

Branimir MENDEŠ:

Profesionalno obrazovanje odgojitelja predškolske djece. Od jednogodišnjeg tečaja do sveučilišnog studija. Prilozi hrvatskoj pedagoškoj baštini. (Early and Preschool Teachers Professional Education. From One Year Course to University Study Program. Contribution to Croatian Pedagogical Heritage.)

Zagreb: Golden marketing – Tehnička knjiga, 2018., 304 str.

This book represents a great contribution to the Croatian pedagogic heritage. It brings a holistic review of the professional education of the preschool teachers in Croatia throughout its beginnings until today when a University undergraduate study program and graduate study program have been established. The introduction was written by professor Maja Ljubetić, Ph.D., pointing out the book as a great gift to early and preschool education professional community. Moreover, it makes an important contribution and provides a development review of this important part of the whole education system in Croatia. In this book, the author presents his longtime research on the theme of professional education of preschool teachers which, in this form, hasn't been available until now. The book consists of three parts.

The first part of the book presents the theme *Initial education – basics for preschool teachers' professional development*. The author debates and presents problems with different terms used for preschool teachers, which was changed through history in different shapes. Due to the development of the profession, the author explains different terms used in history. Recently the terms University Bachelor of Early and Preschool Education and Master of Early and Preschool Education are used. The name itself explains its professional development. The author states that the preschool teacher is a profession according to different sources. To contribute to that statement, he states the structural elements of a profession: development of the basic theories and techniques, professional expertise, public recognition and professional organization, alongside professional ethics. The author also added the development of professional ethics. Preschool teachers' professional development has three connected cycles that are highlighted in this part of the book. *Initial education* starts with a selection and entrance examination and consists of professional competence acquisition. As follows, *internship or training for future work*, which is a very important cycle in the teacher's professional development. *Permanent professional learning* is the longest cycle and its goal is to develop and improve gained competences. In this part, the author presents a professional development model by Sheckley and Allen. In the first part the author highlights the competence approach. In the literature, term *competence* is defined differently by many authors, but in the research context in many sciences (Pedagogy, Psychology, Sociology, etc.) competences are an interdisciplinary problem. Preschool teachers' competencies are a very broad field, which is why the author presents them as a very complex pedagogical term.

The second part of the book brings out a historical approach to preschool teachers' professional competences development. It stresses the importance of the historical approach in the context of institutional preschool education. The author

highlights preschool education conceptions and their changes due to science and social context. Preparing teachers for their work or we can say the development of their professional competences is important for institutional preschool education development. Here, the author emphasizes the methodological frame of his research on the problem of historical orientation, which was based on Mirjana Grosse's concept. Speaking on the institutionalization of professional education it is important to track the development of preschool institutions. Therefore, a mention of the first preschool institution on Croatian land goes back in 1969. The next decade brings out first kindergarten teachers' education. The author mentions twelve historical organizational arrangements in initial preschool teachers' education starting with 1880 until 2009. As it was mentioned before in this book, and for better understanding, social and political changes in society are shown from 1880 until the independence of the Republic of Croatia.

The third part of the book presents changes in the initial education of preschool teachers in Croatia. It provides a thorough and vast report on historical research of the problem mentioned earlier. It is possible to track social changes through which twelve conceptions of professional education are realized. Through the stated characteristics of every conception, we can see changes made in the field of preschool education. With his research, the author commingles conceptions with scientific knowledge and with reform systems as he elaborates every conception. The width of the research done before publishing this book compares preschool conceptions and forms of education with other countries. It can be seen, by referred sources, in the conception of professional education for the preschool teachers in faculties (4+2 model). Besides these conceptions, this book provides all study programs from schools, faculties, and universities on this subject.

Preschool teacher is indeed a profession with many roles which are visible throughout different conceptions. It is impossible to talk about professional education without looking into pedagogic conceptions and social relations in society. Therefore, this book represents a holistic review of the development of early and preschool education as an important part of the education system.

Iskra TOMIĆ KASELJ