State University "Goce Delchev" in Shtip, said to be the fastest growing university in Macedonia.

Following the global trends in teacher education, modern trends in education policymaking in Europe and in the world, respecting the knowledge of the history of civilizations as an important intellectual resource for social development, as well as scientifically and experientially diagnosed educational challenges that have emerged as a result of deep changes of values in our society and globalization trends (scientific, educational, technological, and economic) the Faculty of Educational Sciences has designed study programs for I, II and III cycle of studies in accordance with the organizational - pedagogical quality standards in compliance with the principles of the Bologna Declaration and European credit-transfer system with a high level of recognition in the area of European Higher Education.

If 20 years ago our Faculty started to implement teaching with 5 PhDs and 3 masters as regular employees, today we can proudly say that our academic community is comprised of 20 PhDs and one master.

Today our students have the opportunity to educate themselves at the faculty which sees its future as a continuous development aimed at:

- Strengthening and expanding international partnerships
- Popularization of mobility of students and staff,
- Internationalization and improvement of scientific research work,
- Improvement of pedagogical approaches to teaching and links with practice, putting students at the center of the educational process.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I take this opportunity to thank you for coming today to celebrate with us the teaching profession and our contribution to it.

We are quite aware that the road to success is long and winding and it is easier to travel with joint forces. That is why we wanted to mark this celebration by organizing a scientific conference dedicated to education in the 21st century. Let us share our knowledge, understanding and experiences regarding the situation and perspectives and suggest possible ways of modernization. 89 papers have been submitted and there are authors from 8 countries. This is really promising!

Once again, I wish you all a warm welcome and successful work.

Dean,  
Prof. d-r Sonja Petrovska  
24. 09. 2015., Stip

**ПОЧИТУВАНИ ...**

Со голема чест и задоволство, Ве поздравам во името на сите наставници, соработници, вработени и студенти на Факултетот за образовни науки при Универзитетот Гоце Делчев во Штип и Ви посакувам пријатни моменти во текот на оваа свечена манифестација организирана по повод 20 годишно факултетско образование на наставници и воспитувачи.

Факултетот за образовни науки своето постоење го темели на 146 годишниот континуиран развој на формалното образование на наставници и воспитувачи на овие простори. Во традицијата и развојот на нашиот факултет се вткаени достигнувањата на Педагошко-богословското училиште основано во 1869 год. Со чие постоење се врзува името на творецот на првиот буквар и првиот учебник за наставници – Школска педагогија – Јосиф Ковачев, и името на големиот учител Гоце Делчев, па Учителската школа основана во 1946 год, Вишата педагошка школа формирана во 1959 год, Педагошката академија (1961 год.).

Во 1995 година формалното двегодишно образование на наставници и воспитувачи прераснува во четиригодишно факултетско образование.

Во 2007 година Педагошкиот факултет стана дел на државниот Универзитет „Гоце Делчев“ во Штип, кој го носи епитетот најбрзорастечки Универзитет во Р Македонија.

Следејќи ги глобалните тенденции во образованието на наставници, современите тенденции во креирањето на образовните политики во Европа и во Светот, респектирајќи ги знаењата за историјата на цивилизациите како значаен интелектуален ресурс за општествениот развој, како и научно и искусствено дијагностицираните воспитни предизвици кои се појавија како резултат на длабоките вредносни промени во нашето општество и глобализациските тенденции (научни, образовни, техничко-технолошки, економски) ФОН дизајнираше студиски програми за I, II и III циклус на студии согласно организациско –

педагошки стандарди за квалитет, согласно принципите на Болоњската декларација и Европскиот кредит-трансфер систем, со високо ниво на препознатливост во Европскиот високообразовен простор.

Ако пред 20 години нашиот факултет започна да ја реализира наставата и вежбите со 5 доктори на науки и 3 магистри, како редовно вработени, денес со гордост можеме да кажеме дека оваа академска заедница ја сочинуваат 20 доктори на науки и 1 магистер.

Денес нашите студенти имаат можност да се образуваат на факултет кој својата иднина ја гледа како континуиран развој во насока на:

- зајакнување и проширување на меѓународните партнерства,
- омасовување на мобилноста на студентите и на вработените,
- интернационализација и подобрување на научно-истражувачката работа,
- унапредување на педагошките пристапи во наставата и врските со практиката, поставувајќи ги студентите во центарот на образовниот процес.

#### **Почитувани присутни,**

Ја користам оваа прилика, да ви се заблагодарам што дојдовте денес заеднички да го чествуваме учителското дело и нашиот придонес во него.

Ние сме сосема свесни дека патот до успехот е долг и кривулест но и дека полесно се патува со заеднички сили. Затоа ова наше празнување сакавме да го одбележиме со Научна конференција посветена на образованието во 21 век, да ги споделиме нашите знаења, разбирања и искуства во врска со состојбите и перспективите како и да предложиме можни начини за негово осовременување.

Уште еднаш, На сите Ви посакувам топло добредојде и успешна работа!

Декан,

Проф. д-р Соња Петровска

24. 09. 2015. година Штип



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## THE ISSUE OF RESPECTING THE DEVELOPMENTAL POSSIBILITIES AND ACTIVITY-PLANNING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

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### Abstract

*Following and respecting the developmental characteristics of the child represents a tendency which is becoming more and more visible in contemporary pedagogical practices. Since the differences in the possibilities for children can show great amplitude, i.e. they can be found significantly below or above the medium values, it is extremely unacceptable for the educator to have the same approach towards all the individuals. For this reason, the educational system must be differentiated, not as much in the size and complexity of the content as in the help for the planned activities to be successfully done.*

*The subject of research in this work regards the respect to the individual developmental possibilities of the children from 3 to 5,8 years, as a basis for activity-planning. The methods and techniques that were applied are: the method of analysis, the inductive, descriptive and the method of generalization, as well as the techniques of analysis of pedagogical documentation, observation and surveying. Self-research includes the following tasks: respecting the categorization of the childhood development, the manner of applying the differentiated approach in the realization of the activities, and the needs and possibilities for planning activities based on the developmental abilities of the children.*

*On the basis of the received results, it can be concluded that: The program for early childhood development respects the developmental characteristics of the children; The educator notices and respects the developmental characteristics of the children in their group; There is a need for additional professional competences for the educators regarding the planning of activities based on the developmental characteristics of the children.*

**Keywords:** *Developmental possibilities, Respecting, Activity-planning, Early childhood development*

### Introduction

Preschool education is constantly faced with new challenges that have attempted to give the everyday practice a contemporary mark. In this sense, contemporary planning and the manner in which the educational process is realized are showing growing respect towards children's characteristics.

It is understandable that such an environment is visible in our context as well, especially in regards to the more modern trends of contemporary approaches, which firstly influence the conceptual ideology of preschool education, having further links to the program sequencing. These changes, which will be analyzed in the following sections, set the foundations for reforming what is already visible as an outcome in practical work.

The most recent national documents for preschool education in the Republic of Macedonia have broadened the set limits of the image of the development of a child of preschool age, through promotion and sharing international experiences in a national context. In such a sense, there has been an increasing number of discussions about early childhood development, which is included in the National Developmental Plan of the Republic of Macedonia for the period between 2008 and 2013, and in its framework for improved education for all, early childhood development for children of preschool age is incorporated. Hence, in order to follow the development of children of preschool age, both the drawing up and implementation of the Standards for Early Learning and Development for this age group have been undertaken<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> *Standards for Early Learning and Development of Children Aged Between 0 and 6 Years.* (2009: 7).

The national legislation in R. Macedonia (Law for Protection of Children) defines early childhood development as preschool education that covers not only childcare measures, but also measures and activities for health promotion and improvement of one's intellectual, emotional, physical, and social development. Childcare and education of children of preschool age is conducted in kindergartens, while for those children that are not included in these institutions there are also possibilities for organizing other extra-institutionalized forms<sup>1</sup>.



The National Program for Development of Education in R. Macedonia is focused as well on providing control over the quality of the educational through the Ministry of Education and Science, which is taking measures for permanent control over the quality of the educational system in R. Macedonia<sup>2</sup>.

The legal documents represent a proper foundation for practical realization of the set ideas. What follows is a theoretical analysis of how much the program approaches respect the developmental characteristics of the children of preschool age, as well as the practical experiences of kindergarten educators in regards to this issue.

#### **Program Approaches and Respecting the Developmental Characteristics of Kindergartens**

The preschool education in R. Macedonia, on the basis of its program setting, determines the direction and approach in the organization of the didactic-methodic articulation of the activities and of the educational process in general. In theory there are several types of approaches in the planning of the educational process, but it should be stated that the thematic approach to planning represents the most acceptable and most frequently applied approach in the organization and realization of the program contents in this sub-system. Its main characteristic regards organizing topics and further logical branching of sub-topics, contents, and activities. It seems that such a setting largely builds upon the monthly, weekly, and daily plannings of the educators, and in that direction it allows for a temporal and didactic-methodic compatibility.

The numerous scientific research show that thematic planning in all of its aspects leads towards coverage of topics in a wider horizontal range, but what has been seen through practical experiences is the lack of vertical articulation, which would enable a more through analysis of the topic. It is precisely this reality that in fact is characteristic of thematic planning, thus leading towards the tendency of overcoming this disadvantage.

As a kind of possibility and step forward in the planning, the integrated approach appears, which consists of integrating several program areas in the realization of the planned activities. This approach is based on the activities, as well as the goals that we want to achieve, and it is developing in a broad range of inclusion of almost all the program areas, through which the problem will be analyzed from every angle. Integrated planning is also known as work on projects in which several children are included, while the activity is realized from several aspects, without decisive emphasis of one or another program area.

Nevertheless, the contemporary tendency of planning of the educational activities in the preschool period on a global level refers to the holistic approach, which is slowly entering our educational system as well. This approach overcomes the weaknesses of the integrated approach in the direction of more in-depth analysis of a concrete problem situation, or topic, which includes all of the program areas. If the integrated approach studies issues which cover several program areas, then the holistic approach means the inclusion of all of the program areas and their incorporation in a deeper study of a given content.

The holistic approach, as a philosophical-educational orientation, is based on the premise that every individual finds their own identity, meaning, and intention in life connected to society, nature, and values. This approach stresses the intrinsic respect towards learning, teaching, and life in kindergarten in general.

<sup>1</sup> Official Gazette of R. Macedonia 98/2000.

<sup>2</sup> *National Program for Development of Education in R. Macedonia 2005-2015 with Accompanying Program Documents.* (2006).

The concept of a holistically-oriented pedagogy refers to the idea that all of the aspects of the development of an individual can be covered and can't be developed in separation from some of its components or parts. The holistic way of action attempts to fully determine and connect the functioning of the separate parts, while at the same time to cover and integrate the multiple levels of meaning and experience of every child.

The existing literature mentions several possibilities for implementation of the holistic approach, defined as key aspects of education based on the holistic approach:

1. Learning is natural, necessary, experimental, and based on cooperation;
2. There is a need for a strong feeling of community and engagement among the children, parents, educators, and their care for each other.
3. There should be respect for the child's internal world through methods that overcome the outer environment of competition and reach possibilities for deeper questions about the meaning of life and learning;
4. There are connections to everything that nature has given, starting from the child's nature, natural materials, resources, the way in which nature functions; incorporated THROUGH the curriculum.

The holistic approach and its implementation in kindergartens doesn't merely mean dividing the program contents. In addition, it should be noted that the holistic approach DOES NOT include the program. In fact it makes the program visible in its own way and creates a connection between the program and practice. As a specific approach, holism has its own variants and it cannot be unified or fully defined in a written or systematized form, since it is the personal mark of every educator, group, and kindergarten as well. It represents the manner in which every educator experiences the life in preschool institutions.

Learning and development as part of life in kindergartens would be integrated through:

- Tasks, activities, context that is meaningful for the child, inclusion of practices and activities that are not always associated to the word 'program', for example a routine of care, meals, etc.;
- Possibilities for started and not fully finished explanations and games, without inconsistencies;
- Intensive and warm relations of mutual connections;
- Recognizing the spiritual, i.e. the idealistic dimension of child life in a cultural, social, and individual manner.

The actual implementation of the holistic approach in practice is faced with the imperative regarding the development of "a complete child", and it should represent a significant challenge for every educator. The program for preschool education should especially reflect the holistic way of learning and development of every child. What is particularly important is the need for the holistic approach to reflect the practice of the child's full context, and in this sense the cognitive, social, cultural, physical, and emotional dimension of the development of their personality are represented in an integrated manner. The holistic view of learning and teaching see the child as a person that wants to learn, so the wholeness is reflected as a better way than some other individual experiences.

This interpretation of the three types of approaches provides an excellent base for incorporating the developmental characteristics of the children and the planning of the content realization.

### **Respecting the Developmental Characteristics of Children in Everyday Practice - Experiences**

The everyday practices in preschool education are a rich source of findings that can correct the theory, but they also represent everything that is introduced in practice as a novelty. Thus, for the purpose of this work we interviewed 105 educators from kindergartens all over the country. We gained significant data and insights related to their planning, but more so to the realization of the activities with the children. The results from the research were further qualitatively analyzed.

All of the participants have graduated either from the Faculty of Philosophy (Institute of Pedagogy) or any of the Faculties of Pedagogy throughout the country. Their work experience, however, was different, but the largest part of them have 10 to 20 years of experience.

We had discussions with the educators on several topics, such as:

What types of planning do you apply in your kindergarten - which was answered as:

- Yearly planning,
- Monthly planning,



- Daily planning,
- Having the largest experience in Thematic planning.

What is the starting point in your planning - which was answered as:

- The program,
- The children,
- The developmental characteristics of the children

When we asked the educators if there is any difference in the developmental characteristics of the children in the group they are working with at the moment, all of them agreed that:

There are differences in the developmental characteristics of the children, which are mainly caused by their age (a difference in months, yet significant), the social structure of the family, the education of their parents, the psycho-physical differences between the children, etc.

Regarding the question as to how they determine the developmental characteristics of each child, the educators mainly answered in the following way:

They are determined by observation of each child through their everyday activities, games, speech in formal and informal communication, drawings, etc.

Concerning the question as to whether they respect the developmental characteristics of the children in the planning of the educational process, we gained knowledge into the fact that when planning they are always led by the developmental characteristics of the children, so they base their planning on the program for early childhood development.

Connected to the manner in which they include the children's developmental characteristics in the process of planning, they listed the following:

- Content,
- Discussions,
- Games,
- Activities,
- Poems,
- Other texts,
- Children's interests, possibilities, and needs.

For the next question related to the realization of the educational process and the respect towards the children's developmental characteristics, the educators clarified that they have been having problems in this specific aspect, primarily because of the large number of children in a group. In fact it is this aspect of large groups that incapacitates the practical realization of the planned out contents and activities.

Such an analysis provides a complete image of the possibilities to respect the children's individual differences in regards to a specific level of development. It can be concluded that there exists, on the one hand, a theoretical basis, program possibility, and aspiration on the educators' side, but on the other hand, there are existing factors such as space, resources, number, and time, which disable their full completion.

### **Conclusion**

In the Republic of Macedonia attempts have been made to incorporate this approach in standard educational practice. The analysis of all of the more important official written documents regarding preschool education provide a basis for organizing this sub-system, based on the developmental characteristics of children. The document on the standards for early learning and development of children aged between 0 and 6 years<sup>1</sup>, as a key document, promotes the holistic approach and respect towards development. But it should still be emphasized that this document offers only one conceptual framework, which represents the direction of every educator, who on the basis of the holistic approach in planning, will tend to achieve the set standards through each child's individual maximum.

The latest document, i.e. the program for work in kindergartens, is based on the standards and should follow the same concept that allows for programming the educational work in regards to the holistic principles.

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<sup>1</sup> *Standards for Early Learning and Development of Children Aged Between 0 and 6 Years.* (2009).

Finally, after so many years a structurally formal change is offered in preschool education, which is founded on an idea, a concept, and a goal. The attempts for reform, structured in such a way, provide a contemporary scientific-theoretical placement of preschool education, whose appropriate practical implementation might take a longer period for adaptation and acceptance of the part that links the theory with the practice, and such is the process of planning, the role of the educators, and their readiness to implement this idea in its true sense.

This is precisely the reason why clear, concrete, and complete directions are needed for finding possible practical solutions for this issue, which when specified will become the professional education of the existing and future educators.

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