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Teachers' Practice of Formative Assessment in Secondary Schools: Discussion for Insight

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Abstract:
Formative assessment nowadays is a topicality in all levels of education including formal and informal education. The origins of the formative assessment can be found in school education. This article describes results of the focus group discussion about formative assessment in secondary schools. Eight participants represented schools from different areas of Latvia. The conclusion made during the discussion is that formative assessment is being seldom used in teacher practice.
Keywords: formative assessment, feedback, peer assessment, self-assessment, secondary education.

Introduction

In this century, the paradigm shift in education is topicality in the majority of publications. Movement from reproductive to productive learning, from behaviorism to constructivism, from teacher-centred to learner-centred, from teaching to learning facilitation, from content-based evaluation to outcomes-based assessment is the attribute of the new paradigm (Brown, 2005).

This study about teachers and formative assessment in secondary schools is empirical research as a part of wider research about formative assessment in the study process related to practice in higher education. Students enter the tertiary level of education after completing secondary schools. From the experience of lecturers in different universities, it has been found (Jurāne-Brēmane, 2014) that students are not familiar with activities related to formative assessment, they are oriented to marks, scores or levels.

Secondary education is the previous step of tertiary education. Acts of legislation related to secondary education are more organized, determined, concrete than tertiary education; there is more autonomy in universities and others institutions of higher education. And the same is about teacher training - the requirements of lecturers in higher educational institutions for pedagogical education are rather liberal, but regulations about education and professional development of teachers in schools are quite strict.

Therefore, the assumption was that teachers as professional educators use methods for promotion of learning in the context of learning paradigm. It is the aim of this study to explore what is the formative assessment practice in secondary schools.

Theoretical pillars

Description of theoretical pillars can be started with insight into roots of formative assessment in short. B.Bloom has been one of the initiators of discussion about formative assessment claiming that evaluation influences were learning and motivation (Bloom et al., 1971). L.Vygotsky helped from the perspective of constructivism with the idea about scaffolding in the learning process (Vygotsky, 1978).

Next important step - Assessment reform group (ARG, 2002) in the United Kingdom declaring ten argued principles of assessment for learning:
1) is part of effective planning;
2) focuses on how students learn;

3) is central to classroom practice;
4) is an essential professional skill;
5) is sensitive and constructive;
6) fosters motivation;
7) promotes understanding of goals and criteria;
8) helps learners know how to improve;
9) develops the capacity for self-assessment;
10) recognizes all educational achievement.

Those principles are initiated from researches and ideas of P.Black and D.Wiliam about raising students achievement by formative assessment (Black & Wiliam, 1998). It should be noted that these and the rest of the studies have been related and addressed to the subject of schools and teachers.

Finally, this century started with the idea of formative assessment in higher education. M.Yorke analyzed theory and pedagogic practice of the formative assessment tertiary level of education (Yorke, 2003). Currently, the theoretical background of formative assessment is sufficient for all levels of education.

There is a lot of definitions of what formative assessment is. Feedback, peer assessment, and self-assessment are basic attributes for formative assessment (Black, Wiliam, 2003; Yorke, 2003). As mentioned by M.Yorke, comments and commentaries could help formative assessment to become more of a supportive through intervention on the student's cognition regarding the outcomes of student's work, even if severe [well-grounded] criticisms of the work have to be made (Yorke, 2003).

Known assessment criteria are the basis in self-assessment for students independently to judge the quality of their work, similar to peer assessment students judge works of their peers (Falchikov, 2003). D.J. Nicol and D. Macfarlane-Dick indicate that tertiary education should be built on the students' ability to assess their work and to generate their feedback (Nicol, Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Involving students in the assessment process is the key attribute for student's motivation to learn (Falchikov, 2003). It is an essential aim to teach and develop self and peer assessment skills for students (Rae, Cochrane, 2008; Yorke, 2003). Learning and assessment activity becomes formative only when feedback is used for making improvements to the learning process with the aim of satisfying students' current learning needs (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, Wiliam, 2003). Different authors note the list of different methods, for example, A. Attard indicates that this can take a number of assessment forms, including diaries, logs, and journals, portfolios, learning contracts and negotiated assessment, peer or self-assessment, projects, group work, profiling and identification of personal skills and competencies (Attard, 2011). It is turning to the condition that the teacher has an important role in supporting the learning process and using different assessment methods for learning.

There is a discussion in the literature about assessment for learning - whether it is an independent concept or not. The majority of the researchers agree that "assessment for learning" is a conceptual formulation for formative assessment, with emphasis on it is the basic purpose - for learning (Bloxham, Boyd, 2007; Clark, 2008). The author of this study also belongs to these researchers.

"Assessment is the bridge between teaching and learning, and thus the key process of teaching (as opposed to lecturing)" (Wiliam, 2008:10). It is important to note that the formative assessment, in particular, is the strongest bridge.

As mentioned previously, theoretical background for the formative assessment is broad enough. Feedback, self-assessment, and peer-assessment were identified from literature

as most important concepts for the basis to making statements and questions in empirical research.

Method

A focus group discussion was chosen as a method to capture and interpret the teachers perspective on formative assessment (Mack et al., 2005). The direction and control of the discussion were facilitated by a prepared questioning route.

Eight teachers from different schools situated in a wide area of Latvia (Jelgava, Sigulda, Madona, Valka, Skrīveri, Lielvārde, Lubāna) participated. They were the teachers of subjects related to social sciences, and it was a common thing for all of them. Three respondents were male, but five - female. Distribution of the years of teaching experience was from three to thirty-six years. Age of respondents was also different – the youngest teacher from the age group of 25-30 years, the oldest – the age group of 56-60. Three respondents were from the age group of 46-50, one – of 31-35, two – of 36-40.

Duration of the discussion was one hour and twenty minutes. The following procedures were applied: participants were provided with an information sheet; they were asked to sign a consent form; their opinions were treated with respect by the researchers; ground rules were set. The discussion generated by focus group was audio recorded, and the data was transcribed verbatim. After the discussion, a content analysis was made (Silverman, 2006).

Introductory information was given, description about objectives and tasks of formative assessment instead of scientific definitions. It was compiled from a methodological material developed six years ago by teachers in secondary schools (VISC, 2009). The discussion was organized in four steps - the introductory question and then three stops for the main concepts.

There following are the questions and statements discussed in the focus group.

General perception - students of the secondary school have experience in formative assessment.

1. Students have/do not have self-assessment skills.
2. Students have/do not have peer-assessment skills.
3. What kind of feedback do students receive? When? How often?

Results and discussion

Description of the results will be sequential like the discussion has been, starting with the introductory question without a question mark allowing to share experiences, warming up and opening the discussion. It allowed to predict the future progress of the discussion and to anticipate unclear things for respondents.

As previously mentioned, all the teachers have been trained in the science of education and are participating in ongoing professional development, as required by the legislation of the Republic of Latvia. Respondents were introduced to the description of formative assessment from the well-known material. But unfortunately, there could only find concepts related to problems in summative assessment. Although two keywords are also used in the formative assessment were found, but they are related to assessment in general. Respondents nominated the problems, related to summative assessment:

- setting **criteria;**
- rounding of marks for calculating the average or final mark;
- unequal **requirements;**
- assessment of knowledge *(not for learning);*
- examinations *(not learning tasks).*

These results indicate that there is a lack of understanding of formative assessment.

The next step (or the first stop) was the question about self-assessment skills of students. The fixed categories were: relation to score, grades; self-assessment vs. self-esteem; self-assessment of capability in the context of necessity to learn the specific subjects; students/pupils must be prepared.

There was a misunderstanding about those two terms in Latvian, as they are very similar to each other, but the both definitions were reminded to the participants. Nevertheless more about self-esteem instead self-assessment was found in the answers. Capability salef-assessment is more related to formative assessment, but not in such a good context. Supposedly, it is more related to optimisation of resources, investing one's effort only where students see benefits. Another appreciable aspect - it is about preparation for self-assessment activities. Suggestion to start with those activities more earlier were given. This is consistent with the theory about formative assessment that students must be prepared to self assessment (Rae, Cochrane, 2008; Yorke, 2003).

The statement about peer-assessment skills was the second stop in discussion. The following are the main concepts:
● peer-assessment as the tool to attract attention;
● assessment with scores, grades;
● peer assessment to promote the involvement in group work (as stimulus for lazy ones);
● concern about the damage of relationship;
● students/pupils must be prepared;
● [peer-assessment] open or hidden.

It was difficult to find out some concepts related to formative assessment because examples about summative assessment dominated. However there were two significant points mentioned:
1) involvement in group work (Falchikov, 2003) as well as in learning;
2) preparation similar to the issue discussed in the previous step about self-assessment.

A new idea for research about open and hidden peer-assessment was defined – what – differences or similarities in results of those two ways of peer assessment are. Of course, it is an issue more topical in summative assessment, but it is a question for formative assessment as well.

The situation may be considered better in the question about feedback. Concepts are more related to the formative assessment in this discussion stop:
● comments after essays in written form (common and specific);
● verbal comments on request;
● review of the previously learned material before a new topic is started;
● interest only in marks (students / pupils, parents, education governance);
● an explanation of the assessment (in marks) is important and essential.

Written comments and suggestions are common practice. Unfortunately, teachers feel that nobody needs this kind of feedback. Everyone is interested in marks only. The final issue is about the necessity of the explanation of mark - for example, the mark is 7 (seven) - why? What is the reason for such a mark?

Review of the last before going to be next related to constructivism approach and scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978). Certainly important is orientation not only to content knowledge in this case.

Verbal comments are significant part of the formative assessment, but it was mentioned in discussion and observed in the study process that students do not perceive those comments as feedback for learning, for advising. Only comments in written form are recognized. As recommended by theory, explanation about different feedback forms and how to use it is required (Falchikov, 2003, Rae, Cochrane, 2008; Yorke, 2003).

In the end, there are some words from the teacher, who was silent all the time. He did not participate in the discussions. However he shared some thoughts at the end of discussion: "I have been disappointed in the evaluation system for a long time. Why do we assess? For marks, or does he [student, pupil] have to find motivation to evaluate himself and develop further?"

Conclusions

Although conclusions look pessimistic, there is some optimism after this research as well. It is hoped that at least the teachers who participated in this discussion will pay more attention to formative assessment.

1.   There are just few signs of formative assessment, summative is dominated in secondary schools.

2.   The problem is a lack of clear criteria for self and peer assessment. Professional development of teachers is needed in this issue.

3.   Methods of forcing to listen and participate in the lesson rather than methods of promoting true motivation, interest, awareness of the need are more important for teachers.

4.   Formative assessment in secondary schools is not a routine practice. Therefore, lecturers in higher education should make additional efforts to students understand, why and what assessment is, how it helps to learn, what the importance of self and peer assessment is.

More researches and effort required to find ways for making the formative assessment as teacher's daily activity.

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Peer-assessment in International School Cooperation Projects

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Abstract:
Participation in international cooperation projects is increasing in the context of globalization. Evaluation has an important role in the realization of school cooperation projects from both aspects: project management and pedagogical view. This article analyzes internal peer-assessment in each school and peer-assessment in school partners' level. Participants of the study are teachers from Latvia and different European countries (Bulgaria, Austria, Lithuania, Finland, Greece), previously participated in international cooperation projects.
Keywords: Peer-assessment, feedback, international school cooperation project.

Introduction

This study about peer-assessment in international school cooperation projects is based on three concepts: project, assessment or evaluation and peer-assessment. The topicality of the international school cooperation projects has increased recently. A network of cooperation, formed in the international cooperation between schools is oriented to learning, and particularly to self-learning system (Andersone, 2011). Also, the development of the educational institutions can be enhanced by the active involvement of network strengthening (Andersone, 2009). There is a lot of literature about project management, but research about peer-assessment of international projects is difficult to find. As it is stressed by researchers, project success depends on people involved in the evaluating process. Analyzing the learning possibilities in international projects, it is stressed that knowledge transfer is one of the priorities, although advice how to achieve the transfer usually is not mentioned (Hermano, Lopez-Paredes, Martin-Cruz, Pajares, 2013). A focus on peer-assessment among adults (teachers) participated in international projects has been investigated in the article.

Erasmus+ is one of the most popular international school cooperation programs nowadays. Before it "Life Long Learning" programme was active and schools participated in different activities was used. For insight, the definition of the project concept from Erasmus+ Programme Guide is given: "… a coherent set of activities which are organized to achieve defined objectives and results" (European Commission, 2015).

Another popular international school cooperation program is Nordplus. As it is pointed out in Nordplus 2012 - 2016 Handbook, the goal of the programme is to develop cooperation among Nordic and Baltic countries, popularizing best practice and innovative experience in education as well as increasing the quality of education and promoting life long learning through implementation the projects (Nordplus 2012 - 2016 Handbook 2012).

Nongovernmental Organisation "One World Trust" emphasizes the importance of assessment in the development of any organization. The organization also analyzes the effectiveness of assessing projects in nongovernmental organizations, and the results can be easily attributed to educational projects. The evaluating process should be connected with the

goals and development strategy of the organization. Under this approach one can consider that evaluation should be used as a tool to help the organization to learn from its mistakes and successes, thus improving the effectiveness of its work (NGO Accountability Discussion Series: How to Evaluate Project Effectiveness, 2004). Analysing international school cooperation projects, where the students are involved, it is concluded that reflection, critics and possibility to give proposals for further development of cooperation have been essential for students. Project participants compare their initial wishes with the experience gained during the project, pointing out that tolerance can be taught in international projects (Saile, Schulz, 2012).

As T. Koķe has pointed out, adult learning is most successful when it is project-based (Koķe, 2012). There are several broadly defined criteria to assess this type of learning: evidence for demonstrating learning by doing and developing problem-solving skills; evidence of acquiring solid and varied theoretical foundation coupled with practical experience; evidence of applying classroom knowledge to real problems, as well as the ability to relate and link theory to applications; evidence of developing communication skills as well as building effective team relationship (Hunaiti, Grimaldi, Goven, Mootanah, Martin, 2010).

Learning in the projects is done according to goals and tasks, and planned activities of the project. Every learning process, including learning in the projects, is connected with formative assessment. Also, all partners of international projects are involved as equal partners in project implementation. The task of the project coordinator is to coordinate and guide the project activities according to the application form of the project. Therefore the use of mutual assessment as one of the ways of formative evaluation, using the feedback, is essential. "Feedback is information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, book, parent, or one's experience) about aspects of one's performance or understanding" (Hattie, 2009). Peer-assessment is feedback from peers about activities and achievement. Issues of personality or social style differences are important in projects where intragroup peer-assessment instruments are used (May, Gueldenzoph, 2006). It is the significant aspect for international school cooperation projects, too.

Ongoing processes in the world affect the culture and knowledge. The globalization of culture and knowledge and internationalization occur. In accordance to J. Bilstein, J. Ecarius, and E. Keiner, each of society must learn to build his life - the skills of self-organization of life. Also, self-determination and decision-making skills are required, as well as ability to take responsibility (Bilstein, Ecarius, Keiner, 2011).

Therefore, the research question is following: How is peer-assessment realized in international school cooperation projects?

The aim of this study is to find out, how teachers involved in the project understood peer-assessment, and if there had been such evaluation during project implementation and what opportunities participants could see in the process of evaluation.

Context

The challenge of 21st century's school is the development of student's European and transnational competencies. Students should develop intercultural competencies and global cooperation network skills. Participating in projects, there are possibilities to develop new competencies and to learn from each other (Comenius: Neue Schulwege in Europa, 2010). Also, E. Fuchs has pointed out the influence of globalization on learning the process, making new cooperation networks in the field of education (Fuchs, 2007).

Hence, participation in projects is one of the available lifelong learning platforms suitable for both teachers and adults in general. For teachers, in particular, participation in projects can provide invaluable possibilities for learning and acquiring new competencies. However, for the process to be effective the teachers participating in the project, first of all,

must have a clear understanding of their contribution and that of their colleagues; full commitment is instrumental for effective participation and achieving the project's goals.

It is also important for the participating parties to acknowledge their mutual successes and failures, and to plan special activities together. A joint planning process with all parties actively engaged is vital for fostering the participants' commitment to the project so they would see the project as relevant also from their perspective and remain committed to achieving the project's goals (Dussap, Baumann, 2007). S. Babic, M. Ruzicka, and H. Ruzicka have pointed out the following important factors of success and results:

- good communication (80 %);
- the profound experience of project managers (63,5 %);
- comprehension of project goals and tasks by all participants (56,5 %);
- good project kick-of (51,8 %) (Babic, Ruzicka, Ruzicka, 2009).

As it is pointed out earlier - there are difficult to find researches about peer-assessment in the projects. There are several types of research related to peer-assessment in organizations, for instance, one of the argument is that today's team-based organization use intragroup peer-assessment for performance appraisal and compensation decisions (May, Gueldenzoph, 2006).

The authors' opinion is that international school cooperation projects are a good sample of the ongoing globalization of knowledge and culture and internationalization.

Method

Semi-structured interviews were used in this research. They were problem-centered interviews because the questions were connected with socially relevant problems. Content analysis and coding were made in data processing (Kawulich, 2004) as well as frequency analysis.

Analysing the different project phases the following of them are given in logical sequence: idea of the project → looking for partners → evaluation of possibilities → development of the application → obtaining of the funding → implementation of the project → evaluation → dissemination of results → preparing the reports → the use of the ideas (project sustainability).
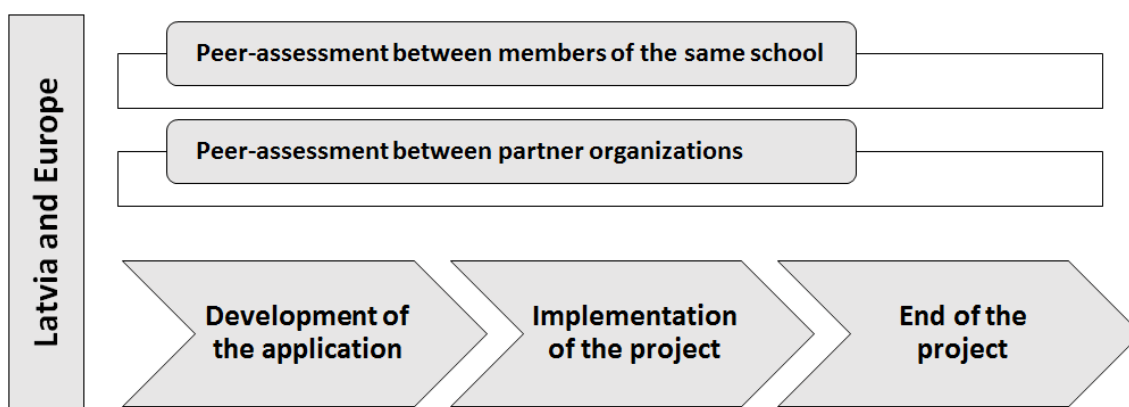
Scheme 1. *Peer-assessment possibilities in international school cooperation projects*

In Scheme 1, all of the project-related steps are summarized in three groups: development of the project, implementation of the project and end of the project. Questions were asked by teachers involved in the projects the following principle as mentioned earlier. Questions were asked not only to the teachers from Latvia but also from European countries (Bulgaria, Austria, Lithuania, Greece, Finland). Peer-assessment was analyzed on two levels:

peer-assessment between members of the same school and peer-assessment between partner organizations.

There is data about interviewed participants: in total ten teachers participated (five from Latvia and five from other European countries - Bulgaria, Austria, Lithuania, Greece and Finland). Teaching experience of teachers who participated in the survey was 8 - 30 years. Two of them have been coordinators in their schools, six □ project team members at schools, but two of them were involved only in some project activities. For six teachers it was the first experience in international school cooperation projects, for one □ second, but for other teachers, it was the 4th or more project in their experience.

Four teachers analysed Nordplus project, but six teachers were involved in analysing projects from "Life Long Learning" programme.

Results and discussion

The interviews started with the question "How have you been involved in the preparation stage of the project?", and answers of respondents were divided as follows: seven from ten respondents stated that they cooperated with partners, offered their ideas and participated in discussion; eight respondents stated that they participated in the work of school project team, suggesting their ideas (see Picture 1). Results show that participants have been involved in project preparation phase.
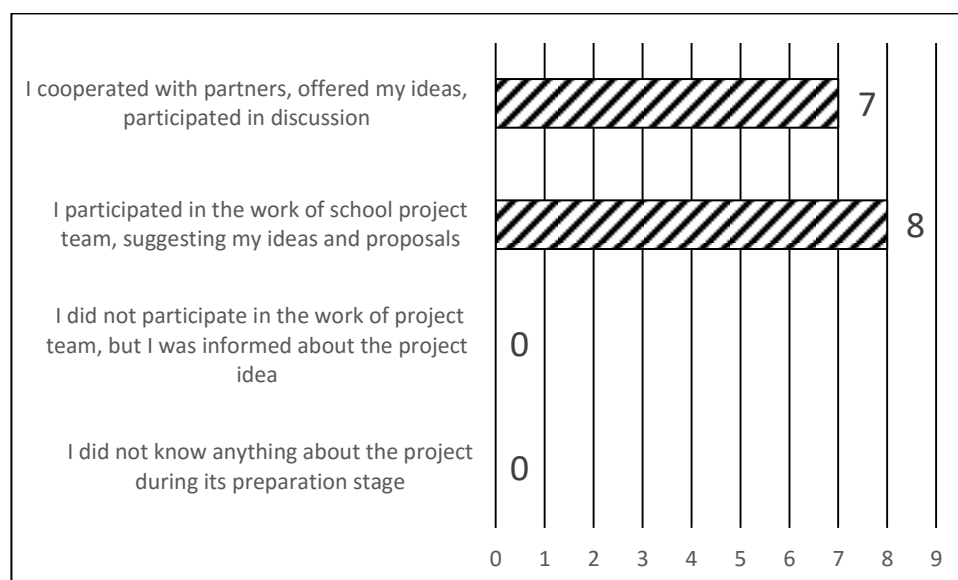
Picture 1. *Involvement in the preparation stage of the project*

Some respondents provided more than one answer to the question: "How did you participate in the peer-assessment process of the project during its run?"

Five teachers responded that they actively discussed the process of the project and its benefits together with their school colleagues and administrators. They also provided each other with assessment and feedback about the project.

Five respondents said that they actively participated in discussions with project partners to evaluate the project together and to understand the mutual contribution of the project. However, two teachers said that they participated in the peer-assessment process passively (as listeners) (see Picture 2).

There was no one who did not participate in the assessment process. This fact could show that respondents have participated actively in the mutual assessment process.
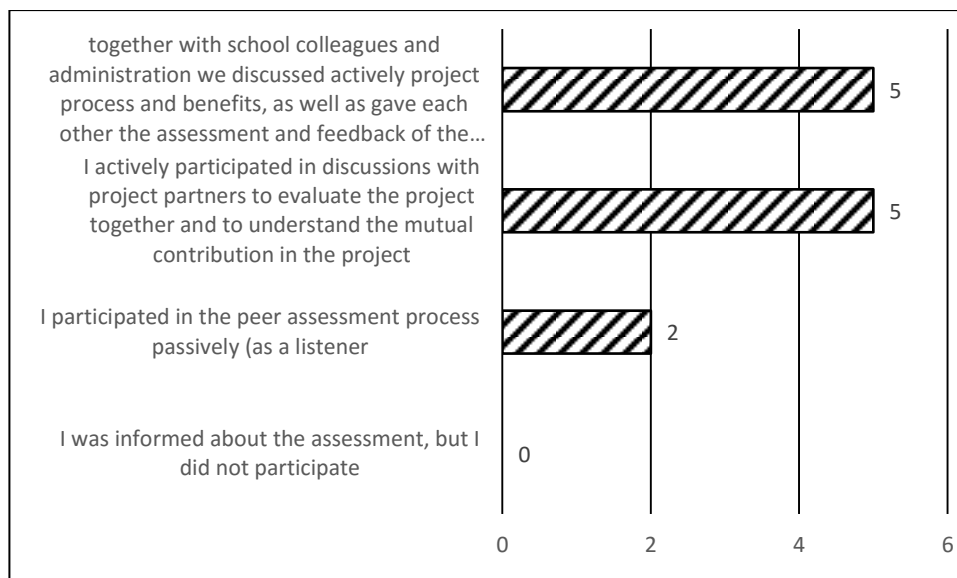
Picture 2. *Participation in the peer-assessment process of the project during its run*

Next question was about participation in the peer-assessment process after the end of the project (see Picture 3).

Picture 3. *Participation in peer-assessment process after the end of the project*

Seven from ten respondents said that they actively discussed the process of the project and its benefits together with their school colleagues and administrators. They also provided each other with assessment and feedback about the project.
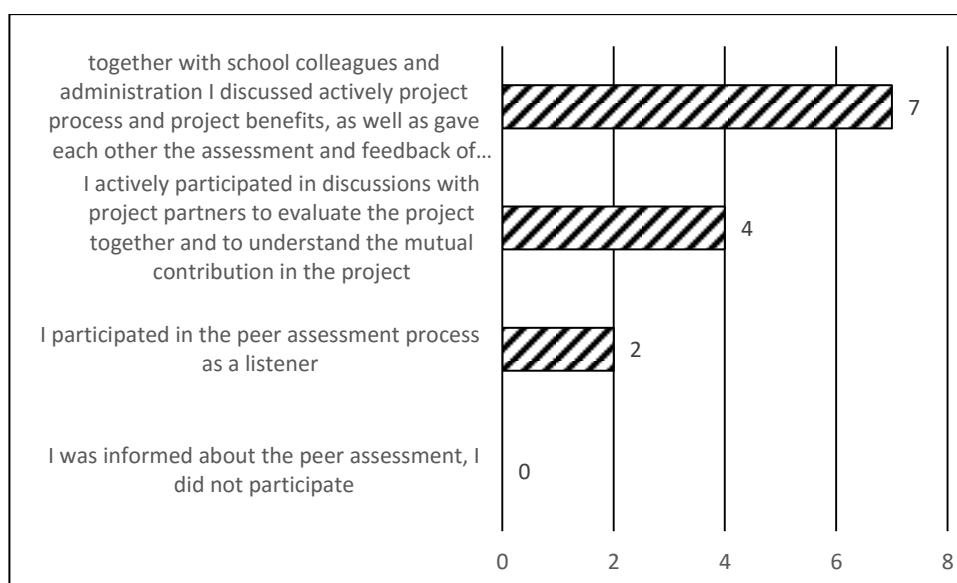
Four teachers answered that they actively participated in discussions with project partners to evaluate the project together and to understand the mutual contribution to the project.

Two answers were the following: "I participated in the peer-assessment process as a listener". One can see that the assessment has been done more actively after project activities. Interviews continued with the open questions. Here are some typical answers to the question:

"In your opinion, what does the project peer-assessment give to project preparation stage, project development and the end of the project?"

- Peer-assessment always ensures better communication and understanding, so it allows planning and preparing for the project better.

- In all projects, it is necessary to evaluate the benefits and the outcome of the project at the beginning, middle and end. The outcomes may change along the way, and that requires flexibility in attitudes. To be able to trust the outcomes of the project and to be able to receive reliable and useful information, the assessment must be done in all stages of the project.

- It allows to be aware of strengths and weaknesses in the project implementation, in coordination, as well as cooperation, thereby improving the quality of the project.

There is the relation to the theory of projects and evaluation that show how acquired skills contribute to better project realization (Hunaiti, Grimaldi, Goven, Mootanah, Martin, 2010; Hermano, Lopez-Paredes, Martin-Cruz, Pajares, 2013).

Answering the question "What would your benefits be if you joined in the peer-assessment process?" 12 categories were found and then structured in three areas (see Table 1). The first area shows the benefits related to assessment itself, and there is an idea about self-assessment, too. The second area is more regarding information than to ongoing process. The third area is rather related to information than future. All these categories are related to findings in the literature about learning in the projects that emphasize self-learning, reflection, critics, possibility to give proposals for further and knowledge transfer (Andersone, 2009; Hermano et al., 2013; Saile, Schulz, 2012).

Table 1. *Categories and areas of benefits in peer-assessment process*

Typical answers	Areas of answers
- providing feedback - analysis of their contribution	Assessment (peer and self)
- wider picture - responsibility - communication - cooperation - understanding of different approaches	Information (for process)
- knowledge - experience - new ideas - language skill - experience in information processing	Information (for future)

The authors of this research have found that it is important to clarify the views of teachers about ways of improving the peer-assessment process in the international school cooperation projects. There are some of the best ideas:

- participants understand the purpose of peer-assessment and what is expected from them;
- preparation and clear assessment criteria are essential;
- organizing of webinars with the discussion in the real time is important;
- assessment according to criteria designed of project partners taking into account the specifics of the project is essential;
- discussions in small teams after peer-assessment process is necessary;

- external assessment – involved people outside project partners is useful.

The last one is not related to peer-assessment, but it is a general idea that can show the necessity of project participants to assess the project.

Conclusions

There are three main conclusions from this research:

- peer-assessment takes place in international school cooperation projects, but not always deliberately;
- To be meaningful and qualitative, an agreement on procedures, forms and criteria are needed;
- it is recommended to agree on the person responsible for the evaluation of both the project as a whole and for each partner organization.

Suggestion for further projects is about mutual assessment that could be done by project coordinator or school coordinators, or it should be possible to make agreements with responsible people for assessment in the initial stage of the project.

Suggestion for further research is to work out precise assessment criteria especially for international school cooperation projects.

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An investigation of teachers enterprise perspective in preschool institution activity planning

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate teachers enterprise perspective and value in preschool institution activity planning. This paper discusses differences and experience how teachers enterprise were involved in the activity planning process in six preschool institutions, what it influenced, what forms of action were used while looking at the teacher enterprise recognition in preschool from colleagues and management team side.

Keywords: teacher, enterprise, preschool, activity planning

Introduction and aim of the research

uncertainty situations, the problems are growing from both the internal and external conditions. Educational institutions objectives are now more complex to educational challenges, demanding expectations of the various stakeholders are increasingly diverse and public accountability heavier than before. Educational institutions have become crucial to supporting the rapid growth of individuals and local communities, associations and international relations and development of cooperation to carry out a wide range of new schools in the structural, social, political, cultural and educational function (CY Cheng, 1998). In this context, teachers in the age of rapid change often require to extend themselves and start the tasks with new responsibilities, such as teacher training program developer, the new teacher mentor, authority staff development promoter, action researcher, preschoolers senior consultant, team leader, decision maker, teacher, member of the administration, and so on. This means that teachers are inevitably required for continuous lifelong learning, their professional competence expansion with new knowledge, competencies and attitudes to meet all these challenges. It is accepted that the teacher is considered as an essential element to achieve success in educational institutions. During the last decade, policymakers, educational institutions and teachers themselves have implemented many initiatives in teacher education and development, aimed to improve the performance of teacher, professional competence and quality of learning process. The 21st century needs a man who without good general and specific knowledge and key competencies has developed creative and critical thinking, enterprising attitude to life, thanks to which a person can create new opportunities or see opportunities where others pass by, without noticing anything observant transform these opportunities for real-life values in order to solve personal, economic or major social and cultural problems (Oganisjana, 2012). Enterprise is a positive character trait - the ability to engage actively certain work, social life or social life linked to the objective pursued and necessary for the success of human activity throughout the course of human life in any sphere of life. People's initiative and creativity allow you to adapt quickly to and accept the challenges posed by the changing life. Enterprise and entrepreneurship concept most be viewed holistically and is consistent with pedagogical traditions of complex systems view (Spona, 2006; Liegeniece, 1999). Scientific literature and different theories founders of the concept of entrepreneurial ability is defined as the process (Drucker, 1993; Churchill, 1992), and human abilities, characteristics, quality, skills, abilities and character traits (Davies, 2004; McClelland, 1961), and behaviour (Gartner 1990), as the human action and the combination

of different properties (Gibb, 2007). For this study, susceptibility will be explained on the basis of K. Oganisjana (2012) enterprise definition: entrepreneurial spirit is a dynamic system in which they are causally related components - human character traits, motivation, cognition, needs, emotions, skills, abilities, and learning behaviour - functioned together as a whole, interacting with the environment to identify, create and implement opportunities to new value creation. Preschool education is inextricably part of the education system, so enterprise must be reflected already at this stage to encourage learners' enterprise, and parallel preschool teacher's enterprise should be supported and motivated too. Studies have shown that the initiative and entrepreneurial ability is promoted in educational institutions, which is based on democracy, flexibility (Braun, 2008), which is used for subgroup work (Taylor & Thorpe, 2004), which supports learner participation and creative activity (Koo, 1999; Politis , 2005), which conducts a theoretical link with practical activities (Jones, 2006), where the creative problem-solving and decision-making skills are promoted in non-standard situations (Gibb, 2007; Kearney, 1999). Enterprising and entrepreneurial pedagogical understanding of nature based learning, as well as entrepreneurs and other people constantly, learn by doing and reflecting, in cooperation with others, both by their experience and learning from mistakes.

In nowadays schools and teachers are faced with new challenges, Many researchers consider that the teacher's work of activation of pupils practicing creates the preconditions for the development of pupils' productive capacity, as well as to make them aware of their strength. If the teacher positions itself as an expert, it is not conducive to entrepreneurial and enterprising environment in the learning process, while boosting entrepreneurial initiative and the learning process the teacher is not a teacher in the traditional sense, but teacher is a coordinator, colleague, mentor, inspiration (Gibb, 1993; Braun, 2008; Kearney, 1999). It is believed that not only the students learn from the teacher but also the teacher learns from students unless the teacher is open around-going, willing to listen, to see the opportunities and needs. To be able to inspire others, the teacher must first be able to inspire itself learning, unified personal authoritative approach to learning. The teacher may have the authority, but it must be rationally based on competence and one that contributes to the development of learners, not irrational, based on power and suppress the freedom of students and initiative.
Differences in enterprise and entrepreneurship nature definition in pedagogy and its sub-sector, preschool pedagogy, in literature is not so highlighted. Pedagogy in the context of the enterprise is defined as a set of behaviours, characteristics, skills and attitudes that allow individuals and groups to create change and innovation to deal with the difficulties, uncertainty and complex situations (Gibb, 2007). Accordingly, the enterprise is a set of values and beliefs to do, see, feel, evaluate and communicate, it is a paradigm shift motivating to see opportunities and to implement them by using and developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes. In pre-primary and primary stage the focus is on learners' personal enterprise development, such as cross-curricular activities and socialization with adults. Preschool teacher in the preschool institution is the main person who has the greatest linkage with learners. A teacher who works in preschool age group has more roles than in any other level of education. In the first years of life children learn most of the skills, knowledge, attitudes towards the world around them to be used for all subsequent life, so it is important to activate and integrate enterprise already in the pre-school stage of education, to broaden and enrich learners' perceptions. It is an open and diverse world, teacher following the example of his enterprise can teach children through the practical operation of the learning process, the extra-curricular life and everyday environment, solving different problem situations by helping children develop a variety of skills, abilities, learning experience, cognitive interest, action role in a variety of situations by finding out the role of emotions in human life, and each person's character traits strengths and weaknesses. The example of the teacher with lifestyle

enterprise thinking may be particularly important for those students whose parents are not living in enterprise style. Teacher enterprise, which is flexibly used in their professional activities in preschool allows to plan, organize and implement preschool program versatile, not only to make the learning process for students bound but also contributes to children's enterprise, initiatives and enrich understanding of the diverse world. Preschool teacher working specifics plays an important role in promoting children's enterprise, institutions and functioning of the environment for pre-school, so it is important to identify preschool teachers' enterprise versatility.

Purpose and goal of the research

The purpose of this study is to investigate teachers enterprise perspective and value in preschool institution activity planning, the way enterprise skills and attitudes are understood and implemented by preschool teachers and administration. The data concerning about enterprise in six preschools in Latvia were identified through a survey using self-report questionnaire. A questionnaire for preschool teachers was used as the instrument for research. The study was conducted with 102 preschool teachers and 12 preschool administration persons – director and vice head of preschool. The questionnaire included ten open questions that teachers and administration filled in anonymously, just giving job title. It was known that these employees in educational institutions are with different work experience, but it was not selected as the most important aspect. It was important to find out teachers and administration views on entrepreneurial values and perspectives in activity planning.

At the beginning the research showed that in practical life preschool teacher entreprise value can be reflected in several areas: in teachers work/ everyday study process in pre-school, in teachers professional development, in their pre-school /workplace well-being improvement, organization culture development, social activity, etc.
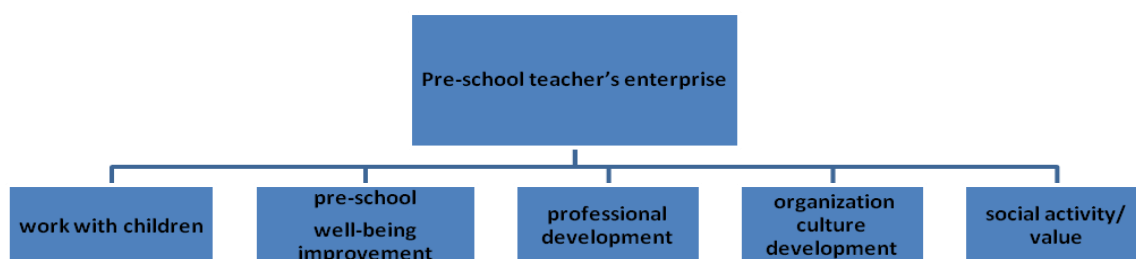
Table.1. *Preschool teachers enterprise value reflection*

But the main goal was to investigate teachers enterprise perspective in activity planning – how and in what directions it can be used, motivated and reflected in preschool. In each preschool institution, there is a work plan – activity plan for a next year. Usually, this plan is made by vice head of the preschool institution, confirmed by the director. This plan includes the main planned activities and events in preschool, which is in tune with the institution's objectives, culture, perspective vision, habits and beliefs of management, how to organize the learning process in preschool, in addition to the daily learning. But there are preschool institutions where management team uses teacher's enterprise as value to involve teachers in this activity plan development, not simply to establish a plan and have them realize it. Why? The answers of questions shows that teacher involvement not only strengthens the teacher's

professional skills, contributes to teachers' sense of belonging to the institution, it creates a sense of holistic learning in the set objectives, but also enhances the educational institution culture, collective mutual relations as well as improving co-operation, participation of parents in the learning process, as well as support for children's learning. Enterprise explanation for preschools is new, till this time, it was more common to higher levels of education. But now, when preschool institution administration is seeking for new teachers' enterprise is a value. The study of survey which was conducted with 114 preschool education representatives (teachers and administration) reflected relationships of teacher involvement and enterprise motivation forms in preschool institution activity planning:

1. Preschools use teacher work groups (all teachers together or in each preschool age group), to give teachers possibilities to influence institution plans, to plan together as the team, to make activity plan for a year more flexible, creative, etc. Teachers use their enterprise to suggest and discuss tasks, activities, new teaching methods to use in next or this year, etc.

2. Establishment of Advisory Council. Two of six preschools established advisory council with is like "right hand" of preschool administration. Director or Vice Head of use preschool council to decide important questions about the preschool environment, work forms with teachers and children, organize exhibitions, excursions for children, different fests, and celebrations. It makes the preschool organization to work more democratic, using appropriate all recourses that they have.

3. 3, 4 and 5- fifth-degree quality step teachers' work group. In Latvia teachers can take part in the project and get their profession work quality step, taking into account their professional experience, work style, professionalism, competence and so on. If teachers in preschool have those quality steps, the administration takes it into account and at the same time try to motivate other teachers to get this quality work step. The teacher does not necessarily need to have this quality grade; all depends on the teacher and his or her enterprise to settle it. Teachers in this work group feel honored and pleased that they can diversify and enrich the institution, improve its functioning by making recommendations and action plans for various issues.

4. Individual enterprising teacher's cooperation with the preschool administration. Every preschool institution has teachers that not only work but even live in enterprise manner. Taking into account this point of view, the preschool administration can cooperate with those teachers on specific issues by asking them to lead and coordinate projects, major events, thus not only enriching the traditions of the institution but also to facilitate the teacher's enterprise acceptance and its further development.

5. Lottery-type activities in each half year a simple activity that is provided twice or more times in the year. Vice head gather together all teachers and ask them to take one lottery ticket and in this ticket is a specific task, for example. "Organize apple exhibition", "lead project "Cosmos" in January" etc. So the teacher's responsibility is to manage, organize and realize this task as the leader, inviting other teachers to work together, dividing or giving them any instructions or tasks. The result is realized measure or activity, as well as teacher professional development, and the promotion of entrepreneurship.

6. Teachers are brainstorming. Brainstorming in preschool is an everyday activity where teachers came together (with director or vice head/ or without them) and discussed some specific question, revealing their vision and presenting it to the public. In discussions, a lot of different interesting ideas can come around, ideas that could later be marketed as a new value. After that new idea are delivered to administration and they are discussed one more time to clarify and discuss their opportunities, implementation.

Conclusion

Taking into account theoretical and empirical research on preschool teacher's enterprise and its perspective in preschool institution activity planning in six preschool institutions there are some important conclusions. First of all enterprise ability is undoubtedly a current path of self-development, opportunities implementation, it is a step of today and already for tomorrow. Preschool institutions need to take it into account and use teacher enterprise and give kids possibility to acquire enterprise skills, attitudes in this young age. The second one, the enterprise is not comprehension of standing in the same place, but the continuous movement and mobility. Enterprise means moving forward taking into account the time requirements. Preschool institutions need to change and move on, reach new goals and see new perspective using different methods in learning the process, in institutions collective involvement, etc. The third one, children, society, pre-school institutions need to have teachers with enterprise skills to promote a new generation of entrepreneurial foundations, to promote children's sense of security with 21st-century work forms, activities that are organized in a creative way and with versatile things. The fourth one, the preschool management team, needs to involve enthusiastic teachers in activity planning process because it helps to develop and to strengthen the institution's staff competencies. And the last one enterprising teacher is added value in preschool institution, he/she can bring out a lot more than other expect, it means to think out of the box – out of the traditional pre-school teacher's job description, everyday work that teacher should or can do. In preschool there is still a lot of work to understand enterprise nature, versatility and future outlook. This topic needs to be updated in extended talk to reflect the entrepreneurship role in preschool.

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The Initiative of Preschool Children in the Process of Self-Directed Learning

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Abstract

Preschool age children have the natural initiative that urges to engage in activities without waiting for external incentives. Self-directed learning in preschool is a collaborative process between the educator and the family, which involves choosing teaching methods to encourage children's initiative and raise their self-esteem. Regardless of the individual's age, the initiative is the first step towards self-directed learning, followed by understanding the necessity of the learning process and setting the desired aim.

The article aims to explore the role of preschool children's initiative in the process of self-directed learning from a theoretical point of view. The empirical research aims to reveal the types and manifestations of the initiative, which promotes children's self-directed learning. The practical study describes the manifestations of children's initiative, identifying and promoting its opportunities. The study results indicate differences between girls and boys on the level of behavioral self-regulation, reflected in the demonstration of the initiative. For example, the girls showed high levels of the initiative by understanding the rules of the game, while the boy's initiative was also dependent on the other peers' interest and the attitude of the assumed group leaders.

Keywords: evaluation, initiative, self-directed learning.

Introduction

The primary objective of self-directed learning is to develop children's skills and ability to organize their activities and to be able to participate in the evaluation of the results of their work following the stated objective. In the process of self-directed learning, the learning targets are initially set by teachers. By guiding the learning process, they help the child to choose appropriate methods, resources, and, gradually, the child is capable of assessing the learning process and learns to apply these skills in any independent activity.

One of the main tasks of self-directed learning is to foster children's ability to perceive change as an opportunity, and, being aware of the pursued objective, to search for a solution with existing resources, and this process would not be interfered by the educators' or parents' assumptions, biases and subjective opinions about the current task.

A child's natural curiosity and desire to learn new information supports the natural initiative. Adults are models, resources, and guides for child's developing independence. The way they carry out these roles strongly influences how children learn to guide themselves. During the preschool and kindergarten years, children are influenced by both adult behaviors and adults' expressed beliefs and values (Bronson, 2010).

The Education Development Guidelines 2014-2020 of the Republic of Latvia Latvian National Education Guidelines provide that the purpose of the content of pre-school education is to support the development of the child's physical abilities, self-confidence, encourage the formation of the child's cognitive functioning and the development of thirst for knowledge, communication and collaboration skills, the formation of positive attitudes, as well as to encourage the development of safe and healthy lifestyle skills (The Education Development Guidelines, 2012)

In preschool age, all areas of development are closely linked. The learning process forms new qualities of the child's mental sphere (cognitive, motivational, emotional) (Реан, 2002).

Everything the child does physically in the first years of life becomes not only the basis of their physical development but also facilitates their cognitive, social and emotional development (Crig, 2009). G.Craig formulated pre-school children's motor development prerequisites: readiness, activity, attention, and feedback. With readiness, the author understands the child's specific physical and cognitive development. Performing these tasks, the child gets enjoyment from the activity and is excited about the work. Adults should offer children maximum amounts of opportunities for being active, and they need to support this activity. Learning new things requires a lot of attention, so adults should think about how to encourage this cognitive process (Crig, 2009). Research reveals that, for the 3-5-year-olds, it works best if the child repeats the action after seeing that, but at the age of 6-7 years, they can follow instructions quite accurately, especially if they participate in routine activities. The feedback the child receives for their achievements promotes the maintenance of their motivation (Crig, 2009). The motivation of the child's competence is of particular importance. R. White defined motivation of competence as the need for success to feel oneself capable of doing and able to do certain things. It is a type of internal motivation, and its source is the child itself and their actions (White, 1959). In addition to the child's inner motivation, there is an important role for external motivation in the form of an adult recognition, praise, and awards for certain results. By receiving awards for the work, children acquire their property that has value or even notable role between peers. Important circumstance and uniqueness for awards are the fact that these items cannot be bought or found. Awards should be earned to receive them (Осорина, 2011). Therefore, it is important for educators and parents to realize how exactly to give these awards to promote the child's inner motivation, which, in turn, stimulates their development of the natural initiative. This way, the child's learning process becomes self-directed, in which they learn to set aims, choose ways of reaching them, and assess results.

The question of research: How to encourage the initiative of preschool children in the process of self-directed learning?

Methods of research:
1. Analysis of literature.
2. Empirical research methods: pedagogical observation, creative exercises and modeling, parent questionnaire, discussion

Research sample consists of 25 children aged 6 to 7 years from the educational institution in Riga and 50 parents**.**

Type of research: qualitative**.**

Procedure of the research:
Studying the promotion of children's initiative in preschool age consists of several steps:
1. Selecting creative exercises and games for promoting initiative through independent activity. Promoting decision-making skills in selecting tools for particular task (colors, materials)
2. Promotion of initiative by using score system for evaluating individual results, based on observations by teacher and parents, and self-evaluation according to test described by Dembo and Rubinstein.
3. Discussion with parents to inform about planned activities before start and interview after activities. Discovering differences of children behavior in family comparing to process together with the teacher.

A scoring system was developed to record the results of specific tasks carried out in the group. The system was used to document the activity of the child's initiative, i.e., the manifestations of the original performance. The obtained results were discussed with the

children's parents, and information collected regarding parents' observations in the family during the respective time. The aim of the process was to support practically the children's initiative in the process of self-directed learning and to create a model for the promotion of self-directed learning in preschool. To reach the aim, different kinds of methods should be used, and one of the methods is to document activities which encourage previously unnoticed initiative in children. The activity time lasted for three months. During this period, with the help of different creative activities, inducement, and evaluations, both collectively and individually, the children were encouraged to show their skills in observation, working, making decisions, evaluating their skills and the skills of others, and concluding, and the main task was to notice any their actions.

The children's emotional condition was documented using the self-esteem measurement scale (Рубинштейн, 2010) based on assertions about the satisfaction level in the environment where the child is staying, pointing to the potential shown in the activity of the initiative – the desire to work and to engage in creative processes.

In preschool, children are emotionally "heated up", and, at home, in the family, they continue to share their experiences actively. It is a considerable change in their routine not only at preschool but also at home. Self-directed learning is not a method; it is a long-term process, which requires different kinds of methods which are applied in daily routine maintaining playing activities. However, in the process of learning preference is given to activities chosen by children themselves. For example, if the task of the particular day is the letter 'S', the educator observes what creative activity children prefer that day. If it is drawing, then children are asked to draw anything that starts with the letter "S". It can be "the sun" or "a snowman", or anything else. Then everybody tries to guess some words starting with the particular letter. On the next day, it can be modelling or singing, but the content remains to be more important than the form of the activity.

Children lead the process with natural initiative, and the educator has the role of a consultant in their creative work, helping to achieve the set aim without taking away the play, but enriching it with inducement to select and apply different resources. When the activity is completed, children evaluate the results of their creative work themselves giving points to each drawing. The symbolic points in this process can be buttons, beans, chestnuts, small stones, etc. Everything is counted, and the best works are selected according to the given points. Children are not allowed to evaluate their work. The process of evaluation encourages everybody to try harder next time.

The performed activity should be awarded to foster initiative; therefore, children receive awards in the form of points, which are displayed on the group's board. At the end of the week, according to the total amount, these points turn into colored magnet roses. There are different colors of flowers according to children's achievements. Points are like awards for children to stimulate their further initiative and activity. Almost all children are collectors, and they like making collections of "valuable" things (Осорина, 2011)

The procedure of collecting points occurs in fixed periods of time, dividing months into weeks, and weeks in days. At the end of each week, one of the children, with the highest number of points, gets a magnet with a rose which is attached to the whiteboard next to the child's name. At the end of the month, the main prize is awarded to the child with the highest number of points for the whole month. If one of the children has been one of the best in one or two weeks, it does not mean the largest number of points per month in total.

At the end of the month, prizes are given to the one who has earned the most points in the exact month (does not matter a boy or a girl), as well as one boy and one girl, with the greatest number of points respectively between boys and girls, not including the main prize. Those who have received a rose at the end of the week get a prize as well.

Aim and content of self-directed learning

Learning is a process by which an individual learns a new skill or experience. Self-directed learning is based on the demonstration of initiative in learning process, with or without external help learning the information necessary for the learning objective (Knowles, 1975). The child's natural initiative is a strong driving force to achieve learning goals, and educators are assistants in this learning process. Self-directed learning is based on initiative. The aim of the article is to reveal the opportunities and the benefits of self-directed learning model in preschool. To understand the process of self-directed learning, it is necessary to look at the essence of learning. Learning experience for the individual is the particular learning environment, or its essence in a form that is characterized by ongoing changes in the learning process (Kokare, 2011). Self-directed learning environment is created according to the child's inner development processes.

Learning is awareness of one's cognition process, transforming perception images into conceptions, organizing memory and attention, using the available way of thinking in everyday and educational problem solving. The next step in the development of learning skills is not only one's awareness of cognitive processes, but also the management skills of these processes, the ability to choose the perceived images selectively and to concentrate on the most essential things, in accordance with the stated objectives of the learning process (Šteinberga, 2013). For adults, it is important to understand how to promote the child's inner motivation that drives the development of their natural initiative which helps the learning process to become self-directed. In self-directed learning process, there is a constant interaction between the child and the educator, who notices the occurrence of the child's initiative and directs the learning process in the form that is attractive to the child. Giving children choices and allowing them to learn from the consequences of the choice made, children learn to organize their work more productive.

The process of learning in preschool is not a finished phase in the development of an individual. It is the beginning of lifelong learning process. The aim of self-directed learning in pre-school is to promote children's cognitive performance, based on their natural curiosity or initiative. Being interested in the process of acquiring information promotes the ability to use knowledge creatively and encourages its deeper understanding. Self-directed learning is based on natural initiative, which develops because of the rapid development of self-regulation during the first years of life. The development of natural initiative can be considered as a part of self-regulation development (Bronson, 2010).

Children (and adults) regulate themselves according to the requirements of the social and physical environment, achievable goals in the environment, and increasingly internalized standards for judging the adequacy of their efforts (Bronson, 2010). M. Knowles stated that there are no strict limitations in the self-directed learning process, because children have the natural curiosity, and their learning habits are naturally self-directed, which means that if children can be self-directed when not in school, they can certainly be self-directed at learning the process in class. According to self-directed learning theory by M. Knowles and theories of self-regulatory development by M. Bronson, conceptual differences of engagement in self-directed learning between adults and children are shown in the following graph (Graph 1).
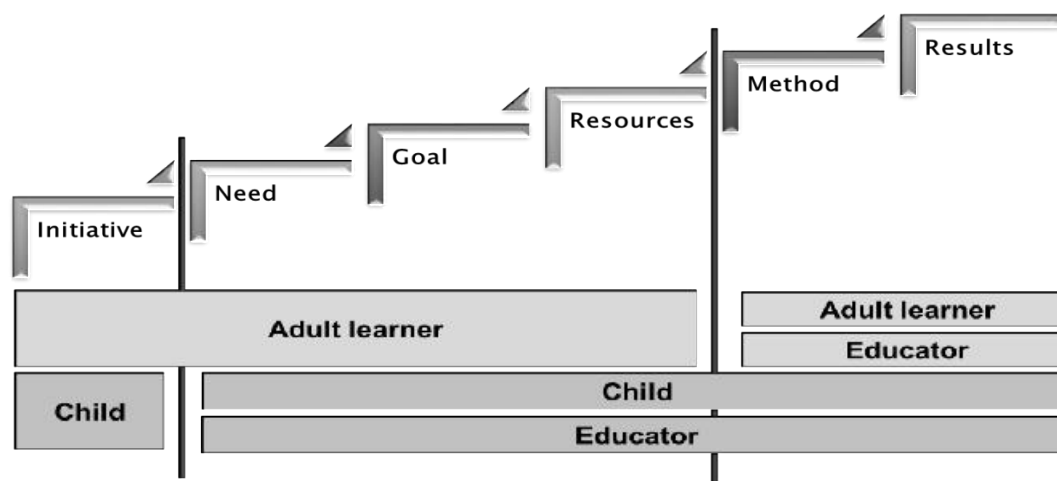
Graph 1 *Differences of engagement in self-directed learning process for adults and children based on M.Knowles, M.Bronson*

      In its broadest meaning, 'Self-directed learning' describes a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and materials resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes (Knowles, 1974).

Preschool age children's initiative and opportunities to promote it

      The initiative is the internal or external inducement, encouragement to act without waiting for an invitation from someone else, but involving others in activities as well. The initiative is the ability of active and independent activity (Dictionary of Pedagogical Therms, 2000).

      There are many organized classes for children daily, and they are not encouraged to express their personal attitude and to take the initiative in organizing their activities often enough. The child constructs their experience through playing, which is learning and working at the same time, and the initiative is closely connected with the acquisition of new skills, as well as the development of competencies.

      The child's cognitive development in preschool affects their ability to social adaptation and school results when starting their studies at school. The process of preschool children's learning is organized using playground activities, games and the child's natural initiative (Āboltiņa, 2014). The guidelines for preschool age children's emotional development are significantly different from the ones of adults. Correlations and relationship models, which already exist in the world of adults, are gradually developing in the cognition of preschool children. By learning them, the child integrates into the adult world and grows up. Personality formation includes two main components: physiological and psychological changes, as well as changes in acquiring social environment. In general, childhood can be described as a continuous change of mental and physiological conditions, resulting in the formation of new personal features, which characterize the development of each child in the particular environment. From 2 to 6 years, the dominant form of learning the adult world and surrounding environment is play. Each child's attitudes are formed under the influence of the particular environment and adults, and there are no universal methods and criteria to measure to what extent each child has grown. When planning and conducting lessons, it should be taken into account that every child is in a different stage of learning the world. Some children may create a misleading impression of their behavior that they are more grown-up than

others, and the rules of the game have become too easy for them, but in reality, we are talking about more successful adaptation to the given environment at the particular moment (Реан, 2002).

Preschool children's initiative can be promoted in different ways, using playing and games, offering exercises, stimulating learning situations, encouraging children to act creatively. In creative activities, it is equally important for the educator to participate in the process as well as to be able to step aside, to continue to organize the playing environment in which children can independently demonstrate their initiative, carrying on the process of playing. Playing is an indispensable means of children's cognition and learning, through which they express and develop their personality. As the child's emotions are of great importance in the development of learning motivation, perception, and interrelations, it is essential to promote children's positive emotions and to create such a learning process that gives joy and satisfaction (Rutka, 2012).

Empirical research of 6-7 year old children's initiative promotion

In the empirical study, the initiative of pre-school children is researched, and activities that promote initiative are carried out in playing sessions and the group's daily activities, in cooperation with the children, teachers and parents. The study was carried out in one of Riga's preschool educational institutions, using a variety of creative tasks, playing and games, the aim of which was to promote children's initiative by encouraging them to work independently, interact with their peers, observe and compare, make decisions and conclusions about their own and other children's activities and collaborative processes.

Children's evaluation was carried out in three stages (months), where each stage was divided into four stages of intermediate evaluation (weeks), and each intermediate evaluation consisted of five steps (the days of the week). A table was drawn on the board to make it visually clear for the children. It could be seen not just by the children themselves, but also by the parents who could earn points. The children were informed when and how the points would be given at the beginning of the day before the particular activity. They were earning points for the whole week, and at the end of the week, they were counted. At the end of all three stages of evaluation, each child received a diploma as an award. The diplomas were in different colors (each color represented the child's achievements) and provided a short description of accomplishments. Positive feedback about these diplomas was received not only from children but also from their parents, which is reflected in their questionnaires, for example, "My son was proud of his achievements" or "He was very glad of it and attached it to the wall."

Observing the daily life of the children in the group and their playing, their desire to act creatively was clearly visible (make by using plastic, cut, glue, and draw), to participate in the games, but started activities remained unfinished. The children were asked why they lost interest and did not finish the activities, and they answered that they did not know how to do them. Therefore, before introducing the activities with the "point system", the evaluation system was developed, and the tasks were created. Individual interviews with the children, between members of the group, in the family and about the children's attitude towards evaluation, in general, were carried out. In the first interviews, the children showed that they were ready for new games and activities. It can be concluded from their comments, for example, "I like to make different things from plasticine", "I like it when others are in charge of the game", and "I like to start new things".

Before the activity, the children were informed about the rules and procedures for obtaining points. At the end of each week, it was counted who had got the most points, and they turned into colorful magnet roses that were attached to the board. The children were also

informed that there would be various prizes depending on the number and color of earned roses. The boys' initial response was very low, so the points were given for the achievements of girls and boys equally, therefore promoting boys' activity.

The children showed great interest in the new "point system" and tried to do their best not only in participating in plays but also in helping to maintain order in the group and in organizing themselves. For example, one girl noticed that the teacher was sharpening pencils, and she came to the teacher and observed what she was doing. When she was asked if she wanted to help, the girl answered that she did not know how. After collective work, the girl received a point for her initiative to help, and it was noticed by other children. Later on, the children sharpened their pencils themselves and informed the teacher about the work they had done to get the evaluation. In the beginning, they got points together with praise, but later they were given only praise because points were no longer needed. This is just one example of how to create a positive feeling by helping to overcome "I can't" and "I don't know how". The girls in the group were more active and hardworking than the boys, and they were more emotional when they lost points. It is supported by the educator's observations during activities and the responses of the parents in the questionnaires.

One of the girls in the group (a leader) in a conversation with a boy asked him why he did not do his best in activities and added that he could prizes, maybe there would be some interesting stuff, a book or candy. However, the boy replied that he was not interested, and he did not need it. The children received prizes for their initiative at the end of the first month, and everybody was satisfied with the activities.

The overall activity of the children grew, and more pronounced creative activity was observed: the children not only made drawings with color pencils but also created mosaics and showed interest in plasticine. They made different objects from plasticine, and they were placed on all the available surfaces in the room. Having observed all those activities, the educator suggested building a city together, and a specific surface was set up for this purpose. During the first month just a few children showed interest, but during the second month, the whole group became active creating interesting objects from plasticine. In a month, the surface was covered with different objects, each having its story. During this month, the idea to create a fairy-tale was put forward, and it was followed by the suggestion to make the group's cartoon film called "Christmas in the wonderland".

During the second month, the girls and the boys were equally active. The children were creative and imaginative, and they were seeking for solutions how to create the foundation and the houses. The parents' involvement was necessary for making the cartoon. The presence of the parents and their interest in creative work increased their children's initiative because the cartoon was discussed not only in the group but also at home. The children created everything for the film, including decorations and characters made of plasticine.

At the same time, there was a tendency for the group to tidy up, put everything in their places and get some points or praise. The children frequently invited their educator, their peers and parents to look at what they did, and wanted to know how others liked their work and what they liked the most.

At the end of the second month, the children received the awards. The children's emotions and feelings had reached their culmination because at home they talked only about collecting points and roses. As a result, the parents mention in their questionnaires that the child did not want to miss one day regardless of illness or the necessity to see the doctor because then they would not be able to earn points, and every day in preschool was discussed and the earned or not earned points counted.

At the third stage, the children were more confident about their activities. Non-standard situations were observed where the children wanted to receive not only praise, but also evaluation, which was analyzed by the children themselves: what was good, what was bad, and whether it was fair or unfair. The children prepared their exercises and games during which points were awarded. In the final stage, the tasks were more difficult. The children knew that it was the last stage, so they tried to earn as many points as possible. It was a big surprise for the children that they all received diplomas at the end.

The children were very enthusiastic about creative activities, and at the end their works were exhibited and points awarded by the members of the group. The children evaluated, analyzed, supported their opinion, and evaluated the works according to the requirements of the task. It encouraged them to express their attitude. Even those children who could be considered shy or unconfident started to feel better among peers. The evaluation fostered the children's attention and respect for each other's work, and it was proved by their ability to say who the author of the particular work was.

The children's parents were asked what changes they saw in the behavior of their child during these three months, and they pointed out that the child showed more initiative in different areas: cleaning the house, doing the dishes, doing creative work, writing, reading, and the child has become more independent and competitive, and there is a more pronounced desire to receive praise and also earn something like an award for the job done.

Some of the girls' parents started a discussion about the fairness of the point system, and the awards, pointing out that competition was created in the group, which could endanger the child's self-esteem. In the majority of cases, such objections were raised by parents whose children were very emotional and upset because they did not get the main prize. Unlike the girls, the boys would rather attract everybody's attention to their diligence than become the winners.

Regarding the issue of the evaluation system, most of the boys' parents stated in their questionnaires that at the first stage of the activities the boys' interest was not big. Their interest appeared at the beginning of the second stage. However, one boy's mother observed that her son participated in all the activities with great enthusiasm from day one, and his ability to concentrate on beginning the task and finishing it on time improved, which was also observed by the educator during his work in the group.

After the activities, the second discussion with the children took place to find out how they felt when they had to evaluate their work by themselves when they were evaluated by their peers and the educator. None of the children in the group mentioned that they did not like evaluating the others' work or receive feedback from their peers. Nevertheless, four children from the group stated that they did not feel good when they had to evaluate themselves because they thought that it was not fair, arguing that everybody would give themselves the highest evaluation, even if the work was not accurate. Only one child from the group expressed dissatisfaction with the educator's evaluation of the work while the child was still working on the task, and was planning to do it well, but had not finished it yet.

Conclusions and discussion

It can be concluded from the results of the empirical study that preschool children's interest in working independently and creatively, evaluating, and coming to conclusions depends to a large extent on the attitude and encouragement of the educator, as well as the expressed inducement and opportunities to receive awards. The empirical study revealed differences between the manifestations of children's initiative and parents' opinion about it. Some parents stated that their child was not interested in participating in special activities and pointed out that a small competition among children could not generate considerable interest.

There were differences in the group of the boys and the girls like their initiative, activity, attitude towards evaluation and the results achieved. The boys worried about their peers' opinion more often than the girls because the boys, in particular, did their best to become more noticed and keep up with the girls. This statement requires more research to understand if the observed tendency in the particular group reflects the situation in the manifestation of girls' and boys' activity in general.

After the completion of the activities for promoting the initiative, both the children and their parents expressed their satisfaction with the work done. Many parents noted that they had become better acquainted with their children, and discovered new ways of spending time together as a family and organizing daily tasks.

The achievements of the children show that the point system is one of the motivating factors, which can promote manifestations of the initiative, and evaluation is important for children either expressed as praise or a reward. The obtained results about rewards require more research to understand the benefits and risks, as well as to determine the optimal period in which the "points system" should be carried out.

Documenting the child's desire to create images, the world of fantasy, encouraging them to develop it and make it result in a cartoon is one of the most obvious examples of self-directed learning.

Cooperation between educators and parents is an important prerequisite for the development of preschool children initiative. To make learning in preschool self-directed, this cooperation should be planned, purposeful and guided, and parents should be able to give their feedback, analyze their cooperation with the child and the educator, receive support and set new educational goals. The educator can guide parents to reach best results for their children and plan learning strategies together, bringing preschool cooperation to an entirely new level.

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Contemporary Teacher's Professionalism: Reality and Challenges

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Abstract

This paper describes the analysis of teachers' daily work most necessary competencies and what related difficulties are. Research also shows what students think about the teacher's professionalism and necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes. The research conclusion reveals contradictions between the contemporary challenges in schools and teacher professionalism.

Keywords: teacher's professionalism, competence, professional qualities

Introduction

Today continuous learning has become a lifelong activity – regardless of age or academic education level. It helps to develop the personality, being successful in the professional area and helps to create qualitative sustainable individual and community development (Valbis, 2005). Professional competencies improvement provides being modern, the ability not to fall off in the social and professional sense (Koķe, 2003). For teachers it's not only the way of how to become more accessible and closer to students, better understand today's events, but also an important step closer to future communities and economics requirements, which dictates most important already learnable skills to be successful in life, development and taking part in the future in general.

Teachers professionalism is understood very widely and as very abstract term – depending on the educational context, it is possible to say that definitions of teacher professionalism focus on teachers' professional qualifications such as "being good at his/her job", "fulfilling the highest standards", "and "achieving excellence" (Demirkasimoglu, 2010). This is why it is tough to determine teachers' professionalism improvement opportunities, or even for teachers themselves to identify their professionalism strong and weak sides. This is what guides teachers to improve their professionalism using methods offered by their workplace, which saves time and money, but at the same time – it might not be what teachers or their students think necessary for teachers to improve. It leads to the goal of this research: theoretically describe today's teachers professional nature and by using empirical research find out students and teachers thoughts about contemporary teachers necessary professional qualities.

To achieve this goal, these methods were used: scientific literature analysis, students' questionnaire, teachers' questionnaire and mathematical analysis of the data.

Teacher's Professionalism theoretical nature

The term „professionalism" comes from words "profession" and "professor" has their etymological roots in the Latin for profess. To be a professional or a professor was to profess to be an expert in some skill or field of knowledge (Baggini, 2005). However „teacher's professionalism" nature historically is defined from differently. It consisted of competencies which were required for the successful exercise of an occupation (Englund, 1996, 76), which earlier were related to tighter control over sociological, ideological and educational dimensions and aimed at achieving the highest standards in teaching profession which was based on the professional formation, knowledge, skill and values (Demirkasimoglu, 2010). Nevertheless, based on definitions up to now, it is possible to interpret professionalism as a multi-dimensional structure including ones work behavior and attitude to perform the highest standards and improve the service quality. The dominant discourses in the field of education indicate that teacher professionalism is associated with improving the quality and standards of teachers' work and their public image

(Demirkasimoglu, 2010), which in promoting context in pedagogy we call professional competencies.

Therefore, in this research teachers' professionalism is seen as qualities, which follows from teachers professional competencies. In scientific literature competencies are described as the combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context. They are particularly necessary for personal fulfillment and development, social inclusion, active citizenship, and employment. Competencies are essential in a knowledge society and guarantee more flexibility in the labor force, allowing it to adapt more quickly to constant changes in an increasingly interconnected world. They are also a major factor in innovation, productivity, and competitiveness, and they contribute to the motivation and satisfaction of workers and the quality of work (Key competences for lifelong learning, 2006).

In EU education law (Supporting teacher competence development, 2013) there are eight key competencies kinds stated which teachers need to maintain in good shape. Communication in the mother tongue, which is the ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and to interact linguistically in an appropriate and creative way in a full range of societal and cultural contexts; communication in foreign languages, which involves, in addition to the main skill dimensions of communication in the mother tongue, mediation and intercultural understanding. The level of proficiency depends on several factors and the capacity for listening, speaking, reading and writing; mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology. Mathematical competence is the ability to develop and apply mathematical thinking to solve a range of problems in everyday situations, with the emphasis being placed on process, activity and knowledge. Basic competences in science and technology refer to the mastery, use, and application of knowledge and methodologies that explain the natural world. These involve an understanding of the changes caused by human activity and the responsibility of each as a citizen; Digital competence involves the confident and critical use of information society technology (IST) and thus basic skills in information and communication technology (ICT); learning to learn is related to learning, the ability to pursue and organize one's own learning, either individually or in groups, in accordance with one's own needs, and awareness of methods and opportunities; social and civic competences. Social competence refers to personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and all forms of behavior which equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life. It is linked to personal and social well-being. An understanding of codes of conduct and customs in the different environments in which individuals operate is essential. Civic competence, and particularly knowledge of social and political concepts and structures (democracy, justice, equality, citizenship and civil rights), equips individuals to engage in active and democratic participation; the sense of initiative and entrepreneurship is the ability to turn ideas into action. It involves creativity, innovation, and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects to achieve objectives. The individual is aware of the context of his/her work and can seize opportunities that arise. It is the foundation for acquiring more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance; cultural awareness and expression, which involves the appreciation of the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media (music, performing arts, literature and the visual arts) (Key competences for lifelong learning, 2006).

In all these key competencies the main emphasis is put on critical thinking, creativity, initiative, problem solving, risk assessment, decision taking and effective management of feelings (Waring M., Evans C., 2014). In each area, actualities may differ,

and opportunities how to self-develop might be limited by social, economic or political conditions. For example, Latvia as one of EU nations has regulations, which dictates that comprehensive education, professional education (professional classes included), after school group interest educational activity educator is responsible for his professional competencies development, which must be done in three years in no less than 36 hours. Latvia's law of education states four educator professionalism modules. First is teachers general competencies module, which consists of civil treatment improvement, qualitative, and creative pedagogical activity promoting accordingly to each student's individual needs, special and inclusive educations, child protection, health and safety, recognition and prevention of violence against children and child abuse in the family. Second is education content and didactic module, which consists mostly of learning strategies and choice of methods and information and communication technology skills in the modern education environment. The third one is educational process management module, which describes organization for focused and result oriented educational process, leadership and financial skills, educational institutions that help to secure the competitiveness, document, and school management. The fourth and last one is teacher experience module, which describes information about participating in conferences, seminars, workshops, internships and other related activities, membership of employers' organizations to help organize training in methodological material preparation in their subject or practical classes in general, teacher promotion of competitiveness and lastly personal development. (Noteikumi par pedagogiem nepieciešamo izglītību un profesionālo kvalifikāciju un pedagogu profesionālās kompetences pilnveides kārtību, 2014)

That is stated by the law but, in reality, its way more challenging for teachers. Things that teachers consider most needed for their professionalism support differs from the ones available, described in law or ones needed for students. To determine this gap an empirical research was done in Latvia with the goal: describe today's teachers professional nature by using empirical research find out students and teachers thoughts about contemporary teachers necessary professional qualities. With help from this research information about actual current events for students and teachers related to teachers, contemporary professionalism was clarified and collected while determining major flaws, difficulties and challenges.

Materials and Methods

Based on scientific literature analysis and document analysis it was concluded, that theoretical information varies from actual today's teacher professionalism, this is also why research is mostly based on empirical research with the goal to find out today's teachers professionalism. This is why research is aimed at both – teachers and students opinion comparison. In this way can also determine major flaws and difficulties in teachers' professionalism and recognize the gap between current and desired state, also what teachers think they should improve and what students consider as most important for today's teacher.

Research gathers and analyzes information which was acquired using questionnaire given to pupils and teachers in different regions of Latvia. Questions in the questionnaire were about the situation in their schools and their opinion. For data analysis, content analysis method and mathematical statistics computer software were used. Respondents were chosen randomly. Forms had ten open-ended questions, from which most were the same for both students and teachers. Questions were available in electronic format that allowed gathering data from different regions, different schools, and respondents with different experiences.

Results

The questionnaire was done by 214 respondents, from which 111 were teachers and 103 were students. Teacher and student opinion are compared in research, but, because gender, age or work experience differences do not show meaningful

correlation or does not correlate at all, those results are not further specified in more detail and are not important in this research.

Results show that today's teachers most important qualities (see fig.1) are different if asked to students or teachers. Teachers' most important qualities for the contemporary teacher are: creativity, knowledge, usage of IT and communication. Students' most important qualities for current teachers are: to teach, to help, empathy and listen to students. Unlike students, for teachers, the abilities (talent) to teach or to help develop are not important quality at all.
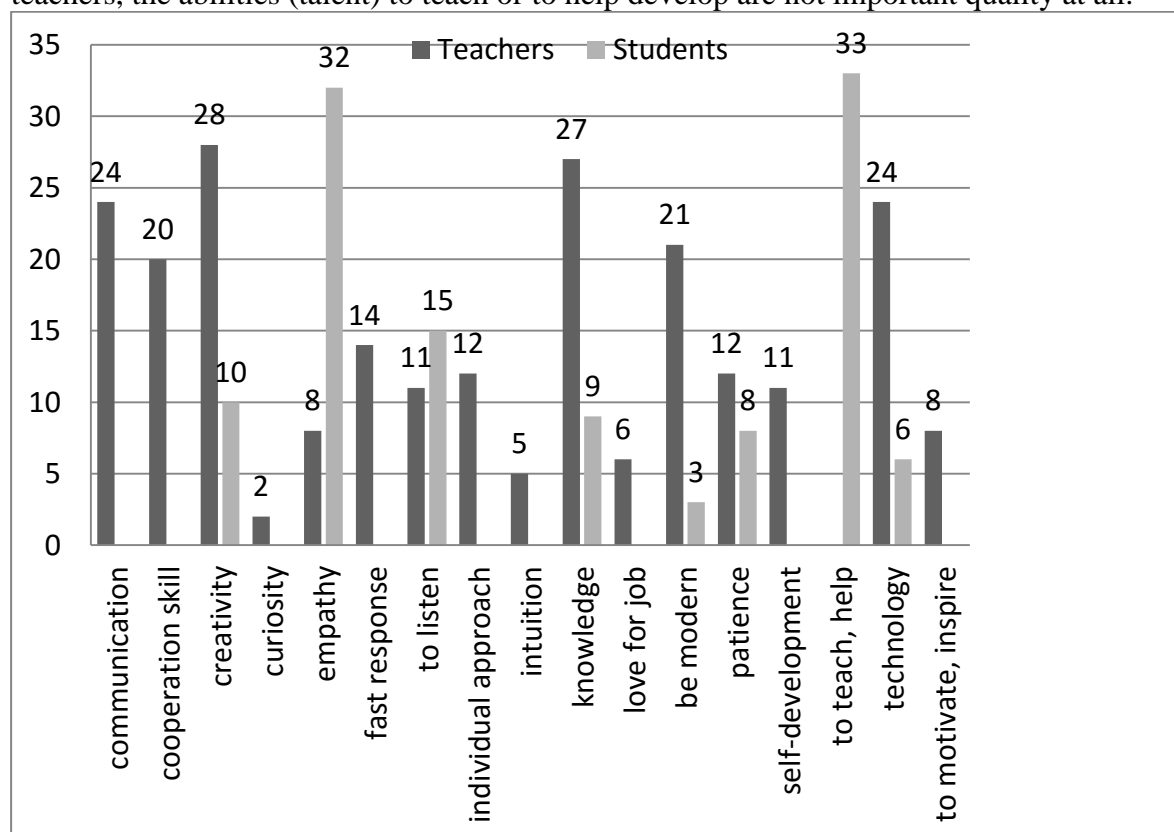

Figure 1. *Today's teachers' most important qualities*

Results show data about teachers' competencies that needs improvement (see fig. 2). Compared teachers and students opinions, we can see that many (9%) students think that there are nothing for teachers to develop. Teachers think that it is the most important to develop IT skills, individual approach and know how to protect themselves from aggressive (physically or mentally) students or they parents. Also, more than 10% of teachers say that they have to develop the ability to take care of themselves and to relax. They do not agree, only competence where students and teachers think the same is knowledge of psychology (~8%). Also, they both think that patience and modernizing needs improvement. Students think that the most important teachers' competencies that have to develop are empathy, patience, and psychology.
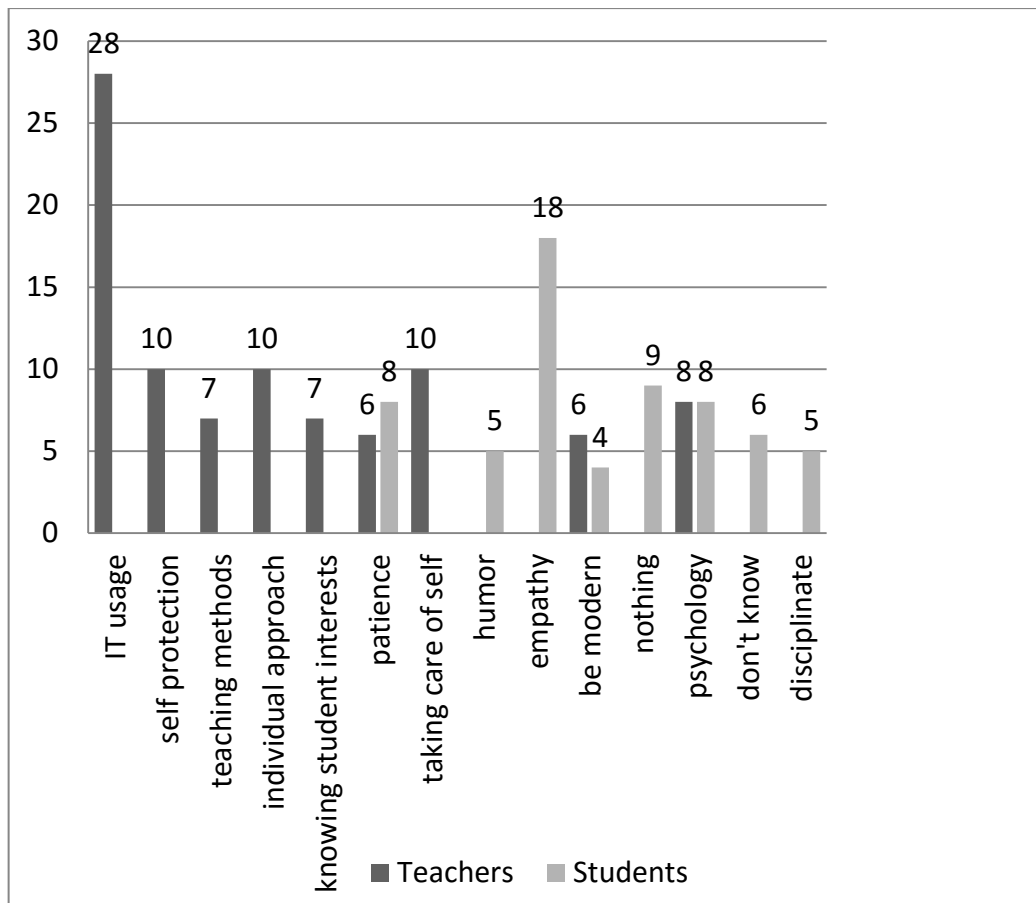
Figure 2. *Teachers' competencies that needs improvement*

In this research teacher and student opinions about how creative teachers are in everyday work were compared, creativity level was expressed from low to high. Students had to answer about teachers as a whole, but teachers had to answer how creative teachers are in scale from 1 to 5. It was found, that Teachers think that their creativity on the daily basis is at the high level while students (almost half) estimated average level of creativity (see fig 3).

Figure 3. *Teachers' creativity level on daily basis*

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In Research, there also were questions to teachers about their opinion – where they see their creativity. Answers show that all, except 5 (they are worried about the time that creativity takes since salary does not include extra time for planning creativity promoting tasks or time to make classes more interesting in general) teachers see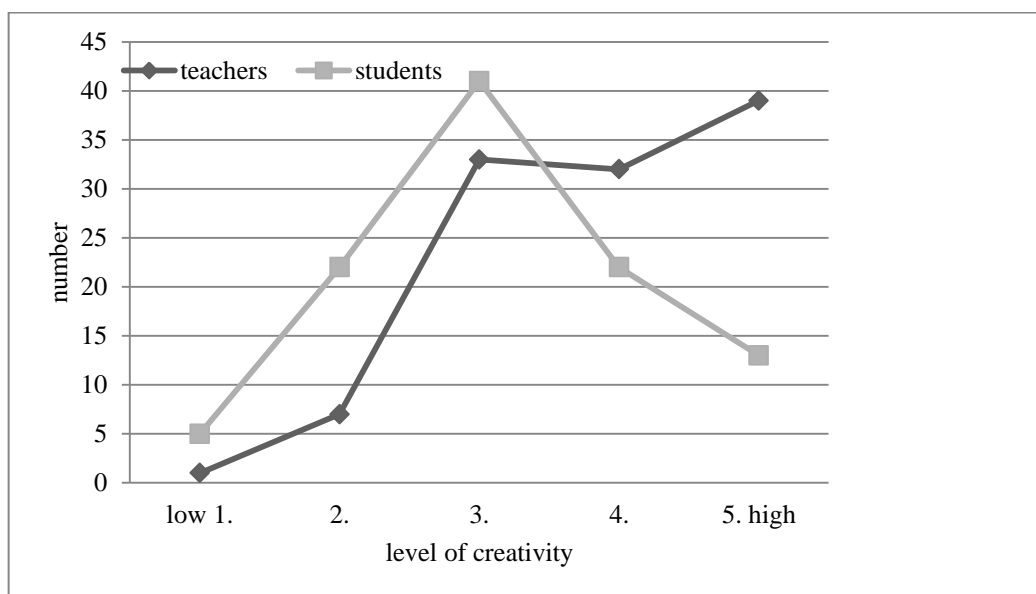 positive aspects in creativity at work. On teachers opinion (see fig. 4) creativity helps to get motivation for learning; gives fun and satisfaction to themselves and helps not to burnout.
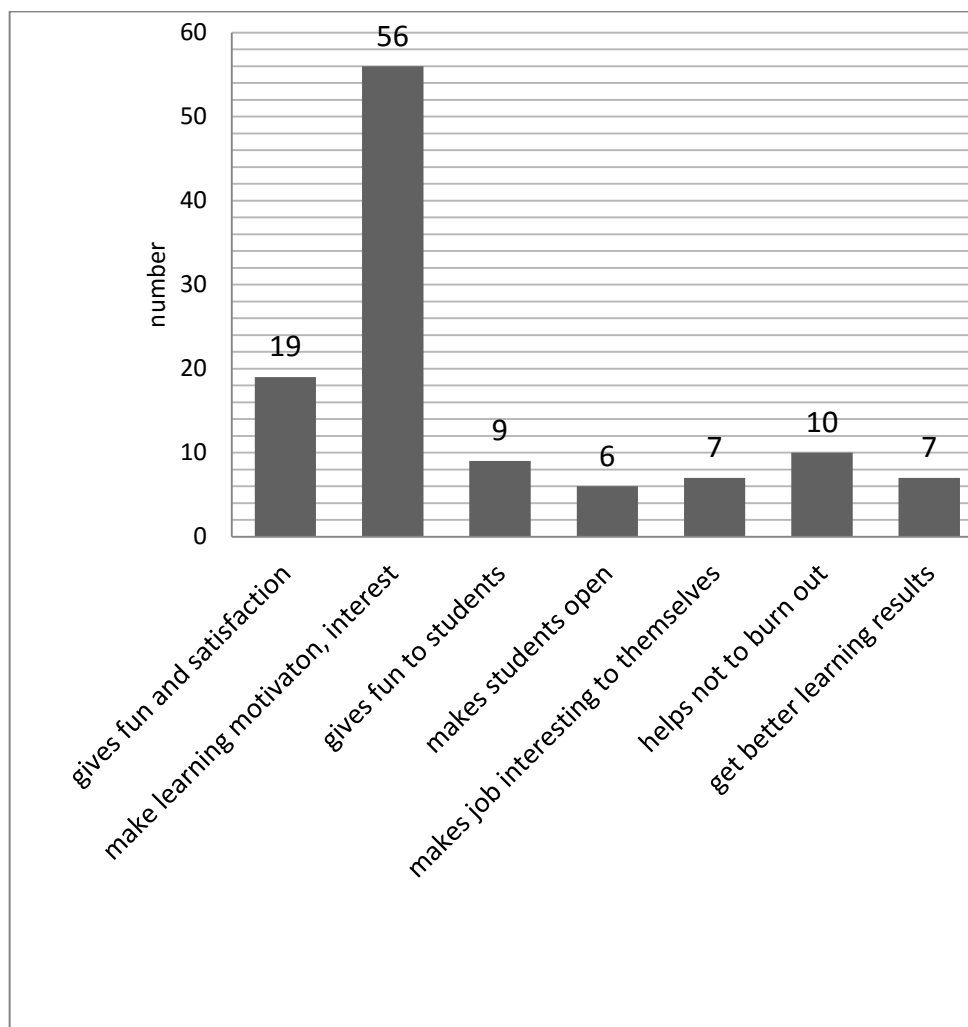
Figure 4. *Where teachers see their creativity*

Student and teacher questionnaire also included question – when and where the teacher has to be creative. Teachers have more varied versions, but most popular answers are the same – both students and teachers have given answers that creativity must be included in teaching process and extracurricular (see fig. 5). Answers similar to these were very common – *«When I'm creative? From the moment I open school's doors until I'm closing them and going home»* – every third teacher considers that teachers have to be creative all the time.
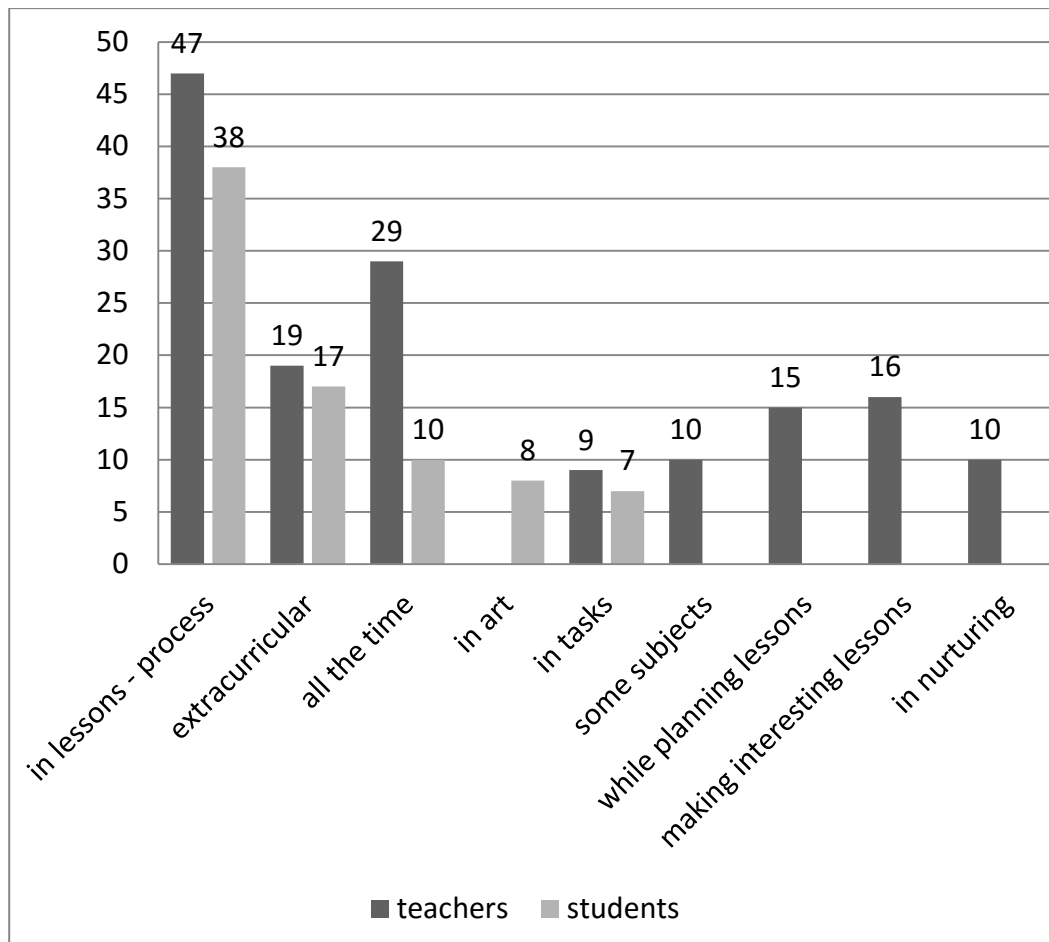
Figure 5. *When and where teacher has to be creative*

Further students and teachers were asked to estimate – how many teachers can be called «creative» in your school (for students – school which they attend, for teachers – school where they teach). Estimations were given in seven-point scale, starting from none and ending with that every teacher in school is creative (see fig. 6). Results revealed that teachers and students opinion is very different. Teachers consider more than half of their colleagues are creative while students think otherwise – there are only few creative teachers in the school.
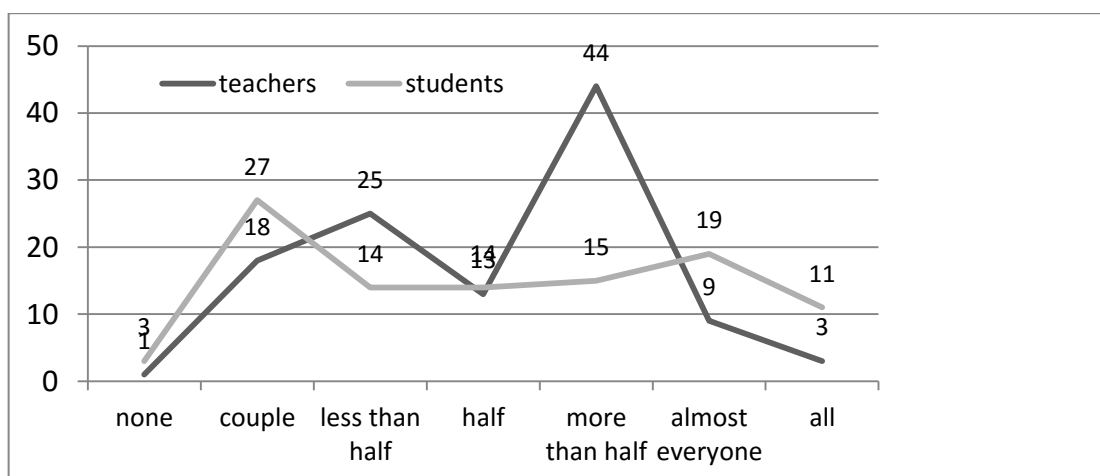
Figure 6. *How many teachers can be called «creative»*

Research also shows how creative teachers sees themselves compared to their colleagues. Most of them see themselves as pretty creative compared to their colleagues. About one-fourth thinks that there are some more creative colleagues, but about half sees themselves as almost the most creative. Only one of respondent teachers considers himself having the low level of creativity. Students see teachers even less creative. It might mean that teachers overestimate their creativity, but students underestimate it.

Students were asked to describe teachers they like to learn from, and it is easy to learn from them. This revealed that for students most important professional qualities are humor, skill to teach and help, creativity and being kind (last one appears as important quality to especially primary school students). These qualities that describe best teachers in students opinion were compared to competencies that teachers think they can offer – their strong side. Teachers advanced qualities and students necessity comparison (see fig.7) shows that teachers are strong in qualities: creativity, empathy, knowledge, love for their job and people, while students need them to be more advanced in humor, teaching, being kind and creative and that the only thing that both – students think is necessary and teachers think is their strong side is creativity, empathy, and knowledge.
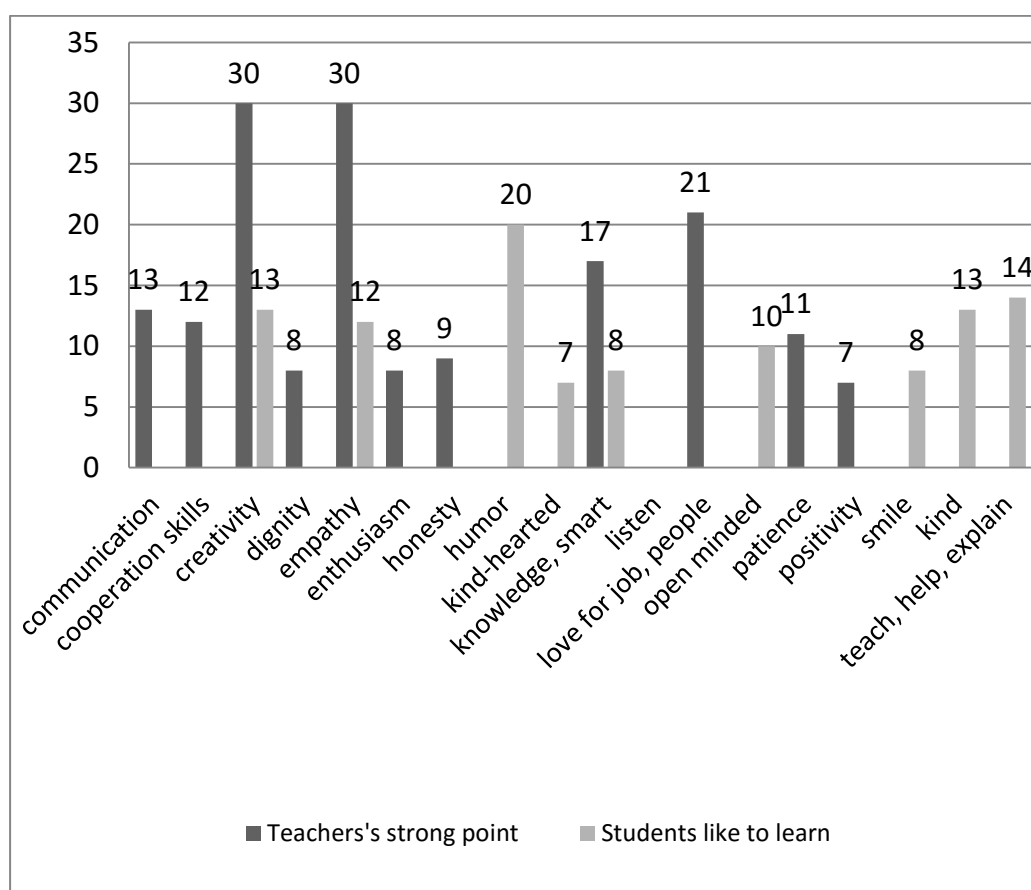
Figure 7. *Teachers advanced professional qualities and students necessity comparison*

Also, while researching teachers' opinion about professional qualities and students views, their opinions about professional qualities that are necessary to be a good teacher (see fig. 8) were compared. In diagram students opinion is shown – what teacher qualities needs to be improved to make them good teachers, and teachers individual opinion – what three most important qualities they think they should improve to become the better teacher.

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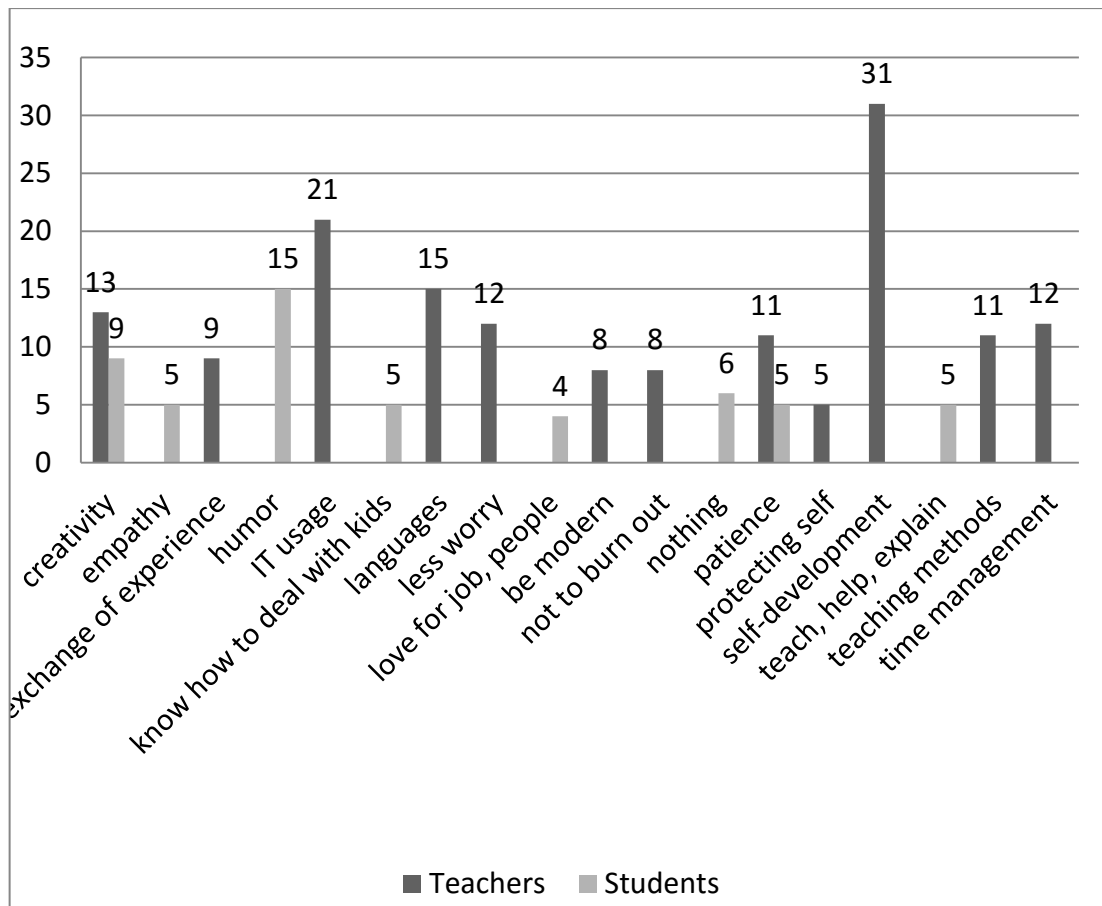
Figure 8. *Professional qualities which are necessary to be a good teacher*

This showed that teachers believe that to be a good teacher, the most important improvement of their professional competence is to self-develop – especially in psychology and special pedagogy. Also that they need to improve IT skills, language skills and creativity. Time planning skills, providing time for relaxation and less worry are referred as very important. Students think that competencies for the teacher to be a good teacher has to have a sense of humor and creativity. A Large proportion of students said that teachers have nothing to improve to be a good teacher.

Conclusions

Research shows creativity as very important part of contemporary teachers' professionalism. Students answers show creativity as a very important and missing competence in teachers. Teachers also recognize that creativity is very necessary, but consider themselves to be very creative and a lot of their colleagues as very creative. Both students and teachers consider that creativity level is related to finance and lack of time.

Research clearly shows that students want to be heard - qualities as empathy, understanding, ability to deal with children and psychology knowledge are very common in students' answers. Openness, consultation, respect for the point of view, as well as other responses (teachers do not care about our problems, etc.) indicates that students probably feel very misunderstood, and for students most important teachers' professional competencies are related to qualities - understanding, tolerance and empathy. Research also found odd contradictions – teachers consider empathy as one of their strengths while students consider it as the most important and lacking professional quality.

Also, students show the desire for more interesting, more creative activities. Research revealed the belief that existing methods of teaching are invalid because most teachers and lessons are boring - this often appears in student (especially elder ones) responses. If there are no group activities, creative methods or stories from teachers' experience – learning in school doesn't work. By contrast, teachers think that the most important competencies are related to information technology, knowledge of psychology, not making lessons any more interesting. It might be related to belief that using more modern technology will guarantee that students will learn and they will enjoy learning.

Overall, for students, it is crucial, that their teachers are modern (because only then they will understand students). Modernizing as competence doesn't get high rates in any question, but it shows in every of them.

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Factors affecting student's motivation and dropout

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Abstract
The early school leaving (ESL) rate has been used both as a fundamental strategic indicator for the monitoring of the Lisbon Agenda and as an indicator of the current Europe 2020 strategy. According to "Europe 2020" strategy, the ESL rate in the European Union (EU) Member States must be reduced to a maximum of 10 percent by 2020. Factors affecting dropout and students' motivation to graduate from an education program includes personal, family, school environment and community factors. Dropout can be analyzed on the country, region, city or school levels.
Keywords: Dropout, Early school leaving, EU education policy, student's motivation factors

Introduction

Europe 2020 is the EU's growth strategy for the coming decade. The European Union has set five ambitious objectives – for employment, innovation, education, social inclusion and climate/energy – to be reached by 2020. One of the objectives included in this strategy is education, and it includes two sub - targets for the EU in 2020 (European Commission, 2015):

- reducing the rates of early school leaving below 10%;
- at least 40% of 30-34–year-olds completing third level education.

The early school leaving (ESL) rate has been used both as a fundamental strategic indicator for the monitoring of the Lisbon Agenda and as an indicator of the current Europe 2020 strategy. Simultaneously, this indicator characterizes the dropout level in each particular country.

The indicator "Early leavers from education and training" is measured by the share of 18 to 24-year-olds who have at most lower secondary education and are not in further education and training. The value has consistently declined since 2008, for both men and women. In 2013, the indicator "EU 27 countries" stood at 12.0%, compared with 14.7% in 2008 (Eurostat, 2015a).

Given the social problem that ESL represents, one of the most important targets included in the Lisbon Strategy was to reduce by half (by 2010) the number of persons aged 18–24 with no more than a lower secondary education who are not receiving any further education or training. The envisaged maximum rate was to be 10% in 2010. However, for several reasons this target was not achieved, which is why in 2010 the Europe 2020 strategy included reducing the ESL percentage (14 % in 2010) to 10% by 2020 as a headline target (European Parliament, 2011).

The characteristics of ESL are different in various European societies, and therefore, the strategies designed to fight it must take the analysis of the specific national, regional and local characteristics of the phenomenon as their starting point. Some authors state that in the majority of western countries, reducing ESL has become one of the most important issues in national politics (Dekkers & Claassen, 2001).

In Latvia, the amount of school leavers in the age group of 18-24 years comparing to 2008 has dropped from 15.5% to 8.5% in 2014 (European Commission, 2015).

Looking at historical averages, the overall Latvian scores (12.0% to 8.5%) for the period from 2010 to 2014 are better than the EU average (14.0% to 11.2%) and the euro zone (15.5 to 11.7%). Still the future forecasts for this indicator in Latvia are not so favorable. Comparing Latvia to other European states (Figure 1), it can be concluded that a deterioration of the forecast results by the year 2020 (in comparison to the current situation) will also be experienced in other EU countries too.
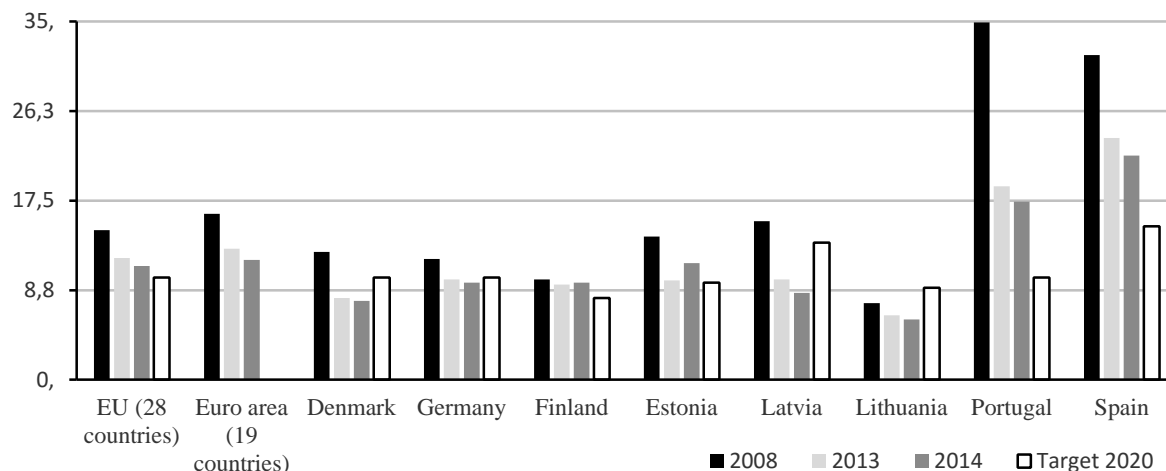

Fig. 1. *Results of the analysis of statistical data and targets for the indicator "Early leavers from education and training". (Data: Eurostat, 2015)*

In Figure 1 the indicator EU (28 countries) includes all the member states of the European Union. The indicator Euro area includes all 19 states of the euro zone. The authors conducted an analysis of statistical data. The sample includes countries and years that show significant changes and trends in the EU. After analyzing the national indicators, all 28 countries were chosen post-Soviet countries – Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and countries with historically "bad" indicators – Spain and Portugal. Finland, Germany, and Denmark data indicate that similar trends and their differences can be observed in other EU countries.

The Aim of the Study

The object of the study is the secondary professional education. The subject of the study is the dropout. The aim of the study is to explore the causes of the dropout. The task of the study was to identify similar studies in Latvia and in the world, to examine the latest scientific literature related to factors affecting student's motivation and dropout.

The authors of the present study identified the methods used in other countries for the purpose of ESL studies. The "5 Why" method was applied in the students survey.

Materials and Methods

The present study employed theoretical and empirical research methods. The theoretical methods included the research and analysis of scientific literature as well as legislative acts along with the analysis of statistical data. A theoretical study of the empirical data was performed. The empirical research methods included the use of student's questionnaires and personal reflection. The empirical part of the research included data from total 98 respondents aged 18-24.

School dropout studies. This paper uses reference material from journal articles, books, and reports starting from the year 1975. The search engines ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center), ResearchGate.net and ScienceDirect, were used. An additional criterion was the restriction of the search to the literature in the English language alone. The keywords "school dropout" or "school leaving", and "secondary education" or "high school" were used in the search for abstracts.

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Among others the following studies carried out at various times were referenced: Reich and Young (1975), Rumberger (1983), Ekstrom et al. (1986), Okpala et al. (2001), Orthner and Cook (2002), Allensworth (2004), Vizcain (2005), Ou and Reynolds (2006), DesJardins et al. (2006), De Witte and Van Klaveren (2012).

Rumberger (2004a), Ramsdal, Gjærum, Wynn (2012), Niklass (2013) have researched the correlation between dropout and youth unemployment.

Studies in Latvia that mention dropout or related topics – youth unemployment and social issues – include CEDEFOP (the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training) publication Vocational education and training in Latvia 2015 (Cedefop, 2015). Problems related to dropout from schools have been analyzed by Bebriša, Ieviņa, Krastiņa (2007). Anspoka (2012) has studied school dropouts and aspects of teachers' professional competencies.

Fan & Wolters (2012) have addressed the links between motivation and dropout in their publication. In her Ph.D. thesis, Koroļeva (2011) researched students' motivation to adopt decisions regarding continuing their studies, choosing a career and creating families.

Low motivation has been addressed by foreign (Adams & Becker, 1990; Herbert & Reis, 1999) and Latvian researchers (Grīviņš (2012).

Analyzing the research described in scientific publications, the conclusion can be reached that research on dropout can be divided into the following levels by size about the State in which it is performed (De Witte et al., 2013):

- National
- State
- Country/District/City
- School

Each research level uses different methods. Most studies in the period from 1975 to 2013 have been carried out at least at the City/District level – covering some educational institutions (De Witte et al., 2013). Studies of the methods used in different researches are summarized in Table 2. The table was created adapting De Witte et al. studies and analysis of the works mentioned in their study.

As it is evident from Rumberger's (Rumberger, 2011) work and the other literature, students dropout from schools because of the complex set of reasons, many of which can be traced back to their early experiences at the school. Examples of the main factors found to be related to high school dropout include the following:

School characteristics, such as the quality of teachers, level of expectations of students, school climate (Pittman & Haughwout, 1987; Bebriša et al.; 2007, Anspoka, 2012), adequacy of resources and support services, disciplinary policies and practices, school size and location (Pittman & Haughwout, 1987), student-teacher ratio and the composition of the student body (Pittman, 1993; Balfanz & Legters, 2005; Rumberger, 2004a).

Family characteristics, including socioeconomic status (Entwisle et al., 2005; Anspoka, 2012), parenting practices, parent engagement in students' learning, family structure (Rumberger, 1983; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2003), school mobility, homelessness, and violence and abuse in the home.

Student characteristics, including:

- Educational performance, such as failed courses, test scores, grade retention, and academic achievement (Ekstrom et al., 1986; Entwisle et al., 2004; Dalton et al., 2009).
- School engagement, including:
  - Behavioural engagement, such as attendance/ absenteeism, disciplinary issues, involvement in school-related activities (Entwisle et al., 2004).

- Cognitive engagement, such as investment and motivation in learning (Adams & Becker, 1990; Herbert & Reis, 1999).
- Emotional engagement, such as feelings of being in school, relationships with teachers, peers, learning.

Table 2. *Observed approaches, methods, models and level of dropout analysis (adapted from De Witte et al., 2013)*

Observed approaches, methods and models	Level of analysis			
	National level studies	State level studies	County, district or city level studies	School level studies
Case study and ethnographic methods	–	–	–	Herbert and Reis (1999)
Difference-in-difference (DD) analyses	Koball (2007)	–	Cabus and De Witte (2011)	–
Hierarchical generalized linear models (HGLM)	–	–	Allensworth (2005)	–
Instrumental-variables approach	–	–	Allensworth (2005)	–
Logistic regressions	Suet-Ling and Dong-Beom (2000), Kalsmijn and Kraaykamp (2003), Henry (2007)	Entwisle et al. (2005)	Allensworth (2005), Vizcain (2005), Duchesne et al. (2005)	DesJardins et al. (2006)
Ordinary least squares regressions	–	–	Okpala et al. (2001)	–
Probit models	Rumberger (1983), Jarjoura (1996)	–	Allensworth (2005), Ou and Reynolds (2006)	Adams and Bescker (1990)
Survival analyses/event history models/time hazard models/cox regression models	Ekstrom et al. (1986), Kalsmijn and Kraaykamp (2003)	–	Allensworth (2005), Vizcain (2005), Duchesne et al. (2005)	DesJardins et al. (2006)
Methods and model not detailed	Pittman and Haughwout (1987), Olsen and Farkas (1989), Rumbergesr and Lamb (2003), Plank et al. (2005), Balfanz and Legters (2005), Smith and Naylor (2005), Ishitani and Snider (2006), Dustmann and van Soeast (2008), Caprara et. al (2008), Dalton et al. (2009), Cataldi et al. (2009)	Entwisle et al. (2004)	Reich and Young (1975), Orthner and Cook (2002), Allensworth (2004), De Witte and Van Klaveren (2012)	–

- Behaviour outside the school, including risky behaviour, violence, the extent of out-of-school work.
- Psychosocial attributes, attitudes, such as goals, self-perceptions, and resiliency (Ekstrom et al., 1986; Vizcain, 2005).
- Health status, such as freedom from chronic disease or acute illness, self-assessments of health and well-being (Anspoka, 2012).
- Demographic characteristics, such as race and ethnicity, age, gender, immigration status (Rumberger, 1983, 1994a; Allensworth, 2004; Anspoka, 2012).
- Early adult responsibilities, such as managing pregnancy and parenting (Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2003; Allensworth, 2004; Niklass, 2013).
- Lack of motivation (Adams & Becker, 1990; Herbert & Reis, 1999; Fan & Wolters, 2012).

Community characteristics, including poverty, unmet needs, inequality in the fields of quality and availability of services and opportunities, such as child care, health care, transportation, employment (Rumberger, 1983, 2004a).

The district, tribal, state, and federal policies, such as final exam requirements, incentives to retain low-performing students, policies and practices that perpetuate inequity, racism, and disparities in health and well-being (Herbert & Reis, 1999; Rumberger, 2004b).

Combined factors from the above, including composite measures of risk factors, typologies, and structural models of dropping out (Okpala et al., 2001).

5 Why method. The "5 Why" method was used in the student questionnaire. For this purpose, Sakichi Toyoda's 5 Whys technique was studied. It is a simple but powerful tool for quick discovery of the root of a problem so that one can deal with it once and for all. Sakichi Toyoda, one of the fathers of the Japanese industrial revolution, developed the technique in the 1930s (Toolshero, 2015). He was an industrialist, inventor and founder of Toyota Industries. His technique became popular in the 1970s, and Toyota still uses it today to solve problems. The 5 Whys technique is true to this tradition, and it is the most effective when the answers come from people who have hands-on experience of the process being examined. It is remarkably simple: when a problem occurs, you uncover its nature and source by asking "why" no fewer than five times (Serrat, 2010). The method is characterized by the following features:

Pros:
- Ease of use.
- Effectiveness in most cases.
- Encourages the search for a solution to baffling cases.

Cons:
- The tendency to limit problems exploration depth.
- The risk that the current response to the "Why?" displays a discrepancy of the right branch, that is, produces answers that do not lead to the cause.
- The opening of the cause shall be restricted to the researcher's competence.
- Results are not always replicable – different specialists will provide different answers.

In our case, the risk of diversion allows one to get a wider range of causes. Respondents are not restricted in their replies.

The Results and discussion

The present study of the causes for the young people to leave school early can be regarded as a harbinger in the field of analysis of one of the problems with the education system of Latvia – that of adolescents and young people leaving school prematurely or not receiving a diploma or a qualification. The statistical indicators of students' movement in 2013 and 2014 (Fig. 2) which were submitted to the Ministry of Education by Riga State Technical School (Rīgas Valsts tehnikums), shows that the number of students dropping out of school increases.

If the teachers and school administration can find the real causes of dropout, they can try and influence that to make the change. The exact reason which is specified in statistical surveys or sociological studies provide no indication for the right course of action and any particular activities – aiming at helping the students to stay at a school and supporting their learning process. Because the same school dropout pretext may be caused by various factors.
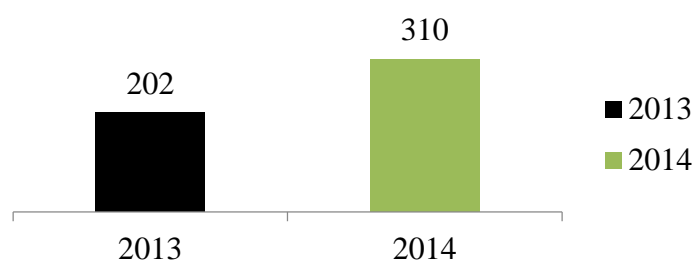
Fig. 2. *Students dropout and periods of 2013.-2014.*
Based on the example of Riga State Technical school data.

There was a total of 98 students interviewed. Summarizing the answers seven groups of reasons for the young people to drop out of education were formed. Analysis of the cause-and-effect is a group of problem-solving methods that is used to identify the causes of a problem or relationships between the events (consequences) and their causes. Every adverse situation or problem can be corrected, but for to ensure that this situation will never be repeated requires taking corrective action of eliminating the causes of this problem. The obtained answers are summarized in Figure 3.
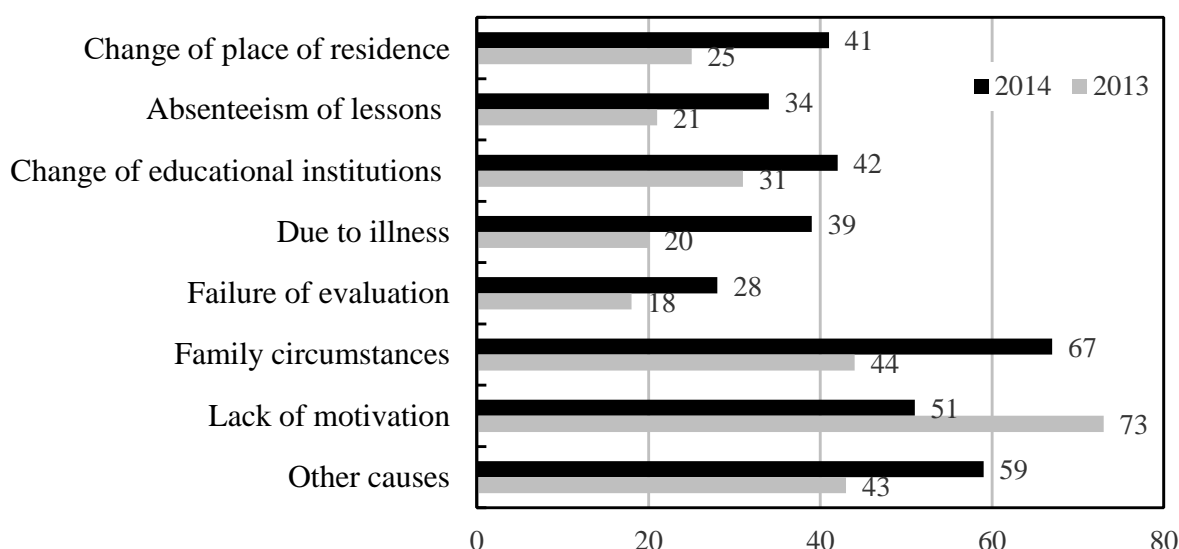
Fig. 3. *School dropout causes. Total of 98 respondents*

The aim of the analysis was to find out the cause of the problem. Upon analyzing the results, it should be stated that illness is an objective cause. Health problems were cited as the cause by several students. But what if this is the beginning of a chemical or behavioural addiction? Similarly, the complex is the situation with the inability to get up in the morning. At the first glance, it may seem to be nothing but laziness. But what if it is caused by depression? Chronic diseases, drug addiction or depression are three completely different reasons summarized under the same wording – due to illness.

The cause of the "lack of motivation" is not defined in the questionnaires as the underlying cause. Usually, this cause as a reason it is "mentioned „failure of evaluation", "Absenteeism of lessons". Loss of motivation appears reason "change of educational institutions" in combination with "no interest in the chosen profession" and "not interest in knowledge."

Another reason is the low academic performance, which appears due to the **lack of evaluation or low marks,** causing the person to leave the school. Also this may combine different causes under one title – lack of motivation, which may be caused by different reasons. Lack of motivation can manifest itself in a lack of interest or a reason for action. This can not only occur due to the lack of prior knowledge in some academic subjects, but also in the chosen profession in general. The following are quotations from the responses: "teaching unnecessary things (no idea what will be taught), exams in particular subjects not passed, cannot see any sense in learning, lack of motivation."

The absenteeism of lessons, similarly as with the failure of fair evaluation, usually occurs because of "laziness" or "lack of motivation". The "laziness" and "lack of motivation" may be hiding other reasons. Maybe, indeed, "there is nothing to do at school"? Sometimes classes that fail to interest the students are offered, leading to the teaching staff taking offense in the fact that the students do not choose any of proposed activities or even display a dismissive attitude towards those. As it was stated in the responses: "There is nothing to do at the school. There are other interests. The inability to get up in the morning. Lack of motivation."

The pretext of "family circumstances" can combine a set of very different dropout causes. The worst, of course, is the reason "lack of sustenance in the family",

which leads to teenagers or young persons having to take work. There are also other reasons displaying our modern Latvian reality – children are reared by grandparents or even barely adult siblings because the parents have left in search of work. The parents believe that their children need no help. At the same time, the grandparents may send children to work because they believe that at the age of 18 they already have to earn their living themselves.

The provided cause of the "**change of educational institutions**" might not match the subject of the present research, as there is a possibility that the young person will eventually receive some education and a proof of it in the form of a certificate or a diploma. But also this choice may be influenced by a variety of reasons, and the school can help its students if it performs a study of the causes. According to respondents:

- The school teaches unnecessary things (no idea what will be taught).
- Incorrect choice of profession (no idea about the profession – lack of career education at the primary school. Mom wants me to learn this (or some other) specific profession).
- There are other interests.

The pretext of "**other causes**" is equally capacious. It makes sense to research it, as the existence of different causes of psychological and social nature will be uncovered that cause the young people to leave school without proper education. The most frequently mentioned reasons are as follows:

- The desire to take work.
- Education is not necessary.
- Dropping out because of friends.
- Insufficient means of sustenance in the family.
- Commencement of partnerships.

Summarizing all the above, the causes (factors) that contribute to the ESL can be divided into **objective** and **subjective**. The ones that are beyond the influence of the young people are grouped as the objective causes, such as the need to help the family or a serious illness.

Subjective psychological causes can be divided into:

- Intellectual;
- Emotional;
- Related to the one's individual will, the analysis of which has not been the aim of the present article.

Among the causes that contribute to the dropout the following shall also be mentioned:

- The lack of social skills.
  - Inappropriate choice of education profile (specialty) .
- Lack of motivation to learn.
- Prevalence of knowledge over the skills.
- Previous education oriented towards memorizing (evaluation)

The most topical issue in teaching is returning non-attending students back to school. Schools emphasize various offers, interest-related classes, leisure time activities, and measures for strengthening self-awareness and social competencies.

The experience of vocational education institutions suggests that frequently problems arise from the intense and diverse, yet fragmented, the content of curricula.

Part of students' parents are of the opinion that 9th-grade students do not require assistance in learning. In turn, parents who work abroad cannot provide adequate support for their children. One can observe insufficient awareness among students about the professions they have selected: this is frequently characteristic of cases when parents have decided the most suitable professions for their children.

Part of students' parents are inactive regarding communication, they are difficult to reach (because they live in rural areas, small towns or abroad), and establishing contacts with them is difficult. For example, Riga State Technical School puts effort into making the partnership between parents and the school more efficient. Along with the traditional collaboration forms (meetings, discussions, parents' council), it also offers communication using electronic media.

Conclusions

To talk about the root causes a broader and deeper study is needed. Still, one of the most frequently mentioned causes is the lack of motivation to learn.

To reduce dropout rates "due to family circumstances", it is necessary to increase parents' interest, and engagement in the education process; closer communication between the teaching staff and parents must also be facilitated.

Regarding motivating students, additional attention must be paid to the causes of the decrease in learning motivation and their relation to curricula and organization of the educational process.

It is possible to increase students' motivation if vocational education institutions observe the following aspects when organizing their educational processes:

1. Ensure individual approach to students considering their perception abilities;
2. Ensure that students have the opportunity to acquire skills and abilities related to their future profession during field practice;
3. Introduce students with the differentiation of educational achievements which provides them with understanding of the ability to pass the planned tests at a sufficient level;
4. Develop communication skills through organizing various quick-wit competitions in particular subjects;
5. Organize sports activities including skill presentations in particular professions;
6. Organize meetings with employers who invite students to become acquainted with their companies;
7. Supervision of teachers to improve their teaching competencies.

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The significant qualitative management criteria in non-governmental sports organisztions

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Abstract

Quality Management is a relatively new field in the sports industry. Not only scientists but also practitioners often emphasize the importance of implementation of quality management in the sports industry (Breuer & Erdtel, 2005). The Sports Management literature is mostly about the transfer of general models of quality management into the sports industry (Horch & Breuer, 2006). This paper will analyze the specific issues of sports industry, namely non-governmental sports organizations in accordance with quality management. For the most part, of this paper, it will be analyzed the qualitative management criteria in non-governmental sports organizations.

Introduction

Authors D. Murruy and G. Howat (2002) concluded the importance of the client contentedness/ satisfaction in the sports quality management. Consumers do not only assess the quality of the services but also compare it to their individual needs or preferences. The contentedness or discontentedness, wishes or requirements by the association members with the sports influence the consumer behaviour, communication, and loyalty to the sports association. The contentedness or discontentedness with the sports services is a very important factor of sports quality management. Since most sports associations offer services, the service quality depends on the customer's subjective evaluation. Moreover, services are intangible and for the evaluation of customer service involvement necessary (Stauß, 2001).

On bases of this theory in this paper will be selected the appropriate quality management criteria in non-governmental sports organizations.

The topic quality management in sports associations was chosen due to the fact that the authors are employees of non-governmental sports organization - Latvian Universities Sports Federation, which is the umbrella organization of student's sports in Latvia and it, coincided with its objectives and interests. The goal is to improve the level of quality management in Latvian Universities Sports Federation to reach the organization's vision and tasks. According to scholar P. De Knop (2006), the significance of sport is that in the abstract there is a duty to improve the quality of it. To achieve and to improve the quality management of LUSF an appropriate quality management evaluation model has to be established. That would allow judging the quality management level and the necessary improvements for the development.

Tasks:

1. To evaluate the major quality management models;
2. To evaluate the significant quality management criteria for non-governmental sports organizations; 3. To establish criterial model for quality management in non-governmental sports organizations, which will be based on the selected material of the literature research and review

The purpose of the research:

The evaluation of the significant criteria for the quality management in non-governmental sports organizations

The following methods will be applied to enrich the nominated tasks and purpose:
Theoretical analysis of literature

Quality Management in non-governmental sports organizations
From the economics point of view, sport is assumed to be the products and services for the active and passive sports exercises as well as the sports organisations, societies or clubs, where these sports products and services are produced. Sports products and services are very heterogenic, and their offer pallet is very wide, i.e., from sports shoes to sports physiotherapy and from small local sports clubs to international federations.
Not only scientists but also practitioners more often emphasize the importance of implementation of quality management in the sports industry (Breuer, Erdtel 2005). Scientist J. Freiling (2001) believes that quality management provides the implementation of customer wishes and advantage over its competitors. Since most sports association offering services; the service quality depends on the customer's subjective evaluation. Moreover, services are intangible and for the service sourcing is the customer involvement necessary (Stauß, 2001).
 Authors D. Murray and G. Howat concluded the importance of the client contentedness/ satisfaction in the sports quality management literature. Consumers do not only assess the quality of the services but also compare it to their individual needs or preferences. The contentedness or discontentedness with the realisation of the sport association members wishes or requirements influences the consumer behaviour, communication and loyalty to the sports association. Here need to be underlined sports organizations members role as the client.

The contentedness or discontentedness with the sports services is very important factor of sports quality management.

Additionally, the ARCHSECRET model helps to analyse the external stakeholders of non-profit and non-governmental sports organizations i.e. sports organizations members in detail. Global quality assessment is based on the assessment of individual quality characteristics (Stauß, Hentschel, 1991), which are evaluated in this model using ten dimensions. The ARCHSECRET model contains the following ten dimensions: Access, Responsiveness, Communication, Humaneness, Security, Enabling / Empowerment, Competence, Reliability, Equity, Tangibles. The obtained Data from the ARCHSECRET needs to be correctly applied.

Besides this important factor will be also viewed central aspects of quality management by sports scientists H. D. Horch and Chr. Breuer 2006. They defined central aspects of quality management and the specifics of the sport industry. The four central aspects of this matrix are: 1. Options of perspective, i.e., differences between different sports fields, the interaction of several providers and expectations of different stakeholders; 2. Uncertainty/ instability of sports quality management; 3. Integration of external factors in sports societies or unions; 4. Costs and Dysfunction of quality management (see Figure 1). The necessity of quality management in the sports industry is closely related to the sports industry transformation. The signs of sports industry transformation are commercialization, professionalisation, greater independence from government subsidies, higher requirements for quality and economy or cost-efficiency, as well as greater competitive pressures. Scientists H. D. Horch and Chr. Breuer (2006) are confident that the quality management models should be used in the sports industry, but they must be adapted to the peculiarities of the sports industry.

Options of Perspective	Uncertainty
- Interaction of several providers - Sports fields: leisure sports; health sports; competitive sports. -Expectation of different stakeholders	-External factors: Time costs and availability; Weather -Uncertainty of sports results -Bilaterally personal service
Integration of external factors	Dysfunctions
- Sport union member = Client - Sport union member = Co-owner, Copartner	- Bureaucracy and formalization - Expenses >quality management Advantages? - Lack of resources

Figure 1: *The author's representation in form of graphic of scientist H. D. Horch and Chr. Breuer literature (2006)*

Important is to determine the target audience of sports association/union, which consumer behaviour can manifest in several forms. For example, a football club fans get game tickets or buy the other Merchandising products, whereas sponsors strike a deal, but sports association members' show and strengthen the loyalty to his sports associations/union. For sports unions, it would be important to set their target audience to meet more or even surpass their members' demands and expectations. First of all, it must be distinguished the internal and external audiences or groups. The internal sports union group is made of members and staff, but the external group is made of viewers, fans, sponsors, government and society. The significance of these groups depends on the size of the sports union and its objectives. For example, a small sports union focus more on their members and sponsor expectations, while the larger sports organizations such as professional football or ice hockey clubs focus more on the fans, the public and the media (Dregner, Sachse and Thiel 2006). When the target audiences are defined, the next step is to establish a definition of satisfaction and member expectations and requirements for sports union. To achieve this task, a sports union must set a communication with their members in the form of negotiations between the staff and members or evaluation of members' positive and negative reviews. Scientist N. Beutin (2006) stated that customer satisfaction can be measured by event oriented or with features oriented approach or method. Event oriented method examines only selected contacts between customers and service providers, so this method is less suitable for the measurement of overall customer satisfaction. Features oriented method researches the features or services components on which basis the customers form their satisfaction. The features oriented research method can also be measured by the content, specific periods of time or multidimensional ex-post method which is more suitable for relatively low poll expenditure and relatively high benefits (Beutin, 2006). In this method, the respondents assessed each service element or each service feature to gauge satisfaction. To implement this method is to define

the service components that make up the customers' needs and requirements. The service should be differentiated into the main component and the addition service component. For example, the football game is the main part of the service, but the addition services or peripheral services by T.C. Greenwell, J.S. Finka and D.L. Pastores 2002 study are described as easier to be provided, which are also a major impact on customer satisfaction (parking, merchandising products, comfort, music, gastronomy, etc.).

Methodology

For the realization of the research, the purpose was carried out the theoretical analysis of literature.

Firstly was researched the established quality management models, evaluation criteria mostly for non-governmental organisations. The research begins with the research for analogue resources of foreign languages because Latvian available materials are in short supply, and this topic is very new to sports science.

Secondly, it was searched for materials for the introduction of quality management in the sports sector. Thirdly, it was discussed and analysed scientific journals like the European Sports Management Quarterly, Journal of Sports Economics and the Journal of Sports MANAGEMENT. The following were discussed different types of literature, which gave the opportunity to get acquainted and understand the theoretical side of the issue under study.

In total were reviewed 92 literature sources in the frame of the master thesis of the authors. Based on the literature research and analysis we have created the experimental, theoretical model of quality management evaluation of sports NGOs.

Results

Criteria for assessment of quality management in non-governmental sports organizations were established based on literature research and review. Initially, the complex characteristics of quality management in the sports sector were defined. Scholars H.D. Horch and Chr. Breuer (2006) defined characteristics and specifics of quality management of the sports industry. The four central aspects identified were: (1) options of perspective, i.e., differences between different sport fields (sports for all, performance sport and recreational sport), as well as interaction with several providers and expectations of different stakeholders; (2) uncertainty/instability of sport quality management; (3) integration of external factors in sport societies or unions; and, (4) costs and dysfunction of quality management. The four vital aspects are further supplemented by the criteria relied on by D. Meffert and G. Bruhn. These scholars took into account significance, completeness, actuality, patency and costs for assessment of quality management in non-governmental sports organizations. The criteria for analysis were applied in an appropriate and adequate model - ARCHSECRET (Vaughan and Shiu, 2001). The ARCHSECRET model helps to examine the external stakeholders of non-profit organizations in detail. The ARCHSECRET model contains the following ten dimensions: access, responsiveness, communication, humaneness, security, enabling/empowerment, competence, reliability, equity and tangible.

The following research task is to establish the criterial model for quality management in non-governmental sports organizations, which will be based on the selected material of the literature research and review.

The steps of the new designed experimental approach will be consecutively undertaken. Important is to determine the target audience of the sports organisation,

which must be distinguished the internal and external audiences or groups. When the target audiences are defined, the next step is to establish a definition of satisfaction and member expectations and requirements for the sports organization. Further sports organizations must distinguish their main service of the additional or ancillary ones. Recommended for the evaluation of the customer satisfaction is the measurement by event oriented or with features oriented approach or method. Event oriented method examines only selected contacts between customers and service providers, so this method is less suitable for the measurement of overall customer satisfaction. Features oriented research method, the features or services components on which basis the customers form their satisfaction. Both selected methods are in content complemented with scholars H.D. Horch and Chr. Breuer (2006) characteristics and the specifics of quality management of sports industry (1.Options of perspective, i.e., differences between different sport fields (sports for all, performance sport and recreation sport), interaction with several providers and expectations of different stakeholders; 2.Uncertainty/ instability of sport quality management; 3.Integration of external factors in sport societies or unions; 4.Costs and Dysfunction of quality management) and the ARCHSECRET model (Vaughan, Shiu, 2001). These research methods can also be measured by the content, specific periods of time or multidimensional ex-post method. This evaluation process needs to be carried out with all nominated target audiences.

This model is established for Sports NGOs, but the adaption and evaluations of quality management in the NGOs need to be assumed the peculiarities und features of every single sports organization.

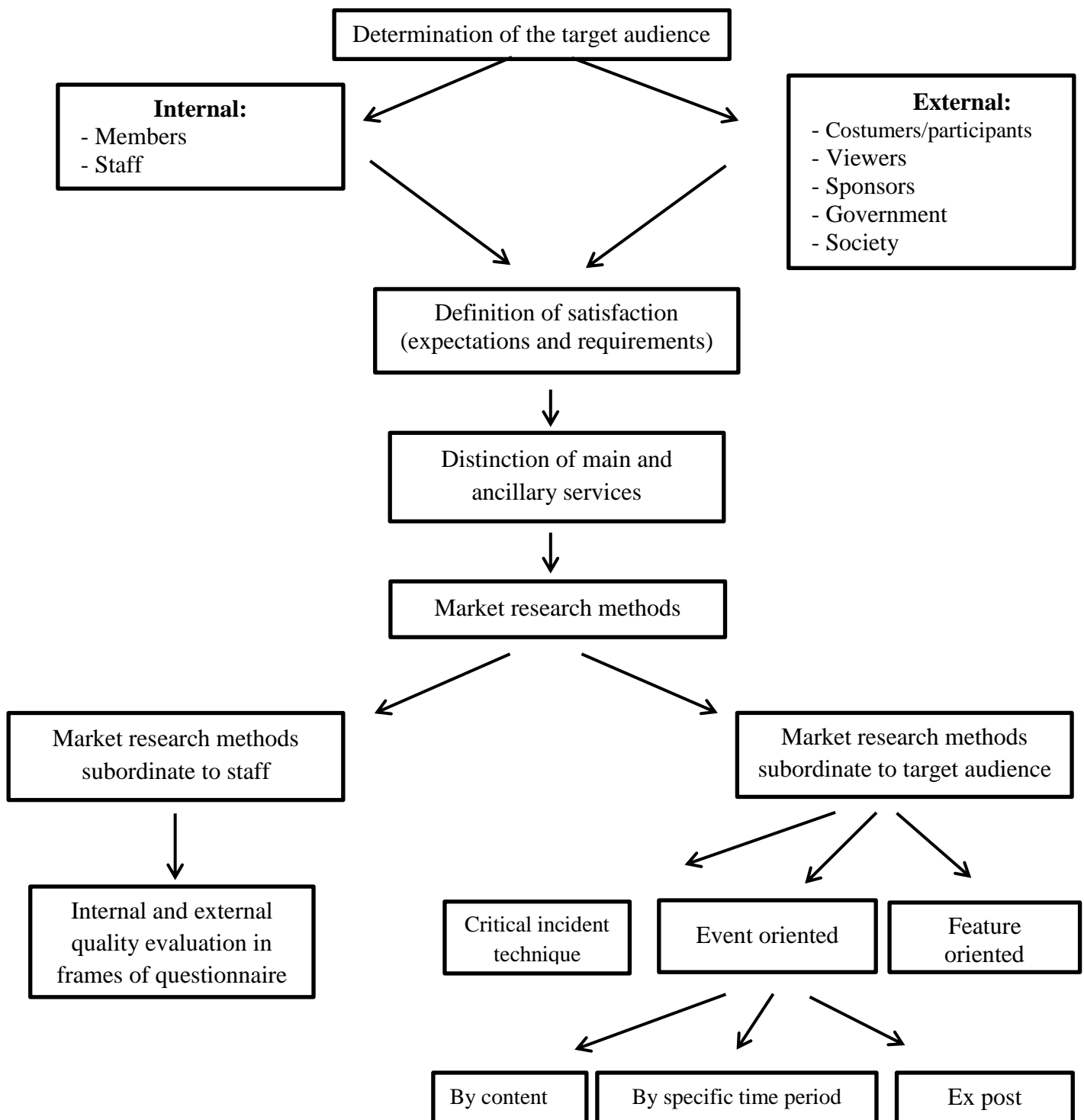**Criterial Quality Management Model for non-governmental sports organizations**

Figure 2: *The author's established Criterial Quality Management Model for non-governmental sports organizations (2015)*

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The need for autonomy, competence, and relations with others and the realization of those needs in the opinion of prospective teachers

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Abstract
Satisfying one's need for autonomy, competence and relations with others is necessary for learning and motivation. This study aims to obtain data on how pedagogy students understand those needs and how they perceive their fulfilment in the process of teacher training. The students' opinions were analyzed in the context of the theory of humanistic education of teachers.
Keywords: needs, autonomy, competence, relations with others, prospective teachers.

Introduction

In the present, rapidly changing reality, issues connected to educating teachers are considered to be one of key importance. It is possible that the teacher training of today may shortly become obsolete. The contemporary educational system is also constantly evolving and being transformed. Therefore, we need teachers who can deal with the challenges of the changing world and ever higher social expectations (Dylak, 2000). An opportunity to successfully face the above-mentioned challenges lies in the humanistic approach to teacher education, which takes into consideration the claims of humanistic psychology and combines them with notions such as those of "a good teacher" or "good education" (Kwiatkowska, 2008).

A humanistic approach to teacher education is not a uniform trend. Three of its aspects stand out: the human being is an autonomous, unique entity, and actualizes him/herself in relation to another human being (Dylak, 2000; Lewowicki, 1997); the teacher's knowledge the teacher's knowledge results from his/her personal experiences and constitutes his/her individual system of cognitive meanings (Dylak, 2000; Mizerek 1999); education does not consist in accumulating information but is a means of interpersonal communication (Rutkowiak, 1992; Lewowicki, 1997). According to H. Kwiatkowska (2008), the humanistic concept of teacher education appreciates specialist knowledge (professional competencies) because such competence stimulates activity and professional development. Professional competencies also include pedagogical and methodological knowledge as complementary elements of teacher training. The main aim of education is redefined as assisting the teacher in discovering his/her individuality, i.e. his/her particular interests and needs, and in presenting him/her with opportunities to make choices. Other important factors in the concept of teacher education are encouraging future teachers to cooperate and experiment, creating an atmosphere of kindness and belonging, of motivating students to solve problems by themselves, and eliminating censorship as well as the sense of danger.

Aim of Study

The aim of the study is to learn how students define the needs for autonomy, competence, and relations with others, and the way these needs are realised in the

process of teacher education as the ones which are crucial in the humanistic concept of teacher education.

The above-mentioned needs appear in E. Deci and R. Ryan's theory of self-definition of motivations and needs (Self-Determination Theory - SDT) (Deci, Ryan, 1985; Deci, Ryan, 2000; Ryan, Deci, 1995). As a meta-theory of human motivation and personality, SDT explains the sources and mechanisms of spontaneous, inspired, and directed human behaviours, and considers them as considerably important factors in education. It also deals with the factors which facilitate or hinder the processes of assimilation and growth in human beings (Niemiec, Ryan, 2009). This natural tendency towards mental growth and development is made possible by an individual's activity, enabling him/her to influence his/her external and internal environment, and to ensure his/her needs are being met. The authors of this theory define needs as "innate psychological tendencies which constitute a fundamental condition of psychological integration and wellbeing" (Deci, Ryan, 2000, 229). The need for competence is perceived as one's having both an influence on one's immediate surroundings and a conviction that activities undertaken make sense and bring desired effects. This need is actualized by efforts connected to structuring learning situations and tasks and supplying feedback information about the before mentioned activity (learning). The need for autonomy ties in with the desire to act, the possibility to make independent decisions, undertake initiatives, attempt independent problem solving and act any time it is possible, all of which result in the sense of freedom to act. The term which aptly describes the satisfaction of the need for autonomy is the term of "social subjectivity", which – as emphasised by W. Kozłowski (2012) – while it did not successfully enter English-language literature, refers to a situation analogous to that described by E. Deci and R. Ryan. The need to relate to others is expressed in the desire to be together and in the sense of belonging to a group or team. It is also expressed in caring for others, and expecting reciprocity. More than any other need mentioned above, an actualization of this need demands support from the environment, achieved by showing an individual one's acceptance and care and devoting to them one's time and attention (Ryan, Brown, 2003). In the theory of self-definition (SDT) one's relations with others are defined as maintaining contact with others by pro-social connections (Deci, Ryan, 1994), and they are used accordingly in this text.

Methodological Assumptions

This research aims to analyse the implementation of the humanistic model of teacher education by learning the opinions of students preparing for the teaching profession as concerns their definitions of needs for autonomy, competence and relationships with others as well as their opinions on whether these needs are being met. The students participating in the research are 3rd-year students of kindergarten and early education pedagogy. They offered their interpretations of the three needs discussed above and described the situations and conditions in which those needs could be or were met. The aim of analysing the material was to provide an answer to the following questions:

−   How do students – prospective teachers – define their need for autonomy, competencies and relationships with others?

−   Does the system of teacher education offer future teachers possibilities for actualizing their needs for autonomy, competence and relationships with others and, if so, in what ways?

The research involved 55 female students in their last year of the 3-year course of study at the Pedagogy and Psychology Department of the University of Bialystok [Uniwersytet w Białymstoku]. The students began by defining their needs for competence, relations with others and autonomy, to go on to describe situations, educational activities, and organizational solutions which would in their opinion ensure that these needs would be met. Participants in the research expressed themselves in written form and were free to choose its format and unlimited by time constraints. The material thus gathered underwent qualitative analysis, which centers on identifying and describing phenomena without scrutinising their range or frequency. The method of analysis chosen allows one to search for answers to research questions through showing the many dimensions of the phenomenon, the variety and wealth of opinions rather than focus on numerical data.

Analysis of research results

Autonomy belongs among the fundamental terminology in the humanistic concept of teacher education while the aim of education is defined as assisting prospective teachers in discovering their unique individualities. In pedagogy, autonomy is perceived as a universal educational value and treated as the student's right to a degree of freedom in the learning process and his/her independence in the area of self-definition. Learners' autonomy is defined as their need to direct the learning process. How, then, do students define the term? The notion the students cited most frequently in their definitions of the need for autonomy was that of individuality: *Being treated and perceived as a unique individual; Noticing the student's personal needs; I am myself, a person, a unique individual; Perceiving the student as a unique individual.* Another notion that appeared in the respondents' replies was the idea that autonomy was connected to their need for independence and self-reliance. The following explanations can serve as examples: *Freedom and independence; Ensuring that the student has complete freedom and independence; (…) I see it as a need to be independent of others, a sense that I can arrange various matters without involving others; Autonomy means independence in thinking and acting; Independence and responsibility for oneself.* In education, autonomy is defined as "ability to take responsibility for one's learning and a readiness to take decisions on particular aspects of learning" (Janowski, 2008, 51). The above-expressed attitude can also be found in the definitions offered by the students participating in the research: *The right to decide about one's education; An independent taking of decisions concerning the content and method of learning; The possibility to employ one's own strategies for achieving goals – the freedom to act and achieve goals; Autonomy is deciding about oneself, about what and how I want to learn and how my learning will be assessed by the teacher; Not being set the pace and method of working.* An attempt to explain autonomy in the context of one's learning and studying proves the maturity of the individuals is voicing such opinions and the fact that they are self-defined individuals. One cannot neglect to mention explanations associating autonomy with the fact of enjoying various rights: *The right to one's opinion; (…) the guarantee of the right to voice one's opinions and judgments.*

The second part of the students' replies concerned the ways in which the expressed need was or was not met. The question to which the students referred first and most frequently (70%) was that of whether possibilities of making choices in the various areas of student activity were offered them. Here are excerpts from students' replies: *(…) The choice of subjects of study according to one's interests; the choice of*

facultative subjects and one's supervisor; (...) freedom to choose what activities one will do and how one goes about doing them; The possibility to choose what tasks and activities one does; Independent choice of the subject of one's thesis. Student commentaries that followed showed that there were various ways in which that need could be met. Some students (23 %) thought that the possibility of satisfying the above needs at university was illusory: *I may be free to choose my supervisor, but the one I want is not available;(..) in the choice of subjects in the list there is no one that interests me; It is not done well – the syllabus is designed without us, and there is no freedom in our choice of classes to take and in how they are being taught.* There are students (17%), however, who - as self-empowered people should – take matters into their hands and seek ways to fulfill their needs, as can be exemplified by the following replies: *Finding fulfillment in special interest groups; That need is not being met in class but can be met outside of it – in student organizations; (...) The department's staff is reacting to the students' ideas and initiatives.* Some respondents also noted the right to one's opinions: *In some classes we can express ourselves freely, to others we have to try to read the teacher's mind; The number of students in each group is so high that one is prevented from choosing freely; Whether this need can be satisfied depends on the person who is teaching the class. The younger ones are worse in this way than the older teachers.* Analysing the material obtained in this part of the study one notices a certain inconsistency. An autonomous individual should be characterised by an internal imperative that would force him/her to seek the fulfillment of his/her needs. However, some of the respondents (27%) approach the issue of achieving autonomy passively. They expect someone else to do it for them.

Another need which was studied was the need for competence. It is particularly important in teacher education since, as noted by J. Bruner (1974), the efforts at achieving competence should be treated as one of the main motivations for learning. Defining this need posed no difficulty to the students, who aptly defined its essence: *The need for competence equals pursuing self-actualization; Acquiring concrete and important skills, knowledge; It is a constant acquiring of new abilities and perfection in a given domain; Raising the level of one's knowledge and skills; Broadening one's competences not only in the area of the chosen field of study.* The need for competence – as emphasised by E. Deci and R. Ryan – is the need to acquire competencies to be able to prove in action that one is competent.

Such a set of abilities allows one to influence one's social environment. Such an approach is expressed in the following: *The need to be competent is the chance to be a good teacher and, later on, doing as good a job of working with children as possible; (...) it needs to be treated as preparation for future work – the sense of being ready to work as a teacher.* Here is how one of the respondents perceived the need for competence*: The possibility to self-actualisation is made real by learning.* Some replies linked the need for competence with aspiring to perfection: *doing one's task in the best possible way*; others evidenced a maturity seen as *an internal need to be good at something and the awareness of what stage one is at and what one wants eventually to achieve.* The material analysed contained references to future employment: *Learning the theoretical and practical side of issues, so that one is well prepared for future work; The necessity to acquire specialist competencies needed for a future teaching job.* Students associate the need for competence with specialist knowledge, the first and fundamental condition of any teacher's competencies. It is a correct approach because pedagogical and methodological

knowledge constitutes a complementary element of any teacher's education no less than the practical ability to employ oneself as an instrument of pedagogical activity.

The students' assessments of whether their need for competence was being met in the conditions of university varied significantly. Here are some examples: *Various degrees in which this need is being met; A meager degree of individuation in the acquisition of skills during classes; It depends on the person teaching the course – the requirements s/he sets and the manner in which s/he teaches the course; Taking advantage of the library; The teacher aims for every student to acquire competencies.* Respondents perceive the fulfillment of this need in the context of professional training. Such replies constituted the majority of responses: *The best way to realise the need for competence is to combine theory with practice; participating in teaching training sessions in schools; (....) mainly through practical classes connected to working in schools; Practicing various skills without which we will not succeed as school teachers.* Other replies showed a different way in which the need for competence could be met while studying. *Through problem solving; Through designing and carrying out research; Writing the final thesis; Preparing for classes and attending practical training and lectures; Through participating in conferences.* The above-expressed opinion proves that some individuals see the possibilities of fulfilling that need from a broader perspective, also expressed the following opinion: *Acquiring diplomas and certificates, they can come in handy later or Take advantage of the experience of one's elders. Some replies contained very personal statements: I do not feel competent to work at school just yet; The University is OK, but to think of teaching school is scary.* To sum up, despite the opinions by respondents who expressed doubts about how competent they were, the subject of competencies is the one which the students are most knowledgeable about. The above-analysed statements can be seen both at the stage of interpreting the concept of this need and at the stage of elucidating on the ways to fulfill it.

The last of the needs analysed was the need for relationships with others. The human being is a social animal and tends to act in groups and spend time in the company of others. The above mentioned is true not because human beings are subject to the influence of their social environment, but also "in the sense of needing others to attain their own, personal, individual goals and fulfill their psychological and spiritual needs" (Sowińska, 2011, 271). Interpersonal relations are a form of expressing interactions and connections among their participants. When asked how they conceived of the need for relations with others, students associated it mainly with friendship, peer relations, company, and student life. Relations with others are: *Spending time together in between classes; Making friends, offering help, maintaining social relations; Desire to establish relations with others; Striving to develop closer connections with other people, or Looking for a "soul mate".* Individuals who took part in the study were able to relate their relations with others to their learning and acquiring of competencies; they could also say to what degree such relationships contributed to tasks performed together, and how they could be useful in studying. *The need for establishing contact with another human being when one is studying; Meeting new people, being inspired by them; Good relations with others can help one perform new tasks; A chance to dispel doubts, acquire interesting information; creating project work together as coursework; Exchanging opinions with other people.* Explanations of this kind appeared less frequently, as did replies pointing out the role of this need in creating an atmosphere of trust and acceptance: *Relation with others are a deciding factor in one's well-being; Relations with others are a way to*

give and get support; If one has a problem, they will usually find someone who will help. One of the replies showed that there exists within the framework of mutual relations also less beneficial phenomena: *That need is perverted, instead of cooperation, there is unhealthy competition.* It is probably difficult to avoid this situation in the era of "rat race", of the struggle for the best possible starting position in the fight for one's future job.

The respondents' written works show that studying at university is conducive to satisfying the students' need for relations with others. The above analysed can be exemplified by, among other things: *Discussions during seminars and consultations; Exchange of e-mails, conversations with University employees during their duty hours; Teamwork; Pair work; Tasks which make relations with others possible.* Students emphasised various group work, project work in small teams, exchanging course notes and books among friends, or informal meetings relating to performing the tasks assigned by lecturers. They drew attention also to the scarcity of informal meetings within university framework: (…) *too few trips and bonding events organized by the university.*

Summary and conclusions

Analysing research material collected to present an assessment of teacher training in the humanist spirit yields the following:

- − the need for autonomy, as described by students, was variously expressed and revolved around the dimensions presented. Students' explanations of notions such as autonomy did not contain all the attributes of these notions. Participants in the research tended to focus on one of them, ex. Individuality, self-sufficiency, self-reliance, or independence in taking decisions, and the respondents tended to focus on explaining the meaning of the term rather than on defining their needs.
- − organisational and, in fact, reasonable limitations in what needs can be met and in what way causes the students to accumulate experiences not conducive to making the idea of humanistic education of future teachers come true. While the university may be to blame here, so are our prospective teachers and educators, who sometimes do not notice the opportunities presented them or, when they do notice them, tend to refrain from taking advantage of them. As concerns making sure that their needs are met, the individuals are participating in the research more often than not take on an attitude of passivity.
- − studying is perceived first and foremost as teacher training and not as a period of life that can be devoted to intense self-development.
- − definition of the need for competence and its satisfaction approaches the vision and assumptions of humanistic teacher education.
- − in educating teachers one should consider constructing such situations which would foster the students' ability to diagnose their needs and encourage them to seek actively opportunities to make sure those needs are met.

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The topicality of recommended civic educational programme and the framework of its content in the Republic of Latvia

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Abstract. The issue of the introduction of civic education in mainstream schools of the Republic of Latvia has been actualized at the parliamentary level in Autumn, 2014. To carry out the necessary reforms planned in the curriculum, it is necessary to carry out a theoretically substantiated analysis of the current situation. Using theoretical and empirical research methods, as well as being aware of the existing social and educational reality, the publication provides a recommended model for civic, educational programs.
Keywords: curriculum, civic competence, civic education, civic education program, civic participation.

Introduction

Living in a rapidly changing era of globalization, one of the prerequisites for the development of the country is the promotion and formation of the democratic environment. Thus, the citizens have been involved in the discussions about important issues, leading to the encouragement of citizens` participation in the processes of the country, as well as contributing citizens' sense of belonging to their country. On the one hand, the issues of citizenship, e.g. the consciousness of the state or the way of responsible citizens` thinking and acting in the public interest, may seem self-explanatory to be updated in all areas of life, especially the child's upbringing and education processes. However, there are different approaches and deep comprehension how the involvement in the political and socio-economic processes can be contributed in the more active way. The different understanding, which is formed by person`s life experiences, upbringing in the family and social environment in which the individual lives, serves as the basis for a broad interpretation of approaches, explaining the essence and relevance of civic education. In the 21st century, the issue of promotion of patriotism in schools is becoming increasingly topical resulting from the geopolitical conflicts in Europe.

The aim of the publication is by the theoretical research, as well as being aware of the existing social and educational reality, to work out the concept of the civic, educational programme in the Republic of Latvia, including the program's objectives, tasks, available guidelines and the preconditions of pedagogical approaches. As result theoretically developed civic, the educational programme can serve as a methodological tool for teachers.

For a person to be civically active, with a high responsibility and a sense of belonging to his/her country, it is necessary to develop the values of life at school, thus activating the desire to be engaged in the social processes and providing the basis for an active and constructive capability. So the knowledge, the real practical action and social interaction, attitudes and skills acquired within the educational content gain special importance in the pedagogical process. The personally significant emotional

experiences of students that significantly affects the formation of motivation are ensured by the teacher`s provided personal example and professional competence through giving the necessary educational information, masterfully using differentiated, problem-based and interactive teaching methods, as well as creating a social activity promoting the environment. Providing the youth successful integration into society, as well as the promotion of patriotism and realization of the objectives of life is closely related to educational opportunities. For the society to become more open to change and to overcome the problems, a high level of civic competence must become the desirable outcome of the learning. A person must be prepared for citizenship, although the existing environment often does not provide favourable conditions for this. Implementing the required changes of modern era into the content of comprehensive education, it is possible to actualize the potential for developing civic education and civic upbringing. Civic upbringing enables the person to become informed, responsible, critical and active citizen.

The interconnections of civic education and civic upbringing on Latvian historical perspective

To more successfully achieve the aim of the publication, it is necessary to carry out the analysis of two-terms "civic education" and "civic upbringing" to reveal their contents and determine the characteristic features of both concepts.

The formation of civic competencies can be facilitated through civic education, thus strengthening democratic traditions, creating a common national understanding of values, promoting citizens active involvement in the strengthening of their community and promoting socially responsible economic development. A positive impact on young people's civic participation and civic pride can be put through involving them in the community-related activities, thus reducing the possibility that the youth's behaviour could be contrary to the public interest. A social sense of responsibility of young people is formed through engaging in civic participation activities, thus strengthening civic society (Innovations in Civic Participation, 2010). The result of military conflicts in Europe emphasizes a growing necessity and social need for young people`s civic competence and civically responsible actions that can be purposefully promoted by the implementation of civic education in schools.

It should be noted that civic education is defined as one of the preconditions for the development of the Republic of Latvia. The Strategy of Sustainable Development of Latvia by 2030 has emphasized: "to maximize the use of human capital of Latvia, adopting high-quality decisions and to facilitate the introduction of policy-making, the society should be involved. To do this, the real opportunities for participation must be created, as well as the mechanisms to encourage the use of these opportunities, such as social recognition systems, administrative relief, or simply constitute evidence that participation results are implemented. To make the public participation process constructive and efficient, the abilities and skills of the citizens of Latvia to participate in the processes of society must be strengthened through the implementation of civic education programs for both: within general education and outside it- workshops, lectures and courses." (Latvijas ilgtspējīgas attīstības stratēģija līdz 2030. gadam, 2010, 84-85). Meanwhile, the National Development Plan of the Republic of Latvia 2014 - 2020, has emphasized the importance of education to achieve the various goals – to promote citizens ownership, civic awareness and pride about their country and people." (Latvijas Nacionālā attīstības plāns 2014. – 2020.

gadam, 2012, 49). So the general public setting of civic participation and the promotion of civic education has been formulated. At the same time, there is a different approach to the explanation of civic education in Latvia.

The topicality of civic education has been accentuated in the Guidelines for Education Development 2014 – 2020. The document has been designed to strengthen students' citizenship, civic participation skills and patriotism, to ensure the participation of children and young people in nationally important events, promoting a high level of student` cultural and creative development as well as all basic requirements of Educational Curriculum. Guidelines for Education Development by 2020 are focusing on implementation of values education, promoting student self-strengthening to enhance and broaden young people's creativity and active citizenship, improve cooperation with parents, using the new effective forms of cooperation between school and family, to increase parental (family) ownership of the teaching and upbringing processes within the educational institution (Izglītības attīstības pamatnostādnes 2014. – 2020. gadam, 2013). While in the guidelines for national identity, civic society and integration policy, 2012 - 2018 civic education has been described as a tool for strengthening national and civic identity and understanding of the values of the society of Latvia, determining the objective of civic education: "to promote individual responsibility for the development of the country as to teach civic participation skills, knowledge, attitudes and values to every individual." (Nacionālās identitātes, pilsoniskās sabiedrības un integrācijas politikas pamatnostādnēs 2012. – 2018. gadam, 2011, 12). At the same time, it should be noted that the lack of a common approach and diverse interpretation explaining the essence of civic education found in planning documents of the policy of the Republic of Latvia, may hinder the implementation of civic education in the pedagogical process.

Analyzing studies on civic education (Branson, M., Quigley, C. 1998, Grossman, D. 2000, Patrick, J. 1997 Quisumbing, L. 2002, UNESCO, 2002) and systematizing theoretical findings, it can be concluded that the teaching process of civic education is focused on the learner:
• civic knowledge of the basic principles of democracy, political participation, human rights, the obligations, the history and cultural traditions of his/her country of the interaction with the world-historical context through critical and analytical thinking;
• civic skills in the processes of decision-making, teamwork communicating with peers, civic participation skills, ability to see himself/herself as a community member in the local, regional, national and international levels;
• civic values, which are based on the approach of tolerance to intercultural dialogue, accepting different views and position, respect towards the others.

As a result, the civil competence of students has been promoted through civic education. Based on the analysis of theoretical studies (Abs, J., Veldhuis, R. 2006, Himmelmann, G. 2013, Hoskins, B., Villalba, C., Saisana, M. 2012, Журова, В. 2012, Котова, Г. 2008) and the clarifications of European Commission, civic competence can be defined as knowledge, skills, values and development of experience in the particular activity forming democratic, responsible, and socially active individual with a capacity to act.

The implementation of civic education takes place at several levels, firstly in families, then at schools, finally at the national level, where the government policy promotes it by providing the necessary support, or on the contrary hinders the implementation of civic education. Furthermore, there is also the context of

socialization, which is essential for the implementation of civic education – human interaction and dynamic information exchange (Berns, 2012). With the influence of the socialization: in the primary phase – the family, the secondary phase – school, tertiary phase – a professional level, the highest stage – the individual`s socially important activities (Gudjons, 2007), there is the cultural and historical experience transfer to future generations, so the common understanding of the nature and necessity of civic education gains topicality. The quality of civic education could be improved through targeted civic upbringing, as well as the understanding of the concepts of civic education and civic upbringing, the nature of these concepts, their importance in the processes of the formation of the personality and national consciousness.

The question of civic upbringing in the parliamentary level of Republic of Latvia was updated in the autumn of 2014, when the 11th Saeima of the Republic of Latvia (9th October 2014) in the first reading adopted the conceptual changes in the Education Law by making changes in the Article No.14, adding 38th point: "establish requirements for instruction of the national education for students of general education and vocational education institutions". Education Law amendments are needed for the Cabinet of Ministers to determine guidelines for the educational institutions, except universities, in the field of students` upbringing, including national upbringing guidelines till the 1st of January, 2015. National and civic upbringing programs` objectives are: "to promote a sense of belonging to the Republic of Latvia and its basic values; raise awareness towards democracy and civic participation; to develop a sense of responsibility towards society and the environment; to strengthen the student`s national consciousness and patriotism." (Likumprojekta „Grozījumi Izglītības likumā" anotācija, 2014). The issues of civic and national upbringing are clearly justified in the context of existing social necessity. In addition to the planned national and civic upbringing programs, there is a need to develop a systematic and theoretically justified pedagogical approach in order to promote the youth civic competence.

Similar to the case of the concept of civic education, there are different explanations and approaches to the concept the implementation of civic upbringing in the pedagogical process.

One of the most recognized person in the process of the formation of the consciousness of the nation of Latvia – A. Kronvalds has emphasized the necessity for the education of honoring homeland (patriotism): "the love towards homeland shines and strengthens every its member, and, therefore, all the nation, bringing up it in an unsuspected mightiness." A. Kronvalds described the sources of honoring homeland: recognition of homeland; patriotic love; respect and care towards the mother tongue; trusting parents` falconry; community spirit; the dignity of the most honored sons of Latvia; honor holding and religious education. A. Kronvalds did not use the concept: civic education, he used the concept: honoring homeland (patriotism), describing its importance and the need for the promotion of it in the family and school, "pure love towards homeland should be planted at the early age; we will never reach the true heights and strength of honoring homeland, if not in schools and homes we plant it and nurture it." (Goba, 1937, 145-149, 151-155).

In the first period (since 1918 till 1940) of the Free State of the Republic of Latvia through being aware of the difficulties that the people of Latvia were exposed and fought for their national independence; honoring homeland and raising national consciousness became logical and self-evident questions in the process of education.

Teacher K. Dēķens in the newspaper „Mūsu nākotne" (Our Future), on the 5th of May 1922, has emphasized the importance of national (civic) education and the need for strengthening it at the legislative level. He sharply criticized the Law „On the educational institutions of Latvia" adopted on the 8th of December 1919 by the Council of the Nation of Latvia ", in which the basic principles of national education were not included (Dēķens, 1922). Only in the 17th of July, 1934 the government of Latvia adopted a law on national upbringing, whereas one of the priorities students' national (civic) upbringing was included: Article No.3 of the Law stated: "education institutions should accomplish youth physical, intellectual, aesthetic and moral education. In the process of education youth personal and public morality, working for and honoring homeland and its people, as well as the spirit of the Memorandum of classes must be obtained." (Likums par tautas izglītību, 1934). It must be admitted that despite the features of the specific approach of the authoritarian regime: promoting of honoring homeland in the learning process at school, had positive aspects. It is only natural and logical that the state contributes to students' sense of belonging and patriotism towards their country. The importance of patriotism has been stressed by an outstanding educator J. A. Students: "national existence is on the great weight of nationalism and patriotism, which together cause statehood or national consciousness." (Students, 1998, 292). The question of the need for strengthening national self-confidence is very important today, ethnopsychology researcher I. Apine emphasizes the urgency of national self-confidence: "if the individual has lost his/her national self-confidence, he/she is already owned by other ethnic groups. When the sense of belonging is lost to the majority of the ethnic group, the ethnic community itself ceases to exist." (Apine 2001, 36). National consciousness reflects the particular individual's sense of belonging to a certain ethnic group, thus forming individual ethnicity. The prerequisites of national awareness are very complex and depend on some factors, including upbringing in education and upbringing at school. Educator K. Obšteins in his work has characterized the objective of the school in the period of the 1st Free State period (since 1918 till 1940) of the Republic of Latvia: "to prepare school staff and fighters for a better, fuller life and the future, harmonious development and consolidation of students` creator forces must be ensured so that they can build a new better human union". Thus, he has stressed that education cannot be detached from the honoring homeland (Obšteins, 1930, 175).

Further explanation of civic upbringing at the end of the 20th century, which was marked by the awakening time, is provided by teacher V. Zelmenis. He has formulated the main objectives – to promote honoring homeland and its people, value the language and cultural heritage, as well as to respect the rights and obligations of citizens towards their work and created values (Zelmenis, 2000). The main task of civic upbringing (according to V. Zelmenis) is to bring up citizens – patriots. While the educator L. Žukovs also stresses the importance of the teacher in the process of civic upbringing: "teacher's responsibility is to be aware of the nature of patriotism in the democratic society. Thus purposefully managing students` activity in this education field" (Žukovs, 1997, 119). The glossary of pedagogy determines civic upbringing as the purposeful process in which personally important and essential for the country national attitude is being developed. This process is implemented by the teacher (Pedagoģijas terminu skaidrojošā vārdnīca, 2000).

The outstanding educators (Dēkens, K. 1922, Kronvaldis, A. 1937, Obšteins, K. 1930, Students, J.A. 1933, Zelmenis, V. 2000, Žukovs, L. 1997) have emphasized the importance of civic upbringing, both in the context of personality development

and the existence of the nation. Thus, they have highlighted the necessity for the promotion of honoring the homeland (patriotism) in the family and school. The concept of patriotism is derived from the ancient Greeks ("love of homeland"). However, it goes beyond this interpretation. Patriotism is formed by the attitude of the individual and his/her civic responsibility, being aware of role and contribution to the development of the country, as well as having the knowledge and maintaining nation's history and cultural heritage – it is the individual responsibility of each citizen.

With the process of upbringing leading to transferring historical and cultural heritage from generation to generation, the foundations for personal improvement and human value orientation are laid. Meanwhile, civic upbringing creates the foundations for the sharing responsibility of individuals for the surrounding processes. It is difficult to implement civic upbringing, if the family is not acquired with the morals of civic upbringing or if the teacher does not meet the postulate morality. As the result of it, students see a contradiction between words and deeds. The implementation of civic upbringing is the responsibility for both, the family and teachers to show an example to the younger generation.

Gathering the analysis of regulatory framework and the theoretical concepts, certain characteristic features of the concepts "civic education" and "civic upbringing" can be defined (see Table 1).

Table 1

The characteristic features of the concepts "civic upbringing" and "civic education"

The frame of the content of civic upbringing concept in Latvia in the 20th century: 20th-30th and 80th-90th	*The frame of the content of civic education concept in Latvia in early 21st century*
Sense of belonging	Sense of belonging
National self-confidence	Citizenship
Civic participation	Civic participation
Sense of responsibility	Civil liability
Attitude towards own country	Civic attitude
Knowledge of the history of own country knowledge	Civic knowledge
Knowledge of the national cultural history	
The understanding of democracy	
Respect for own country	Civic values
Respect for own language	
Respect for the own rights and obligations and the rights and obligations of the others	
Honoring homeland	
Patriotism	Pride about own country and people

The understanding of the content of the concepts of "civic upbringing" and "civic education" is mainly determined by the historical experience gained in the 20`s-30`s of the 20th century – the first period of independence of the Republic of Latvia. Both: democratic and authoritarian systems were topical in this period, and the honoring of the homeland and national self-awareness gained their importance. Respect and responsibility towards their country were integral components of the

school curriculum. The cherished independence of the Republic of Latvia was soon interrupted by the 2nd World War. Its consequence was the inclusion of Latvia in the Soviet Union. Later in the 80`s-90`s of the 20th century, during the revival of the nation of Latvia, the need for civic upbringing was re-raised by educators V. Zelmenis un L. Žukovs. Only in 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the regaining of the Republic of Latvia`s independence, the civic upbringing gained importance again in the field of the promotion of patriotism, including a sense of belonging and strengthening of civic participation. In the early 21st century, adapting education development trends in Europe, the issue of the need for civic education in Latvia was raised.

The explanations of the concepts of civic education and civic upbringing reveal the appropriate understanding of the concept of each period, as well as the necessity and pedagogical challenges. At the same time, it should be noted that the concept of civic education is much broader, which can be explained by the differences between the education and upbringing. The successful implementation of civic education can be ensured by the implementation of civic upbringing: civic education serves as a narrative framework, but civic upbringing reveals the nature and process of how civic education is being implemented. One of the defined objectives of the strategy of sustainable development of Latvia is ensuring Latvia as a country of active and responsible citizens. This can be reached by taking into account the concept of civic education and developing appropriate civic upbringing program, which should be directed to the formation of students' civic competencies. The results can be achieved by applying interdisciplinary approach and recognizing the holistic system approach for the implementation of civic upbringing in the pedagogical process (Latvijas ilgtspējīgas attīstības stratēģija līdz 2030. gadam, 2010).

After summarizing the analyzed theoretical sources in the concept of civic upbringing, as well as being aware of the existing social reality and the challenges of the Republic of Latvia, the recommended civic upbringing program`s aim can be defined: to promote student`s civic responsibility and a sense of belonging to the country, to provide the necessary support for personal improvement, take care of himself/herself and peers and the environment. It must be noted that the aim of the recommended civic upbringing program is not contrary to the aims of education: "to ensure that every citizen of Latvia develops his/her mental and physical potential to become an independent and developed personality as a member of democratic country and society. According to the age and needs of the student the following opportunity is provided:
1. to acquire the knowledge and skills in the humanities, social, natural and technical sciences;
2. to acquire knowledge, skills and experience of attitudes to participate in the society and public life;
3. for moral, aesthetic, intellectual and physical development, thus promoting a knowledgeable, skillful and socialized individual" (Izglītības likums, 1998), stipulated in the Law on Education of the Republic of Latvia (Article No.2).

The guidelines and substantive framework of recommended civic, educational programme

Being aware of the importance of interdisciplinary approaches to the implementation of recommended civic education, as well as taking into account the

priorities of planning documents of the Republic of Latvia (The Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia till 2030, the National Development Plan of Latvia 2014 - 2020, Education Development Guidelines of 2014 - 2020 and the integration policies of National Identity and civic society 2012 - 2018), as well as experience of class teachers in the process of planning class lessons through narrative framework – sample program of class lessons the following recommended civic, educational programs guidelines have been offered:

- Self-awareness and personal development

At any age, but especially for children and youngsters of the school age, it is very important to help them to explore and learn about emotional, mental, physical and social aspects of themselves. The individual behavioural stimulus – treatment and enforcement component – capacity have been formed at the self-realization stage of the individual, which leads to a treatment system that forms the basis of personality structure (Бодалев, 1988). The guideline of the planned thematic content of civic upbringing program "self-realization and personal development" states for self-identity, emotional intelligence, regulation of emotions, the formation of attitude, communication and interaction, tolerance, behaviour and respectful mutual relations, ethical categories of values orientation.

- Belonging to the State

Living in the multicultural community of the European Union and being on the boundary between the West and the East, the sense of belonging to the state gains special significance for the society of Latvia. The core element of national consciousness a central becomes ethnic identity, as well as the awareness of belonging to state (Apine, 2001), so it is very important for both: family and school to promote national self-esteem, an interest in the historical and cultural heritage of family, city, county, and state. The guideline of planned content of the civic upbringing program "belonging to the state" states for family, school, city, county, state history and cultural heritage, patriotism, national identity, national consciousness, national holidays and commemorations, national symbols, multicultural environment and intercultural dialogue.

- Civic participation

Sustainable development of society can be ensured by the active civic participation of young people's and taking ownership of the current socio-political processes. Civic participation is a crucial prerequisite for the development of the society, helping an individual to become responsible for the surrounding processes to be proactive former social and political events. The environment is an essential prerequisite for the successful civic participation, because, in the broader context of the concept of the environment, it can be motivating or demotivating; the environment can be supportive or hindering an individual`s or a group`s civic action. The active participation of young people in the society by providing the necessary support: a practical benefit, emotional support, and the long-term advice can contribute to the personal growth and strengthen civic participation (Dolan, 2012). The guideline of thematic content of the civic upbringing program "Civic participation" states for the basics of democracy, the values of democracy, civic participation at school, local, national and trans-national activities, citizen's rights and obligations, individual civic ownership of the surrounding events, participation in social campaigns, voluntary work, participation in decision-making processes, leadership, teamwork.

- Choosing a career

Choosing the career for people is not an easy task, it is a very complex process that depends on the individual's personality characteristics, interests, opportunities and educational attainment. In this complicated process, the family and school can provide support to the child – to help discover his/her talents, interests, dreams, aspirations and it's most diverse way to support and encourage. Career is one of the key elements that determine the quality of life; successful career gives people the opportunity to fulfill their capabilities and interests in the personal, professional and social terms (Paszkowska-Rogacz, 2010). Child`s career begins with the process of forming personality. The guideline of planned thematic content of civic upbringing program "choosing the career" states for the importance of a career in the personal development; biological and psychological factors of choice of profession; the importance of education in career choice, as well as entrepreneurial skills, lifelong learning, applying for employment – an application letter, CV, a job interview.

- Health, freedom from fear and environment

The knowledge is one of the most effective ways to protect the health and not to harm the environment, is being aware of risks and consequences of personal actions. It should be noted that the human`s freedom from fear is one of the national priorities of the Republic of Latvia: "we can predict, but we cannot reliably know which factors will affect the development of Latvia and its population. Latvia is open to the national economy, which is becoming increasingly globalized. Therefore, it is important to strengthen the state population`s freedom from fear or ability to adapt to changing circumstances. A person with sufficient freedom from fear can find solutions to promote the development and solve problems and not only for himself/herself and his/her closest people, but also can properly participate in the society." (Latvijas Nacionālā attīstības plāns 2014. – 2020. gadam, 2012, 33). The guideline of the thematic content of the civic upbringing program "Health, freedom from fear and environment" states for the healthy lifestyle and health-promoting environment; addiction prevention; reproductive health; prevention of infections; mental health; media literacy, healthy family formation; physical, mental, and social security; civil defense. It tries to solve global problems, e.g. crisis; abnormal and emergency situations; global warming; pollution, wasting natural resource and have to manage and promote reusing and recycling.

It should be noted that the offered civic upbringing program content has recommendatory nature, which requires the active involvement of the teacher in the process of improvement of the content. Civic upbringing program content is wide, so interdisciplinary approach gains a special importance, providing the necessary cross-curricular links and each teacher's personal responsibility to promote students' citizenship.

To successfully use and implement recommended civic upbringing programs in pedagogical activities, program design (see Table 2) should be set up, providing:
- pre-defined themes;
- classes according to the curriculum defined by Ministers Cabinet regulations;
- specific topics of the lessons, thus clarifying contents of a topic;
- the result to be achieved is one of the quality indicators and targets;
- learning tools and the list of resources that will help the teacher theoretically orientate in the subject obtaining;
- inter-disciplinary link, thus identifying the content of the topic in the context of specific subjects, reflecting the interdisciplinary approach and its performance;
- recommended training tools and resources for learning;

- recommended teaching methods and forms.

Successful acquisition of recommended civic upbringing program primarily depends on a teacher, as well as professional and multi-faceted approach and application of the most appropriate methods and forms. Each class is a unique case, and teacher working with his/her particular students focuses on their current needs. The recommended civic upbringing program is primarily a methodological tool for the teacher, taking into account the teacher's individual approach to the implementation of the program, so the program is not specified and there are no specified numbers of the lessons allocated to each particular theme.

Table No.2

The planned sample for civic, educational programme (Jurs, Samuseviča)

The guidelines of civic educational program		
Grade groups		
Nr.	The lesson topics	Results to be achieved	Interdisciplinary link
Suggested teaching methods and forms		
Suggested training tools and resources for learning		

The proposed substantive framework for the recommended civic upbringing program is very extensive and versatile. The practical training is provided throughout the school year mainly in the class lessons. At the same time, recognizing the current realities of teaching in schools and the importance of interdisciplinary approach in the curriculum and contributing the students` holistic understanding of the issue, it should be noted that it is not enough to practice civic upbringing only in class lessons (35 class lessons for each class: 1 class lesson per week) to achieve the recommended civic upbringing program objectives: to promote civic responsibility and the students` sense of belonging to the country, to provide the necessary support for personal improvement, care for themselves, other people and the environment. Therefore, it is necessary for the teachers of the other subjects, not only the class teacher, to provide purposeful pedagogical participation and responsibility.

Conclusions

1) As the result of the formation of civic society and the geopolitical conflicts in Europe, the issue of the need for a more targeted way to encourage children and young people to be patriotic, as well as a sense of belonging to their country in the Republic of Latvia has been updated. Thus, the national consciousness in the context of civic education has been strengthened more clearly.

2) The successful implementation of civic education contributes to the formation of students' civic competencies. This process can be provided with a help of civic upbringing. Civic education serves as a narrative framework, but civic upbringing becomes the form and the process of the implementation of civic education.

3) For the successful implementation of civic upbringing at schools and the achievement of the objectives defined in the legislation of the Republic of Latvia and various policy planning documents, there is a need to develop a socially realistic unified national civic upbringing program.

4) For the achievement of the objectives of the recommended civic upbringing program: to promote students' civic responsibility and a sense of belonging to the state; to provide the necessary support for personal improvement, taking care of himself/herself, other people and the environment; as well as the implementation of contents of the program, the teacher's personal attitude and belief and family`s active participation and co-operation with the school are required. Thus, upbringing process occurs in the close interaction and interrelation between the school and the family, bringing a positive result.

5) The acquisition of the content of civic upbringing program the principles of holistic approach should be followed. It is important to be aware of each student's individuality and using the interdisciplinary approach to effectively promote within the program required students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

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Learning Theories and Didactic Models in Expert's Continuing Education

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Abstract. The article "Learning Theories and Didactic Models in Expert's Continuing Education" is based on the results of theoretical and qualitative empiric research and analyses doctor's necessity for continuing education and motivation in postgraduate studies. The research discusses learning theories and didactic models for efficient learning and improvement of expert's experience, as well as substantiates the didactic models and pedagogical paradigms chosen during study process for the successful provision of experts continuing education.

Keywords: continuing education, medical expert, learning theories, didactic models, curriculum.

Introduction

Choosing the learning theories and didactic models for the medical experts' program of continuing education and preparing for their functioning in the medical experts' commissions started by the paradigm of autonomous or learner-centred educational process and peculiarities of adults' learning. The aim of this research is to build and discuss the basic assumptions of a formal learning program for medical experts' continuing learning, a program which in the best possible way meets the peculiarities and possibilities of the medical experts as adult learners.

Medical expert as an adult learner

Medical experts' further education follows the regularities of adult general education; it can be considered a kind of pedagogical practice in which adults engage in formal, non-formal or informal education. This process is directed towards sustained, systematic self-educating activities when the adults gain new forms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, or values (Sharan & Brocket, 2007, 7-8). Any form of learning where adults engage beyond traditional schooling encompass personal fulfillment, follows the particular philosophy of learning and teaching underpinned by the assumption that adults can and want to learn, that they take responsibility for their learning, experience freedom to learn when learning meets their personally valid needs.

To underpin the curriculum for the medical experts' further education principles of andragogy are used. The principles (Principles, 2013) follow an understanding of the peculiarities of adult learners and help to organize their learning triggered by the special educational program for the medical experts:

- adults cannot be made to learn – they will learn when they are motivated to do so when they experience a need for new knowledge and practices.

- adults usually and willingly learn by doing, participate in knowledge construction to follow their needs for deep knowledge, understanding, and new skills.

- adult learning is mainly problem-based, it is finding solutions, and, therefore, the problems suggested for formal continuing learning must be realistic.

- learning is affected by the personal experiences what each adult holds; he/she follows the goal of improving one's operational effectiveness and productivity.

- adults prefer informal learning triggered by practical challenges; formal educational curricula, therefore, should be run with the respect for their autonomous learning.

- instead of guidance in learning the adults better accept assistance in learning and problem-solving that satisfy their personally valid needs and achieve goals of their professional development.

J. Bohonos describes the professional image and increased career opportunities which are among the predictors of continuous adult learning. However, formal learning can sometimes be trapped if the adults fail to consider the amount of time needed to be successful. Career track professionals who need continuous learning to make the next step within their organizations will prefer flexible course offerings (Bohonos, 2014).

Following the above mentioned principles the curriculum for the medical experts takes into consideration several obstacles which medical specialists meet in Latvia: balancing between career and family demands, comparatively low salaries and additional workload, daily activities and scheduling of the formal learning program, on-going discussion on functioning of the experts' commissions and financial support from the state budget etc. Therefore, the best suggestion for the experts is blended learning and appropriate support by e-materials.

The didactic process of the medical expert is based on four theories: the adult learning theory, didactic process theory, and curriculum theory.

Keeping adults motivated, instilling in them confidence, reinforcing positive self-esteem allows the adults develop themselves into lifelong learners (Kunga & Machtmes, 2009). The curriculum for the medical experts, therefore, has been based not only on the theories of adult learning but also on the views of the experienced experts.

Didactic models and their implementation

Characteristic features of the adult learners' learning have led to the choice of the main learning theories to base on in the program building for the medical experts. This article is an attempt to define the specific usage of the learning theories in adult medical experts' learning: cognitive, social, and critical constructivism is chosen as the most appropriate background that does not exclude other theories to make the implementation of the program more diverse.
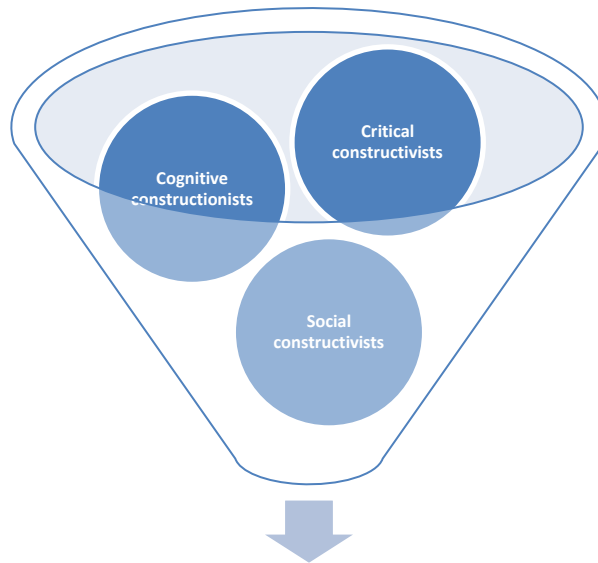
Didactic models

Figure 1. *The used didactic models for the training programme*

Traced back as far as to L. Vygotsky to stick to the basic idea of constructivism the authors of this article have also addressed more recent publications, for instance, Tenenberg, J.L. & Knobels, M. (2013). It is a theory of learning which defines regularities and suggests practical implementations on how a learning person makes sense of the world and his/her learning, and by doing so contrasts his/her personal knowledge. Learning is perceived as an active process, where knowledge is constructed, not simply acquired by memorizing. Knowledge construction is based on personal experiences and the continual testing of hypotheses. Each person has a different interpretation and construction of knowledge process, based on past experiences and cultural factors.

Jonassen (1994) proposed that there are eight characteristics that underline the constructivist learning environments and apply to the learners' perspectives. On this background we define the characteristics of medical experts' as adults' constructivist learning:

- learning environments provide multiple representations of reality, which medical experts as adult learners' meet and are supposed to function in;

- multiple representations of real situations and problems avoid oversimplification and offer complexity of the real world of expertizing;

- the learning environments challenge knowledge construction and skills' development instead of knowledge reproduction – in medical expertise there one can hardly find two similar cases or problems to solve and pass a decision;

- instead of abstract instruction authentic tasks in a personally meaningful context are suggested by the medical specialists themselves, therefore they are real, and their solutions are valuable;

- learning environments are brought about from the real-world settings and make the process of teaching-learning case-based instead of acquisition of abstract knowledge;

-    the unique problems, cases, and situations are taken from the medical experts' real job encourage thoughtful reflections on experiences and serve as a source of multiple suggestions for consideration;

-    the real environments of the experts' everyday job enable them as adult learners' context- and content-dependent knowledge construction and decision-making;

-        collaborative construction of knowledge through social negotiation, not competition among learners for recognition' lead to learning in teams and synergy.

Cognitive constructionists' teaching methods aim to assist learners in assimilating new information to existing knowledge, and enabling them to make the appropriate modifications to their existing intellectual framework to accommodate that information.

Social constructivists put emphasis on the collaborative nature of learning and the importance of cultural and social context: all cognitive functions are believed to originate in, and are explained as products of social interactions; learning is more than the assimilation of new knowledge by learners; it should be the process by which learners are integrated into a knowledge community. Students learn by doing rather than observing or listening.

Critical constructivists' philosophy involves learners into activities being critical of the prevailing or suggested (for instance, by an article) view of an author or a particular social grout, etc. Critical theory in education is about questioning how an educational system or a curriculum can best offer education to the target learners. The learners are suggested to ponder, consider alternative possibilities, question, give arguments, and arrive at ones' belief grounded in personal evidence. Learning, therefore, is a process of discovery where learners build their knowledge, with the active dialogue between teachers or peers, building on their existing knowledge.

Having gained understanding, learners must be given access to alternative meaning perspective for interpreting this reality so that critique of the assumptions is possible (Mezirow, 1981). This involves combining ideas related to how people think while interacting with the social environment (constructivist) or how meanings are socially derived (constructionist) and impacted by power structures in society, as well as the ethical consequences of people's choices (critical).

Adults' experience enables them to contextualize the content they learn and that of everyday life or practical activities. The experts who have joined the program highly evaluated its usefulness for their activities in the experts' commissions: 49% of the experienced specialists and 93% of the novices answered to the questionnaire that the content of the program and its outcomes are very useful for the experts' activities. They also recognized the problems of corruption and conflicts, as well as the ways of their practical solution very topical and useful.

Discussion. The suggested learning theories and didactic models conception of the curriculum for the medical experts' continuous learning.

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Learning argumentation skills through debating

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Abstract. The results, conclusions and recommendations of centralized exam in the English language of 2012 - 2013 School Year, provided by the National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia have highlighted the necessity for argumentation skills to improve the general secondary (upper) students` results in the writing and speaking parts. The richness and diversity of using the learning method - debating in the lesson provides the process of learning of argumentation skills: a vital form of human cognition in the 21st century. Using theoretical and empirical research methods, the author of the publication highlights the development of argumentation skills of students who have experience in debating. In order to find out whether students were prepared for the required in the exam ability to develop arguments, 29 twelfth grade students were interviewed after the centralized exam of the English language, the year 2015. Basing on the results of the interview (N=29), the author of the publication can highlight that in order to pass the exam successfully, the argumentation skills must be developed, as well as the interdisciplinary link should be emphasized in the learning process. This can be ensured by the learning method: debating within the lesson and outside it.
The key words: argument, argumentation, argumentation skills, debating, exam, learning method, student, speaking skills, writing skills.

Introduction

Guidelines for Education Development 2014 - 2020 have updated the necessity for the improvement in the field of learning content, as well as the development of innovative teaching aids, including new competencies. It is important to improve/revise the learning methodology in the foreign language obtaining process from the 1st - 12th grades finding the most effective learning methods for the learning content acquisition through strengthening the students' language literacy and development of creativity (Guidelines for Education Development 2014 - 2020). Nor a teacher or a textbook are the main sources of knowledge in the 21st century. Earlier there were limits for the learning process: within the textbook, lesson, school. Nowadays these borders have blurred: students have unlimited access to knowledge, they can direct their own learning (Fullan, Langworthy, 2014).

The aim of the publication is: basing on the analysis of the theoretical aspects of argumentation, to clarify and describe the assessment of argumentation skills and the necessity of them in the centralized exam of the English language, updating the significance of introducing of learning method debating in the foreign language acquisition process.

The publication focuses on defining of concepts of argument, argumentation and argumentation skills. Argumentation skills are essential to be acquired not only to promote the obtaining of the educational content in the variety of subjects; these skills are essential in writing and speaking parts of the centralized exam of the English language (12th grade). The evaluation criteria of the centralized exam highlight the significance of argumentation skills for reaching better results. Having rich vocabulary in the foreign language and competence in the field of different political, economic, social, etc. themes, as well as developed argumentation skills can ensure successful accomplishing of writing and speaking parts of the exam. The improvements in this field could be provided by applying the innovative learning methods in the learning process, e.g. debating. Debating is a competition based on arguments. Systematic development of the argumentation skills through debating all three years of secondary school in the English language can promote successful language acquisition process.

The topicality of the development of argumentation skills

Democracy is the natural environment for an argument. The ability to argue determines understanding of tolerance, empathy and different opinion. It is an opportunity to look at the processes from different angles, as well as the ability to accept different opinion, which is based on evidence (Andrews, 2009). An argument is an academic negotiating tool that can be accepted and/or rejected. Although the concept of it is often associated with different views, its essence is to convince people that the provided information it contains is truthful. Thus the vision of the world has been described with words. The dialogue based on arguments does not resemble everyday conversation: it provides detailed information. The argument must contain information that provides an understanding of its nature; it can be memorized without an effort. Excellent argument is irrefutable and it:

- is understood and perceived easily;
- promotes the availability of the information to the community;
- is collaborative.

The argument provides the message to the public of the individual and contains information confirming the veracity of a statement (Cavell, Midgley, 2013). Significant components of the argument are:

1. Assertion;
2. Reason: the linking component of assertion and evidence (Cavell, Midgley, 2013);
3. Evidence-facts or information supporting an assertion.

It is essential for the student to be able to promote argumentation skills in the variety of subjects acquiring the educational content. The author of the publication is a teacher of the English language, so within the publication the aspects of the assessment of argumentation skills in the centralized exam of the English language (12th grade) will be highlighted.

Argumentation is the process of forming and exchanging arguments (Styslinger, Overstreet, 2014). However it is not equivalent with persuasion (Andrews, 2009): argumentation promotes cooperation and comprehension (Ravenscroft, McAlister, Musbah, 2012). This is focused on assertions that are completed with the reasons and evidence. Thus through the evidence and the facts an argument has been proven. Whereas refutation is the process of rebutting opponent`s arguments with facts and evidence (Cavell, Midgley, 2013). Argumentation can be formal, e.g. dealing with legal or political issues, etc. or informal: casual conversation. It is necessary not only to persuade the others, argumentation is also a tool for reasoned decision-making (Scheuer, McLaren, Loll, Pinkwart, 2010).

Argumentation skills are required in both: private life and professional activities. We agree or disagree with arguments of others and put forward claims to convince the others. Thus argumentation skills are developed in everyday conversations through strengthening arguments with facts and evidence and refuting the counterarguments. These skills are an essential precondition for shaping the democratic society. However, the most important and determining factor in the process of argumentation is the knowledge (De Ascaniis, 2012). Highlighting the educational value of the argumentation, it can be concluded that in this process students not only acquire knowledge but also continue the development of argumentation skills as well as the ability to cooperate. Thus to develop the argumentation skills the new knowledge acquisition process has been updated. The

ability to speak in public and the development of problem-solving skills, both: individually and in a team are also the key benefits of the promoting argumentation skills in the learning process (Scheuer, McLaren, Loll, Pinkwart, 2010). Lack of cooperation and focusing on one particular student`s performance are the barriers for successful development of argumentation skills within the lesson and outside it (Bouyias, Demetriadis, 2012).

To discover the dialectical nature of argumentation, the psychologist M. E. Nussbaum (Stanford University) and the researcher O. V. Edwards (Lamar University) have offered a particular approach to the acquisition of argumentation skills: V-diagram (see Figure 1). This approach is used in the process of forming the arguments in the debating. Debating is a learning method: a way how to encourage students to participate actively in their own learning process (Nussbaum, Edwards, 2011). This method is offered in the curricula of the foreign language subject in lower secondary and general secondary education in Latvia besides the other learning methods, e.g. discussion, questions, role play, conversation, narration, etc. Through debating students have the opportunity to focus on the issue from two opposite sides. V-diagram offers students the opportunity to develop arguments and test them with counter-arguments and questions. V-diagram can be successfully used for acquisition both: writing and speaking skills. V-diagram offers students opportunity to analyze arguments and counterarguments as well as to find out critical questions.

The necessity of argumentation skills for successful preparation for the centralized exam of the English language

Argumentation skills are required for both: the speaking and writing part, of the centralized exam of the English language. However, the particular importance of these skills is indispensable in the writing part of the exam (task 2: essay) and speaking part of the exam (task 3: the monologue). If these skills are not obtained in the learning process, it is complicated for students to perform the requested in the task. Analyzing the essay topics of the centralized exam of the last five years, it can be concluded that in order to successfully write an essay, it is necessary not only to have a rich vocabulary in the foreign language and competence in the field of different political, economic, social, etc. themes, but also to have well developed argumentation skills. Essay topics are:

- Centralized exam, the year 2015: *Do you think areas of wild nature should be developed to bring economic benefits?* The task instructions are: *Write an essay stating your opinion and giving reasons to support it.* (National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia 2015,). To accomplish the task students were required to know facts from the field of the economics, biology, the protection of the environment, etc.
- Centralized exam, the year 2014: - *Financial security is one of the reasons why people work. What other reasons are there?* The task instructions are: *Write an essay stating your point of view and giving reasons to support it.* (National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia, 2014). To accomplish the task students were required to know facts from the field of economics, social sciences, etc.
- Centralized exam, the year 2013: *A lot of young people nowadays think that it is much better to watch a film version of a book than to read it.*

The task instructions are: *Write an essay expressing your opinion and providing reasons to support your point of view.* (National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia, 2013). To accomplish the task students were required to have reading experience as well as the knowledge about particular books which have their film versions.

- Centralized exam, the year 2012: *Some people claim that advertising provides us with useful information while others argue that it is a tool of manipulation.* The task instructions are: *Comment on both opinions and give your point of view supported by arguments.* (National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia, 2012). To accomplish the task students were required to make both: arguments and counterarguments on this particular topic, as well as they had to be well acquainted with the current issues in the field of advertising.

- Centralized exam, the year 2011: *Some people think that museums are enjoyable and educational. Others think that museums are a waste of time and money.* The task instructions are: *Discuss both these views and give your own opinion about the future of museums.* (National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia, 2011). To accomplish the task students were required to make both: arguments and counterarguments on this particular topic, as well as they had to have the experience of visiting museums.

The essay topics have highlighted the fact that in order to successfully write an essay a student needs erudition in various fields, as well as an understanding of the concepts included in the themes. In order to pass the Centralized exam of the English language successfully, it is necessary to learn the structure of the argument in both: writing and speaking tasks. The learning method- debating provides the opportunity to hear the arguments of others and to create own arguments as well as to present them. It is important to practice argumentation skills through writing, speaking and discussing them within and beyond the lessons (Overstreet, Styslinger, 2014).

The assessment of argumentation skills in the writing part of Centralized exam

National Centre for Education has developed methodical material for the writing part of the Centralized exam of the English language, where the criteria for the assessment have been set up. The provided criteria have been developed according to the Common European Framework levels: C1, B2-2, B2-1 and B1. The second task of the writing part of the centralized exam is essay where the contents, organization, grammar, vocabulary and orthography are accessed. The necessity of argumentation skills has been emphasized in the assessment of the contents:

- C1-5 points: The arguments are convincing, relevant, fully extended and well supported
- B2.2-4 points: The given arguments are varied, detailed, well highlighted and appropriately supported.
- B2.1-3 points: The main ideas are relevant; there may be lack of focus or precision in supporting the material.
- B1-2 points: Some main ideas are put forward but incompletely developed; the arguments may appear irrelevant, unclear or repetitive.
- A2-1 point: The text bears some relevance to the topic (National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia, 2012).

The maximum number of points assessing the essay contents -5 points can be earned only if arguments are *convincing, relevant, fully extended and well supported*. So it can be concluded that argumentation skills are essential for students to pass the exam successfully.

The assessment of argumentation skills in the speaking part of Centralized exam

National Centre for Education has developed methodical material for the speaking part of the Centralized exam of the English language, where the criteria for the assessment have been set up. The criteria have emphasized the necessity for argumentation skills in the speaking part as well, e.g. maximum score: 4 points for vocabulary student can earn if he/she *has a good command of a wide range of vocabulary. Can express himself / herself, provide clear descriptions, opinions and arguments*. 3 points can be earned if student *has sufficient vocabulary to express himself/herself and provide arguments*. There are 3 tasks in the speaking part of the exam and argumentation skills are essential in the task No.3, where maximum points-6 can be earned if student *can give the main idea of the text and an elaborate opinion, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion* (National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia, 2015).

The methodological material shows the assessment of three students` performance. The assessment highlights the particular lack of argumentation skills. E.g. student gets  5 points from 6 in task No.1: "the student`s participation is effective; she expands on some questions by stating her point of view, but does not develop any of more complex questions by giving her arguments". Analyzing another student`s presentation the lack of argumentation skills has been emphasized again: "Student has sufficient vocabulary to express her and provide arguments. However, occasionally the student's word range is limited so she cannot fully expand on the ideas and provide her arguments, e.g. Līgo party – that's a very big one". Therefore student gets 3 points from 4 for vocabulary (National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia, 2015). Here the author of the publication can conclude that argumentation skills are very important part of the foreign language competence gained in secondary school. However, argumentation skills can be used effectively, if student has appropriate vocabulary, grammar, fluency, knowledge, competence, etc.

The results, conclusions and recommendations of centralized exams in foreign languages (the English language) of 2012 - 2013 School Year, have updated that "all three tasks of the speaking module require students to perform different communicative functions: in task 1 (interview) students are invited to give spontaneous answers to the teacher's questions, expressing own point of view, providing arguments and expanding on them". The importance is put on *"giving more extended answers to the remaining three questions – show personal treatment of the topic, develop the argument "*(National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia, 2014).

Task 3 proves to be "the most demanding both linguistically and organizationally. The main difficulties were: only expressing own ideas; inability to create a logical monologue where the student outlines the main idea and expands on it giving own opinion supported by relevant arguments". And one of the recommendations is*:* "to develop the students' argumentation strategies" (National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia, 2014).

Assessing the results, conclusions, recommendations and methodological materials of centralized exams in the English language provided by National Centre for Education, it can be concluded that it is essential to acquire the necessary

argumentation skills for successful passing of the exam, focusing on expanding on giving own opinion by supporting it with relevant arguments. The improvements in this field could be provided by applying the innovative learning methods in the learning process, e.g. debating.

The learning method-debating a tool for the development of argumentation skills

Learning method debating is a way how to encourage students to participate actively in their own learning process. It includes the preparation process, the presentation of prepared material, teamwork, fast decision making, etc. (Brookfiel, Preskill, 2005). A teacher who has chosen to use the learning method-debating in the lesson not only fosters the learning process to become more interesting for both students and teachers, but also promotes the understanding of the learning content. This method is significant for the analysis, strengthening of the obtained knowledge and building argumentation skills (Proulx, 2004). Debating can be also defined as a cognitive game (Easterday, 2012). This is a competition based on arguments. Competition can take place between two teams or two individuals. The aim of debating is to find out which team or individual will provide stronger set of facts and evidence. The difference between the exchange process of arguments and debating is the fact that debating provides a systematic approach for the exchange of arguments which is determined by the debate format. Format defines a sequence of speakers and time for presentation of the arguments. So the speakers have to be ready to provide arguments for both: for and against the resolution (Cavell, Midgley, 2013).

Debating is a tool to improve students' ability to write essays, to speak in front of the public, to present, etc. (Chiara, Manno, Scarano, 2012). This method promotes the development of argumentation skills: for all debating formats the common issue is a fact that debaters create the arguments for and against the resolution/topic. The debating is a complex learning method: it includes discussion questions, essays, role-plays, conversations, stories, e-discussions, etc. It is an argumentative discourse.

Debating updates the using of information technologies, which is also essential part of the process of the development of argumentation skills, e.g. in the preparatory process for the debating: e-discussion (discussion via instant messaging or e-mails). Thus, collaboration has been updated. Teacher, organizing e-discussion can arrange the elements of the role-play: split the roles for the e-discussion participants, e.g. "theoretician", "moderator", "summarizer", "the source search engine", e.g. (Scheuer, McLaren, Loll, Pinkwart, 2010). The biggest part of the preparation process for the debating occurs outside the classroom, thus e-discussion environment has been updated. The most common debating format for lower and upper secondary school students of Latvia is Karl Poper debating format. There are two teams: affirmative and negative and three speakers in each team: the first, the second and the third. Affirmative team stands for the resolution and negative team against. Each speaker has his/her own responsibilities:

Affirmative team (A-team)
- 1st speaker (A1): Poses the resolution and defines the concepts the resolution contains; lists 3 arguments for the resolution proved with reasons, facts, evidence and examples.

- 2nd speaker (A2): Refutes N1`s arguments and denies opponents evidence through stating more convincing evidence; updates his/her teams case, providing new evidence refuting N-team`s statements about A-team`s case. New arguments cannot be posed (only the ones mentioned by the first speaker of A-team, which have been strengthened by new facts).
- 3rd speaker (A3): Summarizes all the debate and highlights clash points; emphasizes information raised in the question and answer part; shows the weaknesses of the case of the N-team and highlights the issues where his/her team was superior; compares the two cases of both teams and shows his/her teams excellence.

Negative team (N-team)
- 1st speaker (N1): Refutes A1`s arguments with examples pointing out mistakes/errors/failures of opponents` team; lists 2 arguments against the resolution and proves them with reasons, facts, evidence and examples.
- 2nd speaker (N2): Restores the position of N-team through refuting A-team`s evidence. New arguments cannot be posed (only the ones mentioned by the first speaker of N-team, which have been strengthened by new facts).
- 3rd speaker (N3): Summarizes all the debate and highlights clash points; emphasizes information raised in the question and answer part; shows the weaknesses of the case of the A-team and highlights the issues where his/her team was superior; compares the two cases of both teams and shows N- teams excellence (Debating centre).

The winning team has been decided and announced by the judge (teacher/debate coach), after evaluating the presentation of both teams, taking into account the quality of arguments (facts and evidence), refutation, persuasion skills, ability to ask questions, etc. Each debate team member has to accomplish particular tasks in the process of debating and preparations for it. Thus learner`s ability to work individually and in the team has been developed.

Debating in the secondary school promotes successful preparatory process for the Centralized exams in the English language; especially this learning method is effective for the development of argumentation skills.

Through the implementing the learning method - debating in the process of foreign language learning in grades 10-12, the author has observed that for the tenth grade students it is difficult to accomplish all the required tasks for debating. In addition, it was difficult for them to understand the procedure of debating. However, in the twelfth grade after obtaining the argumentation skills in the 10th, 11th and 12th grades, students have accepted this method of learning and are ready to fulfill all the necessary requirements for accomplishing the wholesome process of debating. On the 16th and 17th of March, 2015, twelfth grade students had the centralized exam in the English language. After the exam students were interviewed in order to find out whether they were prepared for the required in the exam ability to develop arguments. There were 29 twelfth grade students interviewed. Five of them during the three years of learning in secondary school were not only involved in the debating within the lessons of the English language, but also participated in the school debate club and were taking part in regional, national and international level debate tournaments. The others (24) were debating only in the lessons. In the preparation process for debating

(within and outside the lessons) they mainly fulfilled V-diagrams and participated in e-discussions (outside the lessons).There were three questions asked:

1. Which learning method/methods helped you to develop the necessary argumentation skills for the writing and speaking parts of the exam?
2. Did you have the necessary argumentation skills for the second task of the writing part of the exam-the essays?
3. Did you have the necessary argumentation skills for the speaking part of the exam?

To summarize the respondents' answers of the first question: *Which learning method/methods helped you to develop the necessary argumentation skills for the writing and speaking parts of the exam?*, 23 students admitted that the best preparation was debating, because it was an opportunity not only to improve argumentation skills, but also to develop the other skills of the English language, especially speaking and writing skills. Two students found that the best preparation was through e-discussions; four students emphasized that writing essays helped them to get ready for the exam.

The analysis of the respondents' answers of the second question: *Did you have the necessary argumentation skills for writing essays?*, showed that all 29 students emphasized that they had the necessary argumentation skills. However, 17 of them admitted that they were not prepared for the topic of the essay on which they lacked both: knowledge and understanding. So, even though the students had argumentation skills, arguments could not be developed successfully without the knowledge and understanding of the concepts included in the essay topic. The interviews showed that the essay topic - *Do you think areas of wild nature should be developed to bring economic benefits?* (National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia, 2015) was very closely linked to the economics, as well as biology. Thus, the centralized exam of the year 2015 in the English language has emphasized the necessity for significant interdisciplinary approach to the learning process. Although the students knew how to build arguments the knowledge and understanding of specific topics in economics and biology was essential for successful writing this essay. The author of the publication was willing to find out students` understanding of this topic. Therefore, the author asked students to fulfill V-diagram on the topic *Do you think areas of wild nature should be developed to bring economic benefits?* (examination tasks, 2015). V-diagrams showed that one of the most commonly mentioned arguments was: *„Areas of wild nature should be developed to attract tourists` attention. Thus the number of tourists will increase. Tourism gives substantial income to the state.*" (students` answers).

Unfortunately, only few students were able to base their arguments with evidence and facts, because this knowledge is provided by the subject: economics. The analysis of V-diagram revealed students` lack of understanding of the concepts - *"wild nature"* or *"wild nature should be developed"*. This concept was understood by students as *"turning the wild nature into the industrial area"*. However, the part of the students understood it as *"expanding of wild nature or creation of new territories of wild nature"*.

Only some students mentioned specific areas of wild nature, e.g. "forest" or "swamp". Knowledge in this field is obtained within Biology lessons. There was misunderstanding of the concept *"areas of wild nature"* as well. Students were not able to see the difference between this concept and the concept: "*areas of nature*". Thus, the analysis of V-diagrams highlighted one of the theoretical finding of this

article: the necessity for ongoing gaining of the new knowledge for further development of the argumentation skills. Thus systematic development of the argumentation skills all three years of secondary school in the English language must be closely linked with gaining valuable knowledge, being open to the interdisciplinary link; understanding of the concepts, being able to analyze; to have the competence of the topical issues of the 21st century and implementation of new innovative learning methods, e.g. debating in the lesson and outside it.

Summarizing respondents' answers of the third question: *Did you have the necessary argumentation skills for the speaking part of the exam*?, 27 students agreed that they had necessary argumentation skills for the speaking part of the exam; two students admitted that they were partly prepared to demonstrate these skills. However, 8 students emphasized that, despite having the argumentation skills, they lacked the necessary vocabulary. All respondents agreed that they better succeeded in speaking tasks of the exam and the reason for this was the fact that there were more comprehensible themes which were acquired within the English language lessons and were provided within the curriculum.

Conclusions

1) The development of argumentation skills is essential in the 21st century education. Significant benefits of the process of argumentation are the ability to speak in public, problem solving skills as well as the opportunity to gain new knowledge, both individually and as a team.

2) In order to pass the centralized exam of the English language successfully, it is necessary to practice argumentation skills, and later using them both: in writing and speaking parts of the exam. It is essential to hear the arguments of others and present students` own arguments. This opportunity is provided by the learning method-debating.

3) The important and determining factor in the process of developing arguments is knowledge. Students acquire knowledge through argumentation, however to improve argumentation skills new knowledge is required. Thus the knowledge acquisition process has been updated constantly.

4) The essay topic (task 2, writing part) of the centralized exam of the English language, the year 2015, has emphasized the necessity for the interdisciplinary link in the learning process, as well as the understanding of the concepts mentioned in the essay topic, ability to analyze, promoting students' competence in the topical issues of the 21st century, as well as the ability to generate new knowledge from the existing data.

5) The implementation of the learning method: debating in the learning process ensures the active participation of students in their own learning process: the process of preparation for debating, the presentation of prepared material, teamwork, fast decision making, the ability to defend their views, as well as the interdisciplinary links. The debating is the argument based competition.

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