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**PEDAGOGY - YESTERDAY, TODAY,
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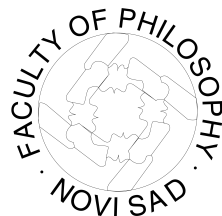
BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

NOVI SAD, 2026.

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UNIVERSITY IN NOVI SAD
FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY NOVI SAD
21000 Novi Sad
Dr Zorana Đinđić 2
www.ff.uns.ac.rs

For the publisher
Prof. Dr Milivoj Alanović

Editor
Prof. Dr Borka Malčić

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ISBN
978-86-6065-980-6

URL
<https://digitalna.ff.uns.ac.rs/sadrzaj/2026/978-86-6065-980-6>



Novi Sad, 2026.

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PLENARY LECTURES

MORE SCHOOL! CALLING FOR A NEW SCHOOL MOVEMENT

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Even if the association with the well-known so-called ‘new school movement’ stretching across the world at the beginning of the twentieth century - by Ellen Key called the century of the child - is intended, my call for a new school movement will not simply repeat its critiques and proposals. In fact, it will imply the questioning of the child-centeredness that was promoted by this movement, that originated mainly in pre-school and primary education in a still very rural society. The new school movement I will call for might be formulated rather as ‘school-centered’ or, better, ‘school-committed’ (avoiding both the emphasis on the child and the idea of a centre). This new school movement aims precisely at ‘school’ as a particular form of pedagogic life. It includes a humble attempt to give the ‘idea’ ‘school’ the power to transform the many reasons that have been formulated to distrust school or that advise us to be ‘against school’. However, it is not so much about offering justifications for why school should matter, referring to ‘outcomes’ or even ‘values’, but rather about articulating the particular transformative power of the school form of education/learning and maybe renewing enthusiasm for (the re-invention of) this form. It rests on a particular, pedagogical, view on the relation between education and society and the possibility to ‘transform’ or ‘renew’ society through school. In order to avoid confusing the specificity of school learning with institutionalized, normalizing school education, I will first first describe the school mode of learning as one which is grounded in principles of freedom, equality, dignity and formation, and I will briefly sketch some of the concrete practices and arrangements that materialize these principles: school talk, school work, school classes (there are many more). I will then indicate the attempts to de-school school and replace it with learning factories. I will finally call for a re-vitalizing of the school-form and propose a direction to elaborate its concrete design requiring a reconsidering of the role and education of teachers as well as questioning the learner-centered nature of contemporary educational thinking. By doing so, I hope it becomes a real option to be concerned with school and even to support its re-invention, rather than arguing against’ and aiming at going ‘beyond’.

Keywords: school-centered, school experiences, school form of education, re-vitalize

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**“TEMPORA MUTANTUR, NOS ET MUTAMUR IN ILLIS” - SCHOOL
PEDAGOGUE COMPETENCIES BETWEEN CONTINUITY AND CHANGE²**

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After 14 years, the topic of competencies is revisited, within the framework of the research project “Competencies of School Pedagogues: Retrospective, Current State, and a Look into the Future.” This time, the approach is contextually broader, methodologically more demanding, and more comprehensive. The research aims were: 1) to hear, experience, and systematize school pedagogues’ reflections on their own competencies; 2) to develop a new research instrument on school pedagogues’ competencies, applicable across different policy frameworks; 3) to obtain expert feedback on the instrument; 4) to conduct piloting and validation of the instrument; and 5) to propose a new competency model for the school pedagogue of 21st century. Ethnography, as a qualitative research method, served as the first collaborator. Within the immediate community of school pedagogues, the aim was to hear, experience, and systematize their reflections on their own competencies, and to discover how they think about the competencies that were studied in 2012 on a national sample in Croatia. Although initially approached with caution and an (evidently) mistaken hypothesis about resistance, school pedagogues in Croatia responded very affirmatively to the discussion about their own competencies. In this context, the 116 participants who took part in the focus groups constituted an exceptionally rich research sample. They were tasked with reflecting on the 2012 instrument and proposing new competencies they consider important for their work. They were additionally given the opportunity for a kind of “venting” of the numerous challenges they encounter daily in their work, which in the spirit of focused ethnography served as added value in the analysis of their initial proposals and comments on competencies. Based on the collected materials and an in-depth analysis of the literature, a new instrument was developed. It was subsequently refined methodologically and prepared for the piloting and validation phase through cognitive focus groups and interviews with a selected sample of 23 participants - 14 school pedagogues employed in primary and secondary schools in the Republic of Croatia, 2 advisors for school pedagogues from the Agency for Education and Training, and 7 researchers from the social sciences (pedagogues, social pedagogues, and sociologists). At the time of writing this abstract, the piloting and validation phase is still ongoing. The aim of this presentation is to share the preliminary results of the national research on the competencies of school pedagogues in the Republic of Croatia, to discuss the proposed new competency model for the school pedagogue of the 21st century, and to critically reflect on the changes the profession has faced over the past decade. If times are changing, and with them so are we, then the question of school pedagogues’ competencies is not a merely a question of professional adaptation, but also a question what kind of school and what kind a society we wish to build “New kids on the block” are already on their way, it is up to us to develop the competencies for the schools (and professionals) that are yet to come.

Keywords: competencies, school pedagogues, research, preliminary results

² The research is being conducted within the framework of the scientific project 'Competencies of School Pedagogues: Retrospective, Current State, and a Look into the Future,' carried out at the Institute for Migration Research (project lead: Marko Turk, PhD).

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PEDAGOGY IN THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL CONTEXT

RHETORICAL CONSTRUCTION OF FAIRNESS IN PEDAGOGICAL COMMUNICATION

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Fairness represents a central category in educational practice. However, fairness is not just a procedural principle but a rhetorically constructed phenomenon reflected in teacher talk. This study explores how secondary school students construct and recognize fairness in pedagogical communication through the rhetorical dimensions of ethos, logos, and pathos. A qualitative research design was employed using two focus groups with secondary school students. Data were transcribed and analysed using reflexive thematic analysis, followed by rhetorical coding based on the Aristotelian framework of ethos, logos, and pathos. Findings indicate that students primarily associate fairness with ethical consistency and equal treatment (ethos), particularly the absence of favouritism and the application of uniform criteria. Rational justification and transparent explanation (logos) significantly enhance the perceived legitimacy of grades and disciplinary decisions. Emotional regulation and tone (pathos) function as a mediating dimension: even well-argued decisions may be perceived as unfair if expressed harshly, whereas calm delivery increases acceptance. The results suggest that fairness in pedagogical contexts is discursively achieved through the integration of ethical credibility, rational transparency, and emotional control. Teacher authority is therefore not experienced as automatically legitimate, but as rhetorically sustained through communicative practice.

Keywords: fairness, pedagogical communication, ethos, pathos, logos, student perception

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TEACHERS IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: REFLECTING ON ROLES AND CHALLENGES

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The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) raises questions about the transformation of the teachers' profession and roles. Although AI is not perceived as a substitute for teachers (Akinwalere & Ivanov, 2023), its application is believed to change teaching and learning practices (Chen et al., 2020). This study examines the extent to which university teachers in educational fields perceive that AI is changing the role of teachers and how they interpret these changes. The data from 128 teachers were collected using a questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics and content analysis. Almost half of the respondents believe AI changes teaching roles, but it is primarily seen as a supportive tool rather than a replacement. AI reshapes how certain roles are enacted, and shifts the focus from teachers as a source of knowledge to teachers as mentors, facilitators, partners and agents of social change. Emphasis is placed on fostering relationships, critical thinking, creativity, and guiding students to use AI responsibly, ethically, and critically. Responses also reflect concern about the challenges and uncertainties facing the future of education. The findings highlight important questions about the applied educational paradigm and the need for systematic consideration of AI's implications for educational policy and professional practice.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, education, university, teacher

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DELAYED SPEECH IN CHILDREN: A CHALLENGE FOR EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMMES

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The emergence of delayed speech in early childhood represents a significant challenge for early learning and development programmes. The stages of speech development in children up to six years of age are stable, predictable, and scientifically grounded; understanding these stages enables educators, pedagogues, and speech therapists to distinguish between typical development and developmental deviations, and to apply appropriate methodological approaches to support speech acquisition. Early identification of speech delays or difficulties in children who do not achieve expected developmental milestones is crucial, as it enables timely professional intervention aimed at overcoming or mitigating the effects of physiological, cognitive, and psychological factors influencing speech onset. This study was conducted with preschool educators from kindergartens in the municipality of Aerodrom, Skopje. The findings indicate that 67% of respondents working with children aged 2 to 4 encounter delayed speech. The most frequently identified contributing factors are early exposure to digital devices and insufficient linguistic stimulation within the family environment. The study provides recommendations for revising the national Early Learning and Development Programme, as well as for applying effective pedagogical strategies and didactic resources to foster speech development and improve standard pronunciation, including the reduction of jargon, anglicisms, and dialectal forms.

Keywords: children`s speech development, speech delay in children, pedagogical approaches to speech stimulation in children

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**A REVIEW OF BARRIERS TO THE INTEGRATION OF INFORMATION
AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES IN TEACHING: AN ECOLOGICAL
APPROACH**

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In the contemporary digital society, the integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) in teaching is aimed at improving educational outcomes. A key aspect of research on technology-supported teaching concerns barriers that shape teachers' readiness and the ways in which technology is integrated into instructional practice. Unlike previous studies, which typically examine barriers at the teacher and school levels, the ecological approach conceptualizes ICT integration as the result of interactions between individuals and system levels, interpreting technology use as context-dependent decisions. This study is based on a qualitative analysis of the literature, with barriers organized across interconnected levels: macrosystem, exosystem, mesosystem, microsystem, and chronosystem. The findings indicate that at the macro level, barriers are related to systemic support and educational policies; at the exo level, to infrastructural and organizational conditions and resource availability; at the meso level, to collaboration and school climate; while the micro level encompasses teachers' beliefs and competencies, instructional design, and student behavior in digital environments. At the chrono level, changes in barrier structures are observed following the COVID-19 pandemic, with a shift toward pedagogical challenges. In conclusion, barriers operate interdependently, while ICT is often used without deeper pedagogical integration. The implications highlight that sustainable transformation of teaching requires coordination across all system levels.

Keywords: ICT use in teaching, barriers, ecological approach, teacher, educational system

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**FROM TRADITIONAL TO HYBRID CLASSROOM IN HIGHER
EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY**

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The paper addresses the process of transition to hybrid education in higher education, aiming to explore the institutional capacities for its implementation. A descriptive case study of the Faculty of Philosophy, UNIBL, encompasses the analysis of the development of a digital learning environment, support for the development of academic staff's digital competencies, and the redesign of course syllabi towards a hybrid format. The methodological approach includes document analysis, curriculum review, and examination of implementation practices within the institutional context, initiated through the synergistic action of two Erasmus+ capacity building projects in digital transformation. The findings indicate that the transformation process is conditioned by an integrative approach to designing new teaching and learning environments through the alignment of technological infrastructure, pedagogical innovation, and continuous professional development. Emphasis is placed on the importance of systemic institutional support in fostering digital competencies and integrating synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning strategies. The case study suggests that the hybrid teaching model enables flexibility, enhances the quality of learning, supports the development of contemporary pedagogical approaches, while requiring clearly defined institutional strategies. Innovations in higher education teaching are reflected in curriculum enhancement, the development of digital competencies, establishing the sustainable model of digital transformation.

Keywords: hybrid instruction, higher education, digital competencies, transformation of instruction, case study

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HUMANISTIC VALUES AS A BASIS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTERCULTURAL EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

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Cultural diversity is a key feature of contemporary society, placing complex demands on society, individuals, and institutions. In this context, the education system plays an important role in shaping a space for encounters between different cultures and promoting values such as equality, empathy, tolerance, and respect for diversity, thereby becoming central to the development of interculturality. Although the 21st century is often characterized by a crisis of humanistic values, these values are recognized as a necessary foundation for the expansion of interculturality in both social and educational contexts. This paper analyzes the concepts of interculturality and intercultural education, as well as the role of humanistic values in contemporary society, with particular emphasis on their influence within educational institutions. A theoretical analysis of relevant literature shows that the foundations of an intercultural educational context lie in values oriented toward the individual, their dignity, and freedom. The study concludes that promoting humanistic values within institutional frameworks can contribute to creating an educational context that supports diversity, equality, inclusion, and interculturality. The findings highlight the need to consistently implement humanistic values in teaching practice and school culture as a prerequisite for developing an interculturally sensitive educational environment.

Keywords: humanistic values, inclusion, culture, intercultural education, education for diversity

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PARENTAL VALUE PRIORITIES IN THE UPBRINGING OF GENERATION ALPHA CHILDREN

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In contemporary social conditions, marked by rapid technological development and changing patterns of socialization, the intergenerational transmission of values has become an increasingly complex process. Particular attention is directed towards parents of Generation Alpha children, whose upbringing unfolds within a digitally mediated environment. The aim of this study was to describe and interpret the value priorities of parents of Generation Alpha children, as well as the ways in which they understand, shape, and transmit these values within the contemporary context of parenting. The study was conducted using a qualitative, descriptive-interpretative approach with a purposive sample of four parents. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed through thematic analysis. The findings indicate a relatively coherent set of value priorities, with respect, responsibility, empathy, and work-related values being particularly prominent. These values are primarily transmitted through everyday interactions, parental modelling, and communication in everyday parenting situations. The results further suggest that parents shape and negotiate their value priorities within a dynamic interplay of personal experiences and contemporary social influences, particularly those associated with the digital environment. While parents strive to preserve fundamental values, they also reinterpret and adapt them to new developmental contexts. The findings provide insight into contemporary parental perspectives and highlight the need for further research on values and parenting in the context of ongoing social change.

Keywords: Generation Alpha, parenting, value priorities, value transmission, contemporary upbringing

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PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN EDUCATION

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The contemporary educational context is marked by the intensive use of social media among young people, raising important questions about their pedagogical implications for learning and development. The aim of this paper is to examine how the use of social media influences learning processes, as well as to identify the key pedagogical benefits and risks associated with their integration into education. The study is based on a theoretical content analysis and a systematic review of relevant literature. The findings indicate that social media can contribute to increased student engagement, the development of collaborative learning, and improved access to information. However, they also entail risks, including distraction, superficial learning, and exposure to misinformation. Furthermore, research highlights the importance of developing media literacy as a key competence for the critical evaluation of content in digital environments. It's concluded that the effective use of social media in education requires a clear pedagogical foundation and an active role of teachers in guiding the learning process. The implications of this study point to the need for the systematic integration of digital and media literacy into curricula, as well as the development of new didactic models adapted to the digital environment.

Keywords: social media, learning, digital literacy, pedagogical implications, youth

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RAISING HAPPY CHILDREN: THE IMPERATIVE OF POSITIVE EMOTIONS IN CONTEMPORARY PARENTING

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The research problem focuses on the pedagogical implications of reconceptualizing the role of positive emotions in upbringing from the perspective of positive psychology, within the context of two key challenges of contemporary parenting: parental determinism and the scientisation of child rearing. Positive psychology offers innovative responses to these phenomena. The term "positive" in positive psychology has a deeper meaning than mere non-violent discipline of children or responsive parenting. It refers to the development of positive emotions in children for the purpose of their overall prosperity, flourishing, and self-fulfillment. The paper is structured into five sections. The "Introduction" presents the research problem and defines the objective of this study. The section "Contemporary Parenting Culture: Key Challenges" analyzes aspects of parental deterministic influence on developmental outcomes and the scientisation of child rearing. The third section, "Positive Psychology Responses to the Challenges of Contemporary Parenting," addresses the systematisation of scientific standards and guidelines regarding the development of positive emotions in children and, consequently, the deterministic role of parents. The section "Positive Psychology in Child-rearing from a Pedagogical Perspective" examines two pedagogical implications: (1) the marginalisation of the authentic, autonomous parent-child relationship as an effect of the scientisation of child-rearing, and (2) the reduction of responsibility for the development of children's positive emotions to individual educational strategies and interventions. To conclude, the imperative of "positive emotions" raises complex questions, concerning not only the relationship between individual and collective responsibilities but also the scope and limits of scientific standardisation in the field of child-rearing.

Keywords: contemporary parenting, positive psychology, parental determinism, scientisation of child-rearing, imperative of positive emotions

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CULTIVATING HUMAN-IN-COMMAND AI COLLABORATIONS: A TWO-PHASE PEDAGOGICAL MODEL FOR TRANSLATION EDUCATION

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In the AI era, translation education faces challenges in redefining pedagogical paradigms to cultivate translators capable of human-AI collaboration. In response, this study, employing a design-based research methodology, proposes and implements an AI-literacy-centered pedagogical innovation supported by blended teaching within the course Translating Agrarian Wisdom. This course introduces a structured two-phase workflow. Students first hone essential translation analysis and strategy skills without AI assistance, designed to foster independent critical thinking and establish robust translation cognition of agrarian wisdom through a process that prioritizes unaided human analysis. Building upon this foundational competence, the second phase engages students in human-in-command collaboration with AI: draft generation, critical evaluation, revision and reflection. This two-phase workflow is embedded within a blended learning ecosystem. Online components, for example, pre-recorded lectures and exercises, enable students to acquire knowledge of agrarian wisdom and develop a translational mindset. Complementarily, organized agricultural field studies off-line ground translation practice in an authentic cross-cultural context. This structure allocates in-class time for interactive assessment, discussion, and hands-on workshops. Evidence from comparative student translations, reflective reports, and course awards indicates significant success. Students demonstrated a marked shift from AI apprehension to critical engagement, showing the ability to identify AI limitations and produce revised translations synthesizing technical efficiency with human judgement.

Keywords: human-in-command AI collaborators, two-phase pedagogical model, translation education, blended teaching

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PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF RESTRICTING ACCESS TO SOCIAL NETWORKS FOR INDIVIDUALS UNDER 16 FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF PARENTS AND ADOLESCENTS

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This paper examines the pedagogical implications arising from a potential decision to introduce legal restrictions on the use of social networks for individuals under the age of 16, or adolescents of a similar age. The first part of the paper analyzes research findings that consider this measure from the perspective of children's and young people's well-being, its benefits for both the immediate and broader community, as well as findings that point to the potential risks of such and similar measures. The second part of the paper presents the results of an empirical pilot study involving parents and adolescents, highlighting their attitudes and dilemmas regarding this issue. Preliminary results indicate a significant level of concern among parents about the impact of social networks on children and youth, along with expectations that access-restriction measures could have positive pedagogical effects. On the other hand, adolescents generally express skepticism regarding the effectiveness of such measures; however, some of them emphasize the negative effects of social networks on the well-being of children and youth and show understanding for the introduction of this and similar measures. The findings of this research will serve as a starting point for future, more comprehensive studies dealing with the pedagogical implications of social networks on the well-being of children and young people.

Keywords: social networks, access restriction, pedagogical implications, adolescents, well-being of children and youth

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**QUALITY OF LIFE OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN WHO USE
ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY: A PILOT STUDY**

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Family quality of life is defined as a dynamic sense of family well-being that depends on the extent to which both family needs and the needs of individual members are met. Parents of children with developmental disabilities face numerous challenges and stressors, which may affect their emotional and physical well-being. The aim of this study was to determine the quality of life of families in which children use assistive technology. Additionally, the study examined the relationship between family quality of life and the sociodemographic characteristics of the participants. The research included 28 parents of children with developmental disabilities. The Family Quality of Life Scale was used. The results showed that parents were generally satisfied with their family quality of life ($M = 4.03$, $SD = 0.66$). The lowest level of satisfaction was recorded in the domain of Emotional Well-being ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 0.96$), while the highest level was found for the subscale Support related to the family member with a disability ($M = 4.34$, $SD = 0.70$). The findings also indicated statistically significant differences in satisfaction levels with regard to the employment status and marital status of the participants. Data in the literature indicate that the use of assistive technology can improve the quality of life of users with disorders of various etiologies. For this reason, assessing quality of life represents an important segment of research on the outcomes of the use of this technology.

Keywords: assistive technology, quality of life, family

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**THE INTEGRATION OF STEAM AND TVET APPROACHES IN TECHNOLOGY
AND ENGINEERING EDUCATION: A MODEL FOR CONTEMPORARY
TEACHING TRANSFORMATION**

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Contemporary educational contexts require the transformation of teaching practices in order to develop functional knowledge and key student competencies. Technology and Engineering Education provides an appropriate framework for integrating STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) and TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) approaches. The research problem addresses how the integration of these approaches can contribute to improving contemporary teaching and fostering student competencies. The aim of this paper is to provide a theoretical analysis of the possibilities for integrating STEAM and TVET as a model for transforming teaching practice. The study is based on the analysis of relevant pedagogical and didactic literature, as well as a comparative analysis of the key characteristics of STEAM and TVET approaches. The results indicate that their integration enables the connection between theoretical and practical knowledge, supports the development of creativity, critical thinking, and practical skills, and increases student engagement in the learning process. Additionally, their complementarity is emphasized in the context of contemporary educational demands. It can be concluded that the integration of STEAM and TVET approaches represents an effective model for transforming contemporary teaching. The implications highlight the need for curriculum innovation and the improvement of teachers' professional competencies.

Keywords: STEAM, TVET, Technology and Engineering Education, integration, student competencies

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*PEDAGOGY THROUGH THE DISCOURSES OF FORMAL,
NONFORMAL AND INFORMAL EDUCATION*

CURRICULUM REFORM OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN SLOVENIA: FROM PRODUCTIVE EDUCATION TO CHILD-ORIENTED SCHOOL WELL-BEING

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Slovenia is transforming elementary school education. The current school system, based on the 1995 reform, has become the focus of public criticism, mainly due to its dominant cognitive paradigm, which prioritises knowledge and skills, excessive intellectualism and rationalism, neglect of the child's imagination and personal experience, and passive Europeanisation under the pressure of funding deadlines, with insufficient national reflection and consensus. Slovenian pedagogues are critical of the challenge of balancing performance orientation with a safe, stimulating learning environment that supports child well-being. The results of the international PISA survey also contribute to these concerns, showing that Slovenian students have a comparable level of knowledge to their European peers but are below average in their sense of belonging at school, enjoyment of learning, support and quality of relationships with teachers, and experience a higher level of fear of failure in some courses. This raises the question of what the critical needs of students are in terms of their physical, psychological, learning, and social well-being at school, which must be considered equally alongside academic achievements in a child's holistic development. In this paper, we discuss some of these dilemmas in the context of reform pedagogy and a comparative study with neighbouring regions.

Keywords: elementary education, Slovenian National Programme of Upbringing and Education, reform pedagogy, school well-being, comparative study

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BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE: TEACHERS' REFLECTIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)

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In the contemporary educational system, the Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a key mechanism for ensuring quality inclusion. However, a gap frequently exists between normative expectations and everyday school reality. The aim of this paper is to map the actual state of affairs in educational practice, that is, to analyze the ways in which teachers operationalize the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), transforming it from a formal administrative document into everyday didactic practice when working with students who require additional educational support. Through qualitative research using a focus group of 5 to 8 teachers, data will be collected on their experiences from direct practical experiences. The research focuses on three key aspects: (1) mapping teachers' experiences, including the number of children needing additional support they teach, and identifying effective teaching methods; (2) analyzing daily challenges in implementing the IEP in larger classes, specifically dilemmas regarding parallel assessment and progress monitoring; and (3) identifying the need for professional support. Through the discussion of the results, an analysis is envisaged of teachers' attitudes regarding the adequacy of available professional development programs, as well as the specific types of support they lack for the successful implementing individualized instructional interventions. The study aims to provide clear guidelines to improve professional support, ensuring the IEP becomes a functional educational guide rather than merely an administrative requirement.

Keywords: inclusive education, Individual Education Plan (IEP), children needing additional educational support, teachers' reflections, pedagogical practice

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**STUDENTS IN MOTION: INTEGRATING PHYSICAL EDUCATION INTO THE
TEACHING OF NATURE AND SOCIETY**

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Movement plays a significant role in the development of cognitive functions, including attention, working memory, and executive functions, thereby contributing to more effective achievement of educational outcomes. Integrating movement into the teaching and learning process promotes multisensory learning and supports the holistic development of students, including their socio-emotional dimension, which is reflected in increased motivation and engagement. The aim of this study was to examine the practice of integrating movement into the teaching of the subject Nature and Society and to identify perceived barriers and implications for learning. The study employed a qualitative approach using focus groups with a sample of ten primary school classroom teachers. The data collected were analyzed using thematic analysis. The results indicate that teachers recognize the pedagogical potential of movement, yet its integration in Nature and Society lessons is mostly unsystematic and sporadic. Movement is predominantly associated with Physical Education lessons. Key barriers identified include time constraints, limited physical space, curriculum misalignment, and insufficient teacher training. In conclusion, effective implementation of an integrated approach requires professional development for teachers, the development of methodological models, and institutional support.

Keywords: classroom teachers, functional knowledge, movement integration, science education

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**ENGAGEMENT AND CONTRIBUTION OF PEDAGOGUES IN TEAMS WITHIN
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: THE ROLE OF SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC
CHARACTERISTICS**

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Drawing on Tuchman's model of team development and the concept of collective pedagogical leadership, this study examines the influence of socio-demographic characteristics on the engagement and contribution of pedagogues in teams within educational institutions. Based on a sample of 112 pedagogues from preschool institutions, schools, and student residences in Serbia, a survey method was employed using a questionnaire to analyse patterns of participation, self-assessed contributions, and perceived barriers to teamwork. The study focused on institution type, professional experience, education level, and prior training. The findings indicate a high level of involvement of pedagogues in various teams, confirming their significant role in the implementation of collective pedagogical leadership, while also raising concerns about potential professional overload. The type of institution, professional experience, and level of education were found to influence self-assessments of contribution to teamwork, as well as perceptions of barriers to effective collaboration. The results underscore the complexity of factors shaping pedagogues' professional practice in team settings and point to the need for balanced responsibility distribution, clearer role definitions, and enhanced professional development. Future research should broaden the sample to other professional profiles and employ qualitative methods to explore contextual factors influencing pedagogues' contributions in educational teams.

Keywords: teamwork, pedagogical leadership, educational institutions, socio-demographic characteristics

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HATE SPEECH IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: BETWEEN NORMATIVE FRAMEWORKS AND PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE

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Hate speech represents a significant contemporary pedagogical and social challenge in the school context. The aim of this study is to examine how professional support staff and school leadership in secondary schools recognize, understand, and address hate speech, as well as the implications of these practices for pedagogical action. The research is designed as a qualitative study based on semi-structured interviews with nine participants from four secondary schools in Belgrade, with the data analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings indicate the existence of a formal normative framework governing this area, but also reveal a pronounced gap between formal policies and their implementation in everyday school practice. Hate speech is recognized as present, yet remains institutionally insufficiently visible, as it is rarely formally recorded and is most often addressed through informal means. School practices are predominantly reactive, while preventive activities are insufficiently developed and poorly integrated into the educational process. Particular challenges arise from the digital context, as well as from the limited involvement of students and parents in preventive efforts. The findings point to the need for developing integrated and proactive pedagogical approaches, strengthening teachers' competencies, and enhancing participatory models of practice in order to foster an inclusive and supportive school environment.

Keywords: hate speech, secondary schools, pedagogical practice, prevention, school climate

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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

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Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) refers to a set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable students to regulate their emotions effectively, develop positive interpersonal relationships, and make responsible decisions. Despite the confirmed positive effects of SEL, the field is characterized by notable terminological and conceptual inconsistencies across different theoretical frameworks. In this context, the aim of the paper is to examine the similarities and differences among the key theoretical frameworks of social and emotional learning, with a particular focus on the structure of competencies, terminology, and the conceptual foundations on which they are based. The study is grounded in a qualitative analysis of contemporary scientific literature aimed at identifying common elements across different frameworks, as well as at detecting specificities in the ways social-emotional competencies are defined and classified. The findings indicate a substantial overlap in the definition of core competencies, but also reveal differences in their conceptualization and terminological specification. In conclusion, the identified differences among theoretical frameworks hinder their comparability, as well as their consistent application in both research and educational practice. The pedagogical implications of the study point to the need for greater conceptual precision, terminological standardization, and the integration of existing theoretical frameworks.

Keywords: social-emotional learning, theoretical frameworks, comparative analysis

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SCHOOL CLIMATE AS A CONTEXT FOR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP

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The aim of this study is to examine students' perceptions of school climate, with a particular focus on the quality of the teacher-student relationship and its association with academic achievement. The research was conducted on a sample of 100 eighth-grade students from three primary schools in Vojvodina. Data were collected using an adapted version of the Delaware School Climate Scale, which assesses seven dimensions: teacher-student relationship, student-student relationship, student engagement, clear expectations, fair rules, safety, and peer victimization. Reliability analysis confirmed satisfactory internal consistency of the instrument ($\alpha = 0.71 - 0.89$). Descriptive results indicate that students generally perceive the school climate as positive, with the most favorable ratings given to teacher-student relationships and clear expectations, while greater variability is observed in peer relationships and student engagement. Correlational analysis confirmed a strong and statistically significant positive association between the perception of the teacher-student relationship and academic achievement, highlighting the importance of the quality of interpersonal relationships for academic success. The findings suggest that a supportive and fair school climate not only creates a favorable learning environment but also directly fosters student achievement. These results may serve as a basis for improving pedagogical practice and developing school policies aimed at strengthening positive relationships within the school setting.

Keywords: school climate, academic achievement, teacher-student relationship

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CHILDREN'S RIGHTS EDUCATION IN THE NATIONAL CURRICULA OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

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This paper examines whether children's rights education is integrated into the Croatian national curricula and how it is conceptualized within them. The analysis is based on 20 documents constituting the national curriculum system: the National Curriculum Framework, curricula for different levels and types of education, subject-area curricula, and cross-curricular themes curricula. The study is grounded in a three-dimensional conceptualization of children's rights education – education about rights, through rights, and for rights – which serves as an analytical lens for examining its content, process, and aims. Using a combination of keyword frequency analysis and mixed deductive–inductive qualitative content analysis, patterns of presence and modes of conceptualization of children's rights education across the national curricula were identified. The findings indicated that children's rights education is most strongly represented in the “Civic Education” curriculum, while also being prominent in early childhood and preschool education, primary education, and the social sciences and humanities curriculum. The curricula promote learning about rights, citizenship, and democracy, as well as the organization of the educational process in line with these principles, while the stated aims reflect a combination of instrumental, liberal, and critical orientations. Overall, the findings point to the need for a more systematic and comprehensive integration of children's rights education across all levels and areas of the curricula.

Keywords: children's rights, document analysis, educational rights

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**CURRICULUM CONTENT OF ARTS SUBJECTS IN THE FUNCTION OF
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This paper examines how arts education contributes to the development of personal, social, and cultural identity among adolescents in the contemporary school context. Based on contemporary theories regarding the influence of school curricula on personality development, as well as Dewey's emphasis on experiential learning, the study highlights the characteristics of arts subjects and their potential for shaping adolescents' identity and overall personality. The research is based on a theoretical analysis of pedagogical, psychological, and philosophical literature, which considers adolescence as a period of intensive identity exploration, as well as literature emphasizing the significance of art in the development of all aspects of personality. The results indicate that school-based art provides adolescents with opportunities for expression, acquisition, and exchange of emotions, attitudes, and values, as well as for experimenting with different forms of self in a safe and supportive environment. Arts activities promote reflection, empathy, and the development of authenticity, while simultaneously enabling the connection of individual experience with broader social and cultural contexts. Conversely, the marginalization of art in schools can negatively affect the process of identity formation and reduce the potential of arts content to contribute to students' personal development. The findings highlight the necessity of giving greater importance to arts content and methods in the school curriculum, which would contribute to the formation of stable, reflective, and socially responsible adolescents.

Keywords: arts education, adolescents, identity formation, experiential learning, education

²⁵ This research was funded by the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation of the Republic of Serbia (Contract No. 451-03-33/2026-03/ 200018).

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**THE HUMANE SCHOOL – BETWEEN THEORETICAL POSSIBILITIES AND
PEDAGOGICAL REALITY**

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The modern school stands at a crossroads between the pressure of technology and the genuine need to remain a place where humanity is nurtured. This paper analyzes the concept of the "humane school" as an essential response to the social alienation among young people. The aim is to examine how the school can be transformed from an administrative institution into a community based on empathy, dialogue, and mutual learning. The research is based on a qualitative theoretical analysis of contemporary pedagogical approaches and the practical challenges faced by teachers, such as bureaucracy and the prevalence of standardized testing. The analysis points to a clear gap between the declarative support for humane education and the actual conditions in teaching practice. The paper proposes guidelines for the integration of human values into the educational process, grounded in the ethics of care and situated pedagogy. These include encouraging sincere dialogue, implementing formative assessment, respecting the student's individuality, and affirming the local cultural context. Within this framework, the teacher is repositioned as a facilitator of learning, whose primary task is to build humane relationships rather than merely transmit knowledge. The conclusion indicates that the sustainable development of education does not depend exclusively on technological progress, but on the return of human values to the educational process.

Keywords: humane school, empathy, teaching practice, student, upbringing (pedagogy)

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EVALUATING QUALITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: THE MELQO STUDY IN NORTH MACEDONIA AS A TOOL FOR DEVELOPING COMPETENT SYSTEMS

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In the wake of an increased focus on quality and accountability in education systems, the evaluation of ECEC represents a key mechanism for improving pedagogical practice and education policies. This paper aims to analyse the role of systemic evaluation through the MELQO study in North Macedonia, with a focus on its contribution to building quality and competent early childhood education systems. The research is based on the national MELQO study (2024) in North Macedonia and applies a mixed-methods methodological approach, which includes a direct measure of development and early learning (MODEL) and a measure of early learning environments (MELE), conducted on a representative sample of 1,020 children aged 3 to 6. The findings indicate a mismatch between children's achievements and the expected standards of school readiness, particularly in the domains of early literacy and numeracy skills. The conclusions suggest that evaluation, as demonstrated by the MELQO study in North Macedonia, should not be treated as an isolated measurement activity, but as an integral component of competent systems that connect policies, practice, and professional development. The implications relate to the institutionalisation of a national quality monitoring system and the development of evidence-based policies aimed at improving equity and quality in ECEC.

Keywords: evaluation, quality, early childhood education, competent systems

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**INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY CORRELATES OF PEER ACCEPTANCE IN
PRESCHOOL AND SCHOOL CHILDREN**

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Peer acceptance is an important indicator of children's social adjustment in preschool and school groups. This study examined child- and family-related factors associated with peer acceptance. The sample included 365 children (189 boys, 51.8% and 176 girls, 48.2%) with a mean age of 6.83 years. Data were collected using sociometric procedures with children and parental questionnaires, and analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests and correlation analysis. Results showed higher peer acceptance among girls, children from intact families, and those whose mothers were permanently employed. Peer acceptance was positively associated with socioeconomic resources (parental education, income, and material assets) and positive family relations (parental warmth, absence of hostility, and parental communication). The strongest negative association was found for peer-rated physical aggression. Parenting styles and household structure variables were not significantly related to peer acceptance. The findings indicate that children's aggressive behavior, particularly as perceived by peers, is the most important correlate of peer acceptance, while family socioeconomic context and relationship quality also play a relevant role. These results suggest that interventions aimed at improving peer acceptance should focus primarily on reducing aggression and strengthening positive family interactions.

Keywords: peer acceptance, sociometry, family factors, individual factors, aggression

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**IMPROVING PEDAGOGICAL DOCUMENTATION IN NURSERY GROUPS:
EXPERIENCES IN APPLYING EMMI PIKLER'S IDEAS**

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Pedagogical documentation is an essential component of quality educational practice in nursery groups, yet current practice in the Republic of Srpska is often administratively oriented and insufficiently child-focused. This study analyzes existing forms of pedagogical documentation in nursery settings and explores possibilities for improvement through the application of the Pikler approach, based on the principles of Emmi Pikler, which emphasizes individualized monitoring of child development. The qualitative study is part of a broader mixed-methods action research project conducted over six months, involving 20 teachers from 10 nursery groups. Data were collected through initial and final interviews, as well as teachers' reflective records generated during the implementation of Pikler principles in child-focused documentation practices. Findings indicate that current documentation is predominantly oriented towards administrative requirements, whereas applying Pikler principles enhances understanding of children, enables more precise tracking of developmental progress, and strengthens teachers' reflective role. Key challenges identified include group size, time constraints, and organizational working conditions. The study suggests that improving pedagogical documentation requires systemic changes. Implications include revising documentation frameworks and regulations on group size, providing continuous professional development for teachers, and integrating relational pedagogy more strongly into teacher education programs.

Keywords: pedagogical documentation, nursery education, Pikler approach, individualized monitoring, reflective practice

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PEDAGOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF RECOGNITION OF COMORBIDITY OF SENSORY INTEGRATION DISORDERS AND MOTOR SPEECH DISORDERS

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Introduction: Sensory integration disorders and motor speech disorders can significantly affect a child's communication, learning and social functioning in an educational environment. Timely recognition of the combined symptoms of these disorders is of particular importance for experts in education. Research problem: The goal of the paper is to point out the importance of timely recognition of comorbidity of sensory integration disorders and motor speech disorders in order to improve the interdisciplinary cooperation of speech therapists, pedagogues and teachers. Method: The literature review was conducted by searching the Google Scholar Advanced Search and KoBSON databases. Results: Children with dysarthria and childhood speech apraxia often have difficulties in sensory processing, which makes it difficult to control articulatory movements and understand speech. These difficulties can limit participation in classes and social interaction, emphasizing the need for timely pedagogical and speech therapy interventions. Conclusion: Motor speech disorders rarely occur in isolation and often accompany sensory processing disorders. Pedagogical implications: Early identification of comorbid disorders enables the planning of adequate support strategies in inclusive education. The interdisciplinary cooperation of speech therapists, pedagogues, teachers and families contributes to the improvement of communication, learning and the overall quality of the child's life.

Keywords: sensory integration disorders, motor speech disorders, dysarthria, apraxia, pedagogical support

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PEDAGOGICAL CONTINUITY OR DISCONTINUITY? TRANSITION FROM PRESCHOOL TO PRIMARY EDUCATION IN THE LIGHT OF CONTEMPORARY PEDAGOGICAL CONCEPTS

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The transition from preschool to primary school represents an important milestone. In the traditional pedagogical paradigm, emphasis has been placed on the “child’s readiness for school,” whereas contemporary perspectives highlight the need to also consider the “school’s readiness for the child.” The research focuses on identifying key epistemological and organizational differences in approaches to learning, in the understanding of the child’s role in the educational process, and in the organization of educational practice within preschool institutions and primary schools. The findings indicate the presence of significant differences in both epistemological foundations and the organization of the learning process. While contemporary preschool education emphasizes the child’s holistic development, learning through play, exploration, and collaborative relationships, primary education largely operates within a framework of formalized instruction, subject-based organization, and achievement assessment systems. Such discontinuities may pose challenges for children’s adaptation to the school environment. The paper concludes that improving the quality of transition requires establishing stronger pedagogical continuity between the two educational levels. The implications of the study point to the need for greater conceptual alignment between preschool and primary education systems, the development of systematically designed transition models, and the strengthening of professional collaboration between preschool educators and primary school teachers.

Keywords: transition, preschool education, primary school, pedagogical continuity

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THE ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL FACTORS IN SHAPING HORIZONTAL GENDER SEGREGATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A RESEARCH REVIEW

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Horizontal gender segregation in higher education represents a widespread and extensively researched phenomenon reflected in gender-differentiated choices of fields of study. The aim of this paper is to provide a review of theoretical and empirical research on factors associated with horizontal gender segregation in higher education, with particular attention given to the role of educational factors in its shaping and maintenance. The paper first examines the phenomenon of horizontal gender segregation, approaches to its definition and study, as well as current data on its prevalence in higher education. The following section presents research findings analyzing different groups of factors, with special emphasis on the educational context and prior educational experiences, including their role in shaping interests, beliefs about one's own competence, and the values individuals attach to particular fields. These findings indicate the significant role of educational factors in shaping gender-differentiated choices of fields of study, as well as the potential of educational interventions to reduce horizontal gender segregation. At the same time, available data on differences between countries and changes observed over time point to the context-dependent nature of horizontal gender segregation, suggesting that interventions aimed at reducing it should be planned with careful consideration of the specific social and educational context in which this phenomenon is shaped and maintained.

Keywords: horizontal gender segregation, higher education, fields of study, educational factors, gender differences

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ENHANCING ENGAGEMENT IN SERBIAN GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION FOR CHINESE LEARNERS: A MULTIMODAL PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

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With the deepening exchanges between China and Serbia, more Chinese learners are studying Serbian. However, significant differences between the two languages, especially in grammar, often lead to slow comprehension and limited application. Enhancing engagement in grammar instruction has thus become a key pedagogical concern. From a multimodal perspective, this study redefines engagement within a pedagogical framework and proposes a multimodal engagement model. Based on this model, 32 Serbian grammar instructional videos are systematically annotated and quantitatively analyzed across different modal dimensions to examine the core connotation and generative mechanisms of engagement. The findings indicate that engagement is not a superficial embellishment, but a pedagogical construct emerging from the synergistic integration of perceptual modalities (verbal, visual, auditory, and olfactory), cognitive–affective dimensions, and interactive–embodied dimensions. Such integration enhances engagement, reduces cognitive load, and fosters a low affective filter environment, thereby supporting learner-centered instruction and sustaining motivation, particularly for beginner learners. This study provides both theoretical and practical insights for improving Serbian grammar teaching for Chinese learners and facilitating more effective language acquisition.

Keywords: learner-centered pedagogy, multimodal engagement, Serbian grammar instruction

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**EDUCATION IN THE THIRD AGE: A PROPOSAL FOR AN INTERDISCIPLINARY
50+ STUDY PROGRAM AT THE FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY**

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The extension of life expectancy and the demographic ageing of contemporary societies create a growing need for new models of adult and mature education. Within the framework of lifelong learning, education in the third age is increasingly recognized as an important factor in maintaining cognitive abilities, social inclusion, and personal self-realization. Although various forms of educational programs for older adults exist in European practice, the higher education system in Serbia still lacks a formalized and comprehensive academic program designed specifically for individuals over the age of 50. This paper proposes the establishment of an interdisciplinary study program titled “50+” at the Faculty of Philosophy, based on a synthesis of the humanities, including philosophy, history, literature, and languages. The program is conceived as a four-year course of study adapted to the pedagogical needs and life experience of mature students. The aim of the paper is to highlight the social and educational relevance of such a program and to encourage professional discussion on the institutionalization of third-age education within the university system.

Keywords: adult education, third age/older adults, Lifelong Learning, interdisciplinary study program, humanities

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PARENTAL MEDIATION MODELS: DIGITAL LITERACY AS A PREDICTOR OF DIGITAL PARENTING STRATEGIES**Mirjana Senić Ružić³⁶**

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The contemporary world presents specific challenges for parents, who bear a significant responsibility to promote the adequate use of technology and to support and guide children's digital activities. This requires new skills and competencies for digital parenting (mediation), which have attracted the attention of numerous researchers. However, the extent to which parental digital literacy and empowerment for digital parenting model varies in terms of mediation strategies remains insufficiently explored. The research aimed to examine the predictive power of digital literacy (technical-safety and communicative-creative dimensions) and empowerment for digital parenting in relation to three mediation models: active, restrictive, and responsive. To this end, 611 parents of children aged 10 to 15 were surveyed. Using linear regression, the results indicate that the examined factors are the strongest predictors of responsive mediation, with the model explaining 17.6% of the variance. The findings demonstrated that the sense of parental empowerment is the most significant predictor for all examined mediation models. On the other hand, in the presence of empowerment, digital literacy becomes less significant, implying that a subjective sense of competence for digital parenting is far more important for adequate mediation. It is concluded that parental support programs should primarily focus on strengthening parental self-confidence and empowerment in the digital age.

Keywords: digital parenting, digital literacy, parental empowerment, parental mediation

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**INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE IN HIGHER
EDUCATION THROUGH THE PRISM OF ACTIVITY THEORY**

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The institutional culture of a higher education institution extends beyond formally prescribed rules and visible practices, encompassing a complex system of meanings, norms, and implicit assumptions that shape the everyday actions of its members. Within Engeström's activity theory, culture is conceptualized as an integral component of the activity system, in which the subject (student), object (learning process), community, rules, division of labor, and mediating tools interact dynamically and reciprocally. This paper examines institutional culture across three interconnected levels: artifacts (visible structures and practices), espoused values (articulated goals and norms), and underlying assumptions that organize and mediate community activity. Particular attention is devoted to implicit norms and expectations that appear self-evident within the academic community yet may inadvertently marginalize newcomers. Students from marginalized social groups may be especially vulnerable, as they often lack access to informal support networks and opportunities to internalize tacit academic rules through interaction with senior peers. Limited familiarity with institutional culture can result in diminished sense of belonging, challenges in academic and social integration, lower academic achievement, and reduced satisfaction with studies. The paper concludes that explicitly addressing institutional culture (through orientation programs, mentoring structures, curricular interventions, and reflective teaching practices) can enhance transparency, strengthen student integration, and improve overall study satisfaction.

Keywords: academic and social integration, institutional culture, students, activity theory, higher education

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THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-REGULATED LEARNING STRATEGIES IN DEVELOPING LIFELONG LEARNING CAPACITIES

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Considering the rapid pace of social development, human life can no longer be divided into a period of preparation and a period of active participation. After completing formal education, individuals are expected to possess skills that enable continuous knowledge acquisition and active engagement in society. Accordingly, the aim of this study is to examine the importance of self-regulated learning and self-regulated learning strategies as fundamental competencies for lifelong learning. The analysis is based on the method of theoretical analysis and the technique of content analysis. The findings indicate that meaningful and high-quality lifelong learning requires the ability to set learning goals independently and to apply the most appropriate strategies to achieve them - core components of self-regulated learning. It can be concluded that the development of self-regulated learning skills and self-regulated learning strategies represents an essential requirement for lifelong learning, as a foundation for effective functioning across all areas of life. The implications of this study may include a better understanding of self-regulated learning as a prerequisite for developing lifelong learning capacities, which may encourage further research on this relationship at different levels of education.

Keywords: self-regulated learning, self-regulated learning strategies, lifelong learning

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**UNDERSTANDING FORGIVENESS IN THE PEDAGOGICAL RELATIONSHIP -
THE PERSPECTIVE OF A TEACHER**

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In this paper, forgiveness is not viewed solely as an internal process, but rather a relational act that is learned, lived, and transmitted in educational relationships. Relational pedagogy fosters an authority that forgives, but does not cancel truth and responsibility. It preserves the relationship as a space for growth. Speaking as a pedagogue, forgiveness refers to an individual's ability to understand, process and overcome the experience of injury and through this to develop empathy, self-reflection and resilience. In the context of school pedagogy, forgiveness is linked to the development of moral reasoning, social learning and classroom relationships, the prevention of violence and conflict, and the creation of a school climate that sees mistakes as opportunities for growth. The social constructivist approach emphasizes how teachers and students, through dialogue and reflection, develop the ability to understand the perspectives of others, which is the foundation of forgiveness. The empirical part of this paper focuses on forgiveness in the pedagogical relationship from the perspective of elementary school teachers. Starting from the interpretive paradigm and theoretical premises of relational pedagogy, the aim of the research is to explore how teachers understand forgiveness and how they connect it with responsibility and the boundaries of pedagogical action. Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews with a purposely selected sample of teachers, and analyzed using thematic analysis. It is expected that the research will offer deeper insights into forgiveness as a relational dimension of the pedagogical relationship and contribute to the development of reflective pedagogical practice.

Keywords: pedagogical relationship, forgiveness, relational pedagogy

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**DIFFERENT METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO RESEARCHING
CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT**

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Modern approaches to early childhood education and care emphasize the importance of children's participation in the processes of constructing and developing a real-life curriculum. However, in research practice, the question arises as to how different methodological approaches can adequately capture and interpret, above all, the child's perspective. Starting from this issue, the paper aims to consider the possibilities of applying various research approaches to studying children within a real preschool context. Special attention is given to qualitative approaches that allow for a deeper understanding of children's experiences and perspectives, as well as mixed methods that link quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques. The methodological framework of the paper is based on the analysis of relevant theoretical and research literature in the fields of preschool pedagogy and research methodology. The paper discusses methods such as consulting with children, participatory techniques, map-making and "tours," the use of expressive activities, as well as the "mosaic approach," which involves the application of various techniques to integrate the obtained data into a holistic picture of the child's perspective. Furthermore, there is a possibility of supplementing the findings with quantitative data obtained through surveys or questionnaires with practitioners (preschool teachers). The results of the analysis indicate that combining different methodological approaches enables a more comprehensive insight into children's participation in the curriculum development process. It is concluded that the application of qualitative and mixed research strategies can contribute to a better understanding of the child's voice and the development of reflective and participatory pedagogical practice in preschool institutions.

Keywords: children's participation, qualitative research, mixed methods, preschool curriculum

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PEDAGOGY AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

CHALLENGES IN THE WORK OF EDUCATORS WITH GIRLS FROM THE RA-E POPULATION

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The work is aimed at identifying the challenges that educators face in their educational work with girls from the Roma and Egyptian population (RA-E population) in preschool institutions in Montenegro. The goal of the research is to look at specific obstacles and offer recommendations for improving communication practices and collaborative relationships between families and kindergartens, in order to create a stimulating environment for girls from the RA-E population. In the theoretical part, modern communicative aspects are presented, with a special focus on the formation of self-image and overcoming the marginalization of girls from the RA-E community. The empirical research is based on a quantitative-qualitative approach, carried out on a targeted sample of 58 teachers and 131 parents of girls from the RA-E population. Data analysis identified key challenges: language barriers, insufficient family support, presence of gender and ethnic stereotypes, irregular attendance at kindergarten, as well as limited resources and competencies of educators for intercultural work. The results indicate the need for systematic professional support for educators, strengthening partnerships with families and the local community, introducing targeted programs to empower girls, and adapting educational activities to their developmental and cultural specificities. It is concluded that only through a coordinated and planned approach is it possible to reduce the development gap, prevent early educational exclusion and ensure equal access to educational opportunities for every girl, regardless of her social and cultural background.

Keywords: girls from RA-E population, pedagogical communication, intercultural competence of educators, preschool institution, family tradition

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**THE CRITICAL-COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH TO ASSESSMENT:
CONTRADICTIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES**

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The critical-communicative approach to assessment constitutes an important theoretical and practical framework for enhancing contemporary evaluation. However, its implementation is accompanied by numerous pedagogical and institutional challenges. Although this approach is based on the assumption that teaching and assessment rely on interaction, dialogue, and the co-construction of meaning, the question remains to what extent modern evaluation systems genuinely enable its realization. In order to highlight the significance and values of this approach, as well as to identify the challenges of its application in teaching practice, this paper presents an analysis of the key contradictions that limit its full implementation in contemporary education. One of the central issues relates to the burden of standardization and external evaluation, which significantly constrains the fundamental principles of the critical-communicative approach - namely, the equality of participants in the teaching process, the joint creation and evaluation of work, and the development of self-reflection. The major contradictions identified include the tension between the democratization of the assessment process, that is, the co-construction of criteria, and the demands for validity, reliability, and standardization; as well as the mismatch between a focus on participatory learning and the development of complex socio-cognitive processes, and the dominance of quantitative indicators of achievement in practice. The identified contradictions and challenges provide a basis for proposing measures to overcome them, such as re-examining existing approaches to assessment, combining different methods and forms of evaluation, and systematically improving teachers' assessment (docimological) competencies, among others.

Keywords: critical-communicative approach, assessment, interaction, dialogue, competencies

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TEACHERS' EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE AS A FACTOR IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**Nada Kasalica⁴³**

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In the context of inclusive education, where a classroom includes students with diverse educational and developmental needs, abilities, and affinities, teachers' emotional competence plays a crucial role. The aim of this research is to examine teachers' perceptions of their own emotional competence and its contribution to inclusive education in primary schools. The study involved 143 teachers from seven primary schools in the municipality of Nikšić. The standardized Emotional Skills and Competence Questionnaire – Teachers' Form (ESCQ-T) was used, comprising 45 items in three dimensions: perception and understanding of emotions, expression of emotions, and emotion regulation. Internal consistency of the subscales, verified with Cronbach's alpha, showed high reliability ($\alpha = .935$; $\alpha = .948$; $\alpha = .978$), allowing further data analysis. Results indicate that the frequency of working with students with special educational needs is not significantly linked to emotion regulation, suggesting that experience alone in an inclusive environment is insufficient to develop this competence. In contrast, significant differences were found in emotion expression depending on the frequency of professional development in inclusion ($\chi^2 = 16.169$, $df = 4$, $p = .003$), confirming the importance of continuous teacher professional development.

Keywords: emotional competence, teachers, inclusive education, primary school

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**APPLICATION OF MUSICAL PICTUREBOOKS IN WORK WITH EARLY
CHILDHOOD AND PRESCHOOL CHILDREN**

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Musical picturebooks are frequently employed as a didactic resource, as they enable learning through play and experience. They represent a specific interdisciplinary form of children's literature that integrates visual, textual, and auditory elements into a unified learning and aesthetic experience. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate that the use of musical picturebooks constitutes an effective and child-appropriate approach to introducing music in early childhood and preschool education. The methodology is based on the analysis and synthesis of the content of the musical picturebooks *The Story Orchestra* and *The Little Story Orchestra* by Katy Flint and Jessica Courtney-Tickles, with particular emphasis on the possibilities of their application in musical activities with children. The findings indicate that musical picturebooks, as an interdisciplinary form of children's literature, successfully integrate visual, textual, and auditory elements, thereby fostering the development of auditory perception, musical memory, as well as linguistic and cognitive competences. Furthermore, their use contributes to multisensory learning, emotional development, creativity, and children's aesthetic sensitivity. It is concluded that musical picturebooks possess significant didactic value in contemporary educational practice, as they enable an interdisciplinary approach to learning and affirm the role of artistic expression in the holistic development of the child.

Keywords: early childhood, preschool education, musical activities, multisensory learning, interdisciplinary approach

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**DIGITAL LITERACY AND COMPETENCES OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS
FOR THE USE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES IN TEACHING**

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The aim of this study was to determine the level of digital literacy and preparedness of pre-service teachers for the use of digital technologies in teaching. An empirical study was conducted using an online questionnaire. The questionnaire included the Digital Literacy Self-Assessment Scale and the Self-Assessment Scale of Competences for the Use of Digital Technologies in Teaching. The participants were graduate students enrolled in teacher education programmes and final-year students of the integrated primary teacher education programme at the University of Split. The results present pre-service teachers' self-assessment of their digital literacy, as well as their perceived readiness to use digital technologies in teaching. Differences were also examined with regard to gender, year of study, and study programme. The findings of the empirical study may contribute to a better understanding of the level of digital literacy among pre-service teachers, particularly regarding their self-perceived preparedness to use digital technologies in teaching practice. They also highlight areas in which pre-service teachers should be further supported in order to strengthen their competences for future professional practice. For researchers, the results provide a basis for further studies in this increasingly important field, given the rapid development of digital technologies, with the aim of improving initial teacher education and enhancing the preparation of pre-service teachers for contemporary educational practice.

Keywords: digital literacy, digital technologies, competences, future teachers, self-assessment, higher education

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PEER STATUS OF STUDENTS FROM A TWO-DIMENSIONAL PERSPECTIVE**Tamara Radovanović⁴⁶**

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This paper is based on the assumption that peer status should be viewed through two dimensions: sociometric acceptance (the degree of social preference a student receives within a group) and perceived popularity (the level of social influence a student has among peers). This approach allows for a more precise interpretation of students' positions and a better understanding of social dynamics within peer groups. Accordingly, the aim of the study was to examine the relationship between categories of students' sociometric acceptance (accepted, rejected, neglected, controversial, and average) and perceived popularity (popular, unpopular, neglected, controversial, and average). The sample included 120 eighth-grade students from a primary school in Novi Sad, and a sociometric questionnaire constructed specifically for the purposes of the study was used. The results indicate that, in both dimensions, students with average status are the most prevalent, while controversial students are the least represented. A statistically significant association was found between sociometric acceptance and perceived popularity, particularly among students with unfavorable status. At the same time, differences were more pronounced among sociometrically accepted students and students perceived as neglected. Gender differences were found in perceived popularity. Boys were more frequently classified as average or unpopular, whereas girls were more often perceived as neglected. It is concluded that the measured dimensions of peer status can be viewed as complementary, but not necessarily overlapping, aspects of peer relations. This points to the need for differentiated planning of pedagogical interventions, especially when working with students with an unfavorable peer status.

Keywords: peer status, two-dimensional approach, sociometric acceptance, perceived popularity

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CONTEMPORARY PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES TO GIFTEDNESS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

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Contemporary educational systems increasingly recognize the importance of identifying and providing adequate support to gifted students, whose potentials often remain underdeveloped within standardized instructional approaches. Based on this, the research problem concerns understanding the development of pedagogical approaches to giftedness and their significance for contemporary educational practice. The aim of this paper is to examine pedagogical conceptions of giftedness, as well as to analyze modern models of educating gifted students in the context of inclusive and differentiated education. This study employs the method of theoretical analysis of relevant pedagogical literature and contemporary educational approaches in working with gifted students. The results of the analysis indicate that contemporary understandings of giftedness are based on a multidimensional perspective, which, in addition to intellectual abilities, includes creativity, motivation, specific talents, and socio-emotional characteristics of students. Furthermore, the importance of the roles of both teachers and pedagogues is emphasized in recognizing the potential of gifted students, as well as in creating a stimulating learning environment through the application of differentiated instructional strategies. In conclusion, the need for a systemic approach to the education of gifted students is highlighted, one that involves early identification of their potentials and continuous support for their development. The implications of this study relate to the improvement of pedagogical practice through the application of inclusive and differentiated approaches in working with gifted children.

Keywords: giftedness, gifted students, inclusive education, differentiated instruction, pedagogical approaches

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PATTERNS OF SCHOOL FAILURE AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT AS DETERMINANTS OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

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Poor school performance and family functioning are widely recognized as significant risk factors for juvenile delinquency. However, relationships among these phenomena remain insufficiently clarified. The present study aimed to examine the extent to which different patterns of poor school performance and low family involvement contribute to distinguishing juvenile offenders from their peers from the general population. The sample consisted of 665 participants aged 12 to 26 years, of whom 31.2% reported a history of conflict with the law. The findings indicate that juvenile offenders scored significantly higher on six dimensions of poor school performance, including persistent problematic behavior in both primary and secondary school, poor academic achievement in both levels of education, perpetration of peer violence, and victimization by peer violence. No significant differences were observed with respect to truancy. Binary logistic regression analysis further demonstrated that group membership (offender vs. non-offender) could be predicted with an overall accuracy of 70% based on only three predictors: poor academic achievement in secondary school, peer victimization and low family involvement in the individual's education. Notably, indicators of dysfunctional behavior in primary school did not emerge as significant predictors of delinquent status.

Keywords: juvenile delinquency, conflict with the law, poor school performance, family involvement

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THE CLASSROOM AFTER THE CLASSROOM: GENERATIONS BETWEEN DISCIPLINE, KNOWLEDGE, AND DIGITAL FLOWS

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This paper explores the transformation of educational experience from a generational perspective, focusing on changes in the purpose of education, the nature of authority, and the boundaries of learning spaces. It examines how discourses of discipline and knowledge acquisition have evolved across three generations (Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Z), how digital flows have expanded the physical classroom, and how these shifts affect student autonomy and perceptions of authority. The study is based on a qualitative case study involving one representative from each generation, using semi-structured interviews and narrative analysis of personal educational experiences. Findings indicate a shift from externally imposed discipline toward self-regulation, alongside a transformation of knowledge from stable content to continuous access to information. Digital learning environments enhance perceived autonomy but also contribute to fragmented attention and blurred boundaries between formal and informal learning. Generational differences in expectations of teacher authority further produce tensions in educational practice. The paper concludes that generational discourses are reshaping contemporary education, requiring more flexible models of authority, better integration of digital environments, and greater intergenerational pedagogical sensitivity.

Keywords: generational discourse, educational experience, digital learning, authority, student autonomy

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THE RELEVANCE OF MONTESSORI PEDAGOGY – POSSIBILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION WITHIN NATURE AND SOCIETY EDUCATION

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Although repeatedly validated through the work of thousands of schools and preschools worldwide, the pedagogical method of Marija Montessori continues to be the subject of numerous debates and critical reconsiderations within academic circles. Accordingly, the primary aim of this research is to examine the possibilities and effectiveness of implementing specific segments of this pedagogical concept in primary classroom instruction, particularly in the teaching of content related to natural phenomena within the subject Nature and Society. In this context, the following research problem was formulated: to examine the effects of the implementation of Montessori materials in the teaching of natural science content in regular primary schools. Among the Montessori materials, three-part Montessori cards were used in the teaching of two topics – Materials and Living Communities. An experimental design with rotation of the experimental factor was employed, thereby avoiding many of the potential methodological limitations. The main hypothesis was confirmed, indicating that the use of three-part Montessori cards in the acquisition of natural science content has positive effects on the quantity, quality, and retention of students' knowledge. The findings of this study also suggest a high likelihood that other Montessori materials could be effective in facilitating knowledge acquisition not only in this area but in other subject domains as well, providing a solid foundation for future research.

Keywords: Montessori pedagogy, three-part cards, teaching of Nature and Society

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PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AS A FACTOR IN THE QUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

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Contemporary schools face numerous challenges arising from rapid social, technological, and educational changes. In this context, the role of the school principal goes beyond traditional administrative functions and increasingly takes the form of pedagogical leadership aimed at improving the quality of educational practice. The problem addressed in this paper concerns the significance of principals' pedagogical leadership in developing school climate, enhancing teaching practice, and supporting teachers' professional development. The study is based on an analysis of relevant pedagogical literature and reflection on experiences from school practice, using descriptive and content analysis methods. Key dimensions of pedagogical leadership are examined, including support for teachers, the development of a collaborative culture, and the encouragement of continuous professional learning. The results indicate that the principal, as a pedagogical leader, plays a crucial role in shaping a supportive professional environment that contributes to improving the overall quality of school work. It is concluded that systematic strengthening of principals' competencies in pedagogical leadership represents one of the essential prerequisites for the sustainable development of contemporary schools.

Keywords: pedagogical leadership, school principal, quality of education, school climate, teachers' professional development

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*PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY, COMPETENCIES AND
PEDAGOGY STUDIES*

OPEN PEDAGOGY AS A NEW VISION OF PEDAGOGY IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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The contemporary era brings numerous changes which, alongside new opportunities, also include many challenges in the field of education. In the new social context, pedagogy is undergoing intensive adaptation and (re)shaping in an effort to respond to the demands of the (post)information society. The aim of this paper is to examine pedagogy within the antinomies of the (post)information society, with particular reference to the concept of open pedagogy. This aim is specified through the following tasks: (a) analyzing the fundamental characteristics of open pedagogy and its connection with the concept of Open Educational Resources (OER); (b) presenting relevant empirical research related to open pedagogy; and (c) considering the opportunities and challenges brought about by the concept of open pedagogy. The conclusion emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach to new terms and concepts which, within our academic community, significantly lag behind developments in international literature. The contribution of this paper lies in the analysis and presentation of numerous theoretical and empirical studies, rather than positioning the concept of open pedagogy in a relationship of subordination or superiority in relation to the traditional approach. Knowledge and understanding of the concept of open pedagogy represent a prerequisite for more effective use of new educational opportunities that result not only from the changed roles of teachers and students, but also from transformations in the overall process of creating and sharing knowledge, which may significantly influence the future of pedagogy.

Keywords: open pedagogy, digital age, OER (Open Educational Resources), constructivism, critical pedagogy

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**RESEARCH OR BUSINESS AS USUAL?
THE RESEARCH DIMENSION OF THE PROFESSIONAL ROLE OF THE
PEDAGOGUE IN CROATIAN PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE**

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The aim of this research is to describe how the research dimension of the professional role of the pedagogue is constructed in relevant Croatian professional literature published since 2000, with an emphasis on distinguishing the research dimension from general reflective practice and related roles. The results indicate that in the corpus of 10 journal articles and books, the research dimension of the professional role of the pedagogue cannot be distinguished from related roles. This dimension is described as the practice of closely observing educational processes within the institution of one's own employment, using, among other methods, standard research data collection techniques, with the aim of documenting, evaluating, and optimising the process, but with an unclear scientific contribution. The implications of these findings may be twofold, depending on whether pedagogues should be understood exclusively as reflective practitioners who research their own practice or as researchers in the field of pedagogy.

Keywords: insider research, pedagogue, reflective practitioner

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PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGES IN THE WORK OF SCHOOL PEDAGOGUES

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The study is aimed at examining the self-assessments of school pedagogues in the Republic of Srpska regarding professional challenges. A quantitative research approach was applied on a sample of 83 school pedagogues, using a scale encompassing nine dimensions of professional challenges (time/organizational, spatial, material, structural/systemic, collaboration/support, competency-based, psychological resilience, anxiety/stress, and specific challenges). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, factor analysis, analysis of variance (ANOVA), independent samples t-test, and Pearson correlation. The results indicate that time-related and structural/systemic challenges are the most pronounced in the work of pedagogues, while the least pronounced challenges are found in the domains of collaboration and support, working conditions (spatial), and psychological resilience. The type of school (primary and secondary) and school location (urban, suburban, and rural) showed statistically significant differences across certain dimensions of challenges, whereas no significant differences were found with respect to years of work experience. A statistically significant number of positive correlations was identified among several dimensions of professional challenges. The findings point to the need for systemic investment in professional support for pedagogues, particularly in the areas of time management and the implementation of structural and systemic solutions. The results may serve as an empirical basis for the development of professional development programs and for improving the position of pedagogues within the educational system of the Republic of Srpska.

Keywords: school pedagogue, professional challenges, self-assessment, professional development, competencies

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**NEGOTIATING CULTURAL IDENTITY AMONG CHINESE AND SERBIAN CSL
TEACHERS IN SHARED TEACHING CONTEXT**

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This study examines how Chinese and Serbian teachers of Chinese as a Second Language (CSL) negotiate their cultural identities within shared teaching contexts in Serbia. Adopting a qualitative approach, the study draws on semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and teaching materials. Data collection is ongoing, and this presentation reports preliminary insights from the data analyzed to date. Initial findings suggest that, despite limited direct communication between the two groups, identity negotiation occurs implicitly through role expectations, pedagogical adjustments, and unspoken norms. Chinese teachers tend to position themselves as cultural representatives emphasizing authenticity, while Serbian teachers more often adopt a mediating role focused on student comprehension and local adaptation. These complementary yet asymmetrical role orientations appear to be shaped by differing perceptions of cultural authority and teaching legitimacy. The study contributes to understanding how cultural identity is negotiated beyond explicit interaction in cross-cultural language education contexts. Findings remain preliminary and will be further refined as data collection and analysis continue.

Keywords: cultural identity negotiation; Chinese as a Second Language (CSL); teacher identity; cross-cultural education; Serbia

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**DIGITAL COMPETENCE OF PRIMARY EDUCATION TEACHERS: AN
EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS**

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The integration of digital technologies in primary education has become an increasingly prominent aspect of contemporary teaching, making the development of teachers' digital competence a critical component of effective educational practice. This study examines the need for professional development to enhance digital competence among primary education teachers, focusing on their self-perceptions of digital competence and their need for additional training to support effective teaching in digitally enriched environments. It also considers teachers' participation in professional development activities, identifies priority areas for further competence development, and explores their perspectives on the support required to strengthen their digital skills. A quantitative research design was employed, drawing on survey data collected from primary school teachers in North Macedonia. The analysis, conducted through descriptive statistics, frequency distributions, and chi-square tests, identified patterns in teachers' perceptions and professional development needs. Results indicate that while teachers demonstrate confidence in basic digital tasks, they consistently highlight the necessity of sustained training that addresses advanced, pedagogical, and reflective dimensions of digital competence. The study confirms that sustained professional development is essential for advancing teachers' digital competence and ensuring meaningful use of digital technologies in the classroom.

Keywords: professional development, digital competence, teacher training, primary education

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**PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF PRESCHOOL TEACHERS FOR ENHANCING
COMMUNICATION COMPETENCIES**

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Professional development of preschool teachers in the context of developing communication competencies represents a key factor in achieving a successful and high-quality educational process. Well-developed communication skills enable teachers to collaborate effectively with children, parents, and colleagues, while simultaneously contributing to the creation of a positive pedagogical climate. The paper analyzes the importance of continuous professional development in strengthening the verbal, nonverbal, and social dimensions of communication in educational practice. The aim of the research was to examine the extent to which professional development contributes to the development of teachers' communication competencies, as well as to determine whether there is a correlation between the frequency of participation in professional training and the perception of one's own communication abilities. The research results indicate a high level of communication competencies among teachers and confirm that participation in professional development positively influences the development of these skills. It was also found that teachers are aware of the importance of continuous professional growth for improving their practice, while the length of work experience is not necessarily associated with a higher level of communication competencies.

Keywords: preschool teachers, professional development, communication competencies

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PEDAGOGY-RELATED COURSES AT PRE-SCHOOL TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGES IN SERBIA-ANALYSIS OF STUDY PLANS AND PROGRAMMES

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At faculties of pedagogy and preschool teacher training colleges, courses are interdisciplinary in nature, and pedagogy-related courses make up a significant part of both the compulsory and elective curricular framework. The analysis covers the current curricula of seven state faculties of education in the Republic of Serbia that educate preschool teachers, with the aim of addressing the research question: to what extent do pedagogical courses prepare future preschool teachers for their profession? The differences lie in the range of numerous elective pedagogical courses and the smaller number of compulsory courses within the field of pedagogical sciences. Pedagogical courses should form - and indeed they do - the foundation of all competencies and professional standards of future preschool teachers. However, it is noticeable that pedagogical courses contribute the least to the competency standards in the area of evaluation and professional development - areas crucial for the professional growth of educators, given that preschool teachers are reflective practitioners who continuously monitor, analyze, and evaluate their own work with the aim of improving their professional practice. Pedagogy-related courses make the greatest contribution to obtaining competency standards in the domains of knowledge acquisition and educational planning. Therefore, collaboration between curriculum creators and policymakers, as well as the implementation of such curricula in practice, is of vital importance- particularly in light of the essential question: what kind of preschool teachers do we need, and do they possess sufficient knowledge from the field of pedagogical sciences to perform their professional roles in accordance with the demands of their professional development.

Keywords: pedagogy-related courses, initial preschool teacher education, preschool teacher professional development, Serbia

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DEVELOPING PEDAGOGICAL AUTHENTICITY: THE POTENTIAL OF THE FUNCTIONAL FLUENCY MODEL IN A PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT

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Contemporary pedagogical practice places demands on professionals that go beyond mere technical and methodological knowledge, putting primary focus on relational competencies and the pedagogue's personality. The key concept analyzed in this paper is pedagogical authenticity - the ability to demonstrate conscious and aligned action within complex educational situations. The author explores the potential of the Functional Fluency model (FF) (Temple, 1999) as a practical framework for developing such authenticity. The Functional Fluency model, grounded in Transactional Analysis, offers a precise map of human behavior through nine ways of utilizing personal energy. The paper analyzes how a pedagogue, by shedding light on their own patterns (such as dominance, compliance, or authentic care), can transform reactive behaviors into conscious, "fluent" responses. Particular emphasis is placed on the elements of Structuring and Nurturing, and their role in building an authority based on trust rather than power. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate how the application of the FF model contributes to strengthening the quality of interpersonal relationships within the school system, primarily regarding the adult-child dynamic. In conclusion, the model is proposed as an effective tool for empowering pedagogical authenticity both within and outside educational situations, serving as a strategy for improving the mental health of education employees.

Keywords: authenticity, pedagogue, functional fluency, relational competencies, professional development

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NEW TRENDS IN EDUCATION—AN EXAMPLE GOOD PRACTICE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Changes and trends in society have a strong reflection on upbringing and education, with that reflection varying greatly in both intensity and content. New trends in upbringing and education are increasingly observed in higher education as well. One such trend - albeit modest and tentative, yet undeniable - is the ever wider opening of doors to other institutions: expanding the boundaries of higher education implementation, fostering extracurricular student activities, intensifying networking and institutional connections, and introducing innovative models of teaching at our faculty. Our example of good practice in higher education is diverse and encompasses numerous extracurricular activities, such as filming short films, volunteering in the community, work-based learning, teaching in cultural and other institutions, creating inspiring learning environments in higher education settings, and staging theater performances. Such activities are implemented in accordance with the goals and contents provided in the curriculum, with the sole purpose of improving the quality of teaching, functionally connecting theory and practice, and preparing students for the challenges of tomorrow.

Keywords: teaching, future, quality

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PEDAGOGY STUDENTS' PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

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Professional identity represents a dynamic system of beliefs, values, motivations, and experiences through which individuals come to define themselves as professionals, and which is continuously developing throughout the entire career. Its' development begins as early as the period of preparation for a profession and represents an important, yet to some extent overlooked, aspect of education for a specific profession. The aim of this study was to examine the professional identity of pedagogy students, as well as to determine whether there are differences in its expression with respect to the respondents' sociodemographic characteristics. The study was conducted on a sample of 180 pedagogy students at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad. The instrument used to measure professional identity (Tan et al., 2017) consisted of four subscales: Knowledge about Professional Practices, Experience with the Profession, Having the Professional as a Role Model, and Professional Self-efficacy. The results show that students achieve the highest scores on the subscales of having the professional as a role model and professional self-efficacy. The analysis indicated the presence of statistically significant differences at the level of the overall professional identity scale and the subscale of professional experience with respect to the year of study, favoring students in higher years. The obtained results suggest that professional identity develops during the course of studies, particularly through the increase of professional knowledge. The findings contribute to a better understanding of the formation of professional identity among students and may have implications for improving study programs and professional training.

Keywords: professional identity, students, pedagogy, professional development, professional role models

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THE ROLE OF THE PEDAGOGUE IN PROVIDING SUPPORT DURING THE MENTORING PROCESS

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The mentoring process is a significant component of the professional development of educators, and the mentor's level of professional preparedness is crucial in this process. A mentor's effectiveness depends on numerous skills, including professional and communication competencies, all with the aim of ensuring the highest possible quality in introducing trainees to educational practice. In this process, the pedagogue is often a member of the committee responsible for introducing trainees to educational work; however, their role frequently remains insufficiently defined. With the aim of determining the role of the pedagogue in providing support during the mentoring process, a focus group will be conducted on a selected sample (using the snowball sampling method) of 20 pedagogues from early childhood and preschool education institutions, as well as primary and secondary schools in Split-Dalmatia County in the Republic of Croatia. For the implementation of the focus group, an instrument has been developed based on previous research on professional development, lifelong learning, and the quality of the mentoring role, as well as on foundational documents that regulate career advancement of education professionals, in accordance with the fundamental tasks and advisory role of the pedagogue. It is expected that the results obtained through this qualitative research, via the focus group method, will contribute to a better understanding of the pedagogue's role in providing support during the mentoring process as part of the advisory domain of work. Furthermore, it is anticipated that these findings will encourage researchers to undertake further studies on mentoring support in the professional development of education professionals at different levels of the education system.

Keywords: advisory work, mentoring, pedagogue, professional development

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EXAMINING THE STRUCTURE OF THE OLDENBURG BURNOUT INVENTORY ON A SAMPLE OF TEACHERS FROM SERBIA

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The Oldenburg Burnout Inventory is designed to assess professional burnout through two dimensions: disengagement and exhaustion. Significant advantages of this inventory include its theoretical basis, applicability across sectors, and relatively small number of items. Our study examines the internal structure and reliability of this instrument in the Serbian school context. Participants were 165 teachers employed in primary and secondary schools in Serbia, and the collected data were analyzed using confirmatory and exploratory factor analysis. Data analysis was performed using several statistical packages in the R programming environment. The fit indices of the original inventory model with the collected data were inadequate. Due to the inadequate fit of the original model, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted to examine an alternative structure of the instrument. Confirmatory factor analysis of the modified two-factor version of the inventory showed acceptable indices of fit to the data. Furthermore, both subscales had adequate reliability. The results suggest that the original structure of the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory is not suitable for describing professional burnout among teachers in Serbia. Our results indicate the need for revising and validating the instrument using larger samples.

Keywords: Oldenburg burnout inventory, teachers, validity, confirmatory factor analysis

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TEACHER PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY - A THEORETICAL APPROACH

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Teacher professional identity represents a complex and multidimensional construct that encompasses the ways in which teachers understand their professional role, values, and competencies within the educational context. This paper is based on a theoretical analysis of relevant national and international literature in the field of pedagogy. The analyzed studies approach professional identity from the perspectives of social identity, reflective practice, and professional development. Research findings indicate that teacher professional identity includes cognitive, affective, and evaluative dimensions, and that it is shaped through the interaction of personal characteristics and contextual factors, such as the school environment and professional experiences. A review of relevant literature shows that the topic of professional identity is a relatively new, yet highly actual theoretical and research area. This construct is increasingly gaining a central place in pedagogical research, given its importance for understanding teachers' professional engagement, their attitudes toward work, and the process of continuous professional learning in the contemporary educational context. It is concluded that theoretical approaches provide an important framework for understanding teacher professional identity as a dynamic process. The implications of the study relate to improving education and professional training of teachers through the encouragement of reflective practice and the strengthening of professional competencies.

Keywords: teacher professional identity, theories of professional identity, continuous professional development

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SITUATIONAL SELF-EFFICACY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AND INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION: DIFFERENCES ACCORDING TO GENDER, AGE, AND TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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The study examined the situational self-efficacy of graduate physical education teachers in inclusive settings, focusing on intellectual, physical, and visual impairments in relation to gender, age, and teaching experience. The sample included 76 graduate physical education teachers (54 males and 22 females). The Self-Efficacy Scale for Physical Education Teacher Education Majors toward Children with Disabilities (SE-PETE-D) was used. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to assess differences between genders in relation to different types of disabilities, while the Friedman test was used to evaluate differences across age groups (≤ 39 , 40–49, and ≥ 50 years) and years of teaching experience (≤ 10 , 11–20, and ≥ 21 years). Female participants achieved higher scores than males ($p = .022$) in the domain of teaching students with intellectual disabilities. No significant differences were found across age groups or years of teaching experience for any type of disability. Gender has a limited but noticeable influence on teachers' self-efficacy in inclusive settings, whereas age and teaching experience are not significant factors.

Keywords: inclusive physical education, self-efficacy, disability

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BETWEEN PROFESSIONAL REFLECTION AND CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES: THE IDENTITY OF THE SCHOOL PEDAGOGUE IN SCHOOL CULTURE TODAY

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The modern school faces numerous social and educational changes that shape the professional roles and identity of professional associates. In this context, the reflection of professional practice is a key mechanism for the professional development of pedagogues, because it enables a critical reflection of one's own practice, competences and role in the development of school culture. The research problem considers the way in which pedagogues reflect their professional identity and identify challenges and opportunities for improving their professional practice. The research was conducted within a qualitative paradigm using a case study. The sample consisted of 30 school pedagogues from primary and secondary schools in the Kolubara district. The data was collected through a semi-structured interview that covered the initial education of pedagogues, experiences at the beginning of work, mentoring support, and methodical work, cooperation with directors and teachers, as well as contemporary professional challenges. The results show that pedagogues actively reflect on their practice and participate in monitoring and evaluating the school's work, often as coordinators of teams for self-evaluation and development planning. Identified challenges include increased administrative burden, insufficient institutional support, challenges in cooperation with parents and teachers, as well as the need to improve the initial education of pedagogues. The conclusions indicate the importance of strengthening professional autonomy and creating conditions for reflective pedagogical practice.

Keywords: reflection, professional identity, pedagogue, school culture, professional development

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<https://digitalna.ff.uns.ac.rs/sadrzaj/2026/978-86-6065-980-6>

CIP - Каталогизација у публикацији
Библиотеке Матице српске, Нови Сад

37.013(048.3)

**INTERNATIONAL Scientific Conference Pedagogy - Yesterday, Today,
Tomorrow (2 ; 2026 ; Novi Sad)**

Book of abstracts [Elektronski izvor] / Second International Scientific Conference
"Pedagogy - Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow", Novi Sad, 2026. ; [editor Borka Malčić]. - Novi
Sad : Faculty of Philosophy, 2026

Način pristupa (URL): <https://digitalna.ff.uns.ac.rs/sadrzaj/2026/978-86-6065-980-6>. -
Opis zasnovan na stanju na dan 20.5.2026.

ISBN 978-86-6065-980-6

а) Педагогија -- Апстракти

COBISS.SR-ID 194068233