

# The Actual Problems of the Theory and Practice of Modern Pre-School Education in Poland, Romania and Ukraine


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Otilia Clipa  
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# Table of contents

## CHAPTER 1

Getting to Know the Pre-Schooler: Theoretical Guidelines and Pedagogical Benefits ..... 7  
*Liliana STAN*

## CHAPTER 2

Social and Emotional Development of Pre-Schoolers ..... 19  
*Otilia CLIPA*

## CHAPTER 3

Health Education and Environmental Education in Kindergarten ..... 33  
*Renata MUCHACKA*

## CHAPTER 4

The Development of Emotional and Social Competences in Pre-Schoolers. The Impact of a Guidance Program for Parents ..... 43  
*Elena BUJOREAN*

## CHAPTER 5

Health Education as One of the Most Important Elements of Pre-School Education..... 55  
*Anna RÓG*

## CHAPTER 6

Requirements for Computer Assisted Improvement of Children's Behaviour..... 65  
*Maria-Doina SCHIPOR*  
*Ovidiu-Andrei SCHIPOR*

## CHAPTER 7

The Problems of Prevention and Psycho-Correction of Pre-School Teachers' Professional Burnout ..... 79  
*Tetiana KOLTUNOVYCH*

## CHAPTER 8

Polish Teaching Education Standard Concerning Nursery School and Primary School Classes (First, Second and Third) ..... 105  
*Małgorzata STAWIAK-OSOSIŃSKA*

## **CHAPTER 9**

Between Originality and Reflection – Creative and Critical Competences of Primary Education Teachers in the Global World ..... 117

*Iwona CZAJA-CHUDYBA*

## **CHAPTER 10**

Teacher’s Competences in the Field of Information Technology and Computer Science ..... 131

*Mateusz MUCHACKI*

## **CHAPTER 11**

Topical Issues of Pre-School Teachers Training for Work with Children in Ethnocultural Environment of Bukovyna ..... 139

*Maria OLIYNYK*

## **CHAPTER 12**

Pedagogic Training of Undergraduates in Higher Educational Institutions of Non-Pedagogical Orientation: Theoretical and Practical Aspects ..... 165

*Natalya MACHYNSKA*

## **CHAPTER 13**

Prejudice as a Determinant of Academic Mobility of Polish and Ukrainian Students? ..... 173

*Agnieszka LEWICKA-ZELENT*

## **CHAPTER 14**

Professional Computer Science Competences in the Era of Information and Knowledge ..... 183

*Mateusz MUCHACKI*

## INTRODUCTION

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The tendencies of globalization, internationalization, crisis of traditional system of values, smearing of moral orientations, social indetermination, economical and political difficulties, sharp differentiation of society, which are taking place in modern society influence all sides of human activities, including educational. Taking into account the mentioned above, the modernization of educational system on all levels, beginning with pre-school education is consequently performed in the Eastern European Countries, and also all measures are taken to improve its quality and effectiveness.

Problems of preschool education under present-day conditions acquire special topicality. Because according to according too scientific sources and normative legal base, preschool age is sensitive not only in terms of development of cognitive processes, but also in terms of personal formation of children at pre-school age. Besides that, on modern stage, the advanced vocational training of future specialists of preschool education is becoming a task of top-priority. Because the formation of healthy, intelligent person with highly developed moral and ethical qualities depends namely on teacher of educational institution, and will give a person possibility to perform cultural functions, to be an active participant in the social relationship, to be able to study in educational institutions and to self-actualize.

That is why different aspects of modern pre-school education are the perspective directions of scientific study on both theoretical and practical levels.

The strategy of higher education is directed on formation of professional competency of the specialist, who can solve not only professional tasks and who have not only theoretical, methodical and practical skills, but is also ready to go beyond normative activity, to perform innovative processes and processes in a broader sense, to solve extraordinary pedagogical situations, to organize interaction and development of collaboration with foreign specialists in the field of professional and international activity.

That is why it is so important to have the possibility to create conditions for implementing international collaboration into the system of staged preparation of future educators of children at pre-school age. It will give them the possibility to take part in the international programs, to learn how to plan the pedagogical activity and to elaborate plans, to adapt to changing conditions of the environment and to realize educational process in the preschool institution.

The organization of international relations in terms of preschool education also provides inclusion of future educators to the dialogue of cultures. The aim is to form the system of values as conscious sense of life. The organization of international relations helps to present oneself as a personality, to possess reflexive activity, methods of self-cognition, self-analysis and self-esteem; helps to develop

readiness for professional mobility as an important component of European dimension of higher education.

The issues of deepening of the international cooperation, widening of the participation of educational institutions, scientists, pedagogues and students in the projects of international organizations and companies, collaborations between universities of Eastern Europe countries in the context of specialists' preparation become more and more topical.

Theoretical importance and necessity of practical solutions of the mentioned above problems determined the direction of scientific search for certain universities of from Eastern Europe, the results of this search are being the collaboration and mutual studies in the scientific teams. The most important aspects of the mutual studies are being reflected in the monograph.

September, 2014

O. Clipa, Suceava, Romania

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# CHAPTER 1

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## Getting to Know the Pre-Schooler: Theoretical Guidelines and Pedagogical Benefits



## Introduction

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When the adult intervenes in the moulding of the child, the possession of the right data about the child's personality, knowing the child, is imperatively necessary. Based on the gathered information, the teacher will know how to proceed for drawing out the best from the student's individuality, while „relating *what is* to *what could be*, not just to *what ought to be*” (Holban & Durnea, 1972: p.7). It is necessary that, during the unfolding activities, the educator should use that data which describe the student's real personality at a certain point in their life, not an abstract, desired, prefabricated (or even ideal) image of the student; „pedagogy must have an individualized psychological study for a preliminary” – *Alfred Binet* concluded poignantly a century ago (Binet, 1975: p.28). If they have the ability to extract the grounds for educational initiatives out of the context, out of facts and out of concrete, immediate data, teachers will be satisfied neither with the psychologists' opinions – who are „behind in offering «solutions» for individualisation”, nor with the teacher trainers' opinions – who „engage in individualisations which do not really have a psychological basis” (Badea, 1997: p.19).

To a greater extent, significant information about the pre-schooler will empower the teacher to exert a positive formative influence. This type of effects cannot be obtained by those teachers who do not know their work partners, or by those who only know their partners incompletely or superficially; “to allow a personality to bloom,” *Robert Dottrens* claims, “means to know the children as they are, so that, realising their potential, we may help them to develop their qualities and to correct their defects”(Dottrens, 1970: p.17). *Emil Panchard* (1976) also encouraged teachers to believe that “to accurately know the individuals which will be subject of the educator's actions is the first condition for success” (Panchard, 1976), while *David P. Ausubel* and *Floyd G. Robinson* invoked the results of some research when they argued that “teachers who are better informed about their pupils' personality structures and who are helped to use this information in devising particular teaching activities will achieve greater learning efficiency” (Ausubel & Robinson, 1981: p. 476)

Within the theoretical domain of pre-school pedagogy, the principle of getting to know the child is a distinct priority in the act of education. Essentially, it refers to the task of constantly and rigorously working on the profile of the pre-schooler's personality, using appropriate professional tools. Given that teachers who are aware of their action's power know that they do not possess rules to “optimize” a child (be it in kindergarten or a young pupil), the principle of knowing the child's personality is revealed as an obvious imperative priority (to be theoretically assimilated and followed in practice). Because “the measures we take have different effects in each child”, it follows that it is unacceptable “to apply the very same measure to distinct cases” (Adler, 1995: pp. 95-96). We conclude that in education, in general, and in educating pre-schoolers in particular, knowing the

learner must be understood as the starting point in the design, organisation, development, assessment and regulation of formative intervention (Glava & Glava, 2002: p. 27). We also agree with *Dumitru I. Popovici* in that “a good theory of the learning process in school ought to deal with the pupil above all” (Popovici, 2000: p. 96).

Following the principle of knowing the child requires that teachers play a number of roles, from which several specific activities (or operations) derive. The teacher is:

- the person who finds out information/information “gatherer”;
- the organiser of obtained data (by identifying structural criteria);
- the interpreter of the information (by assessing and hierarchizing it);
- the user of those conclusions which have been revealed during everyday interaction.

The corresponding operations required involve:

- identifying a range of specific methods which serve the given aims;
- using tools/notes regarding the obtained information;
- selecting the data according to certain criteria by correlating them to the determined pedagogical concern or purpose;
- identifying the significance of the correlated data (differentiating the value of the data);
- validating those aspects which are important for the beneficiaries etc.

## A View of Young Children and Getting to Know Them

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The actual enactment of the activities of comprehending the child, as well as the functional validation of the obtained data are based on a complex view of the child, of childhood, of the pre-schooler – adult/teacher relationships and of knowing the child. This conception is usually inspired by what is learnt from specialised literature. Nevertheless, every adult has to understand that, regardless of how vast or significant the psycho-pedagogical literature dealing with children and childhood is, no theory encompasses all the answers, or the best answers to the present problems of child growth, development or education.

It is our view that the essence of an image about the child and the process of deciphering the child’s personality consists of a number of important ideas (regardless of their origin); some of these will be emphasized in the following observations.

- The educator must accept the uniqueness of a child’s soul; “as far as education is concerned, each young person is a singular case” (Thomas, 1987: p. 67), whose existence generates the singularity of the educational situation. Vivienne de Landsheere asserted that the value of the educational act “which we perform in a given teaching situation is function of a particular method, applied by a particular

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