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Student practical work related to children motivation

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Abstract

The establishment of a good atmosphere in class is achieved through the interconnection of subjects and creative activities with children, which affects the motivation and development of the key learning competences, in order for them to better understand the world around them. Therefore, the cooperation between institutions makes the planning and accomplishment of the student educators' practice possible, allowing them to become aware of their work with children during their studies. The analysis of the students' work remains an important process during the receiving of theoretical information. It is also important in the accomplishment of their practice in preschool institutions and pre-primary classes within schools in order to motivate the children to learn. This study emphasizes the work of student educators in the following two courses: (1) Theory of Learning Through Practice and (2) Pedagogical Practice for the planning and realization of different activities in cooperation with the educators in the preschool institutions and pre-primary classes. Hence, we think that the interconnection between theory and practice greatly affects the creative work of students in the motivation and development of the children. The study analysis is based on the analysis of classwork

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records, portfolios, presentations and researches of the student educators of the AAB College. The practice is carried out in preschool institutions and pre-primary classes during a fifteen-week period by the second-year and fourth-year students of Social Sciences of the academic year 2017/2018.

Keywords: *practice, motivation, children development, diary, portfolio.*

Children motivation and development of their key competences is a difficult aspect and a very important part of the work of educators in the teaching process because a child who is not motivated to participate in different learning activities can experience difficulties in learning as well. Children should always be motivated for life-long learning because “Motivation to learn is intrinsic, stimulated by active learning methods” (Walsh, Kiranxhiska & Gjorgjieva, n.d., p. 16) This can be achieved by ensuring an environment appropriate to their age and development, inciting creativity in them to achieve a successful learning experience.

Seeing that the work of an educator is a work entailing responsibilities for the child development, consideration should be given to both theoretical information and students’ professional practice during the years of study as a difficult, although achievable, path in the work with children. “We will succeed in shaping contemporary teachers, teachers who will achieve to meet pupils’ requirements, only when theoretical and practical learning is strongly intertwined with each-other” (Winsor, 2004b, p. v). Practical learning is a challenge for student educators starting from the receiving of information during the four years of study and accomplishment of three years of practice in different preschool institutions and pre-primary classes, where they are equipped with different models and experiences of teaching from educators. Practice is a true

source of knowledge and is rightly so called the teacher's experience, because teachers make the decision to treat the curriculum, set the objectives, prepare the material for the planned topics, organize the classroom, and implement the teaching activity (Zajazi, 2003). This experience will serve student educators as a preparation for their future profession during the work with children since it is said that the educator facilitates work, replaces a parent and becomes a dear friend to children. The educator is like a treasury equipped with multiple information, achieving to be effective both in a desert, ocean or under a tree at the top of mountain (Reynolds, 2001).

The role of students in preschool institutions and pre-primary classes is of great significance in the children' learning process. They should manage to inspire children and have an impact in their motivation by planning and accomplishing appropriate learning activities. In addition, open communication with parents for a true cooperation with educators and student educators has a positive impact in increasing learning efficiency because "Parents and teachers should recognize the complementary importance of each other in the life of a pupil" (Fullan, 2002, p. 319). The aim of this study is to analyze the work of student educators while they receive theoretical information and undergo a practice in preschool institutions and pre-primary classes within schools to motivate and develop children in all areas of life. And, to arrive at the conclusion that the interrelation between theory and practice plays an important role in the creative work of the students themselves for the motivation and development of children.

Theoretical context

Based on the Kosovo Curriculum Framework, it is foreseen to integrate learning through curriculum areas, contributing to the development of competences and learning outcomes for children so that they attain life skills. The six key competences that the children should achieve during pre-university education are: Communication and expression competences, Thinking competences, Learning competences, Life, work and environment competences, Personal competences and Civic competences to achieve the final result which is being an effective communicator, creative and critical thinker, successful student, productive contributor, healthy individual and responsible citizen as an independent development of children's personalities (MASHT, 2016).

Based on the age group, activities or games appropriate for preschool education should be planned and organized to achieve success in the six areas of their development, starting from the development of language, development of math, arts education, social and personal development, scientific development and physical and health development. The productivity of children's memory and imagination increases through game as a fundamental activity in order to achieve sustainable development (Zuna, 2003). In each working corner in a classroom, it is necessary to have the materials needed for the development of their creative and cooperative skills.

1. To offer the students *the preparation* they need to be successful in classrooms, and
2. To offer them time and structure for *reflection and discussion*, to enable learning from the time spent in the class (Winsor, 2004a, p. 2).

Therefore, students should have sufficient knowledge about the work with children, starting from lesson plans, their implementation in classes, different activities and games to be developed in a class to create the most motivating environment for children because “Playing is the spirit of every teaching program in early childhood” (Coughlin et al, 1997, pp. I-13).

Methodology

Qualitative and quantitative methods are used in the study. As a research instrument the record of classwork completed by students and the portfolio of practical work done in pre-primary classes and preschool institutions is used, which was implemented as well for the assessment of their work with children, planned and accomplished in fifteen working days. It was completed in accordance with the structure provided, which should consist of annual, monthly, weekly and daily plans, the form of observation of a child having difficulties in the classroom, photos of activities and forms of work with children as well as materials prepared and used for the concretization of the lesson. The work of students mainly took place in preschool institutions and pre-primary classes in the municipality of Prishtina and the municipality of Gjakova. Having in mind the importance of planning and organization of lessons by educators and student educators to achieve a full success with the children (Musai, 2014), students have been advised to plan and deliver a presentation based on their work

in classes during one day of practice, as per the schedule received by educators in different teaching subjects.

The presentation of the work done in classes where the practice took place had a positive effect to motivate students themselves by watching different activities from each other and planning as many attractive activities as possible, achieving the utmost success with the children in quality learning and also being competitors between them in presenting their best work.

This form of research was chosen to examine the creative work of students to participate in teaching classes, gather information for a child with difficulties without letting that child know that he/she is being observed because "it is important to record what was really *seen* rather than what we *think* we have seen" (Glenn, Cousins, & Helps, 2006) and motivate and help children gain life skills through participation of student educators in classes. The research is based on the importance of planning for the achievement of learning outcomes from children, based on the new Curriculum. The sample is purposive; it consists of 158 students from the AAB College, in Prishtina branch and Gjakova branch.

The data was collected from the analysis of 132 student diaries and portfolios completed by fourth year students during the practice and 28 presentations of their work done in preschool institutions and pre-primary classes for fifteen days. In addition to that, the presentations of 26 second year students, who beside lectures have accomplished the tasks given according to the curriculum, selecting a theory unit to implement in teaching classes in preschool institutions and pre-primary classes. Based on the theory acquired from the lectures for fifteen weeks interrelated with the practice carried out with the help of educators in classes with children, the students achieved to be more creative in planning and carrying out

activities so that they get closer to establishing a sustainable relation with children in achieving the purpose.

Outcome

The data help us to provide an evaluation of the work that student educators performed during their practice in preschool institutions and pre-primary classes with the children in the municipality of Prishtina and the municipality of Gjakova. Based on the outcomes from the data, we notice that the preparation of students on the theoretical aspect and the help of educators in their work during the practice helps positively in their formation for a successful work with children. In addition, their success is noticed in the successful planning and organization of different activities and games, motivation of children to learn successfully, achievement of results with the children and students themselves after the completion of their studies to manage to be employed more easily through their dedication for a successful work.

This study is based on the work done by student educators during fifteen weeks of lectures and the tasks performed in the two subjects: (1) Theory of Learning Through Practice and (2) Pedagogical Practice for work planning and accomplishment of different activities in cooperation with educators in preschool institutions and pre-primary classes.

From the outcomes we will arrive at conclusions important with regards to the interrelation of theory and practice in order to raise the awareness of students about the work with children, the interrelation of teaching subjects, the planning and organization of creative activities that motivate children in the development of the key learning competences.

Table 1 Child observation

Child observation						
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	0	56	42.4	42.4	42.4	
	1	45	34.1	34.1	76.5	
	2	15	11.4	11.4	87.9	
	3	2	1.5	1.5	89.4	
	5	1	.8	.8	90.2	
	6	3	2.3	2.3	92.4	
	7	1	.8	.8	93.2	
	8	1	.8	.8	93.9	
	9	1	.8	.8	94.7	
	12	2	1.5	1.5	96.2	
	13	1	.8	.8	97.0	
	14	1	.8	.8	97.7	
	15	1	.8	.8	98.5	
	16	2	1.5	1.5	100.0	
	Total		132	100.0	100.0	

With regards to the child observation task during the practice, which involved the observation of how a child behaves and how much he/she is prepared to stay in the teaching class, 56 students or 42.42% of students did not carry out the task at all, 45 students or 34.1% planned it and carried it out and wrote only one description whereas 31 students or 23.48% have written more than two descriptions about the observation carried out.

Hence, based on the study outcomes according to the Table 1, we understand that 76 students or 57.58% did an observation of a child during fifteen days of practice, describing their difficulties, working methods and forms used with those children, showing the advantages, achievements, setbacks and difficulties after their involvement in the teaching process.

Student who did the observation managed to write different forms of description for children; some of them wrote a general form or descriptive form for the child in a single page, while some other students conducted a detailed and daily description of the planning and accomplishment of activities related to the development of the child in achieving competences and positive results. Descriptions that were written in more details are for the most silent children, children having difficulties in communication, intellectually impaired children, less socialized children. In addition, in descriptions prepared by student educators we see their engagement through different activities with children having difficulties, aiming to achieve more progress during the period of practice in preschool institutions and pre-primary classes. From the data we understand that the assistance provided by student educators had a positive impact on children having difficulties with regards to motivation to achieve the best results and in changing behavior, since nearly 58% indicate how and to what extent the children were motivated at the time the student educators were doing their practice in preschool institutions and pre-primary classes. At the same time, the engagement of student educators had a positive influence on the educators themselves as the work naturally becomes more successful when two educators are engaged in a classroom.

Table 2. Group work activities

Group work activities					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	29	22.0	22.0	22.0
	1	8	6.1	6.1	28.0
	2	14	10.6	10.6	38.6
	3	12	9.1	9.1	47.7
	4	13	9.8	9.8	57.6
	5	11	8.3	8.3	65.9
	6	4	3.0	3.0	68.9
	7	3	2.3	2.3	71.2
	8	6	4.5	4.5	75.8
	9	1	.8	.8	76.5
	10	5	3.8	3.8	80.3
	11	4	3.0	3.0	83.3
	12	3	2.3	2.3	85.6
	13	3	2.3	2.3	87.9
	14	2	1.5	1.5	89.4
	16	2	1.5	1.5	90.9
	17	1	.8	.8	91.7
	18	2	1.5	1.5	93.2
	19	2	1.5	1.5	94.7
	23	2	1.5	1.5	96.2
	25	1	.8	.8	97.0
	26	1	.8	.8	97.7
	27	1	.8	.8	98.5
	30	1	.8	.8	99.2
	31	1	.8	.8	100.0
	Total	132	100.0	100.0	

From the data presented in Table 2, we can see that 29 students or 22% did not apply the group work form, which is considered to be the most appropriate form of performing activities with children, whereas 103 students or 78% applied this work form with children. We see that nearly 52% implemented this form of work more than four times during the practical work and that they have achieved a decent degree of cooperation among children, completion of tasks in time and the correct implementation of the lesson plan including

activities or games adequate for the development of children in preschool education.

One of the reasons why some student educators did not apply the group work form was that the educators did not allow them to apply this form of work with the justification that the classrooms are too small; therefore, they have applied the traditional work form.

Figure 2. The work of children carried out in centers

Fig. 2.1 Annual calendar



Fig. 2.2 Science center



Fig. 2.3 Build the bridge



Fig. 2.4 Math center



Photos realized by students during their practice in preschool institutions and pre-primary classes.

Photos in Fig. 2 show the work of student educators who planned and organized activities with the children in different subjects during their practical work. The first photo 2.1 presents the daily routine activity, which is carried out every day with the purpose of remembering and recalling necessary information, starting from the days of the week, months, seasons, weather and dates. The second photo 2.2 presents the work of children in groups in the science center, where children manage to be creative in their cooperative work using tools, colors and different forms. The third photo 2.3 shows the building of a bridge using recycled materials during an English class, where children communicate with each other and the educator while learning for the working tools needed, building materials, the importance of the bridge, its length and height and other important information; whereas the fourth photo 2.4 presents the math center, with prepared concretization means used to remember numbers, colors, geometric forms, materials, etc. All activities performed in different centers help children see, touch, think, recall, plan and build different objects and this contributes to their preparation and development in all areas. Some of the carried out activities to stimulate learning are given in the book *Methodology according to areas of development* to help children accomplish new successes and practices (Cekani, 2012).

Table 3. Materials used for concretization

Materials used for concretization					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	17	12.9	12.9	12.9
	1	6	4.5	4.5	17.4
	2	4	3.0	3.0	20.5
	3	5	3.8	3.8	24.2
	4	10	7.6	7.6	31.8
	5	4	3.0	3.0	34.8
	6	7	5.3	5.3	40.2
	7	7	5.3	5.3	45.5
	8	6	4.5	4.5	50.0
	9	1	.8	.8	50.8
	10	9	6.8	6.8	57.6
	11	6	4.5	4.5	62.1
	12	4	3.0	3.0	65.2
	13	4	3.0	3.0	68.2
	14	6	4.5	4.5	72.7
	15	4	3.0	3.0	75.8
	16	10	7.6	7.6	83.3
	17	5	3.8	3.8	87.1
	18	2	1.5	1.5	88.6
	19	3	2.3	2.3	90.9
	21	1	.8	.8	91.7
	24	1	.8	.8	92.4
	26	3	2.3	2.3	94.7
	27	1	.8	.8	95.5
	32	2	1.5	1.5	97.0
	33	1	.8	.8	97.7
	43	1	.8	.8	98.5
	54	1	.8	.8	99.2
	56	1	.8	.8	100.0
	Total	132	100.0	100.0	

In regards to the materials made by students themselves and used to make the teaching units more concrete, from the data presented in Table 3 we can see that only 17 students or 12.9% of them did not plan or use concretization means, while 115 of students or 73% used concretization materials and means to make teaching units clear and to motivate children for their development related to achievement of competences and positive learning results. Over 70% of students stated that they used more than three materials during practical work. Some of them stated that the educators helped student educators as well, guiding them in preparing materials for concretisation and helping them to prepare them so that students could apply them in the classroom, making the lesson attractive and motivational for the children to achieve a successful work.

Based on the three tables presented above, we understand that the largest percentage of student educators have achieved the results planned, in cooperation with the educators in order to achieve motivation and development of children.

Table 4. Correlation between activities carried out using different forms of work with pupils - group work, individual work and frontal work

		Correlations		
		Aktivitete në punë në grupe	Aktivitete në punë individuale	Aktivitete në punë frontale
Aktivitete në punë në grupe	Pearson Correlation	1	.527**	.618**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	132	132	132
Aktivitete në punë individuale	Pearson Correlation	.527**	1	.445**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	132	132	132
Aktivitete në punë frontale	Pearson Correlation	.618**	.445**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	132	132	132

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to the data in Table 4, we can see a correlation between different forms of work applied in classes by student educators ($r=+0.527$; $r=+0.618$; $p=0.01$). Despite knowledge acquired in theoretical part about the fact that the group work form - centers is more successful in pre-primary classes, it is noticed that traditional forms of work, such as frontal and individual work form, are still applied. But, from the data it is understood that planned activities almost in all teaching subjects have been done using the group work form to make the learning units, motivation, socialization and development of children as concrete as possible. Whereas, frontal and individual forms of work were used less to understand the general information during routine activities, games and different drawings with children, while planting flowers and other successful activities.

According to qualitative data collected from student educators for the purpose of this study, we understand that:

Table 5. Students' results in the work planned

From the achievement of results planned in a day, student educators noticed that the children:	Understood the story narrated and they repeated it in their own words
	Could differentiate between cold water and hot water
	All the children were involved in the physical education class and when they succeeded in performing the activities they felt very happy
	They were amused through different games
	The objective of the activity to familiarize children with insects and perform cutting was achieved because children were having difficulties.
	With the activity organized in nature, children learned very quickly how to classify insects into flying and non-flying insects; they were even not afraid to catch them by hand.
	Children managed to understand the time when a day begins and when is night time
	Children indicated the time when they wake up, leave for school, the time when the school is done and the time when they go to bed
	Children managed to understand the fairy tale, perform a role play and draw the characters of the fairy tale
Students managed to understand that a good classroom management is achieved by:	Organizing attractive and interesting activities for children

	Establishing a cooperation among teachers to be able to have a good planning of annual, monthly, weekly and daily plans
	Providing a good environment, spatial classes and enough lighting to enable the accomplishment of learning activities
	Implementing different inspiring learning forms by educator
	Preparing and systematically completing files for each child
	Adapting the forms, methods, techniques and tools to learning topics
	Using play and games because it stimulates the development of child
	Performing willingly and successfully the practical work, which is a motivation for the students themselves and at the same time a good experience for children
	Assisting in the organization of activities in nature since it is a useful way to interrelate theory and practice
	Dividing children in groups - centers to perform the tasks planned
From the observation of children in classes, students managed:	To be more attentive as teachers in observing children during the day
	To perform annual, monthly, weekly, daily plans and analyze the individual plan for children having difficulties
	To observe and assist children having learning difficulties during the activities they perform
	To observe and assist children who change their behavior during the activities they perform

	To gain the attention of hyperactive children to follow and perform activities
	To improve the spelling of double letters such as rr, sh, nj, dh, th.

So, from the qualitative data, we can conclude that good classroom management, a good planning and successful implementation of that plan is important in order to achieve results with children, and the assistance as well that should be provided to children having different difficulties in learning process.

Discussions

During the practice, student educators had a good cooperation with educators, they involved all children in activities, applied different forms of work especially work in groups, and the children were happy to participate in attractive activities. Some of the activities organized with the purpose of stimulating curiosity and development of children in different teaching subjects indicate that student educators themselves should be well prepared to plan the learning process, rely on the experience of educator, support children to become independent adapting activities to their age. From the presentations of student educators, we understand that children love changes and attractive games, and they were also willing to participate in the following activities:

All children got dressed with the clothes I had brought and one after the other they practiced being a doctor. The activity was related to both emotional development and creativity. The interrelation between teaching subjects was done as well” - Agnesa

“During activities children were happy and interested to participate, especially in placing the colors of traffic lights” - Shpresa

“Children were able to successfully perform all the activities. I was very happy with their work” - Jetlira

“The behavior of the educator with children was correct and fruitful, management was at the level required, even the small quarrels between children ended up in hugs and apologies to each-other”, “I had a pleasant relationship with children, I overcame the difficulties encountered with the help of educator; working with children is a real pleasure” - Fitorja

“Through this practical work I managed to gain new knowledge and skills and at the same time attain the skills of group work. This practical work helped me to create a solid knowledge base that will enable my further development ” - Valdona

Conclusions and recommendations

The study clearly shows that the motivation of student educators in planning and carrying out activities in preschool institutions and pre-primary classes plays an important role in accomplishing a successful practice. Based on the study outcomes, it is worth mentioning that students' support in relating the theoretical part with the practical part renders a positive impact on the children in terms of creative work in classes, and with the purpose of ensuring their proper motivation and development in all the areas of personality development. The outcomes of this study reveal the success of students during their practical work, achieving their task successfully and creating a suitable environment for children, by planning the work for children, cooperating with educators,

accomplishing activities suitable for the motivation and development of children and offering their assistance while observing children with difficulties.

One of students mentioned that because of her dedicated work during practice in the class, especially in observing and giving assistance to children having difficulties, she was offered a job by a child's parents to work as an assistant educator in the class, in order to help in enhancing the child's progress and help the educator in the class so that she can handle to help all the children.

We consider that joint engagement for cooperation between institutions with the purpose of sharing the best education practices always brings positive results. Therefore, all persons involved in education should give their best to create a warm and suitable learning environment to have the children motivated and engaged as a result of their development at the right time.

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