UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA

78th International Scientific Conference of University of Latvia

HUMAN, TECHNOLOGIES AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION

2020

CILVĒKS, TEHNOLOĢIJAS UN IZGLĪTĪBAS KVALITĀTE

Proceedings of Scientific Papers
Rakstu krājums

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University of Latvia Press

Human, Technologies and Quality of Education, 2020 = Cilvēks, tehnoloģijas un izglītības kvalitāte, 2020. Riga, University of Latvia, 2020. 207 p.

https://doi.org/10.22364/htqe.2020
ISBN 978-9934-18-623-3

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Preface

In 2020, the International Scientific Conference of the University of Latvia (UL) was organized for the 78th time to provide a platform where it is possible to discuss the latest discoveries in science and new research ideas, share the results of various research projects, and demonstrate the achievements of creative innovations. The program consisted of invited sessions and technical workshops and discussions with eminent speakers covering a wide range of research topics in the natural sciences and humanities. This rich program provided all attendees with opportunities to meet and interact with one another to exchange their thoughts and ideas. This volume contains the best articles presented at the 78th UL conference section "Humans, Technologies and the Quality of Education", which was a major theme for this section. As for previous conferences, there was the link between education, psychology, sports and arts, all fields of sciences represented at the Faculty of Pedagogy, Psychology and Art. The ever-changing scope and rapid development of society create new problems and questions, resulting in the real need to share brilliant ideas and stimulate awareness of this important research field, discuss the practical challenges encountered and the solutions adopted, and provide valuable ideas for future innovations.

In total, the work of the section "Humans, Technologies and Quality of Education" was organized into ten subsections, including education and upbringing, educational technologies, educational management, sports, language teaching, and the arts. The level of interest in the subject matter of these sections was high, and 86 suitable papers and creative innovations were submitted for presentation at the conference. The present volume of conference proceedings contains 18 articles which deal with topics about character education, the development of self-regulated learning skills, support for students with learning disabilities, the readiness of teachers for inclusive education, and different aspects of teacher education, for example, the sustainable development of teacher education, the history of education in Latvia, the preparation of English language teachers, aspects of vocational education, parental responsibilities to ensure education for all children, research results in sports education, and the well-being of higher education students.

All the chapters included in this book were double-blind peer-reviewed to ensure that the materials are high quality and deal with important

research topics and that they can indeed be of interest to the community. We would like to express our gratitude and appreciation for all of the reviewers who helped us maintain the high quality of manuscripts included in the proceedings.

I am very grateful to all the authors who put their efforts into the preparation of their chapters and the members of the scientific committee who ensured the quality of the conference presentations and of the papers subsequently submitted to the proceedings.

We are also indebted to those who served as chairmen. Without their support, the conference could not have been the success that it was. A special acknowledgement goes to the members of the organizing committee, who all contributed greatly to making this conference a reality.

I hope that the book will contribute to the field and open up new lines of research, new ideas, and new concepts to be presented and discussed at upcoming conferences.

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https://doi.org/10.22364/htqe.2020.01

ADAPTATION OF A TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR CHARACTER EDUCATION TO THE LATVIAN CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents an analysis of the quality of the adaptation of the transnational teacher training programme for character education "Arete catalyst" to the socio-cultural context of Latvia. Based on the theory of cultural adaptation of educational programmes, and on a qualitative analysis of documentary sources, the quality of the adaptation was discussed by comparing the features of the adapted programme with Latvian societal needs and policy makers' guidelines for character education (research question 1), and with the legal and institutional requirement for teacher training (research question 2). The findings revealed that the adapted Latvian programme responds widely to the needs of Latvian society and of the educational sector regarding character and virtue education, and addresses values and virtue education, as foreseen in the governmental guidelines for upbringing at school. It also complies with the Law of Education and the regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers regarding the professional development of teachers, and with the rules for approval and implementation of teacher training programmes at the University of Latvia. The adaptation process described can be useful for academics adapting existing programs to new socio-cultural contexts. This work should be continued by piloting and refining the adapted programme.

Keywords: *Arete catalyst, character education, professional competence development, programme adaptation, teachers' further education, teacher training programme, values and virtue education.*

Introduction

Character education is widely recognized as an essential part of 21st century school education (e.g., Fadel et al., 2015; Retnowati et al., 2018). However, although there is a number of teacher training for character

education initiatives, such as the work of the association Character.org in the USA[1] and the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues in United Kingdom[2], many teachers feel that they are not properly educated for this task (Mathison, 1999; Revell & Arthur, 2007; Brunn, 2014; Fernández González, 2019).

In Latvia also there is a number of teacher training courses in this field (for a recent review, see Surikova & Pigozne, 2018, pp. 12–14), but these initiatives fail to address holistically the different aspects of teacher training for character education: some are theory-oriented, others focus on the work in the classroom or in concrete subject matters, some address the education of a single virtue, while others look at the integration of values in the school life. And most of those teacher training proposals scarcely address the flourishing of personality of teachers themselves.

For facing these challenges, in 2018–2019, a transnational teachers' training programme for character education (Arete Catalyst, 2019) was elaborated within the Erasmus+ project "Supporting teachers for developing intra-personal competencies and character education at school – Arete Catalyst", a strategic partnership involving Latvia, Estonia and Spain. The programme was elaborated and reviewed by a body of 35 experts from different sectors: educational researchers, schoolteachers and headmasters, education policy makers, and educational supervisors. It adopted multifaceted perspectives, including insights from 'philosophy for children' (Lipman, 1982; Trickey & Topping, 2004), 'coexistence education' (Delors et al., 1996), and 'virtue ethics' (MacIntyre, 2013; Kristjánsson, 2019), and it was based on a research of best practices in the field and a need analysis in the field of character education in the partner countries (Verdeja Muñiz & García-Sampedro Fernández-Canteli, 2018).

The programme "Arete catalyst" adoptes the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues (2017) definition of character as a set of personal traits or dispositions that produce specific moral emotions, inform motivation and guide conduct. Character education includes all explicit and implicit educational activities that help young people develop positive personal strengths called virtues (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2017, p. 2). The programme "Arete catalyst" has a core of fundamental fixed elements which define its academic identity, and several flexible elements which allow programme adaptation for implementation in different socio-cultural contexts, countries, regions or schools. In 2019, the programme was adapted to the Latvian educational context by the University of Latvia (UL) as a professional competence development (PCD) programme

[1] https://www.character.org/
[2] https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/

for teachers called "Improving pedagogues' transversal competencies for promoting students' character education and excellence" (herein after: the Latvian programme). The Latvian programme includes four modules ('Communication', 'Theory and Self-Understanding', 'Methodology' and 'Assessment') and a set of activities aligned with the learning outcomes and the assessment, including a character education project at school.

This paper reports the main issues that were faced during the programme adaptation to the Latvian context, highlighting how the leaders of the adaptation process dealt with Latvian societal, juridical, and institutional specificity. The insights presented in this paper might be useful for academics involved in the adaptation of existing programmes to new, different socio-cultural contexts, and it could serve as a thought-guide and a source of practical advice for those undertaking such a challenging endeavour.

Theoretical background: Programme adaptation theory

Culture influences the way in which individuals see themselves and their environment at every level of the social-ecological system (Greene & Lee, 2002). Nowadays, acculturation and adaptation (Ward, 1996; Berry & Sam, 1997; Ward & Geeraert, 2016) are two major concerns in social sciences in a globalized world marked by an increasing mobility. Cultural adaptation has implications in many education and training areas, such as the internationalization of higher education (e.g., Shafaei & Razak, 2016), transfer of interventions in real practice settings (e.g. Marsiglia & Booth, 2015) and the transfer of teaching and learning in new contexts (Leberman & McDonald, 2016).

In the specific field of transfer of teacher training, McDonald (2016) argues that "cultural characteristics and values can significantly influence the outcome of training" (p. 105). Efficient transfer of teacher training needs to be viewed in a systemic manner (Broad, 2005), which includes considering programme relevance for the students, school, community and culture, as well as the barriers and facilitators of transfer and the ways of dealing with them (McDonald, 2001, pp. 93–94).

The cultural adaptation of teacher training programmes is a challenging process. Barrera and Castro (2006) proposed a heuristic framework for the cultural adaptation of medical interventions that could be useful also in educational contexts. They described an adaptation sequence of different phases: (a) information gathering, (b) preliminary adaptation design, (c) preliminary adaptation tests, and (d) adaptation refinement. This framework was used in this study about teacher training programme adaptation, addressing the phases (a) i.e., information gathering about

the context of the adaptation, and (b), i.e., the description of the preliminary adaptation design. The piloting of the adapted programme (c) and its refinement (d) will make the object of another paper.

In this study, the gathering of contextual information (a) focussed on adaptation facilitators and barriers at different levels of the socio-ecological system in Latvia, namely, the societal level, the policy makers' level and the institutional level. For the design of adapted programme (b), constructive alignment theory (Biggs, 2011) was used. Instead of the traditional approach, which focuses on the definition of contents and on teaching and learning methods, the adapters of the programme sought for an alignment between the intended learning outcomes of the programme, the activities to be implemented by the learners, and the assessment tasks.

In order to investigate the quality of the preliminary adaptation design of the programme, in this study the Latvian programme features were checked against the information gathered (at the three levels of the social-ecological system) regarding national teacher training requirements and societal and educational needs in the field of character education. The following research questions guided the inquiry:

RQ1. Does the adapted programme correspond to the Latvian societal needs and policy makers' guidelines in the field of character education?

RQ2. Does the adapted programme follow educational policy makers' and institutional (UL) requirements regarding teachers' further education?

Methodology

For answering the research questions, an initial qualitative analysis of documentary sources was implemented. Sources revealing societal needs and policy makers' guidelines in the field of character education (RQ1) and policy makers' and institutional (UL) requirements regarding teachers' further education (RQ2) were selected and analysed. After that, a comparison between the program features and the findings of the document analysis was implemented, discussing compliance or disagreement between them.

Findings and Discussion

For clarity, the findings and their discussion are presented by research questions. For each question, the sources analysed, and a summary of the relevant information gathered are presented first, followed by a discussion of the findings in relation to the Latvian programme.

RQ1: Does the adapted programme correspond to the Latvian societal needs and policy makers' guidelines in the field of character education?

Information at societal level was gathered from two recent sources: a research report about pupils' moral education in Latvian schools (Fernández González, 2019), and a recent need analysis report addressing the situation of teacher training for character education in Latvia (Surikova & Pigozne, 2018) elaborated within the "Arete Catalyst" project. Information at policy makers' level was gathered in the Latvian Regulations regarding values and virtue education at school (Cabinet of Ministers, 2016), and in the guidelines of the school content reform project "Competence-based approach to educational content" (Skola2030, 2017).

Latvian societal needs in the field of character education

Regarding Latvian societal needs in this field, a recent research report (Fernández González, 2019) involving more than 2250 respondents from different educational sectors, reports that:

- 92% of respondents believe that "schools should develop pupils' characters and encourage good values", and 70% – that facilitating pupils' moral growth is part of teacher's role.
- However, only 28% believed that teachers were sufficiently or fully prepared for this work. Differences between sectors were significant ($p = .000$): pre-service and in-service teachers were most confident about their preparedness (i.e. 68% and 58%), while only 25% of school leaders and 16% of education managers thought that teachers are well prepared for this task.
- There is a necessity to reinforce pre-service and in-service teacher training for values and character education at school. The courses should be practical, based on real situations, and they should also address the flourishing of personality of the teachers themselves.
- In-service teachers need methodological materials and methodological guidelines regarding character education, in line with Latvian legislation and current reforms.

The need analysis report (Surikova & Pigozne, 2018) identified the following weaknesses and threats in teacher training for character education in Latvia:

- A lack of a unified understanding of the terms related to character and virtue education.
- A lack of teachers' professional competence development (PCD) programmes in this field.
- Given the current educational reforms (Skola2030, 2017), teachers are overloaded. A PCD course on character education should adapt to teachers' lack of time and energy.

— There is a lack of teacher trainers with the required availability and competence in the field.

Values and virtue education in the Latvian regulations and in the school reform project

Regarding policy makers, the Cabinet of Ministers' Regulation No. 480 "Guidelines for the upbringing of learners and the procedure for evaluating information, teaching aids, materials and teaching/learning and upbringing methods" (Cabinet of Ministers, 2016) include a set of ten values (No. 4) and twelve virtues (No. 7) to be taught art school. Teachers and students should develop values and virtues in mutual relations (No. 8), and teachers should collaborate with pupils' parents and families (No. 8.2) and with students (No. 8.3). They should also improve their professional competence in upbringing by attending an at least 6 hours long course every 3 years (No. 11).

The current educational reform in Latvia addresses the acquisition of the values and virtues mentioned in the government regulations (Skola2030, 2017, pp. 7–8). It is teachers' responsibility to help students to develop habits (virtues) based on those values (p. 8), and to integrate them in the study process (p. 7), but they can freely organize their work to reach those goal (p. 6). With their behaviour and attitudes, teacher are role models for students' moral growth (p. 15).

Discussion of the findings in relation with the Latvian programme

As a whole, the Latvian programme responds widely (but not completely) to the identified societal needs and is in line with the guidelines of policy makers. It offers in-service teacher training for character education (without addressing pre-service teacher training). It facilitates teachers' ability to act as moral role models through specific activities addressing teachers' personality flourishing (e.g., activity 2.1. 'Self-awareness and self-reflection'). It is based in practical examples, including the analysis of good practices (e.g., activity 3.2. 'Identifying examples of good practice, generating project ideas for improvement of pedagogues' creativity for character education') and a final practical project. It proposes a unified understanding of the langue of values and virtues and enhances teachers' knowledge of the field throughout the module 'Theory and Self-Understanding'. It also fosters their communicative competence for establishing mutual relations with pupils and their families (module 'Communication'), and addresses the need for methodological materials,

supporting teachers methodologically for integrating values and virtue education in the study process in the module 'Methodology'. The length of the programme (36 hours) and the distribution of seminars, practical work and lectures is meant to adapt to teachers' availability, but this should be tested practically.

RQ2: Does the adapted programme follow educational policy makers' and institutional (UL) requirements regarding teachers' further education?

Information at policy makers' level was gathered in the Education Law of the Republic of Latvia (RL) (1998), and in the current regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers of the RL (Cabinet of Ministers, 2018). Information at institutional level was gathered in the normative documents of the UL (University of Latvia, 2018).

Latvian legislation about continuous professional development for teachers

The Education Law of the RL (1998) stipulates in Section 14 the competence of the Cabinet of Ministers in the field of education, which includes "to confirm, in accordance with pedagogical professions, the requirements for required education and professional qualifications of teachers" (No. 13) and "to determine the procedures for professional competence improvement of teachers" (No. 32). On these bases, the Cabinet of Ministers of the RL (Cabinet of Ministers, 2018) stipulated that teachers should attend a professional competence development (PCD) programme of a least 36 hours every 3 years (No. 15). The No. 18 of this Regulation stipulates that the PCD programme may include such topics as 'upbringing competence' (No. 18.1), the choice of methods and didactics (No. 18.2), and class management (No. 18.3). Those programs can be implemented, among other providers, by higher education institutions providing pedagogical education. The No. 22 stipulates that the provider should indicate the programme goal, objectives, learning outcomes, realization forms, target public, and an implementation plan indicating the number of hours, the topics and the forms and methods of delivering. Participants receive either a Certificate 1 (in Latvian "*apliecība*" for programmes shorter than 72 hours) or a Certificate 2 (in Latvian "*sertifikāts*" for programmes over 72 hours).

Requirements of the UL regarding teachers' further education

The Centre of Adult Education (CAE) of the Faculty of Education, Psychology and Art (FEPA) coordinates the CPD programmes for teachers

at the UL. For starting new PCD courses, the CAE applies the standard UL procedure for new study courses (University of Latvia, 2018).

First, the development of the new course is proposed to the head of the department responsible by the director of the study programme with the approval of the dean of the faculty implementing the study programme (University of Latvia, 2018, No. 3). Then the course is elaborated according to the "Study course description form" (University of Latvia, 2018, Annex 2), which includes the information required by law (Cabinet of Ministers, 2018, No. 22) and some additional information, as for example, the study course title, level, number of ECTS, number of contact hours (incl. lectures, seminars, practical assignment and independent study hours), characterization of students' independent work organization and tasks, requirements for awarding credits, criteria for assessing learning outcomes, compulsory reading list, further reading list, and a detailed course content. At the UL, learning outcomes are categorized in 'knowledge', 'skills' and 'competence' (Baranova, 2020, p. 8), and the study course assessment is done in a 10-point scale (University of Latvia, 2018, Annex 4). The next step is the course verification: the full course description is introduced in the electronic system of the UL (LUIS) and it is examined by the Department of Studies and controlled by the responsible of the educational branch. The final step is to proceed to the course approval: first, by a decision of the Council of the Faculty implementing the programme, and then by the Rector who issues the order authorising the implementation of the programme under the request of the Dean, and nominates its director and defines its classification and sources of financing.

Discussion of the findings in relation with the Latvian programme

The Latvian programme complies fully with the national requirements for teacher training. It was developed and approved according to the No. 22 of the regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers (Cabinet of Ministers, 2018). It last 36 hours, which is the required amount teachers should acquire every 3 years. It directly addresses pupils' upbringing, character education methods and class management. In addition, it includes the topics "elaboration of methodological materials" and teachers' "personality development", which appeared in the previous redaction of this Regulation under the headline "teacher self-experience" (Cabinet of Ministers, 2014, No. 12) and, unfortunately, are not included anymore in the list of topics of PCD programmes in the new edition of the Regulation (Cabinet of Ministers, 2018, No. 18).

The approval of the Latvian programme at the UL complied also with the standard procedure. The development of the programme was initiated by the programme director with the support of the dean of the FEPA. The programme information, including a reformulation and reorganization of the ILOs in the categories of 'knowledge', 'skills' and 'competence', was introduced in the LUIS system. It should be noted that there were some differences between the "Study course description form" and the description file of the Latvian programme: As a PCD programme, the requirements for the acquisition of the programme were the active participation in seminars (discussions, analysis of case situations, work of groups), the implementation of the independent works (presentations, methodological materials), and the design and implementation of the character education project. The assessment of the modules and activities is not foreseen in a 10-point scale.

Once the Latvian programme was verified by the Department of Studies and the responsible of the educational branch, it was approved by the Council of the Faculty (decision No. 30-2/23 of 28.03.2019), and, under request of the Dean (05.04.2019), was approved by the Rector of the UL (Order No. 1-161 of 23.04.2019). It is currently being implemented as a PCD programme by the CAE at the UL. Under completion of the programme, participants receive a Diploma delivered by the UL. It should be noted that the UL is taking measures to reduce fragmentation of the higher education programmes and to develop higher quality study programmes, following a national trend (specific objective 8.2.1 "To reduce fragmentation of study courses and to strengthen sharing of resources" of the priority axis "Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning" of the national Operational Programme "Growth and Employment"), and with support from EU funds (European Commission, 2019, pp. 8–9). In this context, the acceptation and approval of a new teacher training programme counts as an evidence of the quality and necessity of the new Latvian programme.

Conclusions

In 2019, the international teacher training programme "Arete catalyst" was adapted as a Latvian programme by a team of experts of the UL. This study analysed the quality of this adaptation, considering needs and requirements at societal level, the policy makers' level and the institutional level.

The adapted Latvian programme responds widely (but not completely) to Latvian societal needs and the needs of the educational sector regarding character and virtue education, offering an in-service teacher training for character education that improves teachers' understanding of the langue

of values and virtues, enhances their personal flourishing, is based on real situations, enhances their methodological skills in the field and is appropriate to teachers' availability. It also addresses values and virtue education, as foreseen in the governmental guidelines about pupils' upbringing and in the normative documents of the current educational reform.

The Latvian programme complies with the orientations and guidelines of educational policy makers regarding the professional development of teachers, offering a PCD programme fully in line with the Law of Education and the regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers. The programme complies also with the requirements and procedures for programme development and implementation of the UL, which is intended to implement the Latvian programme.

It can be concluded that the adaptation of the programme "Arete catalyst" to the Latvian socio-cultural context was successfully implemented. Further research directions could include piloting and refining the Latvian programme and completing it with methodological guidelines for facilitating the implementation of character education at school.

Acknowledgements

Research founded by the Erasmus+ project "Supporting teachers for developing intra-personal competencies and character education at school – Arete Catalyst" (2017–2019), project number 2017-1-LV01-KA201-035435, by the European Regional Development Fund within the post-doctoral project "Arete school" (2017–2020), project number 1.1.1.2/VIAA/1/16/071, and by the University of Latvia within the research project "Human, technologies and quality of education" (2016–2020), project number ZD2010/AZ22, conducted at the Faculty of Education, Psychology and Art.

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https://doi.org/10.22364/htqe.2020.02

LITERACY OF BIOLOGY TEACHERS ON SUPPORTIVE MEASURES DURING THE BIOLOGY LEARNING PROCESS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

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ABSTRACT

In recent years there has been a lot of discussion about the students' rights to equal educational quality. Several international documents and reports as well as Latvia's Education Development Guidelines 2014–2020 envisage provision of inclusive and equitable quality education, reaching the maximum potential of each student according to his/her abilities, willingness and effort, not circumstances the student (also the teacher and parents) have no influence over. Inclusive education is also one of the six education principles included in the project "Competency Based Curriculum" by the National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia. Although in Latvia, as well as in other countries around the world, inclusive education is talked about a lot, the actual level of inclusion measured by the international research project OECD PISA 2015 is low and students with disabilities are still segregated. Teachers often lack professional knowledge and skills for working with students with learning disabilities; teachers of biology and natural sciences do not have enough specific recommendations and sample materials to provide adequate support measures for students with learning disabilities. The aim of this paper is to study the literacy of biology teachers at mainstream education schools on the support measures required by primary school students with learning disabilities during the biology learning process. The author analyzed legislative documents, statistics and scientific literature; developed a questionnaire and surveyed biology teachers working in mainstream education schools and summarized the results of the study. The empirical part of research determined the level of biology teachers' literacy of supportive measures required by students with learning disabilities. The results suggest that biology teachers are able to choose the support measures required by students with learning disabilities during the biology learning process and they know how to provide these support measures according to their knowledge and experience. However, they are not able to use their knowledge and experience to offer and provide support measures tailored to each individual student.

Keywords: *learning disabilities, support measures, biology teachers, literacy, biology learning process.*

Introduction

In recent years there has been a lot of discussion about the students' rights to equal educational quality, including in the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nations in 2015 (United Nations..., 2017) with Goal 4 asking all countries to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all. Similar principles of equitable education are included in several other international documents and reports, e.g. UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education in 1960 (Convention against Discrimination in Education, 1960); UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, 1989); World Declaration on Education for All in 1990 (World Declaration on Education for All in 1990, 1995); the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education in 1994 (The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education,1994); UNESCO General Conference in 2017 (UNESCO, 2017). Education is an important factor in achieving social inclusion and independence of people, especially people with disabilities, as discussed in the Implementation Guidelines of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for 2014–2020 (Implementation Guidelines of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for 2014–2020, 2013).

The international OECD PISA (Geske et al., 2015) study emphasizes that inclusive and equitable quality education, means the ability to reach the maximum potential of each student according to his/her abilities, willingness and effort, not circumstances the student (also the teacher and parents) have no influence over. The description of curriculum and educational processes in the project "Competency Based Curriculum" (NCE, 2017a) by National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia (NCE) lists inclusive education as one of the six educational principles, defining it as appreciation and recognition of student diversity, meeting the various learning needs in an open study process, using versatile methods and approaches and ensuring a safe and supportive environment with no discrimination.

According to the data available from NCE (Rascevska et al., 2017) about the academic year of 2016/2017, 6172 students with special needs were studying in mainstream education schools, comprising 2.87% of the total number of students. Of these students with special needs, 69.57% had learning disabilities.

The author of this study is an actively teaching biology teacher in two mainstream education schools and has everyday experience with primary school students with learning disabilities. The author believes

that teachers lack professional knowledge and skills for working with students with learning disabilities. Based on personal experience acquired as a biology teacher and the data obtained from the study "A Study on the Cost Model for Support Services for Children with Special Needs in the Context of Inclusive Education" (Rascevska et al., 2017), it can be argued that teachers of biology and natural sciences do not have enough specific recommendations and sample materials to provide adequate support measures for students with learning disabilities. Thus, the **aim of this paper** is to study the literacy of the biology teachers at mainstream education schools on support measures required by primary school students with learning disabilities during the biology learning process. Two research questions were put forward. First, what characterizes the literacy of biology teachers on support measures required by primary school students with learning disabilities during the biology learning process? Second, how do biology teachers rate their literacy on providing the support measures required by primary school students with learning disabilities during the biology learning process?

To achieve this aim legislative documents, statistics and scientific literature were analyzed, a questionnaire was developed and biology teachers working in mainstream education schools were surveyed; results of the study were summarized.

Theoretical background

1. Support measures for students with learning disabilities in mainstream education schools

The term "learning disabilities" is relatively new, although signs of learning disabilities have been described more than a century ago. It was first used by Samuel Kirk (Kirk, 1963) in Chicago Conference of Exploration into Problems of the Perceptually Handicapped Child in 1963. Nowadays there are several definitions of learning disabilities. Dictionary of Speech Therapy terms (Luse et al., 2012) defines learning disabilities as "neurological disorders influencing the ability of the brain to understand, remember or transfer information." A similar definition is provided in Encyclopedia of Learning Disabilities (Turkington and Harris, 2006), Learning Disabilities Association of America (Learning Disabilities..., 2018) and authors Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs and Barnes (Fletcher, Lyon, 2019), who describe learning disabilities as neurobiological disabilities caused by structural or operational differences of the human brain. Learning disabilities can mean a person has difficulties in connection with thinking, memory, perception, attention, speaking, reading, writing, pronunciation and calculation processes, social skills and emotional maturity.

It is important to note that learning disabilities are not synonymous to mental development disorders, autism spectrum disorders, hearing and/or vision impairment and behavioural disorders (Gartland, Strosnider, 2017). The term "learning difficulties" is sometimes used, but it should not be considered synonymous to "learning disabilities", because learning difficulties can have reasons other than neurobiological disorders of the brain (Demidova, 2008; Gartland, Strosnider, 2017). The term "specific learning disorder" is not used in this study as it is more commonly used in medicine, while teachers in their field of work use the term "learning disabilities".

It is crucial to identify that a child has learning disabilities as soon as possible, to provide the necessary support in a timely manner and the child can be successful in school and life. There are lists of warning signs for learning disabilities in various age groups. A summary of possible warning signs for adolescence was made, as the aim of this research is to study the literacy of biology teachers on the support measures required by primary school students with learning disabilities.

Combining the information provided by various authors (Smita, Strika, 1998; Turkington, Harris, 2006; Kemp et al., 2019), teenagers with learning disabilities can have problems/difficulties with: learning new words, terms; using full sentences; understanding the structure of a conversation; retelling; expressing thoughts; memorizing facts and information; remembering routines; comprehension of materials they have read; mathematical calculations; handwriting; drawing or retracing shapes; following instructions; self-esteem; communication with peers; distinguishing between important and trivial things; voice modulation; accuracy and organization; change of activities.

Most of the students with learning disabilities will have problems/difficulties with specific tasks, e.g. one student might have difficulties with calculation and coordination, another one might have difficulties with text comprehension and writing. Taking into consideration the various manifestations of learning disabilities, the diagnostic process is difficult. Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 709 (Regulations on Pedagogical-Medical Commissions, 2012) state that only the National Educational Medical Commission has the right to issue a conclusion about the most appropriate special primary education programme for students with learning disabilities from Year 5 to Year 9. A study by Rascevska, Nimante, Umbrasko, Sumane, Martinsone, Zukovska (Rascevska et al., 2017) concluded that the special educational needs of students in Latvia are still determining and recognized using a medical approach to education.

In order to help students with special needs to overcome the hurdles in learning created by their health problems or developmental disorders,

various additional activities and methods i.e. support measures should be used within the learning process of these students (NCE, 2019). Laws and regulations have set the process of assigning support measures to students in Latvia. If a student is diagnosed with a learning disability, the school has to license a special primary education programmes for students with learning disabilities, however often the disabilities are not diagnosed or the official document does not reach the school administration for some other reason. Regardless of whether a student with learning disabilities acquires primary education following a basic primary education programme or a special primary education programme for students with learning disabilities, it is necessary for the student to provide support measures for the success of the learning process. To accomplish that during the biology learning process, biology teachers have to provide these students with support measures, meaning they have to find additional ways, measures and methods within the biology learning process to compensate for the learning disabilities of their students. All support measures provided to the student have to be included in the Individual Plan for Acquisition of Educational Programme (individual education plan or IEP). IEP is developed in cooperation between the support personnel, the student, his/her parents and teachers (NCE, 2017b). According to the procedure described in the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 335 (Regulations on the Content and Procedure of Centralized Examinations, 2010) and No. 1510 (State Examination Procedure, 2013), students are entitled to support measures during the examinations when finishing Year 9.

Support measures include a set of various activities and methods that can include adjusting the study environment, methods, materials, homework, tests and time planning. When assigning support measures for a student with learning disabilities, several things should be taken into consideration: the opinion of the student (he/she has to understand the meaning of each support measure); support measures have to be based on evaluation of each student; the information about this student that teachers, parents as well as other people who know this student's needs and strengths have; adequacy of the study environment; do specific support measures correspond to the needs of the student (British Columbia..., 2011; Michaele, 2013; NCE, 2019).

Support measures can be divided into several groups based on their type. Most often support measures are classified as: support measures for receiving information; for preparation of answers and answering; working environment; time for completion of tasks and sequence of tasks (NCE, 2019). The author of this paper suggests grouping support measures by their timing (support measures provided throughout the learning process; before the learning process; in the first part, middle or end of the learning process; after the learning process) and the fact whether these support measures

can be used only for the student with learning disabilities or the whole class. Such classification is supported by the fact that teachers of specific subjects are the ones to use support measures during their learning process and the author, being a biology teacher, has concluded from experience that support measures aimed at students with learning disabilities improve the progress of other students as well.

2. Literacy of biology teachers on the support measures required by students with learning disabilities

For students with learning disabilities to be successfully included in mainstream education schools and natural sciences classes, Jefferies (2018) notes that the determining factor for successful inclusion of students with learning disabilities into a mainstream education school is the teacher, his/her attitude, ability to use the correct support measures, understanding of his/her student's weaknesses and strengths and the wish to continue professional development.

Analysing and summarising findings of various authors (Blūma, 2016; Connor, Cavendish, 2018; Education Department of the Ministry of Education and Science, 2018; Praulite, 2008; Rozenfelde, 2016; Rutka, 2012) about the knowledge, skills and attitudes of teachers who are working with students with learning disabilities, it can be concluded that besides knowledge of their subject curriculum and teaching methodology teachers also need:

- willingness to work with students with learning disabilities;
- ability to evaluate the individual development, strengths and weaknesses and learning needs of a student;
- ability to conduct learning process in a way that facilitates the development of all students and their ability to reach their maximum potential;
- readiness to continue professional development in the fields of biology, pedagogy, psychology and legislation, and, also, develop as a personality;
- ability to cooperate and share experiences with colleagues and support personnel;
- knowledge and skills to use support measures for reaching the goals specific to the subject.

In order to determine what elements of literacy are necessary for biology teachers, to provide all the support measures required by primary school students with learning disabilities, the author has developed descriptions of literacy for biology teachers in four levels on the support measures required by students with learning disabilities (Table 1).

Table 1. Levels of Literacy of Biology Teachers on Support Measures Required by Students with Learning Disabilities (author's design, based on Uno, Bybee, 1994; Uno, 1999)

Level	Description
Nominal	Identifies/recognises the terms "learning disabilities" and "support measures". Is able to provide partial descriptions of the terms, can have misconceptions about the meaning of these terms, lacks comprehension.
Functional	Is able to define the terms "learning disabilities" and "support measures", they are part of vocabulary. Knows about signs of learning disabilities and types of support measures. Lacks deeper understanding of the terms, little/no personal experience.
Structural	Is able to use his/her own words to describe and explain the terms "learning disabilities" and "support measures". Knows and recognises signs of learning disabilities, and knows how to select the necessary support measures: makes support measures meaningful based on his/her own knowledge and experience.
Multi-dimensional	Knows the history and essence of learning disabilities and support measures. Is able to study the ways a student's learning disabilities manifest, can collect all the necessary information. Using this information and his/her experience, is able to offer and provide support measures required by the student. Has interdisciplinary knowledge, including knowledge from the fields of medicine and psychology about learning disabilities and support measures. Tendency towards life-long learning: continuous improvement of knowledge and skills on support measures for students with learning disabilities.

The empirical part of research was carried out based on the author's developed levels of literacy of biology teachers on the support measures required by students with learning disabilities.

Methodology

This research was a quantitative non-experimental descriptive study using a survey method: a questionnaire. The study was carried out from September of 2017 to May of 2019 and it can be divided into four stages (Figure 1).

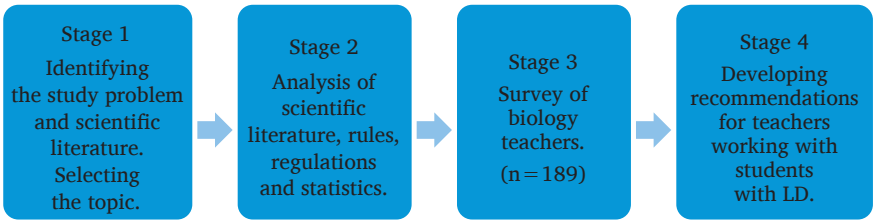

Figure 1. Research Methodology (author's design)

During Stage 3 "Survey of biology teachers" author developed a questionnaire based on information gathered from scientific literature and carried out a survey of biology teachers of mainstream education schools on support measures for students with learning disabilities during the biology learning process (Figure 2).

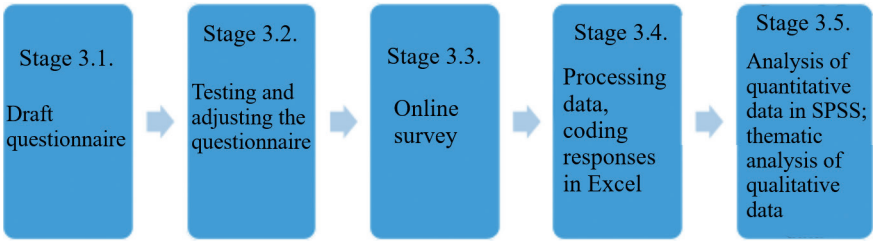

Figure 2. Detailed Description of Stage 3 – Survey (author's design)

Survey consisted of five stages:

1. Developing a draft questionnaire in Google Forms. Survey was aimed at biology teachers from mainstream education schools who were or had been teaching biology for primary school students. The questionnaire consisted of 19 closed questions (five of which are Likert scale questions with four or five answer options) and one open-end question. Questions could be grouped by their type and level of literacy.
2. Testing and adjusting the questionnaire. After the draft questionnaire was created, it was filled in online by two biology teachers with preliminary knowledge of creating surveys using Google Forms. After completing the questionnaire, teachers gave written feedback about improvements to the questionnaire. The author considered the suggestions and made adjustments to the questionnaire.
3. Online survey. Questionnaires were sent from the author's email to the email addresses of selected 617 mainstream education schools (Ministry of Education and Science, 2018), with the request to pass them on to biology teachers. It was possible to fill in the questionnaire online for 8 weeks. 189 biology teachers participated in the survey during this time period.

4. Processing of received responses and coding them in Microsoft Excel. Responses were coded assigning a number to possible responses.
5. Analysis of data using SPSS.
   5.1. Creating a matrix in SPSS "Variable View" (input of questions and possible answer codes); importing coded data from Excel to SPSS "Data View"; analysis of data – for Likert scale questions (data validity, spread of variables, correlations); basic data analysis (binary data etc.) – cross tabulation; mean; standard deviation.
   5.2. Thematic analysis of qualitative data from the survey. Analysis of answers to question 20 (open-end question), using thematic analysis – a method to analyse qualitative data.

Results of the Survey

Respondents of the survey were biology teachers from mainstream educational schools teaching biology to students of Years 7 to 9 (ages 13–16). The survey was completed by 189 respondents, 95.24% ($n = 180$) of which were female and 4.76% ($n = 9$) – male. The largest group of respondents (34.39% or 65 teachers) had been working as biology teachers already for 21–30 years. The second largest group (32.28% or 61 teacher) had been working as biology teachers for more than 30 years. The smallest group (4.76% or 9 out of 189 biology teachers) had been working for 6–10 years. Data received in this survey partially corresponds to data from TALIS 2013 (Geske et al., 2015) where 16% of teachers were working less than 10 years (this research: 14.28%), working 11–20 years – 28% of teachers (this research: 19.05%) and working more than 20 years – 56% of teachers (this research: 66.67%). The author explains these differences by the fact that TALIS research was carried out 6 years ago and the percentage of teachers working more than 20 years has increased over time, because the teaching force in Latvia is ageing.

Analysis of further data showed that:

1. The literacy of biology teachers on support measures required by students with learning disabilities corresponds to the nominal level as:
   - Teachers identify/recognize the term "learning disabilities", because almost 80% of biology teachers admit that they have been or are currently teaching students with learning disabilities. Teachers are mostly informed about students with learning disabilities in their class, especially if these disabilities are officially diagnosed and recognized.
2. The literacy of biology teachers on support measures required by students with learning disabilities corresponds to the functional level as:
   - Teachers know the signs of learning disabilities, noting that the most common difficulties are connected to attention span, reading and

writing. Least common difficulties – coordination and thinking (processing visual information).

3. The literacy of biology teachers on support measures required by students with learning disabilities corresponds to the structural level as:
   - Teachers know and recognize signs of learning disabilities, and based on their knowledge and skills know how to select the necessary support measures: the support measures most often used during learning and tests by biology teachers were additional consultations, additional time and use of prompts/word mats, however there is a partial lack of correspondence between the manifested learning disabilities biology teachers have encountered and the support measures most often provided to students with learning disabilities. This indicates a partial correspondence to the structural level of literacy.
   - There is no correlation with support measures that require more effort, time and other resources from the teacher, are more complicated, require more skills and higher level of competence. Due to this, teachers more often use support measures like additional consultations, which are voluntary, and the student could decide not to attend them; seating the student in the first row and allowing to use prompts/word mats.
   - One fifth of respondents noted that the support measures offered to students are formal and almost a third – that the school creates IEP for students with learning disabilities. However, these plans are formal and are not developed on the basis of experiences, skills and differences in the learning processes of different students, which indicates that there is a lack of deeper understanding.
   - Not all biology teachers are active participants in the development of IEP. In general, approximately a fifth of biology teachers answered that they do not know about it or they think IEP are not being made. Biology teachers cooperate with other teachers to ensure a successful learning process for students with learning disabilities and attend various educational courses to improve their literacy on working with students with learning disabilities.
   - Regardless of the time they have worked as biology teachers, all teachers require additional professional skills and knowledge for teaching biology to students with learning disabilities.
4. The literacy of biology teachers on support measures required by students with learning disabilities does not correspond to the multidimensional level as:
   - The support measures used most often by teachers during learning and in tests are additional consultations, additional time and

use of prompts/word mats, however there is a partial lack of correspondence between the manifested learning disabilities biology teachers have encountered and the support measures most often provided to students with learning disabilities.

- Some teachers admit that they are not able to tailor individual support measures to students with learning disabilities, because they are not knowledgeable enough to make adjustments to the learning process and they expect support personnel to step in. Basically, there is a risk that students with learning disabilities could not get support as soon as they need it.
- In all groups except teachers who had been working for 11–20 years, there were some teachers who do not consider it to be the job of mainstream education teachers to be teaching students with learning disabilities. Part of the teachers with more years of working experience agree that they wait for the specialists to give them instructions about what to do.

Conclusions

Answering the research question: "What characterizes the literacy of biology teachers on support measures required by primary school students with learning disabilities during the biology learning process?", the author concludes that it can be characterized by four levels of literacy: nominal, functional, structural and multidimensional. The highest – multidimensional level of literacy of biology teachers is characterized by the ability of teachers to study ways the student's learning disability is manifested, to gather all the necessary information about it; to use all interdisciplinary skills and knowledge to offer and provide the student with support measures corresponding to the needs of the student; constantly continue learning new information and skills about support measures for students with learning disabilities.

Answering the research question: "How do biology teachers rate their literacy about providing the support measures required by primary school students with learning disabilities during the biology learning process?", using data from the empirical study, the author concludes that the level of literacy of biology teachers on support measures required by students with learning disabilities partially corresponds to structural level of literacy, because, firstly, a teacher with structural level of literacy on required support measures will be able to select support measures and use them according to his/her level knowledge and experience; secondly, the discrepancy between the ways learning disabilities manifest mentioned by biology teachers and the support measures chosen most often indicate

that teachers are not yet able to use their knowledge and skills to offer and provide support measures that are tailored to the requirements of each student, which would be indicative of the highest – multidimensional level of literacy.

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https://doi.org/10.22364/htqe.2020.03

LEARNING NATIONAL IDENTITY OUTSIDE THE NATION-STATE: THE STORY OF LATVIAN PRIMERS (MID-1940S – MID-1970S)

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ABSTRACT

In order to understand how the concept of national identity, currently included in national legislation and curricula, has been formed, our research focuses on the recent history of national identity formation in the absence of the nation-state "frame", i.e. in Latvian diaspora on both sides of the Iron Curtain – in Western exile and in Soviet Latvia. The question of our study is: how was national identity represented and taught to next generations in the national community that had lost the protection of its state? As primers reveal a pattern of national identity practice, eight primers published in Western exile and six primers used in Soviet Latvian schools between the mid-1940s and the mid-1970s were taken as research sources. In primers, national identity is represented through the following components: land and nation state iconography, traditions, common history, national language and literature. The past reverberating with cultural heritage became the cornerstone of learning national identity by the Latvian diaspora. The shared, idealised past contrasted the Soviet present and, thus, turned into an instrument of hidden resistance. The model of national identity presented moral codes too, and, teaching them, national communities did not only fulfill their supporting function, but also took on the functions of "normalization" and control. Furthermore, national identity united generations and people's lives in the present, creating memory-based relationships and memory-based communities.

Keywords: *national identity, nation state, Western exile, Soviet Latvia, primers.*

Introduction

In 2019, the Diaspora Law was adopted in Latvia, the law aiming to strengthen the Latvian identity of the national community abroad (Diasporas likums, 2019, Art. 4). The law provides for state support and guardianship in respect of classical components of national identity, i.e. cultural heritage, history, and language, and obliges governmental institutions to promote the acquisition of Latvian culture, Latvian history, and the official language

of Latvia in the diaspora. Doubtlessly, acquisition means nothing else but education, and, therefore, a key role in the implementation of the "principle of affiliation to the Latvian nation" is given to formal and non-formal education, which is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science (Diasporas likums, 2019, Art. 6). Strengthening of national identity within the Latvian education system is also decreed by the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers of 2016, which proposes promoting student "awareness of national identity and statehood, loyalty to the State of Latvia, the Constitution, and patriotism" (Izglītojamo audzināšanas vadlīnijas…, 2016, Art. 6.9).

Thus, national identity falls under protection, supervision, and control of the state through its education system. In this way, Latvia fits into the classic category of the nation state, because, as Tröhler writes, "the nation state, depending on loyal citizens, is deeply educationalized," (Tröhler, 2020, 10) and it is a noble duty of the modern mass school system in different nation states to create distinguishable citizens of particular nations (Tröhler, 2016, 282). However, in Latvia, the relationship between the state for one part and national and ethnic identities and nationalism for another is not as obvious as it is in the case of "big" and "self-confident" Western countries. As other Baltic nations, Latvians are one of the national communities that established their state only four generations back, lost it three generations back, and regained it one generation back. For 50 years, the Latvian diaspora was separated by the Iron Curtain: some Latvians became war refugees in the West and shaped their lives outside Latvia, but Latvian identity was also endangered in the homeland, which was part of the USSR. The experience of threat to national identity is deeply ingrained in Latvian collective memory (Šūpule, 2012). Since today, in Latvia, 70–80% of decision makers received their education during the Cold War (Visu sasaukumu deputāti, 1990–2018, i.e. after Latvia had lost its statehood, it can be argued that the roots of active conceptualization of national identity in the modern public space may be traced in the complex course of Latvian history. Despite post-modernism and the digital age, the old-fashioned "fixity of identity" (Meynert, 2013, 27) is still topical in Latvia. In the words of Hartog (2011/2017, 119–127) and Carretero (2011, 91–105), Latvians live in a memory-based society, which means that our past controls our present.

In order to understand how the concept of national identity, currently included in national legislation and curricula, has been formed, our research focuses on the recent history of national identity formation in the absence of the nation-state frame. With Tröhler's (2020, 13–14) "national literacy" concept and Silovas's idea of the "learning of nation" (2019, 11) in mind, we put the following research question: how was national identity represented and taught to next generations in the national community that had lost the protection of its state?

We chose Latvian primers published in Western exile and in Soviet Latvia as sources because the primer and the first reader teach not only reading and writing but also purposefully form children's worldview, canon of values and collective memory (Grever, Van der Viles, 2017, 288; Tröhler, 2020, 11). The primer raises members of the national community; it is one of the tools for building national identity (Cohen, 2004, 91). The primer institutionalizes and standardizes national identity, making it tangible through images and texts. It can be said that the primer reveals a pattern of national identity practice. For this study, eight primers published in Western exile and six primers used in Soviet Latvian schools between mid-1940s and mid-1970s were chosen. We analyzed primer texts and images using content analysis and used the hermeneutic approach to interpret the collected material in the socio-political context of the era.

The theoretical framework of our research is based on studies of nationalism, national and ethnic identity (Carretero, 2011; Cohen, 2004; Billig, 1995; Tröhler, 2020; Šūpule, 2012). According to European Union legislation (Consolidated Version…, 2012, Art. 4(2)) and academic research, national identity is linked to the particular cultural context of a single country (Tröhler, 2016), state and nation. In turn, ethnic identity is formed in communities that do not have their own nation state, do not live in their own nation state, or are not rooted in a specific territory. In the case of Latvians, national and ethnic identities are closely intertwined, as revealed further in this study. We define national identity as a subjective sense of belonging and solidarity with a territorial community, the community which has collective memory and shares history, culture and language, all that giving a sense of security, continuity, and uniqueness (Calhoun, 2016, 12, 14; Cohen, 2004, 88, 91) – "who 'we' are and who others are not" (Tröhler, 2020, 14). We will analyze the representation of national identity through its classical components: (1) land and nation state iconography; (2) ethnic and national traditions; (3) common past, present, and future; and (4) national language and literature (after Cohen, 2004). Although Cohen also emphasizes religious affiliation as an important marker of ethnic identity, we disregarded this criterion, because for Latvians, who are predominantly Lutheran or Catholic, religion is not an important factor for inclusion or exclusion in the national community.

Historical background. The Latvian community in the West and in Soviet Latvia

Establishment and liquidation of the Latvian state. In the mid-19th century, Latvia – then a province of the Russian Empire – experienced a rise of nationalist sentiment typical of Europe at that time, but the idea

of Latvia as a nation state was realized after the First World War. Latvia was founded as a liberal parliamentary democracy after the collapse of the Russian empire in 1918, however nation building began only after battles against foreign forces and local Bolsheviks had been won. The establishment of the nation-state was welcomed by all segments of society, as it meant the liberation from Russian rule and the power of German landlords and as such undoubtedly raised the self-esteem of Latvians. Traditional symbols of ethnic identity such as festivals, songs, and folk costumes were complemented with national symbols – flag, hymn, coat of arms, national heroes and memorial sites. In Tröhler's terms, the creation of the state served to "organize," "normalize" and "politicize" the ethnic community (Tröhler, 2020, 8, 10–11).

The existence of the Latvian state came to an end in 1940, with its occupation and inclusion into the Soviet Union as one of the 15 Soviet Republics. Concurrently, with arrests and mass deportations,[1] the communists began intensive ideological inculcation of their newly acquired citizens. Media broadcasted happy news of the Latvian nation having been included in the teaming mass of Soviet people. Newspapers proclaimed: "No longer does [Latvian] chauvinism separate us from our vast Fatherland – the brotherly nations of the USSR" (D. S., 1940, 36–37). Symbols of Latvian national statehood became banned.

The Soviet occupation was followed by the Nazi occupation in 1941, and the latter's plans also did not include the restoration of the independent Latvia. In 1944, it became clear that the Soviets would return, and, fearing Stalin's repressions, about 125,000 Latvians fled to the West (Zalkans, 2014, 50). A significant group among them were Latvian intellectuals: writers, artists, academics (Plakans, 2011, 382). It is estimated that at the end of the Second World War, about 50% of Latvian intelligentsia became refugees (Zake, 2010, 33) and later formed the nucleus of Latvian communities abroad. This is an important fact because it is intelligentsia that play a major role in national movements, they are those agents who are capable of championing the idea of national unity, who elevate it to the level of ideology and use it against the dominance of "others" (Jaffrelot, 2003, 11, 23, 33, 43–44).

Thus, in 1944/1945, Soviet dictatorship replaced the Nazi occupation and continued the Sovietization of Latvia, the process having launched in 1940/1941 and manifested in political and social repression and censorship

[1] On 14 June 1941, 15,424 people (among them approximately 100 newborns and more than 3000 children under 16) were deported to Siberia and Kazakhstan from Latvia. In total, in 1941, approximately 100,000 people were deported from the Baltic States (Bleiere, Butulis, 2005, 227; Levin, 1995, 15).

of Latvian cultural heritage and history as well as Russification. All Latvian educational institutions were incorporated into the unified USSR education system.

Latvian education in Western exile. In the West, Latvian refugees were settled in Displaced Persons (DP) camps in American, British, and French zones of post-war Germany, that were united as West Germany in 1949. The refugees were financially provided, and their lives were regulated by international bodies operating under the auspices of the United Nations. With the support of these institutions and the enthusiasm of Latvian refugees themselves, in a short time in DP camps 242 educational institutions working in the Latvian language were created. In 1946/47, in the newly founded orphanages, kindergartens, primary schools, vocational schools and gymnasiums studied 15,520 Latvian children and youth (Staris, 2004, 11). Among the refugees there were about 3,000 teachers (Staris, 2004, 10), who gladly continued to work in their profession. The teachers were joined by other members of the intelligentsia, who, in the monotonous daily life of the DP camps, were happy to devote themselves to teaching children. Thus, already in the first years of exile, a unique situation arose, that is, outstanding scientists and university professors worked in Latvian schools. For example, in the DP camp *Insula,* with about 600 Latvian refugees living in military barracks in Bavaria, secondary school pupils learned Latin, English, German, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, art, music and theatre (Zake, 2010, 32).

In late 1940s and 1950s, several Western countries agreed to receive war refugees and the emigration of Latvians from Germany to more than 20 different countries of the world began. The most significant Latvian exile communities were formed in the USA, Canada, West Germany, England, Australia and Sweden (Staris, 2004, 18). As Latvian refugees were no longer concentrated in one place, Latvian schools ceased to operate.[2] In accordance with local laws, Latvian children began to study in schools of their host country but continued to learn Latvian history, the Latvian language, Latvian geography, religious studies, singing, dancing and

[2] The exception was the full-time Latvian gymnasium (Minsteres latviešu ģimnāzija [MLĢ] – Lettisches Gymnasium Münster), opened in West Germany in 1945. In 1957, it moved from a DP camp to Münster, where it operated until 1998. MLĢ was funded by the West German government with the participation of Latvian donors. Latvian students from all over the world came to this school; it had 53 graduating classes with 600 graduates from almost every continent. The diploma from MLĢ was internationally recognised (Minsteres latviešu ģimnāzija, 1999). Several modern-day Latvian politicians graduated from this school. The Latvian language was recognised as a full-fledged subject in 1975 in secondary schools in several Australian states, and Western Michigan University offered an academic degree in Latvian starting in 1966.

games on Saturdays or Sundays (Sandersa, 1977, 47). Thus, Latvian heritage language schools in the West came to be known as "Saturday" or "Sunday" schools. Such institutions operated in all Latvian communities, with the largest and most numerous schools located in the United States, Australia, Canada, England, and West Germany (Dunsdorfs, 1977, 122). Latvian education was usually financed by local Latvian communities, congregations, and occasionally by host country municipalities.

National identity issues. Although the Latvian diaspora was separated by thousands of kilometers, different political and cultural contexts, and difficulties in communicating and meeting, there were several similarities in the situation of Latvian children on both sides of the Iron Curtain: (1) the national community had lost its national statehood and, consequently, the support and protection of state institutions; (2) the identity of the national community was challenged by the proximity of larger national communities and the associated threat of assimilation; and (3) as children so their parents and teachers had to learn to integrate into an absolutely new world, in which everyday practices of national communities were restricted or banned.

In the West, Latvian identity was questioned and redefined by inevitable adaptation, the process "turning [immigrants] into objects of integration and professional intervention" (Padovan-Ӧzdemir, Ydesen, 2016, 427). Although the host countries encouraged integration, Latvian refugees did not identify themselves with the traditional image of low-skilled, culturally different and craving for assimilation immigrants, the typical portrayal Western academic research focuses on and reproduces (e.g., Ogbu, Simons, 1998).

Similarly children who remained in Latvia no longer grew up in their traditional national community but were forcedly included into the Soviet nation, where the strict national hierarchy conferred elite positions to Russians. Russian was declared the "common language of co-operation" and the Program of the Communist Party referred to the "wiping out [of] national differences, chiefly the linguistic ones" (XXII sjezd..., 1962, 313). Latvia was flooded by Russian-speaking immigrants from all over the Soviet Union, that was clearly reflected in the dramatic decline in the number of Latvian schools. So, in 1945, Latvian was the language of instruction for 78–79% of pupils, but by 1963, the number dropped to 55% (Beleire, Butulis, 2005, 358). This led to the tension between Latvian national consciousness for one part and the "supranational," "multi-faceted," "state-wide" Soviet identity with the associated threat of assimilation into the Soviet Russian nationhood for another, and resulted in many complex and contradictory outcomes (Silova, 2019, 5; Šūpule, 2012; Wojnowski, 2015, 3).

In the post-war situation, Latvian children and young people could be described as forced refugees: they "had been uprooted from all they

knew and been displaced in history" (Grosvenor, Roberts, 2018, 334) even though they continued to live in their homeland. In reference to the 'banal nationalism' concept (Billig, 1995, 38), many reminders or "flaggings" of Latvian national identity, routine symbols and habits were banned or restricted both in the West and in the USSR. For example, decorating public spaces with national flags, street names, postage stamps, and peoples' given names were brought into conformity with a foreign language of the "other" (Antonsich, Skey, 2016, 7, 12, 14). Deprived of banal nationalism, which may also be perceived as a top-down framing of the nation, the Latvian nationhood was narrowed to the boundaries of family and informal activities. Outside pressure from large nations forces smaller national communities to consciously or unconsciously cling togehter and actualize their identity while cherishing the hope for a better collective future (Cohen, 2004, 95, 96; Maynert, 2013, 138).

Context for creation of Latvian primers. Authors

The "re-planting" of the national diaspora into a completely new world necessitated the creation of new school textbooks, including primers. The creation of afterwar primers raised an important question at both formal and informal levels, namely, what values had to be passed on to future generations, the generations to grow up in a society completely unknown to their ancestors? In a situation when the national statehood was lost, national or ethnic identity became the central organizing concept; thus, in Western exile and under the censorship in Soviet Latvia, the formation or learning of national identity through primers became an important issue.

Initially, Western DP camp schools used, rewrote and reprinted textbooks brought from Latvia. The situation improved when Latvians created their own publishing houses in Chicago, Nuremberg, Ohio, Stockholm, Munich, and other cities. For example, in 1946 in Germany, there was reprinted a Latvian primer of 1924 written by writers and teachers Jānis Ezeriņš (1891–1924) and Jānis Grīns (1890–1966); the same book was also reprinted later, in 1953, and in 1958, in Stockholm, where Grīns himself lived in exile. Eduards Zicāns (1884–1946), a teacher, theologian and writer, wrote a new primer in the mid-1940s, which was first published in Germany and reprinted again in the USA in 1953 and 1957. Latvian primers were also published in Canada and Australia. The authors of these textbooks represented the cultural memory of Latvians as a national community, which, according to Erll, includes both the individual and the collective side as well as remembering and, most importantly, forgetting (Erll, 2011).

In the afterwar Soviet Latvia, all textbook publishing was under the state control and subject to strict Soviet censorship. The use of books published

in the independent Republic of Latvia was forbidden; moreover, the books themselves had to be destroyed. In 1944, censors reported to Moscow that 2,500 books had been removed from twelve Riga school libraries (Strods, 2010, 143, 145–146, 156, 168, 181). Instead, Latvian schools used versions of Russian textbooks translated in Latvian. Further, for creating new primers there were invited Latvian scholars who had proved their loyalty to Soviet authorities. Thus, the first Soviet Latvian primers and readers were authored by the philologists and teachers Kārlis Krauliņš (1904–1981) and Zenta Lubāniete (1907–1978). Although they created their textbooks under Stalin's dictatorship and strict censorship, both Krauliņš and Lubāniete nevertheless belonged to the Latvian national community. Similarly to the authors of exile textbooks, they received their education in the independent Latvia of the 1920s, so they were well acquainted with Latvian national and ethnic background.

Representation of national identity in primers

Land and state. The state was abolished, but the land of Latvia remained where it had been, and it was depicted as a wonderful place in primers published on both sides of the Iron Curtain. Primers made the "Homeland's symbolic power" (Cohen, 2004, 97) tangible. In the West, an ideal, frozen-in-time image of the homeland was intensified by the fact that Latvia was "locked down" – the borders of the USSR were closed.

Both exile and Soviet primers presented plenty of iconic images of Latvia: the capital of Riga with its panorama, lush gardens and wide streets, typical Latvian trees – oaks, ashes and lindens, the largest rivers Daugava and Gauja, idyllic Latvian rural landscapes (Krauliņš, 1946, 30; Roga, Cīrulis, 1947; Zicāns, 1948, 97; Lubāniete, Bērzāja, 1955, 110).

There were, of course, differences among exile and Soviet primers, the dissimilarity dictated by the political context. In Soviet primers, Latvia was always called the Latvian SSR, the abbreviation for a Soviet Socialist Republic, thus emphasizing Latvia's membership in the Soviet Union. In addition to Riga, Moscow as the capital of the "big homeland" or the USSR occupied an important place in the Soviet primers; there was no shortage of symbols of Soviet life in Riga such as the Pioneer Palace, red flags, Lenin Street. In turn, in the exile primers, the image of Latvia was frozen in the past and Latvia's status as a part of the Soviet Union was never mentioned.

The symbols of Latvian statehood were completely excluded from Soviet primers; they were replaced with Soviet symbolism, myths, and rituals. The Latvian flag, coat of arms, anthem, and portraits of state leaders were banned, as were press publications, books, films, songs, and other elements

of Latvian cultural heritage; all of them were deemed threatening to Soviet rule. The prohibition of national symbols and cultural values was taken hard by the majority of Latvians as it clearly demonstrated the loss of statehood. Overt opposition to the Soviet regime, most often demonstrated by pupils, took form of hanging the Latvian flag on towers and distributing anti-Soviet leaflets (Kreegipuu, Lauk, 2007; Plakans, 2011, 362–363). Any display of symbols of the Latvian state resulted in severe punishments: during the Stalin era, many teachers and students were arrested by the KGB[3] and sent to concentration camps deep in Russia for dozens of years; in later years, many students were expelled from educational institutions (Rimšāns, 2007; Vilciņš, 1997).

Whereas symbols of the nation state became a means of resistance to the Soviet dictatorship, in the West their inclusion in Latvian primers was only expected. The state of Latvia was referred to in the present: "Latvian soldiers defend their country and the honour of the Latvian flag" (Zicāns, 1948, 97). For 50 years, Latvian children in exile studied the iconography of a non-existent nation state, with its symbols becoming an indispensable part of Latvian ethnic identity.

National/ethnic traditions. Visually, belonging to Latvian national community was demonstrated through the national costume. In the 20th century, the use of Latvian folk costumes was widespread: they were worn at festivals and sometimes at school graduations, choirs and dance groups sang in folk costumes, and people attended concerts and celebrated family events, even weddings, wearing them. Therefore, in both exile and Soviet primers, people dressed in folk costumes were not an uncommon occurrence; moreover, they were distinctly positive characters who carried a clear moral message, that is, being Latvian meant impeccable behavior.

In the exile primers, virtually all people were dressed in folk costumes. Iconic images of young people in national dress are found on the covers of primers and next to the letters to be learned. In the Soviet primers, folk costumes were worn by family members, but mainly at public events – people in folk costumes attended Soviet holiday mass gatherings such as, for example, the May Day parade. Inclusion of the national costume in Soviet traditions sent the message that Latvians had been included in the new Soviet way of life.

However, the "life" of the Latvian national costume in the public space through school was an important manifestation of national identity, unattended and underestimated as such by Soviet censors. In the eyes

[3] KGB (*Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti* in Russian) – The Committee for State Security of the Soviet Union.

of the Soviet elite, the Latvian national costume was only a beautiful indigenous ornament; its task was "to serve cosmetically to beautify aspects of power" (Scott, 1990, 52). Latvians, on the other hand, had grown up with the history of this attire, the lore passed down from generation to generation: Latvian folk dress was a proof of belonging to the lowest social strata – Latvians – who had been mostly peasants. Latvian folk costumes had never been worn by "masters", and the latter had never been in short supply in Latvia. Thus, Latvian national dress became a code of affiliation, a symbol of solidarity of the "inner circle" that "strangers" saw but did not understand.

Another signifier of cultural heritage was festival rituals and associated symbols. Like other Europeans, Latvians celebrated Christmas and Easter, but equally important was the Midsummer Festival on 23–24 June, the celebration of the longest day and shortest night. In the independent Latvia, Midsummer had the status of a national holiday.

The exile primers had illustrations of idyllic Midsummer celebrations on a Latvian farmstead, where people, adorned with wreaths and flowers, gathered in folk costumes by a massive oak tree (Zicāns, 1948, 95). Midsummer was more problematic in Soviet Latvia, where Soviet censors periodically allowed or forbade its celebration. Therefore, in the Soviet primers Midsummer was never named. However, the 1949 primer depicts girls in folk costumes in a meadow of flowers, with oak wreaths in their hands (Lubāniete, 1949, 54). This image appears to be politically innocent, but its connection with the canon of Latvian culture is clear – in Latvian folklore the oak is a symbol of strength, and only once a year, on Midsummer, are wreaths woven from its branches. This image opens the door to interpretation, i.e. in the classroom the teacher could discuss it as a beautiful pastoral landscape or dare to use it to teach national traditions.

Representation of the past, present and future. The time in which the national community "lives" in the primers is telling, and that is where the most significant differences among exile and Soviet books can be found.

Characters in the exile primers are dressed in peasant costumes of old times. They live in the patriarchal environment of a typical Latvian homestead, labor on performing their daily chores, namely, herding animals, grinding grain, and nurse babies in old-fashioned cradles. The present and life in their adopted countries do not exist; the only goal is to return to Latvia: "Latvians love their farms. This is their Homeland, which they do not willingly separate with. Those who have gone abroad want to return to their homeland" (Zicāns, 1948, 97). Only in the few primers published in the 1960s does the tone change, and that happens for the next generation of Latvians born in exile, with refugees having adapted to their new homeland and with the hope of returning to Latvia having disappeared.

Soviet authorities put a great deal of effort into rewriting histories of occupied nations, including those of the Baltic states. Ideologically "correct" official versions of the past allowed neither deviation nor varying interpretations; all possible alternative information sources were blocked (Kreegipuu, Lauk, 2007, 43, 48). The first post-war Soviet primers were distinctly focused on innovations that were introduced in Latvia after its inclusion in the USSR. All Soviet primers contained illustrations, stories, and poems about collective farms and Soviet holidays, little Octobrists and young Pioneers, the Soviet Army and military equipment, Lenin and Stalin, and the friendship between the peoples of the USSR. These phenomena were intensely and aggressively inculcated in Latvian milieu by using both Latvian personal names and folklore. For example, Shura and Sasha (typical Russian first names) in Russian folk costumes are visiting Aina (typical Latvian first name) dressed in a Latvian folk costume (Lubāniete, 1949, 81), or Balvis, who is Latvian, is portrayed as a Young Pioneer (Lubāniete, Bērzāja, 1955, 76). All Soviet innovations were presented in a very positive light: for example, "nice, new tanks" (Lubāniete, 1949, 54). Latvians are pointedly depicted as part of the great Soviet nation, with their common path leading to a happy future. Latvia's recent past is completely excluded from the primer, the sensitive issues of the former existence of the independent Latvian state and its cultural heritage are avoided.

National language and literature. Even when the mother tongue is not used in everyday life, it always remains an important symbol of national culture and forms a "common milieu" (Calhoun, 2016, 13; Cohen, 2004, 99). Although Latvians in exile had no rational or "instrumental reasons" in Laitin's words (Laitin, 2007, 59) to learn their mother tongue, some members of the second generation born in exile were able to communicate in Latvian, a rarity among migrants. In addition to family, the network of Latvian schools played an important role in native language proficiency. Even in Soviet Latvia, where the public space was increasingly being taken over by the Russian language, education, from pre-school to university, could still be obtained in Latvian.

In all primers, learning of the mother tongue began with extremely rich Latvian folklore: in addition to about three million folk songs, there is a wide range of fairy tales, legends, riddles, and anecdotes. Latvian folklore encodes the entire daily life of the nation, its most important values and adages. The moral model created by folklore is timeless and "all-rule-safe", so Latvian folklore, and especially folk songs, has presented rewarding material for primers in all times.

All exile primers contain a wide range of folk songs, legends, fairy tales, proverbs, and riddles. For example, in the primers published in 1947 and 1963, next to each letter there was a corresponding folk song (Roga, Cīrulis,

1947; Rietuma, 1963). The Soviet primers printed in 1946 and 1949 also contain folk songs, folk riddles, and fairy tales. Folklore can not be found in the primers of the 1960s, because the communist struggle against "Latvian nationalists" had begun (see Prigge, 2015), but in the 1970s, folklore returned. Thus, in 1976, almost every page once again contains a Latvian folk song or a riddle (Ņesterovs, Osmanis, 1976).

In the Soviet primers, Latvian folklore as well as national costumes underwent rather curious adaptation to Soviet propaganda. In the 1955 edition, in addition to Latvian folk songs, there are "Soviet folk songs" that mimic the rhythm and style of Latvian ones but talk about the specifics of Soviet life. For example, "Strangers wonder, is this Riga or Jelgava? Neither Riga, nor Jelgava, but a kolkhoz[4] is built" (Lubāniete, Bērzāja, 1955, 79). Sometimes folk songs were linked to symbols of the Soviet state; for example, next to a folk song about the "beautiful fatherland", a picture of the map and flag of Soviet Latvia could be found (Ņesterovs, Osmanis, 1976, 91).

Fictional literature also became a tool for acquiring national identity: plot lines modelled "the situation of multiple biographies in national narratives. ... They cultivated a way of imaging that in turn supported the integration of self and nation. ... It was the way of constituting the nation through shared imagination" (Calhoun, 2016, 13–14). Next to folklore, Latvian primers placed short fragments of fiction, but the question of authors was obviously a sensitive one. In the exile primers, they primarily looked into the past and chose Latvian literary classics. Later those were gradually supplemented by works from the vast range of exilic literature and by only one female writer living in Soviet Latvia. Literature of other nations was not cited at all.

On the other side of the Curtain, in Soviet Latvia, the recent past was forbidden to mention, thus, in the 1946 primer the authors of texts and poems were not identified, that can be explained by the uncertainty about which authors might be allowed and which might be banned by Soviet censors. Some Latvian authors known to be Soviet propagandists are identified in the 1949 primer, but in the 1950s, excerpts by Latvian Soviet writers are supplemented with translations of Russian texts. Exile literature created in the West was, of course, not used, as its very existence was concealed throughout the Soviet era and its illegal reading threatened with repressions from the KGB.

[4] Kolkhoz (*kollektivnoye khozaystvo* in Russian) – collective farm in the Soviet Union. After the Second World War, kolkhozes were compulsory introduced in Latvia.

Conclusions

The loss of the national statehood, the massive presence of "others," the threat of leveling with the majority or assimilation, and, importantly, restrictions on the freedom of choice stimulated the cohesion of Latvian community on both sides of the Iron Curtain. Such familiar and understandable components of national identity as land iconography, traditions, common history, national language and literature became the cornerstone of self-organization. The symbols of the nation state were included in community traditions, taking an equal place next to other representations of Latvian identity. Without the actual state, its symbols became part of collective culture and were used in the same way as other components of ethnic identity, the components redefined and re-activated in the new post-war world.

In Western exile, national identity gave a sense of security in a foreign environment and served as an expression of attitude towards the aggression of the Soviet Union against the Baltic states. In turn, the preservation and cultivation of national identity in Soviet Latvia became a means of hidden resistance to Soviet dictatorship and Russification. Education, through which national identity was shaped, stereotyped, and taught to future generations, played an important role in the diaspora's self-preservation. As Franzenburg, Iliško, and Verkest describe the Latvian experience, "By focusing on their [Latvian] mother tongue and motherland, illustrated by songs, symbols, sermons and narratives, they gained the power to cope with experiences of minority-existence ..." (Franzenburg, Iliško, Verkest, 2018, 118).

The past reverberating with cultural heritage became a solid foundation for learning national identity. The Latvian primers homogenized cultural heritage, and its core was the same both in exile and in Soviet Latvia. The symbolic power of the homeland was converted into the power of the past. The common idealized past was contrasted with the present and the future into the Soviet Union. However, the history of Latvians in the primers is not represented as a story of victims, which is typical in cases of "resistant identity" (Carretero, Perez-Manjarrez, 2014, 73), it is more of nostalgia for an ideal land and a society that "lives" forever. The past linked the present and the future (Kattago, 2009, 3); the past being all-inclusive, it united generations and people's lives in the present, creating memory-based relationships and memory-based communities. The common past became a "safe haven" where the "need of belonging" was a response to threats from "others" and compensation for humiliation (Tamm, 2016, 136; Kestere, Ozola, 2019). "Roots fixed in the past" and grand narratives of national history serve ideological purposes, that is, by providing people

with a common past, a common identity is developed and patriotism is strengthened (Jaffrelot, 2003, 10; Kreegipuu, Lauk, 2007, 42; Van Alphen, Carretero, 2015).

The representation of national identity in primers imparted not only ideological but also moral teaching ("education as a social practice is a highly moral issue" (Tröhler, 2020, 6)), i.e. belonging to Latvian national community meant complying with high moral standards and being accountable to the community. Through the primers, respect for one's land, language and history, its beautiful visual image, and diligence were taught. The primers represented the ideal model of behavior. The image of a beautifully dressed, clean and tidy Latvian maid was a means of distancing from the images of both Western and Soviet migrants, clearly demonstrating what we, Latvians, should be. Thus, the national community did not only support but also "normalize" and control, in this way taking over the functions of the nation state.

The story of primers also helps to reveal the context of the representation and learning of national identity. In Western exile, the activities of the Latvian community were not restricted but supported by their host country; in the conditions of the Cold War, the Baltic "card" could always be played by criticizing the policies of the Soviet Union. In Soviet Latvia, national identity representation, if it did not include the symbols of Latvian statehood, was also allowed and even supported as it formed a magnificent facade for the Soviet dictatorship. Such understandable and familiar ethnic components as folk costumes and folk songs were transferred to Soviet political reality with the hope to make it more palatable and acceptable (See Calhoun, 2016, 27). However, cultural heritage, unattended and underestimated by official authorities, left the niche for hidden resistance and enabled Latvians to maintain and preserve their national identity.

It is almost paradoxical to conclude that Latvian national identity was successfully cultivated under the auspices of "great" nations and states, as it was more or less openly in opposition "to the officially sanctioned version of the nation" (Silova, 2019, 11). In the late 1980s, the components of Latvian national identity were redefined again and united exiled and Soviet Latvians, becoming symbols of the movement for liberation from the Soviet Union. Since 1991, with the restoration of the Latvian state, the Latvian education system again has been cultivating national identity and its long experience story, and 'banal nationalism' again has taken its place. However, the collective memory still retains a sense of danger (Šūpule, 2012, 14), and the old-fashioned national identity is brought up to date again and again, finding itself in the sphere of concern, support, and protection of the nation state.

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https://doi.org/10.22364/htqe.2020.04

THE METHODS ND MATERIALS FOR PROMOTING READING LITERACY SKILLS FOR 6 TO 7 YEAR OLD CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

This article summarizes the methods and materials for promoting literacy skills for 6 to 7 year old children. It is essential to promote reading literacy as the ability to read is one of the basic needs in modern society. It has been proved that the ability to read is correlated with one's cognitive development, in particular with the ability to distinguish phonemes. These methods and materials are aimed at the improvement of the phonological awareness and they seek to raise a child's interest to read.

A total of 33 children, 12 parents, 5 teachers and 4 speech and language therapists participated in this study. The research included 26 training lessons. The purpose of this research was to evaluate the developed material as a reading literacy promotion tool for 6 to 7 year old children. The following research methods were used: the analysis of the scientific literature and the evaluation of the children's reading performance. During the research the following observation was made: the most significant improvement in the reading performance was demonstrated by the first grade children as compared to kindergarten children with a linear improvement results. When interpreting the results, the following aspects should be taken into consideration: a child's overall cognitive development, the school's curriculum and the child's environment.

Keywords: *reading literacy for 6 to 7 year old children, phonological awareness, reading literacy improvement, methods and materials for reading literacy promotion.*

Introduction

As long as we can date human history, every human being was eager to share his experiences with his fellows as well as to pass the acquired knowledge to the next generation. The language competency made this possible although the human race has never stopped looking for the ways to improve it. It is not surprising that humans created written form of language which in itself can be considered as one of the most important human

inventions. The language takes the form of reading and writing (Lūse, Miltiņa & Tūbele, 2012). At the very beginning of writing only the author could read his own writing (Šēnveilers & Ptoks 2001) because there existed no system for symbols and its use. During the technological age the literacy skills are becoming even more important (Riley, 2001). The literacy skills are now one of the basic human needs (Moterri & Frandell, 2013), even more so – literacy is the very basic skill that is an obligatory prerequisite for inclusion into the modern society (Carreiras, Armstrong & Danubeita, 2018). Literacy is the most important part of the formal education (Chou, Cheng & Cheng, 2016), and not only the ability to read and write by itself, but more so the skill to select useful, necessary and true information for a particular purpose (Anspoka & Tūbele, 2015). A person's literacy skills serve as a clear indicator of his quality of life.

The development of language comprises of several essential stages. We can assume that the foundations of literacy are laid at the age of seven month when a child starts to distinguish the phonemes of his or her native language. As opposed to a spoken language that a child can master simply by listening to speakers around him, literacy should be thought (Woolfolk, 2016) and it requires certain effort and abilities. It is considered that at the age of four a child becomes aware of the different symbols including letters. At this age he or she can be thought to recognize the letters as part of the language. One of the questions that teachers and parents are preoccupied with is how a child can acquire literacy skills as fast and simple as possible (Ptičkina, 1997). This question will be discussed in this article where different materials i.e. digital and paper are combined with scientifically proved methods.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

In several countries including Latvia a child starts his formal education at the age of five. Nevertheless the main activity even at this age is the play as such that promotes maturity of social, cognitive and emotional areas (Woolfolk, 2016) and the play with loud talk helps the child to develop his language skills. At the age of six children begin to read and write as part of the play.

Usually one year after the formal education has begun, i.e., at the age of six, the possible learning difficulties or disorders in a child can be noticed. One of the commonly distributed disorder that is the basis for different learning difficulties as well as the difficulties in reading and writing, is the underdevelopment of the phonological processes (Tūbele, 2019). All the errors of a child's spoken language will be present in his reading and writing activity.

Summarizing several authors (Carreras, Armstrong & Danubeita 2018; Kauliņa & Tūbele, 2012; Lūse, Miltiņa & Tūbele, 2012; Schleicher, 2019; Sternberg & Sternberg, 2016; Tūbele, 2008; Tūbele & Lūse, 2012; Woolfolk, 2016; Zmitričenoka, 2007) the reading skills can be defined as a child's ability to decode written symbols into words of language, understanding of these symbols, the reaction of speech to written text, the receptive communication, the tool of critical thinking, the decision making and lastly the acquisition of knowledge. The reading skills are closely related to a child's cognitive development.

It is important to emphasize that reading literacy is the skill that can be improved throughout one's life by improving the use and comprehension of a language (Tūbele, 2008), and by increasing the vocabulary size. The following scientists have found that the reading literacy score at the first grade will determine reading literacy score in later grades (Gillion, 2017; Mullis, et al., 2017; Woolfolk, 2016). It is true that the basic skills for reading literacy should be built during the preschool years, and these skills include the knowledge about language, and techniques for text comprehension.

Different authors (Anspoka & Tūbele, 2015; Ehri, 1992, as it is quoted Harley, 2001; Karule, 1997; Montesori, as it is quoted Ward, 2017; Ptičkina, 1997; Tūbele, 2008) split the process of learning to read into different stages. This overview can be seen in table 1 (see Table 1).

Table 1. Reading literacy development stages according to different authors

S. Tubele (Tubele, 2008)	**Z. Anspoka, A. Karule (Anspoka & Tūbele, 2015; Karule, 1997)**	**A. Ptickina (Ptičkina, 1997)**	**L. C. Ehri (Harley, 2001, 223)**	**M. Montessori (Ward, 2017)**
Analytical stage – basic reading skills, i.e., alphabet, letter – phoneme pair, phonological awareness.	Pre-alphabet stage – phonematic notions, word division into syllables and phonemes. Development of listening skills.	First step – precise phoneme pronunciation, alphabet, letter – phoneme pair.	Pre-alphabet phase – very little knowledge of letter – sound correspondence; reading by rote.	First step – introduction into the world of language – stories, games with sounds and phonemes, small books.
Analytic synthesis stage – reading from syllables to words.	Alphabet stage – understanding of letter – phoneme pair, training of basic mechanisms for reading.	Second step – syllable reading from simplest to hardest.	Partial alphabet phase – partial knowledge of spelling – pronunciation correspondence, but unable to segment all sounds in a word's pronunciation.	Second step – word phoneme analysis with sound reinforcement method.

S. Tubele (Tubele, 2008)	**Z. Anspoka, A. Karule (Anspoka & Tūbele, 2015; Karule, 1997)**	**A. Ptickina (Ptičkina, 1997)**	**L. C. Ehri (Harley, 2001, 223)**	**M. Montessori (Ward, 2017)**
Synthesis stage – reading words to word pairs. Contextual understanding.	Post-alphabet stage – training for independent work with text, i.e., training of word meanings, speed reading and awareness.	Third step – training of word reading skills – synthesis of syllables into words.	Alphabet phase – complete connection between letters and sounds.	Third step – synthesis of phonemes into words with the decoding method.
		Fourth step – development of reading literacy using different types of literature.	Consolidated phase – reading like an adult; can operate with multi-letter units, e.g. syllables, rimes, morphemes.	Fourth step – gradual awareness of reading literacy, contextual understanding.

Although the number of steps and the expected skills differ for each author, they all agree that these steps are successive and cannot be omitted.

The authors of this research highlight three training areas of reading literacy development:

- Training for basic reading skills (phonological awareness, letters, letter – phoneme correspondence, analysis of words and syllables, synthesis of syllables and phonemes into words).
- Training for reading accuracy, precision and speed.
- Training for reading awareness and text comprehension.

The training material for teaching to read should be designed so that all three stages would occur simultaneously.

Several authors (Goswami & Bryant 2016; Irbe & Lindenberga, 2015; Karule, 1997; Ptičkina, 1997; Tūbele, 2019; Wagner,et al. 2019) state that training for gaining basic reading skills should include the following steps:

1) Analysis:
   - simple compound words division into constructing words;
   - words division into syllables;
   - rhyming words;
   - word division into rimes, onsets, first, last phonemes, etc;
2) Letters vs phonemes:
   - teaching of letters;
   - teaching letter – phoneme correspondence;
3) Synthesis:
   - compound words construction;
   - words construction from syllables;
   - words construction from phonemes;

4) Reading:
   - words construction from phonemes and association with letters;
   - reading of mono-syllable words consisting of two letters, reading of mono-syllables;
   - reading of mono-syllables with different levels of difficulty;
   - reading of two and later three syllable phonematically simple words;
   - reading of two syllable words with consonant aggregation;
   - strengthening word reading skills;
   - reading of joint words;
   - reading of sentences and text.

In order to teach the reading accuracy the most popular method is a word decoding method, but there also exist a method where a whole word is recognized. Rayner et al (Rayne, et al., 2012) states that it is faster to find a word in lexicon if a particular letter combination is familiar. Several authors (Eysenck & Keane, 2015; Goswami & Bryant 2016; Gillon, 2017; Sternberg & Sternberg, 2016; Tūbele, 2008) mention such a thing as guessing from a context (parsing and priming effect) and guessing from visual similarities. Both these techniques increase the reading speed, but they require the language and reading experience to be used correctly. Tubele (Tūbele, 2008) states that the reading speed improves when a reader's saccade is at least five symbols, for skilled readers it is usually about nine symbols (Eysenck & Keane, 2015; Rayne, et al. , 2012; Sternberg & Sternberg, 2016), but it may vary depending on the language. Reading the syllables are important for remembering typical phoneme combinations, but reading the rhymes helps a reader to recognize various word parts that are different from each other. In order to store a typical letter combinations of words in one's lexicon, it is recommended to listen and read a word that is highlighted. During the first year of learning to read it is not recommended to use syntactic neighbours and joint words without context. To summarize, the authors of this article emphasize that the reading accuracy improves if a reader uses the decoding method, guessing from context and language semantics for unknown words. The reading speed improves by training to read.

By improving the decoding skills the comprehension of written text also improves (Goswami & Bryant 2016; Woolfolk, 2016). Vocabulary is as important for text comprehension as is the knowledge about syntax of a language that constructs the context. It is believed that a reader can comprehend a text fully if he understands about 95% of the words (Sternberg & Sternberg 2016). The following two statements are true: good readers have a extensive vocabulary and those who have a extensive vocabulary can become good readers (Fisher & Frey, 2014). It is very important to keep in mind that the use of language is constructive, as even during the process

of reading the meaning of the text is being constructed (Goodman, 2005) and changed from the context, previous experience and the current parsing process. It is proved that children with comprehension difficulties have problems accessing lexicon (Sternberg & Sternberg, 2016). In order to help construct the context, the training material should include visual clues (e.g., pictures) and also include the material necessary to build a network of semantically linked words and strategies to memorize the context, i.e., key words, formulation of main idea, questions and discussions about the text, etc.

Designed Material and Research Results

Taking into account everything mentioned before, the authors of this article developed the training material where the several reading promotion methods have been summarized. The material is designed for children from 6 to 7 years of age and it includes mobile games and paper materials. It gives an opportunity to improve the reading skills as part of a play. The underlining principle used in this material is "from the simple to the complex". The training material includes the following tasks:

1) Compound word division into constructing words and vice versa.
2) Word division into syllables and word construction from syllables.
3) Syllable division into phonemes and syllable construction from phonemes, typical phoneme combinations.
4) Improvement of reading:
   - phoneme synthesis and two phoneme syllable reading material;
   - phonematically simple two syllable word reading material;
   - phonematically simple three syllable word reading material;
   - phonematically complex two syllable word reading material;
   - monosyllable word and phonematically complex polysyllabic reading material.
5) Creation and reading of linked words, sentences and stories.

In order to promote comprehension there are pictures or pictograms used whenever it is possible. The words, sentences and stories are chosen according to the needs, interests and everyday situations that are familiar to six to seven year old children.

The research took place in two preschool and primary school groups. Prior to include children into training group, they were tested with specially designed examination material. Examination material included phoneme naming tasks, phoneme distinguishing task and word and non word reading tasks. After testing there were 33 children selected and included into the training group with the written agreement of their parents. All children in the research group had a phonological perception disorder.

Their reading skill level was generally lower than that of their peers without phonological perception disorder. All the children were divided by chance into smaller groups. Groups were not the same at every session. Every training group had one training in a week lasting 30 to 40 minutes during the period of four months. During every training session the authors were in the position of a speech therapist and an observer. Every training session consisted of the tasks from the designed material that suited (was in the closest developmental zone) a child's current level of his reading skills. In every session the feedback from the children was gathered. Feedback included individual reading and/or writing task. Feedback results were used for planning next training.

In order to evaluate the progress of the reading literacy there were two types of evaluation materials prior and after training period. First – random naming of 66 capital and lowercase letters and second – letter chain and word chain test. Letter and word chain tests was performed only by those children that had seven years old, as it is required in test design. Letter naming task was done individually – every child named letter sequence and authors of this research measured naming errors and time. Letter and word chain test was done in small groups according to test requirements. After testing all the data (number of correctly named letters, number of errors and time) was gathered into a table and compared with previously gathered data individually and between all children that participated in the research training.

The next figures (see Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3, Figure 4) contains the results of the research data analysis. The name of the child in the figure is replaced by the first letter of his or her name and nearest second letter that makes unique two letter combination with child's first name first letter.

Figure 1 (see Figure 1) shows a letter naming speed for all 33 children before the training, in September, and after training, in December.

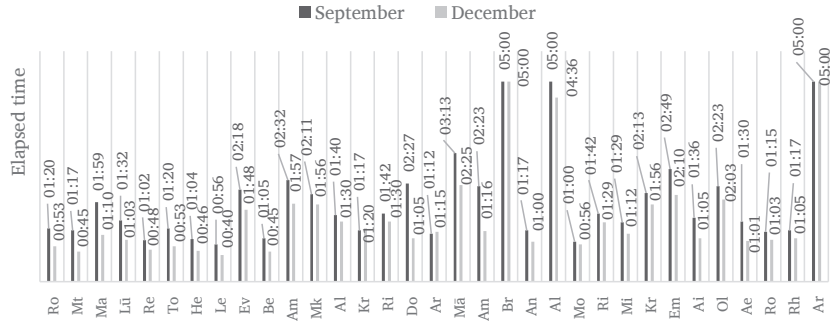

Figure 1. Letter naming speed before and after training

As can be seen from figure 1, the letter naming time has decreased for almost all the children, i.e., all the children demonstrated an improved letter naming speed. Children who did not succeed in this task, also did not show any developmental progress in other cognitive areas outside the training.

Apart from measuring the time needed to name the letters, the authors also counted the number of letter naming errors. Figure 2 (see Figure 2) shows the number of wrongly named letters out of 66 given letters.

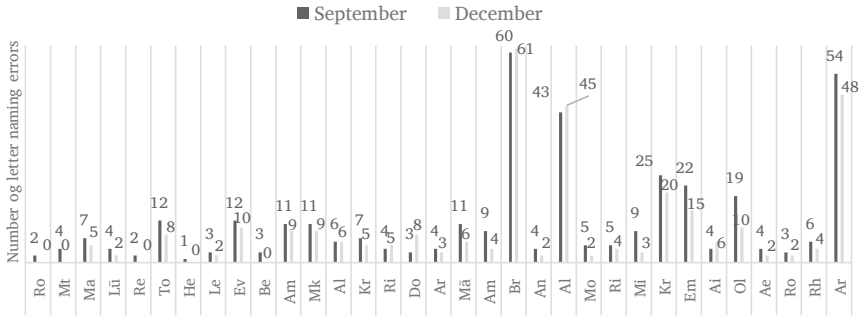

Figure 2. Errors during letter naming before and after training

Figure 2 shows a similar trend as figure 1 – almost all the children improved their letter naming skills, i.e., they demonstrated a decrease in the number of errors except for the children who did not show any developmental progress in other cognitive areas. Few children (e.g. "Do") mismatched Latvian letters with similar Russian letters at both evaluations, but these errors do not reflect a regress in the reading development.

Figure 3 shows the results of letter chain test before and after the training sessions (see Figure 3) In letter chain test participated only seven years old primary school children as it is required by test design.

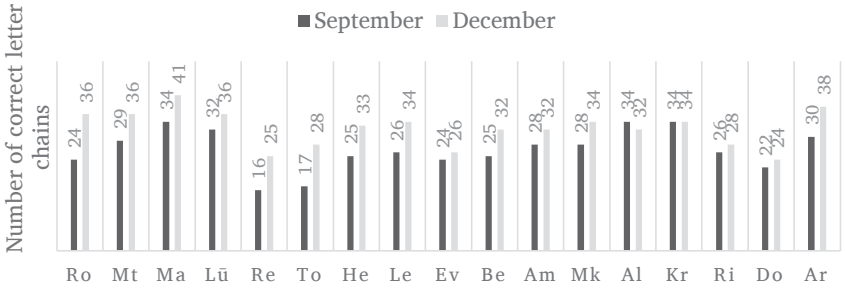

Figure 3. Result of letter chain test before and after evaluation

In Figure 3 one can observe that all the children demonstrated smaller or larger progress in finding two similar upper case letters in any given letter sequence.

Figure 4 shows the results of word chain test before and after the training sessions (see Figure 4). In letter word test participated only seven years old primary school children as it is required by test design.

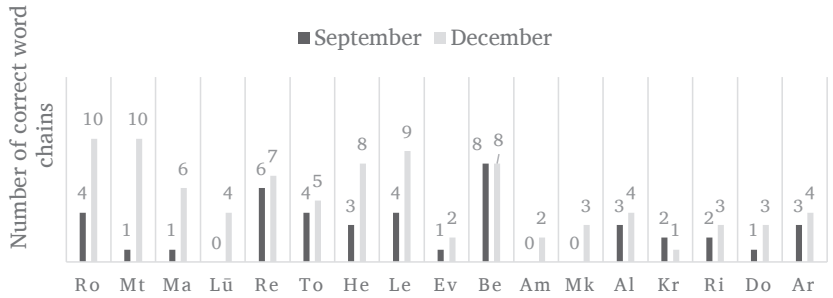

Figure 4. Result of word chain test before and after evaluation

In the author's view the word chain test represents real results of the reading literacy as a child has to select the words from a given word sequence without any spaces. As one can see from figure 4, almost all the children have improved their reading literacy, a higher improvement was for a child named "Mt". The authors could not indicate why a child named "Be" did not show any increase in the number of selected words, but this child showed progress in other evaluation tasks.

Conclusions and Discussions

The research proved the significance of systematically and methodologically correct training material that follows the steps of reading literacy development and child's learning and cognitive development. The highest reading literacy progress was demonstrated by the children of the first grade which is consistent with the findings of other researches mentioned in this article.

Decreased number of wrongly named letters might serve as proof that by training letter – phoneme correspondence and phoneme distinction children with the phonological perception disorder improved their reading accuracy.

Increased number of correctly read word chains after training might serve as proof that it is very important to include in the training tasks of typical syllable combination recognition, as it helps memorize typical phoneme combinations and increase reading speed.

The children that showed very low or no improvement comparing the first and the last evaluation results, showed insignificant improvement in other areas of cognitive development as well.

One can discuss the different reading difficulties and disorders like dyslexia, whether it is possible to promote the reading literacy and if it is, whether this material will be designed well enough to become a suitable intervention tool in these difficulties and disorders.

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https://doi.org/10.22364/htqe.2020.05

INCLUSION OF A CHILD WITH A HEARING IMPAIRMENT IN A MAINSTREAM SCHOOL, SINGLE CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive education means that all pupils, regardless of their ability, gender and race, can study with their peers in the school closest to their place of residence. When enrolling students with special needs in a school, the quality of the student's academic and social inclusion is equally important. The study aims to analyze the single case of inclusion of a boy with a hearing impairment in a mainstream school X to answer the research questions: how do teachers deal with a pupil with hearing impairment and his needs in the classroom, what are the peculiarities of a hearing-impaired child's learning, what support (academic and social) is provided to the boy to promote his inclusion in school and the classroom? In the qualitative study, semi structured interviews were conducted with the boy with a hearing impairment and 5 teachers of school X and the boy's father, they were analyzed using content analysis. Three main categories emerged from the data: (1) support provided by teachers/school; (2) social participation in the classroom, school, friendships, (3) barriers for inclusion. There were two time periods in the first category suggested: (a) before the boy was identified as a child with special needs and (b) after the statement on special needs were received. There were several sub-categories that emerged from the transcripts: support measures provided to a child with a hearing impairment in the classroom, organizational response of the school to a child with a hearing impairment, the visible and invisible aspects in social participation of a child with hearing impairment in a mainstream school. The study highlighted that the academic and social inclusion experience of a child with a hearing impairment in a mainstream school may differ before and after receiving the statement from the Pedagogical Medical Commission on the child's special needs. The study discusses whether the statement of a pupil's special needs may become a new barrier to inclusive education that encourages schools to develop new exclusionary practices.

Keywords: *a child with a hearing impairment, inclusion, general education.*

Introduction

Today, more and more children with special needs are enrolled in regular schools in Latvia (Izglītības un [Public report]…, 2015, Izglītības un [Public report]…, 2019), which is in line with the international recommendation and policy pursued by Latvia (Izglītības attīstības [Education Development]…, 2013). Inclusive education is based on the premise that all children regardless of their ability have the right to be educated alongside their peers in their neighbourhood schools. Although inclusive education is often viewed as a way to enhance the possibilities for the inclusion into the mainstream education of those whom we categorize as "children with special needs", broader understanding of inclusive education is concerned with identifying and overcoming the barriers for participation and qualitative learning in education for all (UNESCO, 2001, 2017). The Law of Education of Latvia states that every child in Latvia has the right to access education (Izglītības likums [Education Law], 1998). However, the accessibility to mainstream education is only the first step. The most important question is whether there are real participation and achievement opportunities for all learners that would rule out any form of exclusion from education. Inclusion is a multidimensional process, which involves organizational, academic, assessment and planning as well as social aspects (McMahon et al., 2016). Children can be included academically and socially. Academic inclusion has two components: academic performance and classroom participation (participation in classroom activities and discussions). Social inclusion means the ability to engage in various social activities, friendly relationships, make friends and be accepted by other children of the same age (Stinson & Antia, 1999).

This qualitative study explores inclusion experiences of a pupil with a hearing impairment in Latvian mainstream school X. In order to understand how academic and social inclusion affects the daily life at school for a boy with a hearing impairment, we have to compare the pupil's perspectives of inclusive practices in school with those of teachers and family. The empirical data is based on narratives with the pupil with a hearing impairment, his father and teachers.

The following questions were pursued in the research:

How do teachers deal with a pupil with hearing impairment and his needs in the classroom, what are the peculiarities of a hearing-impaired child's learning?

What support do teachers offer to a learner with a hearing impairment and how does it promote a child's academic and social inclusion in a mainstream school?

Children with a hearing impairment in a mainstream school

One of the groups with barriers to learning and social participation in mainstream school is pupils with hearing impairments. Although there is no exact statistics on how many children there are with hearing impairments in Latvia, Umbraško estimates that about 0.5% of children in the age of 3 to 14 might have hearing impairments (Umbraško, 2016). There were 18 pupils with hearing impairments registered in special programs in mainstream school in 2019 (Beizītere et al., 2020). However, there is no statistics on how many of children with hearing impairments attend mainstream schools without learning in special programs. Children with hearing impairments represent one of the eight, so called, categories of special needs distinguished in education in Latvia (Prasības vispārējās [Requirements for].., 2019). For a child to receive such status in education, there has to be a statement drawn either by clinical or school psychologist, speech therapist at the school level or Municipal or State Pedagogical Medical Commission. It is their role to determine who meets criteria of special needs and who have to have a special program, special services, extra resources, additional help and support measures in learning process. Upon the receipt of such notification, the child may receive support measures in the classroom as well as study in a licensed special education program. If a child is enrolled in a special education program, he or she can have an extra support and extra recourses provided while learning in the mainstream classroom, or in a special classroom in the mainstream school or in a special school. Support measures can include physical adjustments in the school (such as a light bell), physical adjustments in the classroom (such as placing tables in a semicircle, etc.), assistive learning technologies (such as Frequency Modulation systems, etc.), adjusted learning materials (such as teaching aids with more pronounced visual stimuli, etc.) and individual materials that can be used by the student (such as disposable workbooks) (Raščevska, et al. 2017). Adjustments may be offered both during the instruction time (for example, by repeating instructions several times, etc.) or during the execution of the task by the child (for example, by extending the time to do the task), extra human recourses (for example, an assistant) may be provided and the volume of a task may be reduced or partly removed (for example, the listening part) (VISC [NEC], n.d.).

So far no research has been conducted in Latvia on the social and academic inclusion of children with hearing impairments in mainstream schools. The evidence from the research conducted globally shows that students with hearing impairments have been increasingly more included in mainstream education over the last 20 years (Takala & Sume, 2018), however they may face numerous challenges in the process (Mekonnen

et al., 2015). There are different dimensions of inclusion – organizational, social and academic (Nilsen, 2020). Those challenges may be related both to the academic social and organizational inclusion. Children with hearing impairments may have some participation barriers, as they have appeared not to be well-integrated into the classroom activities either academically or socially with their hearing peers (Ridsdale & Thompson, 2002). The pupils with hearing impairment may have a lower status within friendship groups (Ridsdale & Thompson, 2002) and may as well experience communication and language problems at school (Dakwa & Musengi, 2015), which are closely linked to children's academic and social inclusion (Hadjikakou et al., 2008). In some cases, social and academic inclusion could be difficult for students with hearing impairments, due to the delays in the development of their social skills (Adibsereshki et al., 2015). Research reveals that children with hearing impairments have socio-emotional difficulties interfering with their friendships, classroom learning, and ability to get along with the people around them (Mekonnen, et al., 2015). Children with special needs generally can feel less popular at school, have fewer friends (Vetoniemi, & Kärnä, 2019). Those challenges may be more severe if a child with a hearing impairment has additional disabilities. Then the level of academic and social inclusion can be even lower (Olsson, et al., 2018).

Inclusion means that regular classrooms and schools adapt to the child (Stinson & Antia, 1999) even if some children who are referred to as "children with special needs" have to receive something different from what is required by most children. The inability of a school to meet those needs of children can create barriers to learning and participation. The major challenge lies in a school's inability to adapt the curriculum and provide the necessary social and academic accommodations to meet the needs of the pupils with hearing impairments while the child remains in the classroom along with other children. Inclusion takes place inside classrooms, therefore teachers are the persons to promote socially rich and inclusive environment in their classrooms (Vetoniemi, & Kärnä, 2019). One of the reasons for that might be the fact that the mainstream teachers have little relevant knowledge of the personal concepts and social experiences of hearing-impaired pupils (Ridsdale & Thompson, 2002). It can indicate that there is a need for in-service training for teachers and better cooperation between teachers and support specialists at school. On the other hand, if the school as an organization and teachers has the necessary knowledge, experience and attitude, inclusion can be provided for children with hearing impairment and reasonable academic standard can be achieved (Hadjikakou et al., 2008). If special education pupils' strengths are enhanced by interactions and social participation with peers through their strengths (can be related to hobbies), the pupils can get the sense of belonging (Vetoniemi, & Kärnä, 2019). There is

a positive effect on pupils with hearing impairment self-esteem after participation in life skills training programs (Vernosfaderani, 2014). In the research by Hadjikakou and colleagues (2008) it was shown that the academic inclusion of hearing-impaired children can be facilitated by a number of tools, the most important being pre-tutoring sessions, in-service training provided for designated teachers and the modification of traditional classroom delivery. During the mainstream class, provision of more details or extra explanation and visual clarification during teaching can be used as an additional support for children with a hearing impairment (Bamu et al., 2017). Zanin and Rance (2016) have proved that assistive technologies (for example, remote microphones and remote loudspeakers) in a classroom can be very helpful for improving listening and communication skills with children with hearing impairments (Zanin & Rance, 2016), which increases the chances of their academic and social inclusion. Also, the awareness of a child's hearing impairment among the hearing children and teachers can promote the social inclusion of children with hearing impairments (Hadjikakou et al., 2008).

Methodology

The qualitative single case study was used in the research as we tried to seek an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences and gain an insight into the phenomenon of inclusion of children with hearing impairments in a mainstream school. Case study was chosen as it can help to better understand contemporary phenomenon within its real life context (Yim, 2003).

Questions were designed to answer the two research questions. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews, which were complemented with field notes. A topic guide was used to provide for the structure of the interview, however the boy, teachers and boy's father were encouraged to talk freely about anything they considered to be important. One of the authors of the paper was involved in the interview process. This means that in this case all participants knew who the researcher was and what the researcher's goals were (Geske & Grīnfelds, 2001). The boy and his father were interviewed twice, and all interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim in Latvian. For this article, selected quotes were translated into English. Data collection with interviews and field notes was conducted between October and November 2019.

Participants. The description of the participating persons is as follows:

P1 – Boy, 15 years old, growing up in a family of four children. From the 1st to the 7th grade has been learning in a mainstream school, mainstream class. He was often ill during the 7th grade, mostly otitis. In the 7th grade he was diagnosed with hearing loss (mild), which should not cause difficulties

on a daily basis. His hearing deteriorated over time, it became harder to hear, loss of concentration was observed along with the inability to hear. At the end of the first semester of the 8th grade, an accurate diagnosis was made, treatment was started, but unsuccessfully. The need for a hearing aid was identified. At the end of the 8th grade, a complicated medical operation was performed to compensate for the hearing impairment. It was partly successful. On a daily basis, the hearing aid helps to compensate for the boy's hearing loss. In the 9th grade the student started home education (for one month), then an individual learning plan was set up and he returned to school after the home schooling. In the 9th grade, learning took place individually with a teacher, according to an individual lesson schedule and an individual learning plan outside the classroom. The boy is partly integrated in the breaks between lessons among hearing peers. Another surgery is planned, after which there is a possibility that his hearing will improve at least slightly. Following the initiative of the educational institution, an exemption from the ninth grade State centralized examinations has been made. Outside school, the boy plays badminton, he is a member of the national junior team.

P2 – Father of the boy, lives together with the boy and family.

There were 5 teachers (see Table 1) chosen on a voluntary basis.

Table 1. Demographics of participants (teachers)

Code	Teacher	Work experience	Experience working with children with special needs	Experience working with children with hearing impairment
P3	Classroom teacher, social pedagogue	45	Learning disabilities	No
P4	Latvian language teacher	36	Learning and language disabilities,	No
P5	German language teacher	7	Learning disabilities	No
P6	Mathematics teacher	14	Learning disabilities	No
P7	History teacher	6	Learning disabilities	No

Ethics

Consent to access within this research was requested from the father of the boy and the child himself. The study was described briefly to the father and boy, highlighting the fact that participation was entirely voluntary.

All participants gave their written approval to be included in this study. The interview situations were made as safe and comfortable as possible. Confidentiality and anonymity concerning all provided information was ensured during all phases of the research.

Data analysis

The research applied inductive content analysis (Graneheimam, Lindgrena, 2017). Categories arose from the respondents' narratives depending on their frequency of appearance, or the relevance of the subject matter. The basic unit of the analysis was a single word, a sentence or an expressive unit. Analysis of the data started after the interview notes had been taken. The interview transcripts were read by both researchers, individually, then the results were compered and discussed. The narrative material was processed analytically by breaking the text into relatively small units of content. The key themes were identified and preliminary categorisation was made in each case. The results of all respondents were compared.

Results

Three main categories emerged from the data: (1) support provided by teachers/school; (2) social participation in the classroom, school, friendships, (3) barriers for inclusion. There were several sub-categories that emerged from the transcripts (see Figure 1): support measures provided to a child with a hearing impairment in the classroom, organizational response of the school to a child with a hearing impairment, the visible and invisible aspects in social participation of a child with a hearing impairment in a mainstream school.

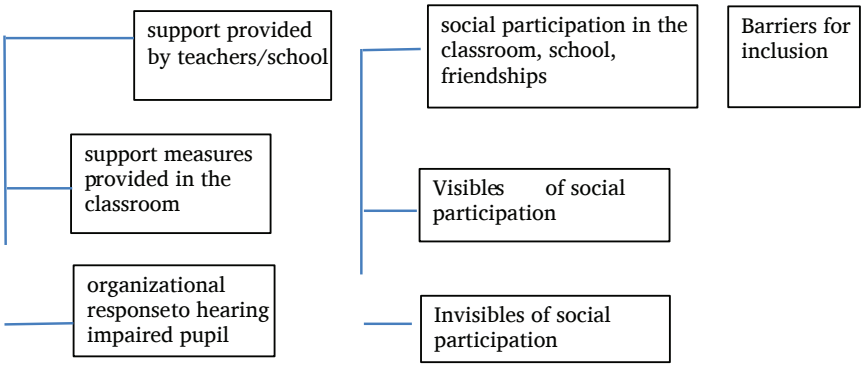

Figure 1. Hierarchy of themes arising from transcripts

Support provided by teachers/school

In the first category, there were two time periods estimated in the narratives: (a) before the boy was identified as a child with special needs and (b) after the statement on special needs was received.

Support measures provided in the classroom

The data from interviews revealed that the teachers, boy's father and boy had been explicit that before the statement on special needs issued by the Pedagogical Medical Commission the boy was learning alongside his hearing classmates in the classroom. The teachers remembered that, first, they noticed that the boy had some kind of learning difficulties. He was absent due to illness quite regularly. So the teachers, in cooperation with the parents, asked the school support team (psychologist, speech therapist, nurse, social pedagogue) for advice and required to start the specialized assessment process. As a result, a mild hearing impairment was diagnosed and the support team immediately recommended providing a classroom support measures. The classroom teacher says, "I noticed that the child was having learning difficulties – difficulty keeping attention, he had problems concentrating in my lessons, he seemed to "slip away". I talked about it with the child's parents. We required the school speech therapist and psychologist to assess the child, but, as it turned out, the child did not have any learning disabilities, but rather had hearing problems, so there was no special support or reminders needed. We provided support measures such as seating him at the front of the classroom" (P4).

The boy admits that the support measures had been very helpful at that time, as being closer to the teacher helped the boy better hear the verbal information the teacher was providing to the class and helped him "read form the teacher's lips": "When my hearing problem was detected, I was moved to the front of the classroom. I sat in the front row near the windows." (P1) The boy added that not speaking too fast and providing clear instructions and repeating them had also been very helpful.

The teachers agreed that the boy was very diligent and willing to cooperate, so they were very willing to provide extra help, if it was required by the boy. As it was said by the boy, he was able to keep up with learning quite well. There were consultations provided by teachers, sometimes he could use peer help, as peer learning was supported by teachers in the classroom.

To support their son, the parents worked very hard, cooperated with the school and were ready to spend a part of the family budget to buy all the necessary equipment and assistive technologies their son needed: "We bought everything he needed. We bought a device that helps him perceive the teacher better, such as a microphone, the teacher has to

put it on his clothes and then he perceives the sound better. We bought bone conduction headphones from acquaintances from abroad, it helps to eliminate background noise." (P2) The father points out that all the devices were purchased by their family, there was little involvement from the Government in supporting those needs. The amount of money to be paid for the hearing device was small, however there were many problems with that, for example, there was a very negative experience with the Latvian Hearing Centre during the adjustment of the hearing device to their son.

Organizational response to a hearing-impaired pupil

The data from the interview suggests that after receiving the statement on the boy's special needs issued by the Pedagogical Medical Commission, the way he was learning changed. In the first month, they provided the so-called schooling for protractedly ill children at home (teachers visited the boy at home twice a week and taught him the basic subjects – mathematics, languages, natural sciences). After a month, the school had designed an individual learning plan (in Latvia – *Individual educational program acquisition plan*). It included an individual schedule for the boy to come to school at certain times for certain lessons to work individually with teachers one to one. The classroom teacher (every classroom in Latvia has its own classroom teacher who is responsible for children's moral and career education, coordinates the cooperation between the schools and parents and follows up with children's academic success) explains, "He attends school only according to an individually designed schedule and lesson plan created especially for him, he studies with teachers individually. In between, during the breaks, he may, if he wants, spend time with others." (P3) The boy explains how it works: "Well…teachers teach me one to one. Now the teachers teach me more individually. I understand better. I study according to a plan, I come to school on certain days". (P1) However, the boy points out that in some cases it helps him learn better, in other cases it does not because there are teachers who do not invest extra effort in explaining the subject to him.

The boy's father is not convinced that this is the most effective way for his son to learn. According to the father, the boy is capable of learning together with other children in the classroom, so there is no need to separate him: "Theoretically, it might be good for my boy in some way that he has the individual plan. However, I would like and I also believe that he could and he wants to study alongside with others in the same classroom. Yes, but, somehow, the school is not sure about that." (P2) Both parents, mother and father, would like that their son return to the classroom and be able to learn together with others. The boy's father even agreed that there

could be some lessons when the boy could stay away from the classroom and learn separately. Nevertheless, he wants that the boy spends most of the school day together with his peers. "We in the family do not really understand why the school does not try to include him in the class, even partly, for example, by teaching only certain subjects individually." (P2)

One of the teachers explained the possible reason behind it. She remembered the boy having some concentration problems when he was learning together with other pupils in the same class. If a boy works individually with teachers, there are no such problems at all: "Now that he is studying individually, the result is quite different." (P6)

Besides the individual plan and individual learning, the school offered the parents to ask doctors to grant their son an exemption from the national final examinations. This was recommended with the rationale that the boy might experience additional stress during the examination, which can affect his health. The father was not convinced about this suggestion either, as he thinks that the boy would be able to pass the examinations successfully. The boy's father thinks that the school is not interested in providing the boy with all the necessary participation support, "Honestly, I believe he has the knowledge and, with more instruction, he would pass the exams. But the teachers probably see this all better. The psychologist argues that pre-exam stress can negatively affect my son. Maybe the school is afraid of something." (P2)

Social participation in the classroom, school, friendships

In the interview transcripts there were identified both visible, and invisible aspects of the boy's social participation at the school, classroom.

Visible aspects of social participation

Teachers are quite unanimous in their view that the attitude towards the boy from other pupils is positive. Other pupils demonstrate understanding and awareness of the situation. One teacher describes it as follows: "Pupils are friendly and responsive towards the X". (P7) The boy also agrees to that, he says that other pupils respect him and treat him well, "I am respected and understood in my class. I have never been bullied and I have good relationships. I don't want to change the class; they all have a good attitude toward me." (P 1). The boy's father agrees with his son, saying that there are nice children in his son's class, they are very polite and all of them are willing to help his son.

Invisible aspects of social participation

At the same time, the boy explains that he is very seldom together with his class. He does not take part in field trips or any other classroom events.

He admits that he feels ashamed of his hearing device, therefore, he tries to avoid people: “I really don’t like the hearing aid being visible, so I am growing my hair…. (turns away), I don’t want anyone to see it, I’m even a little scared of my visual appearance, I don’t like to be in public when others see me.” (P1). The boy’s father revealed in the interview that his son does not have any friends at school. One of the teachers described that the boy does not like to be in contact with others during the school time. He chooses to stay in the classroom during the break. Even if he is outside the classroom in the hallway, he avoids others: “On days when he is at school, he likes to stay in the classroom during the breaks, but then he has to eat lunch, so he has to walk out into the hallway. At those moments, when I am on duty, I even think that the child is not comfortable in the hallway or canteen, it seems that he is looking for another room.” (P4) Another teacher pointed out that the child himself avoids the class: “He himself is quite closed up to the classmates” (P6). Teachers interpret it as the boy’s unwillingness to cooperate with others. Teachers say that they have invited the boy to take part in field trips and other events for several times, but he always refuses.

None of the teachers associates it with the student’s new state of health and new challenges the boy is facing due to the hearing aid, which he must live with. On the contrary, teachers think that the boy does not have any problems with that. One of the teachers describes the situation on the first days, after the boy returned at school with the hearing aid: “It seems to me that on the first days there was a lot of interest, the boy with a hearing aid was in the spotlight, after a while the interest diminished and nobody any longer paid attention to him. But at no point, at least in my practice, did anyone say anything to the child and make him feel uncomfortable, he was feeling all right too.” (P4)

The boy’s father explained that the situation, when his son is ashamed of himself for wearing the hearing aid, is only observed at school. His son is ashamed that at school everyone sees it. At the same time, the situation is different outside the school. The boy plays badminton; he is a member of a youth badminton team. In the badminton team the boy has many friends, as well as in their neighbourhood. Thus the boy’s father has observed that the son is not ashamed of himself with his friends and neighbours outside the school. The boy’s father did not explain the reasons for that. He insisted that his son should be learning along with others in some classes, he argued there is no real reason why the boy is separated from others in the learning process. Separation does more harm than good: “I would very much like the boy to have the opportunity to learn with the class and that the attitude would not change, so that he would still receive attention and help from teachers. I would like every child to be able to learn freely

with others so that they are not immediately separated because of their problems. But it's a big and long way to go, and the school has a lot to do there" (P2).

The father assumes that the school is not addressing his son's problem properly by looking for ways to offer the child inclusion in the classroom, but, on the contrary, unknowingly, is looking for the ways to "get rid" of him: "We often talk about it at home, it is not right. We have a feeling that it would be better if there were no such child at all in the school, but if there is, there could be a way to "get rid" of him. It is much easier than to work with such a child for a long time. You may say what you want, but teachers are not ready to include such a child in the classroom". (P2)

Barriers for inclusion

In spite of the good practice before the boy received statement on his special needs, teachers were unanimous that there are many unresolved issues for the student with hearing impairments to be included in the classroom with others. The main factor – the number of students in the class. As it was stated by several teachers, a teacher is not able to work in a classroom with more than 25 students where there is need to provide support to a special needs pupil, and at the same time providing support to others, there is a risk that others will "not receive anything" at that time (P5). It was stated that in a classroom with more than 25 children it is difficult to provide support to a child with special needs, especially if there are children with other disabilities in the classroom as well. Other factors of importance are the severity of the student's disorders as well as the teacher's attitude. The teacher must be "ready to accept such a child in his / her class" (P7). However, the attitude alone is not enough, the school must offer professional methodological support to the teacher, so that the teacher has the necessary knowledge about the child's disorder and the ways teacher can support the child.

Discussions and Conclusions

As the case study data suggested, the teachers at first confused hearing impairments with learning disability. Hearing impairments are so-called invisible disability, therefore it can pass unnoticed for the teacher in some cases (Takala, Sume, 2018) or gets confused with some other possible problems. After the evaluation was carried out, the child's hearing impairment was identified.

The case suggested that the school has the necessary means and it can ensure academic and social inclusion of a child with hearing impairments both at classroom and school (organizational) level. However, in

the current case, the quality of academic and social inclusion of the pupil with a hearing impairment differed before and after the statement on special needs by the Pedagogical Medical Commission was received. Before receiving the statement, the boy was fully included in the classroom and several support measures were provided to adjust to the child' s special needs: physical adjustments (seating plan), assistive learning technologies (microphone) (Raščevska, et al. 2017). Adjustments during the instruction time (talking slower and repeating the instructions) (VISC [NCE], n.d.), peer support was provided. At the school level there were consultations ensured. There was strong cooperation between parents and school.

After receiving the statement on special needs, the child was segregated from the classroom. At the school (organizational) level, an individual learning plan was designed, which stipulated individual schedule of individual lessons for the boy to learn one to one with teachers. Although he was allowed to socialise during the breaks with other children from the class, in reality, it did not happen.

The interview data from the boy and his father suggest that the boy was not particularly well-included socially and academically (social participation during the learning) in the school as the boy was segregated during the learning process from the classroom. Consequently, he was avoiding his classmates during the breaks, ignored invitations to participate in the field trips and other school events, he did not have any friends at school and was quite ashamed of his "new looks". The reasons behind providing such segregated learning opportunities were explained by the school as a better opportunity for individualized learning to help the child concentrate, have higher academic results and reduce stress.

So, one can conclude that children with a hearing impairment can experience several barriers to inclusion socially and academically. At the same time, the barriers might be eliminated by adapting the mainstream school curriculum by providing physical adjustments, assistive technologies, adjustments during the instruction, extra consultations and peer learning. The mainstream teacher's and hearing peer's awareness of a child's hearing impairment and appropriate education of mainstream teachers are of high importance here. They can promote successful inclusion of children with hearing impairments in a mainstream school. However, the case reveals a new possible barrier for inclusion – the statement of special needs can change the way a school regards the pupils and their problems and determines the way how support is provided at mainstream school for pupils with hearing impairments. Although the school had the opportunity to insure full academic and social inclusion of the boy in the classroom, it chose to segregate the child by developing new exclusionary practices by providing individual learning with teachers. The organizational response was

some kind of overreaction to child's special needs. The case suggests that if something is offered differently, there must be some serious justification not to make the situation worse for the child by developing new exclusionary practices. The support must be both proportionate to the pupil's abilities and disability. It must be provided to compensate for the disability instead of becoming a new way of discrimination. Separating the student from other students, not offering the opportunity to participate in the learning process, restricting opportunities for socialization may result in the student losing the sense of belonging to the school and avoiding and ignoring provided social inclusion opportunities, even starting to feel ashamed.

The case results support the previous research on the importance of the relevant knowledge necessary to the teachers about the personal concepts and social experiences of hearing-impaired pupils (Ridsdale & Thomson, 2002). The case study explains the visible and invisible aspects of how the social participation of a child with hearing impairment is perceived and reminds us, that physical inclusion of a child in the school does not automatically mean that he is included at school and classroom both academically and socially.

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https://doi.org/10.22364/htqe.2020.06

CULTURAL ASPECTS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN TEACHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Education for sustainable development (ESD) cannot be realized without a teacher, who thinks systematically and critically, reflects cultural and sustainable values, is authentic, self-conscious, creative, self-confident, and communicative. The aim of this study is to analyze the cultural aspect of sustainable development (SD) in education and to interpret the opportunities and risks for successful development towards the sustainability in teacher education and through the findings to make connections to general education. To reach the goal, qualitative research was conducted. The data was obtained through interviews; teacher educators were asked to share their beliefs, expectations, and experiences about the incorporation of SD into teacher education. The data were proceeded by hermeneutic analysis of text. As a result of the analysis, various combinations of study content and methods related to the cultural aspects of SD in teacher education practice were generalized. The research results identified possibilities for the development of SD through cultural aspects in teacher education.

***Keywords**: cultural aspect of education, sustainable development, teacher education.*

Introduction

Sustainable development (hereafter: SD) is a significant issue in the contemporary world. There is a great amount of research in the natural sciences, social sciences and interdisciplinary studies related to SD. In political documents, guidelines, recommendations, and procurements, SD goals are set very high. The ambitious aims, values, desirable results, and the ways for meeting the goals of SD are clearly formulated.

The incorporation of the ideas of SD into the general school curriculum is a challenge for schoolteachers and teacher educators because the concept *sustainable development* is very complex and ambiguous. There is a risk that important concepts, values, and huge amounts of information can become

a cumbersome in the construction of SD without a deeper understanding and guidelines for implementation. The responsibility of a graduate from a teacher education program is to make SD accessible and personally significant to each primary school student; that is, to make it simple and easy to grasp without losing the depth and seriousness of the topic.

Researchers acknowledge that the cultural dimension of SD encompasses all other categories of SD (Grossberg, 2010; Raus, 2018). This means that culture could be one way to relate all of the complexities of SD to each person's life and a means to enrich teacher education.

The aim of the study was to look for pedagogical opportunities related to the cultural aspects of SD in the successful development of sustainability in teacher education. To achieve this goal:

1. The concept, *cultural aspect of SD,* was analyzed.
2. The cultural aspect of sustainable development was interpreted into categories of education to highlight the tasks for teacher educators towards the meeting the SD goals.
3. Teacher educators' beliefs and expectations about SD in teacher education were investigated to find out typical mindsets and practices.
4. The structure for analysis of the manifestation of the cultural aspects of SD in teacher education was developed.

The clarified concept, *cultural aspect of SD*, will be useful for teacher educators to reflect deeper on their assumptions, beliefs, and professional practices in order to approach the SD goals purposefully.

As a result of the study, significant issues for the further research, the teaching culture and culture of educational organization are identified.

Theoretical background

Theoretical background is based on the analysis of UNECE, UNESCO documents and research related to the education of sustainable development (Barth, Godemann, Rieckmann, & Stoltenberg, 2007; Raus, 2018; Sterling, 2010; UNECE, 2009, 2011; UNESCO, 2017). The analysis of the cultural aspects of SD is proceeded by the context of documents from the United Nations and research in cultural theory anthropology **(**Gertz, 1973; Levi-Strauss, 2001). The issues in education are interpreted from the perspective of social constructivism (Kron, 2004), a socio-cultural approach (Bennett, Grossberg, & Williams, 2005; Grossberg, 2010), experiential learning (Dewey, 1979; Griffin, Holford & Jarvis, 2003; Kolb, 1984), and teachers' mind-frames (Hattie, 2009).

Sustainable development is the organizing principle for meeting human development goals, while simultaneously sustaining the ability of natural systems to provide natural resources and ecosystem services upon which

the economy and society depends. The United Nations has formulated Sustainable Development Goals as the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges facing humanity in economic, environmental and social aspects, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice (United Nations, 2015).

The natural and social sciences provide a venue for sustainable development goals with issues such as citizenship, peace, ethics, responsibility in local and global contexts, democracy and governance, justice, security, human rights, health, gender equity, rural and urban development, economy, production and consumption patterns, corporate responsibility, environmental protection, natural resource management, and biological and landscape diversity (UNESCO, 2017). The cultural sustainability is described there in terms of cultural capital, traditions and values, heritage and place, the arts, diversity and social history (Roseland et al., 2005). Duxbury and Gillette characterize the cultural dimension of SD from the perspective of the inner relationship of the community (Duxbury & Gillete, 2007). They stress the significance of community well-being; mutual collaboration within the community; common experiences that express a sense of place and create a source of pride for residents that increases their sense of connection with their community; an ecological way of life and production; and the use of the arts to engage community residents in common creative activities.

Within the political documents the main goals of global SD are related to economic, social, and environmental fields, but cultural sustainability is categorized there under the social pillar of SD. Whatever, with recent developments, considerations are being made to make cultural sustainability its own pillar, due to its growing importance within social, political, environmental, and economic spheres (UCLG, 2010). Soini and Birkeland explains the importance of cultural sustainability with its influential power over the people, as decisions that are made within the context of society are heavily weighed by the beliefs of that society (Soini, Birkeland, 2014).

Hawkes suggests to use the term *culture* in the context of sustainability to describe the social production of meaning or making sense together. In this sense, politics, economics, and ecology are cultural phenomena, and culture is a key factor for achieving a sustainable society. He points out the significance of including the cultural perspective in all public policies: “It is what gives us a guarantee that every process of sustainable development *has a soul*” (Hawkes, 2001, p. 25).

Anthropologists point out that humanity is created by culture and culture is created by humanity; to be human is to be cultured and, also, to be human is to differentiate oneself from uncultured nature fundamentally

(Lewi-Strauss, 2001). Culture influences a person's attitudes, beliefs, expectations, values, identity, and practices. Underpinning each human thought is behavior and action which are present at every moment of a person's life. On the other hand, the culture establishes deep connections between an individual and values of the society.

Culture is explained in anthropology as symbolic, ideational, and intangible aspects of human society (Banks, Banks, & McGee, 2015), "an accumulated totality of symbol-systems (religion, ideology, common sense, economics, sports, etc.) in terms of which people make sense of themselves and their world, and represent themselves to themselves and to others" (Geertz, 1973, p. 47). So, the culture has become recognized as a working antidote to overly technocratic, mechanistic means of understanding cultures (culture as learned and shared patterns of behavior), organizations, and historical settings. Culture is not a set of facts, but it is the evaluation and interpretation through a prism of an individual's personal significance and the values of the society in which they live. The culture of each community or social group is expressed in written and unwritten laws and norms. But cultural vitality can be reached only through the participation of each member in the community (Siliņa-Jasjukeviča, Briška, 2016).

Griswold differentiated four cultural perspectives: (1) culture as separated from everyday living and comprised of elevated activities and materials, such as fine and performing arts and literature; (2) culture as a coherent system, of norms, beliefs, values, and attitudes; (3) culture as a *tool kit* used by humans to make sense of their world; and (4) culture as a phenomenon, which affects social existence (Griswold, 2012). So, culture can be attributed to art, to individual sense, to societal norms, or to the existential reality of being a human. In education, all these approaches are familiar, but the question is, which of them are the most appropriate for meeting the SD goals.

In order to promote student's cultural understanding, educators must consider a person's subjective sense emotional experiences, the different layers of meanings, symbols, and complexities within a specific context; and an individual's openness to ambiguous interpretation (Bennett, Grossberg, & Williams, 2005; Grossberg, 2010). Humanity's transformation, which is essential for the development of SD in education, will take place only through personally significant experiences of cultural values and subsequent actions that will transform an individual's personality and the world (Briška, 2011).

Education for sustainable development is mainly associated with learning the issues related to natural sciences (i.e., climate change, protection of biodiversity) and social sciences (i.e., development of society for all), and with respect to cultural diversity (UNECE, 2009). More recently, another

educational aspect appears in formulations of the results of education for SD as competences for sustainable development – critical thinking, personal and collaborative competences (UNESCO, 2017) systems thinking, values thinking, futures thinking, strategic thinking, and complex problem solving (Raus, 2018; Sterling, 2011). The concept of competence in itself means a deep involvement of the personality. Halupa explains that, in the case of transmissive learning, the highest level of achievement in learning is concluding, interpreting, and estimating. In contrast, the transformative learning results are internalization and displaying one's knowledge i.e., competence (Halupa, 2016). Her statement is supported by the opinion of other authors (Bennett, Grossberg, & Williams, 2005; Grossberg, 2010; Kron, 2004).

Theoretical sources dealing with a learner's personal transformation include approaches of experiential learning and in-depth learning. Experiential learning develops the idea of including the learner's personal and cultural experiences into the educational process (Dewey, 1979; Griffin, Holford & Jarvis, 2003). The result of deep learning is not only cognition, but a transformed person. This approach deals with the opposition between concepts of *in-depth* and *surface* cognition. Surface deconstructs structure, perceiving all phenomena of culture as equally significant or in one layer (Shusterman, 2002; Welsch, 2005). UNECE experts point out that the development of SD competences is fostered in education by a holistic approach that seeks integrative thinking and practice, inclusivity, and deals with complexities as well as envisioning change while exploring alternative futures (UNECE, 2011).

Therefore, the objective and critical explanations of cultural phenomena are not enough for the deep learning of culture; but the learner's subjective sense must be involved in study process. If it is personally meaningful human transformation can occur. The purposeful cultivation of the cultural aspect in teacher education helps to make learning the multilayered and contradictious content and competences of SD organic, vital, personally meaningful and transformative (Siliņa-Jasjukeviča, G. Briška, 2016).

To educate the teachers to be the agents of sustainable development in educational communities, the SD topics, students deep personal involvement, openness to mutual contexts should be incorporated in study process.

Methodology

To recognize and develop the theoretical findings of the cultural aspect of sustainable development in the current teacher education practice, the qualitative study was carried out. The data was obtained in semi-structured interviews with teacher educators.

Respondents were asked to what extent and how they address SD goals in their teaching practice, how they do it, how it could be done better, and how important it is in their study course and the teacher education in general. The cultural aspect of SD was interpreted in interviews through beliefs, values, expectations, personal preferences, and meanings attributed by teacher educators to the cultural aspect of sustainable development. Hermeneutic–analysis was chosen as the method to analyze the interviews because "the hermeneutic makes possible to understand the sense and the deepest sense of a text" (Vieira, Queiroz, 2017, p. 14).

Interviews were transcribed and read several times. The units of meaning were coded freely individually by two experts. Then the interpretations were discussed to group the codes in accordance with the theoretical findings, by relating them to the content of SD, focus of students' individual sense and experiences in study process, and context of studies.

The codes not fitting with these categories were grouped separately for additional analysis.

Twenty-five teacher educators, all academic staff from preschool and primary school teacher education department were interviewed between October and December, 2019.

Results and Discussion

One group of codes emerged by marking the SD topics – ecological balance, economic and social well-being as study content. They were generalized from teacher educators' statements like, "teachers need science-based, pragmatic knowledge at the level of values." They believed that the content of learning should raise i.e., "awareness of the role of the teacher as a agent of change in promoting sustainable development." They added that "SD key themes can be analyzed in a narrower and broader sense, at the level of the individual or humanity." Some interviewees pointed out that the study process matters – "discussions and researches of motives and consequences of ones or humans actions, evaluating them in the context of SD key topics are very helpful, such activities should rise further teachers' awareness, change their mindset and professional habits."

Some respondents directly mentioned that vitality, liveliness, and organicity are essential values. Others nominated the special courses devoted to sustainable development goals as environmental science, economics, ecology and ethics, or integrating particular topics in didactic courses such as the didactic of natural sciences, social sciences, design and technology, for example, "recycling the trash", "global warming", "children rights" and like.

In the second group, the codes related to the respondents' beliefs in the significance of promoting the growth of a future teacher's personality

as a responsible, reflective, and self-developed person were united. This idea was interpreted in expressions which characterized the study process like "personally meaningful learning", "involving students in the process of in-depth analyze", "transformative learning is like an organic and never-ending flow that deeply changes everybody who is involved in this process", "student's self-development", "inspiring students for self-education", and "discussions, personally meaningful questions – that makes the study process valuable and inspiring." The call for improvement of future teachers' self-awareness through the reflection of personal emotional experiences was qualified as the "high esteem for student individuality."

The third group of codes related to the contexts of education, mentioned by respondents. There were codes that nominated the significance of various perspectives or points of view: "the teacher's *message* in different levels of education must be realized in a broader perspective, not just a narrow focus on the content of a particular school subject", "subject (Language, Visual Arts, Math, etc.) matters only if we understand its meaning in a wider – socio-cultural context...". The diversity, openness, critical thinking, and civic responsibility were named as significant values in educators' expressions.

Additional codes were fixed on particular contexts of studies including childhood experiences, local community, traditions, outdoor learning, actual situation – the contexts of life outside the textbook, school, and individuality. It is interesting to note than no one's responses were related to the context of the future of the planet or humankind.

Thus, all three components of theoretically substantiated SD cultural aspects in education were found in interviews. It means, that the established theoretical structure is valid for application in practice. Meanwhile, teacher educators' combine the components in different ways by placing emphasis on the content of SD and in this way students' personal transformation or mutual interconnections between sociocultural contexts is experienced.

There were one group of codes, which did not fit in any of three previously expected categories. It related to the relationship between participants of education – teacher – student, student – student, teacher – teacher. There were some critical statements made by the interviewees: "cooperation between colleagues and also with students are not very satisfactory. To be true, there are few of us who generate ideas and make decisions for all, others just agree. I think it is still Soviet heritage and this must be overcome if we want to truly take care of qualitative education for SD". Negative attitude towards the student as a partner in study process were apparent: "Students do not have independent learning skills. They are reluctant to follow the teacher's instructions". Additionally, there were positive attitudes about the collaboration i.e., "I have learnt from

the students so much", or "the new generation is more open than ours", and "Self-development is promoted by cooperation and the opportunity to share discoveries with others." This group of codes allows to add another component to the pre-defined cultural aspects of SD in teacher education. In addition to the studies, respondents have paid close attention to the culture of the educational institution – a set of beliefs and values that determines all the traditions, symbols, rituals, attitudes, perceptions of the desired behavior and performance and human relationship in school (Fullan, 2007).

The results of the data analysis are generally structured in Figure 1.

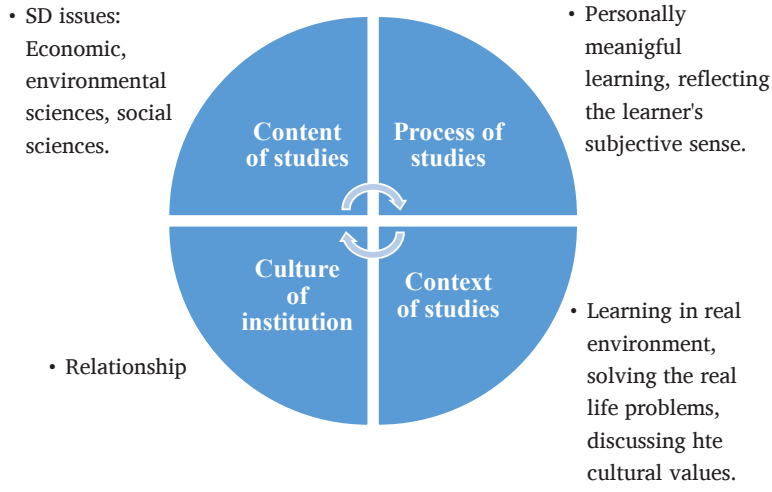

Figure 1. Development of the cultural aspects of SD in teacher education.

The structure of the pedagogical means for approaching to the meeting the SD goals in teacher education contains four components. Each of them reveals the questions, which helps the educator to do it purposefully:

How to include the economic, environmental, social and political issues in each study course?

How to make student's learning personally meaningful by engaging individual's actual life and reflecting the subjective sense?

How to engage the mutual contexts of real life and different cultures?

How to cultivate the relationship or education stakeholders?

Conclusions

Culture connects the values of society and the experiences of an individual. Without a deep personal experience, the declared values

of SD stay at a superficial level. Individual wellbeing and self-expression without the understanding of content of SD does not lead to the personal transformation. Culture is a framework that helps makes the movement toward SD possible.

The cultural aspect of SD teacher education can be realized by:

- Discussing the meaning/significance of the key topics of SD in each study discipline and inter-disciplinary.
- Rating the students' personal experiences of cultural meanings – vitality, equity, viability, responsibility, innovations, creativity, and focusing on the organic balance between the life (environment protection) and human well-being (economic and politics).
- Promoting the students and staff members reflection on their values experiences and cultural contexts of learning in all study courses.
- Strengthening the students' SD competencies such as values thinking, critical thinking, system thinking, creativity, and cultural awareness in personally meaningful learning.
- To enrich the study process and culture of institutions with diverse forms of participation and collaboration.

Teacher educators' combine the components in different ways by placing emphasis on the content of SD and in this way students' personal transformation or mutual interconnections between sociocultural contexts is experienced.

The reflection on teacher educational practices from the perspective of the unity of the cultural aspect of SD is helpful in determining the opportunities and risks for each individual teacher educator in each unique situation for the efficient realization of the education for SD.

Strengthening the cultural aspect helps teacher education approach the ideals of sustainable development in a transformative not only in formal and institutional way.

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SMART LEARNING OF FUTURE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS: STUDENTS' TIME MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE IN AN ONLINE COURSE

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ABSTRACT

An online course can offer limitless opportunities to expand one's knowledge, develop skills and competences and, meanwhile, combine one's online learning journey with a real-world activity, also studies in the case of university students. To manage all, the use of time for the productivity and achievement is crucial. The paper discusses the time management and performance of university students, future English language teachers in particular, taking an online course. A case study was carried out, and teacher education students, who participated in an online course on Learning Technologies and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), were questionnaired to explore their time management strategies and performance during their five-month online study period. The reflections of the online course moderators were collected to triangulate the data and find out their opinion on students' time management habits and performance quality; besides, the differences between their expectations and reality were examined. Findings suggest that students' time management was considerably challenged, and the set amount of time, i.e. one week to accomplish one module and its related assignments, required advanced planning and change of study habits to achieve the aims and objectives of their online learning process.

Keywords: *English language teachers, online course, smart learning, time management.*

Introduction

Current range of technologies offer considerable opportunities to being integrated in language education. Computers, smartphones, tablets enhance any language learner's, from a very young learner to an adult, interaction, linguistic immersion and output in a target language. In today's digital age, animated books, automatic speech recognition programmes, chat programmes, sites that offer practise possibilities with a virtual agent allow to enrich a language learner's experience and learn smart that not always is present in a traditional classroom (Golonka, Bowles, 2014; van den Berghe,

Verhagen, 2019). Therefore, the purpose of the article is to explore how researchers and pre-service teachers approach technologies, innovations, online and smart learning in language education from a theoretical and empirical perspective.

Inevitably, educational technology and online activities are strongly embedded as a part of current language teachers' toolkits. A fundamental knowledge a teacher should have, according to Council of Europe (2019), is related to learners':

- being online – information related to how one engages and exists online, "it comprises three digital domains: access and inclusion, learning and creating, media and information literacy";
- well-being online – information related to how one feels online, "comprising another three digital domains: ethics and empathy, health and well-being, e-presence and communication";
- rights online – "information related to being accountable online, comprising four digital domains: active participation, rights and responsibilities, privacy, security and consumer awareness" (p. 11).

It is a crucial and good practice to highlight above listed digital domains in the teacher education to deepen pre-service teachers' understanding of the digital citizenship and relate it to their future classroom practices and professional activities.

Moreover, educators are to consider continuously how to blend a traditional form of education with technology-enhanced learning, also called smart learning, being aware and open to various intelligent tutoring systems, seriously considering how to apply technologies in the education process to promote learning (Daniela, Kalniņa, 2017). Hwang (2014) indicates that "a smart learning environment not only enables learners to access digital resources and interact with learning systems in any place and at any time, but also actively provides the necessary learning guidance, hints, supportive tools or learning suggestions to them in the right place, at the right time and in the right form" (p. 2). A smart combination can help students to learn in a smart way, too. Besides, Thompson (2017) suggests seeking "to connect academic learning to students' out-of-school technology use" (p. 257).

Striving to improve educational outcomes, meanwhile, considering how to manage expenses at the higher education institution is a long-term discussion referred to teaching smaller groups of students, especially in less popular but still essential fields of science. A favourable opportunity could be more enhancing and strengthening professional core knowledge and competences through students' autonomous work, studying carefully and mindfully designed learning materials and completing more autograded assignments in an online course format, reducing contact with lecturers.

However, the author of the paper suggests a blended learning approach as some interaction, even if it is a distance interaction, of a group of students and the academic staff via appropriate communication tools could be a valuable and notable contribution.

Undoubtedly, online courses can offer limitless opportunities to expand one's knowledge, develop skills and competences in a timeless time, in the 24-by-7 world, and combine one's online learning journey with a real-world activity. The question is whether it is appropriate for any type of a student and whether every individual is skilful to manage one's time to plan and make effort in order to achieve the aims and objectives effectively. To draw parallels, a number of studies have already indicated that barely anyone who starts an online course also completes it (Koller, Ng, 2013; Reich, 2014; Murray, 2019; Reich, Ruiperez-Valiente, 2019) when the initial curiosity fades and the stated intentions change.

Time management and its impact on students' performance could be examined closer as factors to determine one's devotion to the learning process and completion of what has been started. Lakein (1973) saw time management as the process of determining needs, setting goals to achieve the determined needs, prioritising and planning the tasks required to achieve the settled goals. In Thompson's (2017) study, the time management is measured describing how students organise their time on a macro-level, assigning adequate time to study. In the context of initiated learning in an online environment that has to be combined with different real-world activities and studies, in the case of university students, it can be challenging when searching how to make better use of one's time. Claessens, van Eerde (2007) consider that practice and training can enhance time management skills, but not support them directly and automatically to the performance as to become better. Thus, one has to contemplate on how to plan, prioritise, also control activities on a daily basis to manage what has been intended to be accomplished.

Methodology and Materials

To let university students explore theoretical underpinnings of classroom-based technologies, smart learning environments, digital study tools, computer-assisted language learning, synchronous and asynchronous communication and, meanwhile, have hands on practice participating in an online course, a group of future English language teachers of the University of Latvia ($n = 30$) volunteered to participate in a case study. The online course entitled "Learning Technologies and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)" was organised in cooperation between the British Council and the University of Latvia and was moderated by

2 representatives of the British Council. The online course participants were explained that the online course was specially designed to meet the learning outcomes of the particular semester when future English language teachers had to acquire the knowledge and skills of integrating, first, technology in the language learning and, second, the English language skills into other subjects using a methodology of CLIL. Hence, 6 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credits could be awarded for the completed online course as a substitution of two other planned study courses (of 3 ECTS credits each), introducing a similar content.

The online course was held for a five-month study period (18 weeks in total) in an online platform developed by the British Council (cpd.english.britishcouncil.org). The course consisted of the following elements:

- 16 thematic modules with relevant units presenting theoretical standpoints;
- videos of experts in the field and in-service teachers;
- examples of lesson plans where the usage of learning technologies for developing core skills was demonstrated;
- activities to check one's understanding of the learning points with a help of different types of questions (true or false, drag and drop, matching pairs, multiple choice textual clues, find in infographics, sentence sequencing, fill-in-the-blanks, open-ended and closed-ended questions);
- addition resources for further reading;
- weekly emails;
- weekly forum discussions (15 in total);
- 3 independent assignments where participants demonstrated how they could apply the new ideas from the online course into language lesson plans, then testing them in a real classroom and reflecting on the gained experience (what went well? what did not go well? what changes have to be made next time? why?);
- 2 synchronous sessions, i.e. webinars, offering a chance to ask any questions about the course and to learn more about effective studying online.

When indicating the learning outcomes, by the end of the whole online course students had to have a better understanding of cyber well-being, digital literacy, evaluation and integration of website, social networks for educational use and development of the English language skills, and meet the methodological challenges when designing English lesson plans for combining a physical classroom work with online learning environments.

At the end of the online course its participants completed a questionnaire to explore their performance, time management strategies and challenges during their five-month online study period. The questionnaire consisted

of closed-ended, the Likert scale, and open-ended questions. The current paper focuses on a deeper analysis of the gained results. Besides, particular attention was paid to the triangulation process to provide reliable and valid findings. Thus, reflections upon the gained experience and viewpoints from two online course moderators representing the British Council were collected during an online meeting.

The study was a qualitative research where the researcher was also an active online course participant. The researcher volunteered to participate in the project, too, to collaborate with the online course moderators and complete the modules together with her students. Thus, it allowed the researcher to have a more in-depth insight into the online learning process and support students locally and in a real life setting when needed. Circumstantially, the last objective considerably affected the research results, which are discussed in the upcoming section of the paper.

Results and Discussions

The participation in the offered online course was not meant to limit the amount of students' leisure time. Although it replaced two real time study courses, the platform, their smart learning environment, helped students to gain knowledge even when they had their leisure hours and were in their own real-world environment in which they were located in. This case study provides an account of one group's experience, thus the case shed light on the challenges of university students' time management strategies and performance in the online learning process.

There were 30 participants (23 female and 7 male, aged 22–39) involved in the online course, divided in two groups with 15 participants in each per moderator, representing the British Council. The moderator regularly, i.e. weekly, sent emails informing about the thematic module of the week, as it was planned that one module had to be studied within one-week period. In the learning platform, the moderator regularly contributed with feedback, comments and additional questions to the participants' posts in weekly forum discussions.

According to the study plan, the moderators organised two webinars, first, for getting acquainted and leading into the online learning process on the British Council designed platform (cpd.english.britishcouncil.org), second, for addressing burning questions related to study challenges students faced or discussing more academic and fundamental questions on the covered topics of the course, thus enriching the understanding on technology-enhanced language learning and the effectiveness of its impact. However, the webinar participation rate was not high (45–80% of students); it could be closely related to the moderator's choice to plan

them on a Friday evening and on a Saturday or Sunday morning, which is the time when students typically are busy having social activities with peers. To conclude, the time for webinars has to be planned rationally to have a high participation rate.

Having in mind the previously discussed completion rate tendencies of other open online courses (Koller, Ng, 2013; Reich, 2014; Murray, 2019; Reich, Ruiperez-Valiente, 2019), the researcher examined the obtained results. Figure 1 shows that the completion rate of the offered online course was 63%, i.e. 19 out of 30 participants. It is worth noting that those 12 students, which the researcher met on regular basis during other study courses based at the university and had a chance to inquire in person about the issues they had in the learning process or when doing individual assignments, completed the online course entirely (100%). It leads to a conclusion that a blended rather than a totally online learning approach is meaningful and beneficial; even when planning to reduce expenses for teaching smaller groups of students at the university, face-to-face interaction meetings have to be organised.

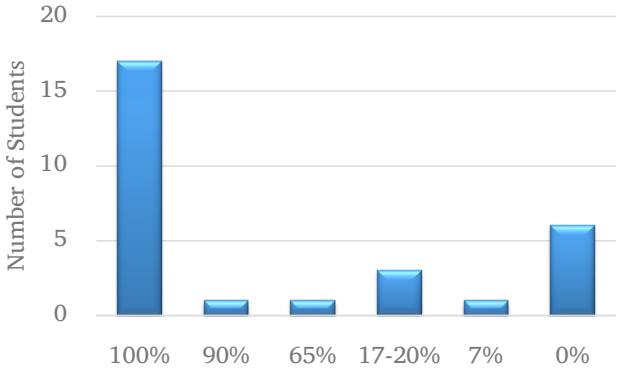

Figure 1. The Online Course Completion Rate among Students

The group of students ($n = 8$) who hardly participated in the online course (the contribution of 20% and less) or withdrew ($n = 3$) from the course, failed the course and had to attend the original study courses at the university the upcoming semester. Among the reasons to withdraw from the course students declared the following: a lack of knowledge on using the learning platform in their study process participating in such an online course for the first time (and hesitated to admit it and search for support), an overload in studies, a lack of time or limited time management skills, a lack of intention to complete the online course. These reasons correlate with the results of other studies (Koller, Ng, 2013; Reich, 2014; Murray, 2019; Reich, Ruiperez-Valiente, 2019) on predictors of completing open

online courses. The language barrier was declined; although the online course was designed and delivered in the English language, the future English teachers perceived theoretical concepts and comprehended the course contents well.

Studying closer the students' performance, the final grades were given using an IELTS (*International English Language Testing System*) style band score rating (2–10), where Band 10 was the highest score and was given to participants who had completed all the modules, submitted three independent assignments (plans for technology-enhanced English lessons) and participated in the forum discussions. Correspondingly, Band 2 was the lowest score and was given to participants who did not complete any of the modules or submitted an assignment.

Figure 2 shows the band scores of those participants who completed the course modules 90–100%. There were students who had completed all the course requirements (Band 10), still some students lacked active participation in forum discussions (Band 9) or failed to submit one (Band 8) or all three (Band 4) of independent assignments, or else submitting two successful assignments, completing 90% of the modules without contribution in forum discussions (Band 7). Similar range of reasons for the minor contribution were presented as listed previously.

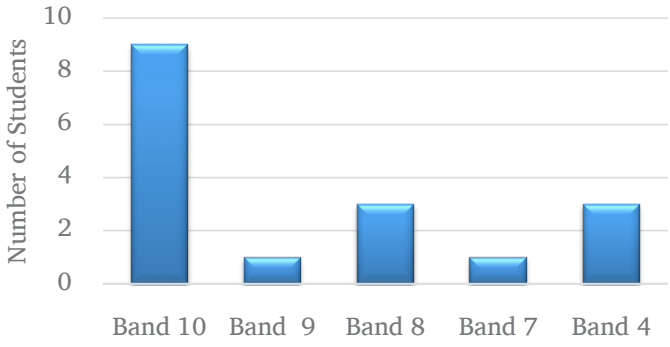

Figure 2. Students Who Completed the Online Modules (90 – 100%) and Their Received Band Scores

As the smart learning environment lets students improve their performance for individual activities of each module, providing immediate feedback (clicking the button *Show Feedback*), correct answers (clicking the button *Show Answers*) and opportunity to complete the required task repeatedly (clicking the button *Try Again*), the majority of students stated that they tried to improve their module completion rate up to 100% or in the range from 90 to100%.

Smart learning is related to anytime and anywhere by using an advanced electronic device. A new module was opened on Monday, available from that time on until the end of the course; the majority of respondents admitted that they explored the requirements of the week on Mondays, contributed and/or followed weekly forum discussions all week long, but attempted to complete their weekly units later in the week, on Sunday, or postponed accomplishing a week or more later. The students' chosen study time ranged from early mornings, afternoons, evenings till late night hours. Location wise, most of the students chose to study at home, although such study places as a university building, library, café, public transportation (buses, trains) were indicated.

"*Sometimes I forgot that I had to do the online course, because I am used to lessons in real life, going to university*", wrote one student in the questionnaire. To characterise the participants' practice and time management strategies, first, the satisfaction of one's own time management while participating in the online course mostly ranged from "to a very great extent" to "to some extent", according to the Likert scale used in the study, but those students who failed the course acknowledged that they were satisfied "to a small extent" or "not at all". Second, students' time management was considerably challenged and required advanced planning and change of study habits to succeed in the online learning process, too. It was revealed that multitasking did not directly reduce students' learning performance, it affected the efficiency of study time. Thus, it can be concluded that smart learning anytime and anywhere is not favourable for any learner; there would be students who would need supportive guidance and controlled conditions.

Finally, the reflections of the online course moderators were collected to triangulate the data and find out their opinion on students' time management habits and performance quality. The moderators managed to form an overall positive impression of Latvian students' activity and performance quality. The added value was the opportunity to learn about Latvian pre-service teachers' awareness and perception of opportunities offered by latest technologies and technology-enhanced language learning which students revealed in weekly forum discussions and in their designed lesson plans, thus demonstrating the gained knowledge and skills in productive real-world contexts. Having enthusiasm for technology-enhanced language learning, the course moderators faced differences between their expectations and reality. As a result, certain strategies could be considered to improve the students' performance and course completion rate, e.g. by allowing participants to demonstrate valuable competences in various synchronous and asynchronous learning formats and online teamwork, spending time on problem-solving activities in smaller groups or implementing frequent assessment.

Conclusions

There is much to be learned from existing researches on various practices on open online and technology-enhanced learning. A priceless opportunity is offering future English language teachers theoretical, methodological and practical learning journeys to extend knowledge and master skills for integrating information and communication technologies in the language teaching and learning process as a modern must. The participation of pre-service teachers in the online course as a hands-on practice study component in a real-life context led to the following conclusions:

1. A blended learning, combining offline and online learning, rather than a totally online learning approach is meaningful and beneficial for university students. Even when planning to reduce expenses for teaching smaller groups of students at the university, face-to-face interaction meetings have to be organised.
2. When studying in a smart learning environment as a part of study programme to achieve particular learning outcomes and to avoid working alone together, a contact with academic staff can heighten a sense of purpose, control over what students are learning and strengthen support when needed.
3. The time for synchronous sessions has to be planned rationally to have a high participation rate; the peculiarities of target groups have to be a matter for careful and detailed consideration.
4. A lack of knowledge on how to use digital tools, online learning platforms for study purposes, an overload in offline and online studies, a lack of time or limited time management skills, and a lack of intention to complete a course are the key reasons for withdrawing from online courses. To avoid it, the possible challenges should be discussed with the target group initially and the improvement of students' time management skills and study habits should be encouraged.

It is noteworthy to indicate that the described online course used for this study was held some time before the extreme situation connected with the outbreak of the pandemic coronavirus. Flexibility for distance education was a key when planning and organising a study process, which had to be proceeded. The community of practice ensured that educators had resources and skills to teach and support the learning. The previously gained experience studying autonomously online using synchronous learning tools and smart learning environments turned out to be an advantage. However, there was no guarantee that all the students managed to complete their university courses studying in safe home settings; many factors that affected study course completion rates among students interacted, time management, study habits, challenges in the process of studying are among them.

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https://doi.org/10.22364/htqe.2020.08

DIFFERENTIATED ACTIVITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION TO ENHANCE THE ACQUISITION OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AT PRIMARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

In the 21st century one of the reasons for teachers to pursue continuous professional development is experiencing demanding situations in their lessons, because the concept of mixed-ability teaching has broadened schools being open to diversity. Consequently, different pupils learn together in comprehensive schools and have equal rights to quality education. That also regards language learning. In the present article the authors look upon a situation in which a teacher of English in a comprehensive school has to deal with groups of primary school pupils who have varied needs and preferences for learning a foreign language both academically and socially (for example, having problems with reading and understanding the read material, focusing and keeping attention, working in pairs or groups). Therefore, the use of differentiated activities to enhance primary school pupils' acquisition of the English language is explored. The chosen research method is a case study in which 14 primary school pupils take part. Data collection methods used in the research are observation (a teacher's diary to notice the pupils' strengths and weaknesses of learning English and checklists to gather the evidence of the pupils' learning achievement) and document analysis (test evaluation forms to record the pupils' learning results and progress). The analysis of the gathered data shows that the use of the chosen differentiated activities, which are based on the ideas of mixed-ability teaching and inclusive education, has helped the pupils improve the acquisition of the English language The results of the case study allow the authors to conclude that the varied needs and preferences pupils have for learning a foreign language are a compelling reason for teachers to find new ways of teaching to be able to help each learner prosper.

Keywords: *acquisition of the English language, inclusive education, language teaching and learning, mixed-ability teaching.*

Introduction

Every pupil has rights to learn the way it is easier for them to perceive and process information, and it is one of teachers' responsibilities to notice pupils' talents and challenges and adjust the teaching/learning process accordingly. That is complicated, however, not impossible if teachers try to involve all kinds of learners in their lessons. In other words, while getting prepared for their daily work, teachers should have all the pupils in mind, those who are lagging behind and those who are gifted as well, because all of them can cause behavioural problems (Reid, 2017; Hallahan, Kauffman, 2009). The essence of mixed-ability teaching is careful preparation, meticulous selection of materials and creative planning of activities to help each learner make the most of their learning (Dudley, Osvath, 2016; Kaur, 2010; Figg, Jaipal, 2009; Tomlinson, 2005). In general, all classes appear to be mixed-ability with regard to pupils' knowledge, teachers being obliged to come up with lesson plans presenting differentiated learning activities (Dudley, Osvath, 2016).

However, according to Tomlinson (2005), nowadays, mixed-ability classrooms are not only about academic diversity anymore, they also concern learning difficulties or disorders, emotional, cultural, social and even physical disability issues. That leads to the concept of inclusive education. Even though perception of inclusivity regarding education differs, it mainly means full involvement of all pupils in all aspects of schooling regardless of the presence of individual differences (Loreman, Deppeler, 2010). All in all, inclusive education is one of the most topical education issues in the 21st century (United Nations, 2019; Rozenfelde, 2016; Nīmante, 2008). The new century has highlighted the necessity for all stakeholders to be united to ensure education is available to as many children of the world as possible not leaving anybody behind. The model of inclusive education envisages that special schools, classrooms for those who are considered to be different are eliminated in order to meet the needs of all pupils under equal conditions (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2013; Westwood, 2011; Loreman, Deppeler, 2010). To optimise the learning process of each pupil, parents should choose the school that corresponds to their pupils' interests and abilities (Buksa, 2016) and in which there is a coordinated support system provided by a team of professionals on a level of the state government, local government and educational establishment if a need should arise. What is more, in this team there should be pupils' parents and teachers, who are understanding, ready to learn and share the gained experience, who are open to the dialogue and cooperation with colleagues as they are the main actors putting ideas of inclusive education into practice (Rozenfelde, 2016).

Overall, it may be stated that the ideas of mixed-ability teaching are similar to those of inclusive education. Firstly, the similarity lies in the fact that both of them emphasise the importance of making learning more accessible to all pupils despite their varied needs and preferences for learning and the aim of both of them is to cater for each learner's needs. Secondly, another common thing is the role of teachers – in mixed-ability teaching, as well as in inclusive education teachers are of crucial importance as they are the ones who communicate with pupils directly and they are the ones who are responsible for involving pupils in the daily teaching/learning process. Teachers should be ready for situations in which pupils in their lessons may differ based on the learning style, ability, gender, culture, sexual orientation, socio-economic context, religion, or any other area that may leave impact on a pupil's learning and/or development.

Therefore, the present article gives an insight into the teaching/learning process of English at primary school, where the pupils have different learning needs and preferences, this being the reason for the teacher to apply differentiated activities based on the theoretical underpinnings of mixed-ability teaching and inclusive education. To sum up, the aim of the research is to find out whether primary school pupils having varied needs and preferences for learning a foreign language can be helped to enhance the acquisition of the English language if differentiated activities are used in the language teaching/learning process.

Methods and Materials

Appropriate to a small-scale education research, the chosen method of research was a case study (Hamilton, 2018; Cropley, 2002), in which 14 seven to nine year old primary school pupils took part (eight Year1 and six Year2 pupils). The research sample was a non-probability convenience sample, which was appropriate for research in education (Cohen, Manion, 2007). One of the researchers was also a participant of the case study being a teacher of English for the pupils of the research sample. The case study lasted for two months – October and November of 2019. Data collection methods used in the research were observation and document analysis:

- observation in a form of a teacher's diary during the first week of the study to notice pupils' strengths and weaknesses to make a list of the most common pupils' needs and preferences for learning English to base the further research on;
- observation checklists with a set of pupils' needs and preferences for learning English after the first week of the study to gather the evidence of the pupils' learning achievement at the beginning and at the end of the study;

- document analysis – test evaluation forms to record the pupils' learning results and progress at the beginning and at the end of the research.

The analysis of the data gained from the teacher's diary during the first week of observation in October allowed the researchers to notice the pupils' strengths and weaknesses of learning English. The reasons causing trouble for the pupils in the acquisition of the English language were varied, including academic and social issues. The most common pupils' issues were compiled in an observation checklist as affirmative statements for further observation. All in all, the checklist of the observation criteria consisted of 13 items:

- can follow classroom routines;
- can follow internal rules of the school;
- can follow simple instructions in English;
- respects others in the class;
- respects others who are different;
- displays positive attitude towards the English language;
- is willing to use English in class and learns how to do it;
- can use appropriate language items for social relationship;
- can cooperate with others in pairwork, groupwork;
- enjoys different games (without option of competing);
- is able to match the learnt vocabulary items with pictures;
- is able to construct short sentences about the topic;
- is able to ask and answer simple questions about the topic.

Using the observation checklist, every pupil's work was examined for four times (each time two English lessons in a row) in October considering the reoccurrence of the observation criteria in the pupils' work. The criteria were observed in four categories – *never*, *rarely*, *often*, *always* – based on frequency of the pupils' performance. At this point, there was also a test in English to record the pupils' learning results. According to the requirements of the education system in Latvia, pupils' learning results of English in Year 1 and 2 are evaluated at three levels: *still to learn* (represented by the symbol '–'); *partially mastered* (represented by the sign '/') and *mastered* (represented by the symbol '+').

The profound analysis of the data from the observation checklists and the test evaluation forms was the basis for the researchers to come up with changes to be introduced to the teaching/learning process. According to the pupils' particular needs and preferences for learning English and their test results, a list of differentiated activities was made, considering the theoretical underpinnings of mixed-ability teaching and inclusive education. The list was as follows:

- individual plans (the adjustments slightly differ from pupil to pupil);

- an opportunity to talk about pupils' feelings and behaviour;
- extended time to complete tasks when necessary;
- making the syllabus real (the topics relevant to pupils' life);
- a multisensory approach (the use of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic-tactile materials);
- giving simple and clear instructions;
- a strategic seating arrangement in the classroom (an appropriate place for each pupil to feel better and have less contact with irritants);
- the use of graphic organisers and pointers;
- the use of response cards and choral responding (hand and body movements also used as a response);
- project work;
- pairwork, groupwork;
- the use of technology and media;
- physical activity pauses (organised according to each pupil's needs);
- a system of praise and motivation (to point to success rather than failures, providing stickers) (Harris, 2019; Reid, 2017; Buksa, 2016; Dudley, Osvath, 2016; Westwood, 2011; Kaur, 2010; Figg, Jaipal, 2009; Hallanah, Kauffman, 2009; Tomlinson, 2005).

The above-mentioned techniques were used in the lessons of English for four times (each time two English lessons in a row) in November. Lesson plans were similar in both classes, just for pupils of Year 2 being a bit more challenging and advanced. The topic of the month for all the subjects at school, that had to be also applied in English, was *Clothes and Colours*. Since in each class there was a small group of learners, some of the teaching/learning process changes could be introduced not only to the whole class teaching, but also used individually for pupils who specifically needed it. Similarly to the observation carried out in October, the pupils' work was examined in November. In total, there were 112 observation checklists at the end of the research. To follow the pupils' academic performance, there was a test at the end of November as well, and its results then were compared to October test results.

Results and Discussion

With observation as a data collection method it was possible to follow the pupils' learning achievement. The observation criteria are marked in **bold** further in the text.

As regards the pupils' ability to **follow classroom routines** and **internal rules of the school**, it was observed that one month was not enough for the pupils to get used to the new routine and change the attitude towards

the internal rules at school. However, the pupils' **ability to follow simple instructions in English** during lessons improved significantly. At the end of the case study there were no pupils who could *never* comply with simple instructions in English. All in all, eight learners out of 14 moved forward for one position (four pupils moved from *never* to *rarely*, two pupils – from *rarely* to *often* and two pupils – from *often* to *always*).

Respect towards each other and **respect towards those who are different** being in a small society like a private school is highly important no matter how different everybody is, and even more important is the fact that everyone feels respected in the group/class. Before implementing the differentiated activities, it was observed that two pupils *never* or *rarely* showed respect to others in the group, and six pupils *never* or *rarely* respected those who were different by making their days in school hard, no one liked to be called names, scolded or ridiculed for being who one was**.** At the end of the case study all 14 pupils showed respect to their peers in the group either *often* or *always*. There were no pupils who would *never* respect others who were different, two pupils could still *rarely* respect diversity, seven fell into the category *often*, but five pupils would *always* respect classmates who were different. The results proved that the applied differentiated activities had helped the pupils to understand that respecting others and being respected were important.

One of the goals of learning a language is to give learners a chance to socialise and be ready to **use the language to communicate** in a variety of contexts. Before the use of differentiated activities nine pupils could *never* or *rarely* use appropriate language for social relationship according to the acquired knowledge, however, at the end of the case study nine pupils were able to use English in simple communication situations falling into categories *often* or *always*. Unfortunately, five pupils remained in the category *rarely*. The reason for that could be, for example, the fact that pupils, to whom communication was a real challenge, needed more time to improve the communication skill. What was important, it did not mean the particular pupils did not know how to use the language.

The way pupils learn from their teachers, they also learn from other pupils, **pupil-pupil interaction** may be a great help enhancing knowledge of English. Before applying the differentiated activities five pupils could *never* or *rarely* cooperate with others in pairwork, the reason for that possibly being a lack of social skills. At the end of the case study only one pupil could cooperate *rarely*, four pupils could *often* cooperate, and nine had no problems to *always* cooperate with others in pair or groupwork. The pupils' learning achievement was visible. Hence it can be concluded that with the help of appropriate differentiated activities and more practice, pupils can improve their cooperative skills.

Learning as such at the level of pre-school and primary school to a large extent is organised around **playing educational games**. However, a problem for pupils having specific needs and preferences for learning is that they are not capable of competing in games. Therefore, for that kind of pupils to enjoy the games an element of competing is not acceptable. At the beginning of the case study, one pupil *never* enjoyed playing games and refused to participate and six pupils *rarely* enjoyed games and their first reaction to the idea of playing a game was negative. The other half of the pupils were ready to play games. What the pupils' behaviour showed at the end of the case study was readiness to participate in language games (without competition) – 3 pupils *often* and 11 pupils *always* enjoyed playing games.

As regards the pupils' **attitude towards the English language** and their **willingness to use English** during the lessons, the analysis of the results showed that the use of the differentiated activities had improved the pupils' achievement in both criteria. While at the beginning of the case study six pupils *never* or *rarely* expressed positive attitude towards English, at the end of the case study only two pupils remained in the category *rarely*, but other 12 pupils were located in the categories *often* and *always*. Consequently, if the pupils feel positive about English, they might also be willing to use new skills in the class. Before the application of the differentiated activities two pupils were *never* and four pupils were *rarely* willing to use English in class. However, at the end of the case study 13 pupils expressed their will to use and learn English being either in the category *often* or *always*, which allowed the authors of the article to conclude that the differentiated activities relevant to the pupils' needs might enhance their motivation to learn and confidence to apply the learnt material thus enhancing their learning achievement in general.

Taking into consideration the pupils' limited knowledge of English and existing challenges with learning, the learning outcomes to be demonstrated by them were rather simple in order to be achievable. Moreover, they were communicative competence oriented which included **knowledge of active vocabulary** and **its use in short sentences** being **able to ask and answer simple questions** about the current topic. At the beginning of the case study four pupils could *never* and six could *rarely* complete the necessary language tasks and only two pupils could *often* and two pupils could *always* complete the tasks. However, at the end of the case study the results had improved, for example, nine pupils could *often* and three were *always* able to match the learnt vocabulary with its pictures, eight pupils could construct short sentences either *often* or *always*, but six pupils could *often* and three pupils could *always* participate in conversations asking and answering simple questions. The analysis of the results showed that the use

of the differentiated activities had helped the pupils achieve learning outcomes successfully and demonstrate progress in their learning.

At the end of October and at the end of November there was a test lesson, in which pupils had an opportunity to show the mastered English language competence. As there was such a lesson twice, it was possible to compare the pupils' learning achievement and follow progress that could be witnessed because of the use of the differentiated activities in the lessons of English in November. The results of the present research showed that seven out of 14 pupils had improved their learning results moving one level up. Namely, three pupils had moved from *still to learn* to *partially mastered* and four pupils – from *partially mastered* to *mastered*. It was gratifying to discover that one pupil had moved even two levels up – from *still to learn* to *mastered*, which was a significant achievement. Five pupils had good results both at the end of October and November, while one pupil, unfortunately, did not manage to change the result and it stayed *partially mastered*. Evaluating work and learning outcomes of pupils who have specific needs and preferences for learning is a complicated process and it differs from evaluating work and learning outcomes of pupils who do not have any specific needs and preferences learning. There might be differences regarding the learning process, quality and quantity of knowledge and skills. Teachers should be careful observing the learning process of pupils having specific needs and preferences for learning as it is not always possible to record pupils' progress according to the compulsory requirements, but it can still be witnessed that pupils have improved their results.

All in all, the pupils' learning achievement and learning results described previously serve as evidence that the applied differentiated activities, which were based on the theoretical underpinnings of mixed-ability teaching and inclusive education, did help primary school pupils having varied needs and preferences for learning a foreign language enhance the acquisition of the English language. Therefore, it is of importance that teachers are ready to adapt to particular circumstances in their daily practice and are motivated to develop professionally.

Conclusions

One of the preconditions of education in the 21st century is its accessibility to all learners not leaving anyone aside. Moreover, it has to be of high quality notwithstanding any differences learners may display. Mixed-ability teaching in its simplest form caters for all learners mainly regarding their academic achievements. However, inclusive education has broadened the spectrum of those learners' issues which have to be considered by teachers in the teaching/learning process including social, emotional,

cultural and other matters as well. Even though nowadays besides teachers there are also other stakeholders representing state, local government and educational institutions who are involved in the process of providing equal opportunities for schooling to everyone, a teacher is still the first person who can start to apply appropriate methodologies to help all pupils study and do it successfully. If teachers are open to diversity and ready to work with different pupils in their classrooms using differentiated activities, all the pupils may get a chance to strive for excellence at their own level.

The above-mentioned conclusions made based on the analysis of the theoretical, scientific and methodological literature have been confirmed by the results of the case study too. First of all, mixed-ability teaching in its broader sense is a reality in the 21st century classroom, because pupils do differ not only based on their academic achievements, but also because of their varied needs and preferences for learning. There are primary school pupils who find it complicated to understand English and use it in communication, there are pupils who find it challenging to communicate and work with their peers, and there are also pupils who have not learnt to respect others. Secondly, if a teacher tries to look for specific differentiated activities for particular primary school pupils and for whole class teaching considering the varied needs and preferences for learning a foreign language the pupils have, it is possible that the pupils both enhance their learning of English and improve their social skills. However, it should be noted that the present research was carried out with small groups of learners and the teacher had a chance to observe the work of all the pupils closely and provide particular differentiated activities to each pupil and whole class whenever it was appropriate. Moreover, there was a set time frame – two months – for the research due to the practicalities of the teaching/learning process. Therefore, further investigation of the input of the differentiated activities in the improvement of the acquisition of the English language of primary school pupils having varied needs and preferences for learning a foreign language is necessary.

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https://doi.org/10.22364/htqe.2020.09

STATE OF THE ART ANALYSIS AND PROFESSIONAL NEEDS IDENTIFICATION IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING DESIGN FOR EURASIAN PRISON CHAPLAINS

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ABSTRACT

Prison chaplaincy in the context of whole penitentiary system has been under continuous change with its ups and downs, criticized and appraised by historians, rejected by secular society, yet appreciated by prisoners, and open for judgment of generations to come. The image of the prison chaplain, who is highly educated, not young, skilled in psychological mastery calls far beyond his pastoral functions for a perfect advocate's portrait, which is, however, still under reconstruction.

The article aims to identify what state of the art of Eurasian prison chaplains is to outline the needs of prison chaplains for the framework development of an e-learning platform that would serve as a prototype of vocational training design. An action research was based on Objective-Oriented Project Planning and Logical Framework Approach concepts and studied the participants from six regions in Eurasia with help of such data collection methods as interviews, diary notes and document analysis. The data of action research formed an accurate civilian and professional profile of a prison chaplain and outlined the requirements to maintain the work in line with the trends in the branch. Findings of the research serve as a ground for organizational, educational, professional and personal changes. Eurasian prison chaplains (national directors) express their professional interests in regular training, professional and career growth, improved job practices and better work environment as they can still be an outstanding example and catalyst of well-being in the life of ex-prisoners.

Keywords: *chaplaincy, well-being, Good News Jail and Prison Ministry, Logical Framework Approach, Objective-Oriented Project Planning, state of the art analysis.*

Introduction

The global society has experienced significant changes in educational service provision, a wave like tsunami striking hard many governmental institutions and raising upon the surface numerous non-governmental organizations (NGOs) proclaiming a new era since the Global Goals for Sustainable Development were once adopted by world leaders at historic United Nations Summit in September 2015. In 2015 the United Nations established a new concept, and issued 17 goals for sustainable development on how to conquer the hunger, poverty, economic and social inequality, it opened new doors all over the world as a new start in the battle for democracy and humanity. The fact that different nations accept new challenges at such a various pace shows how wide functions and deep in understanding the educator's mission can be. While Latvian Prison Administration establishes a strong, pro-European social model in prison sector other neighbouring countries cannot afford even minimal chaplain service provision, which according to European Prison Rules (2006) means human rights provision for their sentenced citizens.

The context of the research is NGO, known as Good News Jail and Prison Ministry (GNJ & PM) International, working in Latvia, Lithuania, Russia (Tyumen and Krasnoyarsk Regions), Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan. It provides chaplain services to more than 83000 inmates with a limited staff of 42 mostly part-time working chaplains. At this moment one chaplain is supposed to reach about 1000 inmates on daily basis. However, none of the above-mentioned countries, but Latvia has ratified the Regulations on Chaplain Service yet.

The **aim** of the article is to identify what state of the art of Eurasian prison chaplains is to outline the needs of prison chaplains for the framework development of an e-learning platform that would serve as a prototype of vocational training design. The following **research questions** are put forward:

1. What unique qualifications of GNJ&PM chaplains are?
2. What are prison chaplains' (national directors) personal and professional interests?
3. What specific guidelines in order to develop the framework for vocational training should be considered?

The chosen research method is an **action research**. The research focuses on leaders of national prison ministries, known as GNJ&PM Eurasian national directors (further in text national directors) and involves a group of 12 respondents (national director and his deputy if needed), which is the **research sample** in this case.

Contemporary understanding of chaplaincy

Chaplaincy is known since a long time ago. It has shared different names, touched different groups of people, influenced nations in a different pace and level. Chaplains used to be team players and key people in different branches during last 50 years. They used to serve outside the church in such state institutions as prisons, hospitals, army troops and schools. In this research only prison chaplains will be focused on – how the world around and the chaplains themselves see their image in the contemporary setting. Scott (2013 referring to Rev Leslie Lloyd-Rees (1971: 9)) describes a prison chaplain as a "prophet, priest and pastor", where *prophets* mean bringing "theological insight" into both day-to-day every prisoner's life and "development of penal policy" as such; *priests* serve as links between God and men; *pastors* are able to see "people, unique and distinct persons" (Scott, 2013: 49) behind prisoners. Contemporary understanding of chaplaincy has already stepped out of traditional use of the word in terms of prisons; since chaplains are seen in healthcare institutions, schools and even military units all over the world.

Aldridge (2006) points out that some resistance to the professionalization of chaplaincy and challenges for chaplains to fit into secular culture with strive "for excellency and accountability" calls for a strong, "separate and distinctive" profile. Paterson (2015) qualifies the healthcare chaplain as someone, who practises "competency-based learning, attends to the educational, training and personal development needs", "fosters capability and resilience within workforce" and thus forms a portrait of "open and flexible chaplains who operate as spiritual drivers and enablers in health and social care" (Paterson, 2015: 4; Todd, 2013: 146) contributes to a definition of chaplain: non-prison, independent and neutral status, not seen as a part of either prison management, or the regime, which "tend to be the causes of its greatest pains". Scott (2013) stresses the notion of being independent and believes that a key qualification lies in the fact that every chaplain has a calling to prison ministry, and other personal qualities such as sincerity, sensitivity, spirituality and the ability to relate to the prisoners in a non-judgmental manner.

Todd (2013) outlines chaplaincy as "an alternative domain, within the prison, but perceived as apart from it" and "a safe space" where the chaplain represents someone whom they can speak to and rely upon and a chaplain himself as someone who prevents extremism, radicalization, respects diversity and offers equality of opportunity.

Timmins, Caldeira (2018) outline nine areas where chaplains show their professional, personal and spiritual image which are: 1. hearing confessions, 2. crisis intervention, 3. faith affirmation and ethical consultation, 4. performing a religious ritual and life review, 5. providing a religious item and

patient advocacy, 6. offering a blessing and counselling, 7. praying and bereavement, 8. meditation and empathetic listening, 9. other spiritual support. Based on the study performed in Great Britain on chaplains and how they reflect on themselves, Sundt (2002) illustrates the chaplains as: 1. males in 85%, 2. white in 84% cases, 3. master's degree holders in 60%, bachelor degree holders in 15% and doctoral degree holders in 18% cases, 4. protestants in 70% cases and Roman Catholics in 26% cases, 5. with mean age of 56,5 years. Scott (1996) specifies that prison chaplains shall approach prisoners 1. with respect, 2. in order to convince them that the "social self-image", "self-hate" is wrong, 3. in order to combat stigmatizing and dehumanizing consequences of imprisonment, 4. in order to be a "social bridge" with the "normal world". Sundt, Dammer (2002) point out that 1950s, 1960s brought renewal of chaplaincy with theologically oriented counselling, clinical pastoral counselling, traditional analysis and gestalt therapy. "Chaplains tended to focus either their attention on those few inmates who were interested in religion or they schooled themselves in the late twentieth century's new religion: psychology", state Sundt, Drammer (2002: 63).

Smith (1997) also speaks in favour of holistic model of ministry in prison chaplaincy which exercises positive power, is able to give, support, nurture people, be responsible for others: "It is about partnership and co-operation, about enabling and encouraging others, engaging in non-aggressive confrontation (when the need arises), negotiation and conflict resolution; it is about influencing the process of individual and cultural transformation within the penal system" (Smith, 1997: 252).

To conclude there is a certain tension between the classical view on chaplaincy and constantly changing image of penal system reformers. A chaplain who has always been: alongside powers, of a great importance, a distinctive profile with a set of qualifications, dressed in collar shirt versus a "neutral" person, with rather dimmed character traits, in a continuous transformation process, willing and able to listen to others rather than speak himself, offering others the right for decision rather than being decision-maker over subordinated, someone whose words and intentions are seen in others covered with his pastoral hand. Being self-critical and careful with inmates and patients they still work hard and reach many, despite they are mostly male ministers, they are gentle, may seem to be too simple or too religious or uneducated they carry their doctoral, master and bachelor degrees deep under mantle, being at everybody's disposal.

Methodology and Materials

To outline the needs of prison chaplains for the framework development of an e-learning platform design that would serve as a means of professional

development providing online vocational training, the action research has been chosen due to several reasons: first of all, action research is problem centred, client centred, and action oriented; secondly, it involves the client system in a diagnostic, active-learning, problem-finding and problem-solving process; and finally, to be able to design a change and work on changes (designed actions), a special attention ought to be paid on exploring how human beings design their actions in difficult situations and learn new practices.

Contextual and Collaborative Action Research with Interactive/ Collaborative inquiry features where 12 participants – leaders of national prison ministries known as GNJ & PM Eurasian national directors were invited to design their "future" (further development) – were chosen to identify GNJ&PM chaplains' professional needs for their own and organizational development. In order to introduce a structured and effective concept of organizational change, Objective-Oriented Project Planning (OOPP) and Logical Frame Approach (LFA) had been applied.

As to Vaccarino, Comrie (2007) contextual and collaborative action research fits larger (working globally) organizations, exploits spirals of steps and circles of planning, actions, results. In present research state of the art analysis of Eurasian prison chaplaincy was conducted to identify their needs for the framework development of an e-learning platform that would serve as a prototype of vocational training design. The case of prison chaplaincy in 6 Eurasia regions requires an **interactive inquiry** which would balance problem-solving actions and collaborative data analysis in order to enable personal and organizational change.

As there is a tension between personal and organizational interests, there were involved people and they were led to their own personal change, while local ministries had been invited to work for a better organizational improvement. The statement that "knowledge is always gained through action and for action" proposed dynamics and a chain of actions which would settle a continuous change.

Collaborative (or cooperative) **inquiry** suggests to "research" not "on" people, but "with" people and makes participants active co-researchers where 4 different types of knowledge (propositional, practical, experiential and presentational) are gained (Adelman, 1993). This action research approached organizational development, which could be outlined as "organization improvement through action research". The motivation to change had to be strongly supported with the assumption that if people actively participated in decision-making affecting them, they were more likely to adopt new ways.

Usually LFA serves as a tool for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of any innovation. Historically LFA was developed in the late

1960s, adopted as a planning and management tool that proposes eight steps: 1) conduct stakeholders analysis, 2) conduct problem analysis, 3) conduct analysis of objectives, 4) define the intervention logic, 5) specify assumptions and risks, 6) specify indicators, 7) prepare an activity schedule, and 8) specify inputs. This research adopted three first steps of the Log Frame approach with rather detailed analysis of stakeholders (interested parties, with a special focus on 1. chaplains or national directors as the first group – research participants and 2. beneficiaries – inmates in this case). At the first step – stakeholder analysis – the groups, people and institutions were identified which were likely to be affected by the development of online vocational training design, identified the key problems, constraints and opportunities they faced. During the second step – problem analysis – problems were formulated, *cause and effect* relationships were determined, and a paradox table was developed. As to the third step – analysis of objectives – based on the analysis of identified problems, the objectives were put forward and the strategy for Eurasian prison chaplains' vocational training design was determined. The data were collected by interviews with national directors to find out their subjective well-being; the diaries of national directors' self-reflections and document analysis to trace ministry dynamics, evaluate GNJ&PM chaplains' qualifications, explore their interests, needs, requirements, and predict the desired development.

Results and Discussions

The action research revealed another side of national directors. At the beginning of the research, national directors showed indifference, disinterest, low level of motivation for any measures undertaken in general and then poor participation in the Strategic Planning Course (Action Phase on the action research) in particular. Semi-structured interviews with national directors revealed conducted their subjective well-being in six dimensions: 1) self-acceptance, 2) personal growth, 3) purpose in life, 4) positive relations with others, 5) environmental mastery, and 6) autonomy (Ryff, 1995). The data reflected most important elements of comfort for personnel as well as success for the whole organization according to which national directors of GNJ&PM were found satisfied with their life status, jobs and ministry, their family life and personalities/roles, in spite of different background and previous life experience. As majority of chaplains had experienced a tremendous life change once in their past and then continued to work on their character traits, qualities required and appreciated by Christian communities, pro-social behaviours, exemplary lifestyle which would be identified as personal growth process. Their ambitious personal growth was accompanied by interest in their professional development and supported

by concrete and clear purpose for their life. Their life vision could be summarized by two statements: these people would do what they believed in and would work where they were called to. Their pro-active lifestyle, empathy, giving support and taking care relationships had formed their family model, relationships with relatives, friends and developed the circles of colleagues which became great backup in their life and GNJ&PM later. The participants were identified as potentially autonomous personalities, however, their cultural consciousness, tight bounds to their Christian communities, political legislation negative towards evangelicals in those countries in general and towards prison chaplains made the participants from eastern parts of Eurasia feel uncomfortable talking about autonomy. Despite restraint autonomy, national directors demonstrated outstanding skills to master their environment in several ways. They had successfully changed their environment in a certain point of their past, which resulted in their choice to work with people for common future well-being. Due to their different and yet unique leadership styles, sometimes negative or even criminal life experience in the past, however, current strong pro-social life orientation, in spite of government limitations and public religious preferences, the national directors fit their local organizations, presented best staff available to lead local chaplain teams, and demonstrated high level of environment mastery.

Thus, the following can be concluded: 1. While GNJ&PM chaplains have quite high requirements to be people of proven character, convinced in what they do and who they are, there are not many merits in the International Chaplain's Resource Kit which can describe the minimal competence required to apply for a ministry of chaplain / national director, 2. One of the researchers (Area Director, GNJ&PM Eurasia) has faced a variety of problems dealing with the incompetence of the personnel on the national directorship level, which can be the case in other areas for GNJ&PM International operating globally as well, 3. The situation where both chaplains and national directors meet with excellence the qualifications for proven character and conviction to be unique on the whole globe and have so many deficits in their managerial skills should be balanced with a "proper training" in sense that those missing skills, which never had been mentioned, trained, treated as important should be invested in by the organization, 4. "Full time ministry" announced in the qualifications above should be changed to "part time" or at least on National Director level the ministers should be motivated/supported/trained to get support for "full time ministry". All local GNJ&PM chaplain ministries, but Latvia, has got part-time working chaplains, and all national directors (inclusive Latvia) are part-time working staff, which does not support competence gaining/ development concept.

Based on the data of the diaries of national directors' self-reflections and analysis of documents: monthly reports to identify the dynamics of the ministry and International Chaplain's Resource Kit requirement analysis to compare to the current chaplains' state, the Paradox Table was designed in the form of structured cause-effect hierarchical order current problem – situation, and which is the opposite side to the desired future situation (see Table 1).

Table 1. Paradox Table (Ignatssons, 2020)

Paradox 1	**GNJ&PM chaplains needs vs offered teaching seminars**
Traditional "teaching seminars" concept is too expensive and too clumsy.	According to GNJ&PM vision chaplains should be trained regularly; However, to provide regular training (face-to-face traditionally, all "students" sitting and listening and "teacher" speaking – "teacher-centred learning" classroom) requires high costs with very moderate learning outcomes and that is why it is never done in sufficient quantity.
Paradox 2	**Ministry expansion rate vs learning needs satisfaction**
Expansion rate takes 1.25 times more seminars every year.	At the current ministry expansion rate (25 countries/ 20 years) GNJ&PM reaches 1.25 country a year, which means GNJ&PM must additionally provide at least 1 extra teaching seminar per year. It will overload the organization's capacity at this moment (if GNJ&PM does it only in a traditional way). Then not to forget others, which is at least 1 teaching seminar every 2 years, which is 25/2 = 12 or a little bit more than 1 teaching seminar every month plus 0.25 extra seminar for the new country. So, growing needs in education put forward a question how it can be accomplished.
Paradox 3	**Current communication form vs the needs of the growing ministry**
The current communication strategy does not meet the needs of the growing ministry.	The means of communication are email, WhatsApp, zoom. More than ever, however, it is still insufficient. Connections between countries and units are too loose. To support daily ongoing routines, the ministry should exploit possibly new way of thinking about communication not only communication tools.
Paradox 4	**Nationally oriented local ministries vs globalization processes**
Local organizations need to adapt to globalization processes and train the skills the global society requires today.	IT/ ICT, globalization processes require the staff to work effectively and obtain other skills. It differs a lot from country to country. However, the basic set of the skills to be developed and improved can remain the same. To create a qualification development process for higher ranked staff, different skills and training activities should be focused on. Many national directors need to improve their communication skills while many chaplains need a very basic social skill training. It means that a whole range of skills should be identified.

Paradox 5	**Two-day teaching seminars vs lifelong professional training concept**
Two-days teaching seminars do not serve the need of continuous, lifelong learning experience.	GNJ&PM owns a unique Resource Kit for Chaplain Training. The problem the chaplains face is that they have just two days to go through it during teaching seminars or conferences in one of the countries. They rush through the book and lay it aside for a couple of years. The ambition is to make GNJ&PM Resource Kit a living manual instead of rushing through it in two days.
Paradox 6	**ITC innovations and opportunities to initiate systematic training vs old expensive face to face training**
Not using video and/ or other ICT innovations hinders the organization to enter "systematic training" concept.	The organization has not worked on video recording of its seminars so far which is a problem for the introduction of systematic training in the field of prison staff training. IT/ ICT technologies provide a good base for creating and maintaining visual tools and IT-based sources for educational purposes. Face to face training is expensive and ineffective.
Paradox 7	**Best training manual vs local cultures and traditions**
The Resource Kit is not adapted by national organizations to fit local cultures and serve local vision progress.	GNJ&PM Eurasia experiences a continuous need in equipping its staff and giving an appropriate training in rapidly changing environment. The Resource Kit should not only be presented, but also adapted to local cultural situations. Any organization with the staff about 200-300 internationally and 200 nationally would face severe difficulties in its organizational growth unless it solves problems connected to education and administration.
Paradox 8	**The needs of development vs limited old fashioned verbal PPPs**
The reports on educational events of GNJ&PM are mostly presented verbally, partly documented. Further development is restricted to the way how main departments are organized.	Today GNJ&PM Eurasia has got no systematically documented history on educational and other events. So, it is difficult to trace each country and their learning and learners' needs, not speaking about curriculum, syllabus, competences. The idea of creating a bank of knowledge, a history track – an archive of development is not new but requires a proper IT equipment and strategy. All courses, seminars, conferences can be documented, filed and available to those who join the organization later and need to get a basic course. The costs to save and keep video files do not require serious financial investments. So, launching the training and education system would give a start to keep records, organize video and all other materials, and analyse progress.

Paradox 9	**Different roles and levels of responsibility vs universal, united knowledge**
Different levels of administration and management call for various skills and differentiated knowledge.	The idea of growth and expansion means increase of staff with different levels of knowledge and a broad variety of skills. How to systematize and structure these "newcomers"? The current structure of GNJ&PM International counts with 1 Vice President – 4 Area Directors – 25 National Directors – 200 Chaplains internationally. Normally every chaplain has got volunteers, a Chaplain Board, sponsors and so on. All these people should have a right to internal education and training. So, there are 4 rather big groups which demand different knowledge and various training of skills.
Paradox 10	**Needs for collaboration within the organization and with outside standing potential partners vs "uniqueness of GNJ&PM" image**
The gap between requirements for collaboration for national chaplain teams within the organization and their real cooperation skills is deep. At the same time needs for cooperation between external NGOs, educational bodies and national ministries could not be ignored.	The organization stands quite at its starting point in its collaboration with other NGOs working in the field. Those few signals the leadership has received from other similar international movements remind them they have to include cooperation possibilities and even promote the competences which favour collaboration and cooperation. Those strategies exploit not only multicultural competence, but also innovations available with IT/ ICT. Collaboration skills should be developed and knowledge about global sustainable development in education should be spread. It is impossible with only traditional teacher-centred classroom method. On the other hand, such virtual learning platforms as Moodle, Google Classroom and Office Teams facilitate groupwork skills and WEB-based learning at the very beginner level. All "digital aliens" should become "digital natives".

Conclusions

The action research had been conducted and the data had been collected and interpreted in order to explore state of the art in Eurasian GNJ&PM through the analysis of their personal and professional profile, interests as national directors of GNJ&PM, requirements to do the work of the ministry, and problems they faced in their everyday life.

In-depths analysis of interviews, diary notes and documents indicated that the national directors were exhausted, unmotivated, limited with their primary job tasks; some of them were overloaded in their ministries, some others had already lost their grip on the situation; and all of them were restricted in working time for GNJ&PM. Half of the respondents who were interested in changes brought forward multiple professional interests.

Their interests called the GNJ&PM International for provision of regular training (required skills) and new skills with improved job prospects, where the national directors (and chaplains) would be aware of their career growth. The national directors indicated their interest in improved work practices and creation of motivating work environment.

National directors expressed interest in their involvement in new curricula development and new work practices depending on their competence and engagement level.

In case of successful implementation of the above listed requirements and taking care of the staff's well-being and interests, the national directors would adopt new roles and perform new functions. The research cleared up that the national directors would update their teams of chaplains/ other interested parties on the ministry progress, participate in training design. This would practically mean to increase the national directors' online and offline work time in order to evaluate GNJ&PM progress, analyse chaplains' learning and general needs, define necessary skill training, engage with teams, volunteers, potential partners.

Skills and competences needed to form vocational training design are those primary "know-how" qualities:

1. ability to transform a curriculum into a modular system;
2. ability to handle different target groups;
3. ability to respond to innovations;
4. passion and perseverance;
5. creativity and not being afraid of failures;
6. life skills.

What makes vocational training a very special art is a set of the following requirements: there is a big gap between school and vocational school, formal education and vocational education. Chaplains can be classified as professionals who match their professional standards, which require vocational education in its turn. In European countries it varies from country to country, however, can demand the completion of 2 years professional school organized as an e-learning platform. Besides, up to 70% of time should be devoted to the development of specific skills and 30% of training time to the theoretical knowledge.

Both trainers and trainees need to know the labour market, the conjuncture, state policies and requirements in formal educational institutions. Chaplaincy in Eastern Europe can cause an irritation in traditional correctional system, however, it is the only way to provide better services and democracy-based thinking into conservative bureaucratic societies where informal and non-formal education has not shown its full effect yet.

So, to summarize it all the following should be stated: vocational training design should be given a special attention, time and care. It is a challenge

to formal educational systems, governments promoting punitive measures and preferring correctional policies normally found in those countries where non-formal, informal education providers, often presented by NGOs cause mistrust and even hatred and dissatisfaction.

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https://doi.org/10.22364/htqe.2020.10

STUDENTS' READINESS TO IMPLEMENT INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN PRESCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive education (also known as inclusion) is an important principle in modern education. However, it is also a great challenge for the whole education system, beginning with the education policy and ending with activities promoting each child's development. Researchers have pointed out that professional teachers are the key to the success of implementing inclusion; therefore, all teacher education programmes have paid close attention not only to topical issues of the specific specialization methodology, but also to topics that form teachers' professional competence in the field of inclusion. In an analysis of research studies on inclusive teachers' professional profiles, it is important to assess the core values and competencies that teachers need to acquire in order to prepare all teachers for work in inclusive education. The aim of the research is to evaluate the future pre-school teachers' attitudes and readiness to implement the principles of inclusion in their teaching. We used the survey and statistical data processing methods in a descriptive empirical study. The study concludes that future pre-school teachers' attitudes are generally positive about the implementation of inclusion into pre-schools; however, a greater understanding of the essence of an inclusive approach is needed in the study process, as most students consider their knowledge and skills to be insufficient.

Keywords: *inclusive education (inclusion), professional competence of a pre-school teacher, teacher training.*

The article has the following parts: title, abstract, keywords, introduction, methods and materials, results and discussion, and conclusions.

Content: the significance of the problem is justified, the introduction defines the aim of the research; the main text provides an overview of previous studies; the research methodology, data analysis, methods, and results are clear; conclusions are drawn.

Students' Readiness to Implement Inclusive Education in Preschools

For several decades, education around the world has been experiencing a paradigm shift in education, making inclusion one of the education system's key principles. However, its implementation into educational institutions' practice is still in process. The difficulties are related to the structure of educational institutions, public opinions, educational programmes, as well as teachers' readiness and ability to work by respecting their pupils' diversity. Professional teachers are considered to be the key to successful inclusion; therefore, a lot of attention in teacher training programmes should be paid not only to topical issues of specific specialization and methodology, but also to the development of values, knowledge, and skills that form teachers' professional competence in inclusive education.

In 2012 the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education developed the Profile of Inclusive Teachers as a guide for the development of initial teacher education programmes. They defined the core values and competencies of all-inclusive teachers as follows:

1) assessing the diversity of learners
2) providing support to all learners
3) working together – cooperation and teamwork is an important work approach for all teachers
4) continuous personal professional development – teaching is a learning activity and teachers are responsible for their lifelong learning (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2012).

Another approach to teacher preparation for implementing inclusive education identified four key skills that an inclusive teacher needs to acquire, which is partly in line with the above:

1) knowledge about special needs groups
2) skills to diversify the learning process
3) excellent classroom management skills
4) teamwork skills (Allday et al., 2013; Kwona et al., 2017).

We can conclude that the main achievable results in inclusive teacher training are appropriate knowledge about special needs groups, early diagnosis of special needs, knowledge of classroom management strategies, cooperation skills, and readiness for continuous professional development. At the same time, there are specific issues related to knowledge of special needs groups that should be included in teacher training programmes.

However, the most important key to success is teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. Shani and Hebels (2016), Booth (2010) revealed that a large number of teachers experience dissatisfaction, fear, or anger when dealing with students with special needs in pedagogical

work. They also indicated a discrepancy between what teachers have declared and the actual situations. Leatherman and Niemeyer (2005) found a direct correlation among prior knowledge, positive attitude, and inclusive education in action. Kwonaa et al. (2017) showed that learning about inclusive education was more valuable, as it was more likely to show teachers' positive attitudes towards inclusive education and to help teachers become more skilled in creating an inclusive learning environment. Sucuoğlu et al. (2014) indicated that special attention should be paid in curricula to creating a more positive attitude towards inclusion in pre-school teachers.

Latvia already has about 20 years of experience in teacher education programmes that focus on inclusive education issues, but Rozenfelde's (2016) research, which was conducted in Latvia in 2016, showed that in fact Latvian society has only just begun the path towards having inclusive schools. Over the past 20 years, a number of studies have been conducted on how prospective teachers' understanding of inclusive education is changing. In the period from 2002 to 2012, Tūbele and Vīgante (2014) concluded that there has been a change of attitude towards people with special needs throughout the learning process. The attitude is based on a different level of understanding because knowledge about the nature of disorders has been acquired, which is necessary to help and support teachers (Tūbele & Vīgante, 2014).

Pre-schools and pre-school education teachers have a special role to play in the implementation of inclusive education because the pre-school education environment is open, it is oriented towards children's diversity, and new public attitudes are formed in it. This environment reinforces the importance of training pre-school education teachers how to implement inclusive education.

Pre-school teacher education programmes take into account the model of an inclusive pre-school education ecosystem developed by the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. The model reveals the essence of good quality pre-school inclusive education in five dimensions. Teacher training (initial education of inclusive pre-school teachers) is included in Dimension 5 (external) as a support structure at the regional / national level and influences all ongoing processes within the model (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2017).

It is necessary to evaluate the experience of teacher trainings at the University of Latvia, as well as the topicalities of the education system in order to improve the content of teacher study programmes, resulting in graduates' higher professional competence in the field of inclusive education. Waitoller and Artiles (2013), in their study about teacher preparation for work in an inclusive education environment, indicated that

after graduation, teachers must continue trainings on inclusive education as it is an ongoing process that cannot define a final outcome, not even in teacher professionalism.

The aim of the research is to evaluate future pre-school teachers' attitudes and readiness to implement the principles of inclusive education into their future work.

The article analyses the experience and opinions of students of various pre-school teacher study programmes at the University of Latvia on their readiness to implement inclusive education into pre-schools.

Methodology and Materials

In the descriptive design empirical study uses a survey method for collecting data: questionnaire and processing of data statistics. The survey involved 113 students from a different pre-primary education teacher program. Respondents were introduced to the purpose of the study before the annexation. On site students completed an online questionnaire containing eleven partially closed questions. The resulting data is processed and analysed by a Microsoft Excel program.

The research question was the following: What are the readiness, attitudes, knowledge and skills towards the implementation of the inclusive education approach of current pre-school teaching students?

Results and Discussions

Based on the study programmes and courses offered by University of Latvia in teacher education, there are study courses that include inclusive or special education components in pre-school teacher training programmes at the university: Special Pedagogy (3 ECTS), Inclusive Education in a Multicultural Society (4,5 ECTS), Basics of Special Pedagogy (3 ECTS), Introduction to Speech Therapy (3 ECTS), Diversity in School Pedagogical Process (3 ECTS), Personality Development in the Process of Socialization (4,5 ECTS), Inclusive Education: Work with Children with Special Needs (3 ECTS). One study programme mostly offers study courses with content on inclusive education in the amount of 6 ECTS

The research base included students who were studying at the first level of the higher professional study programme "Preschool Education Teacher" (73%) at the University of Latvia. The students of the 2nd (55%) and 5th (26%) semesters, i.e., the first- and the third-year students, who also were studying at pre-school educational institutions. Most students (56%) reported coming into contact with children with special needs in their professional activity and internships.

During the study process, this tendency could definitely be assessed as an advantage. In the process of mastering the content of the course on unity of theory and practice, the change to the new learning approach was especially actualized, when the construction of the students' new knowledge was formed on the basis of already acquired knowledge, skills, experience, and attitudes or competences in working with children with special needs.

However, 41% of the students had no contact with children with special needs, neither during the internships nor in their professional activities. In order to promote these students' readiness to implement an inclusive education into pre-schools, they are encouraged to attend seminars and practical classes to solve practical pedagogical problems in heterogeneous group work, which includes different student experiences in working with children with special needs. As practice has shown, based on the solution of the pedagogical problems, the construction of new knowledge provides students with a deeper and more grounded understanding and readiness for the implementation of inclusive education into pre-schools.

45% of the respondents indicated that they come into contact with children with speech disorders, while 46% of the respondents stated they had contact with children with different cultural and linguistic experiences, and 38% had contact with children with mixed developmental disorders. The mentioned tendencies show that special emphasis should be placed on inclusive education in a multicultural society in course content, namely for speech therapy and inclusion. When teachers work with children with special needs, these components of inclusion or special education need to be integrated into the content and acquisition of other courses.

Forty-six per cent of the student respondents believed that children with special needs should attend special educational institutions or groups. A similar number of respondents (42%) admitted that only in very rare cases should children with special needs have to attend special educational institutions or groups. Thus, it can be concluded that pre-school teaching students need to strengthen their understanding of the integration of children with special needs into the pre-school pedagogical process in a general pre-school institution, and they need to understand the advantages of inclusive pre-school education.

The respondents' attitude towards inclusive education were most influenced by personal experience (80%), which confirms what has been said before about students' contact with children with developmental disabilities. Personal experience is a stimulus and promotes students' motivation to find out about the problems they will face in daily practice in preschools within their courses.

Unfortunately, according to the results of the survey, 62% of the students underestimated the general theoretical knowledge gained in the study

process about inclusive education and working with children with special needs in a pre-school institution of general education. Only one-fifth of the respondents (20%) rated their knowledge as sufficient, but 15% rated it as optimal. Similar results were obtained for the acquired skills in working with children with special needs, namely 72% of students evaluated their skills as insufficient, 15% as sufficient, and 10% as optimal. After assessing their readiness to implement the principles of inclusive education into pre-school education, we found that the majority of students (61%) were aware that they could do it, but still needed to improve their knowledge and skills.

Based on the respondents' answers, we concluded that students are motivated to work with children with developmental disabilities, and they expressed the need to improve their knowledge and skills. This was also confirmed by 90% of respondents' stating that in the study process they had an interest in learning more about the issues involved in the principles of inclusive education and special education. We can conclude that in the study process, students have learned to take a cognitive interest in issues of the principles of inclusive education and special education. However, in the future, it will be necessary to strengthen the theoretical positions in practical activities on issues of the principles of inclusive education and special education within the framework of general education study courses.

Respondents were asked what they think should be improved in the study process so that at the end of their studies, they would be better prepared to implement inclusive education. They pointed out that it would be necessary to devote a larger part of the study content to the issues of inclusive education. They also mentioned specific topics that should be included in the study content. For example, one student wrote: "Implementation of a differentiated and personalized approach into practice, topics on identification of special needs, practice on support system and inclusive education, speech therapy, child psychology, cooperation with parents in an inclusive education approach."

Respondents emphasized the need to strengthen their emotional (psychological) readiness during their studies to be able to work at an inclusive pre-school. A large part of the proposals is related to ensuring the connection between theory and practice. During internships, it would be necessary to perform tasks related to the implementation of inclusive pre-school education, as well as to observe examples of good practice of inclusive pre-school education.

Respondents also indicated that they were ready to increase their professional competence on issues of inclusive education by attending professional teacher development courses. This confirms these students' interest and positive attitude towards inclusive education issues.

After analysing the research data, we can conclude that future pre-school teachers' attitudes are generally positive about the implementation of inclusive education into pre-schools. However, they still need a greater understanding of the essence of an inclusive approach in the study process, as most respondents considered their knowledge and skills to be insufficient.

The content of study programmes can be enriched in order to promote future teachers' knowledge and skills in implementing inclusive education by promoting their readiness to identify children with special needs using various teaching methods and organizational forms and cooperation in a professional team. In order to promote more students' readiness to implement inclusive education, administrators should also use the course of pedagogical practices.

Conclusions

All children in pre-schools need to be provided with good quality education from their teachers' implementing the principles of inclusive education. In order to achieve this, it is important to strengthen teachers' professional competence for work in inclusive education groups; therefore, in the initial teacher training process, it is important to create study content in which students can acquire necessary knowledge and skills, as well as to promote students' positive attitudes towards inclusive education issues. In teacher training, students' knowledge and skills on inclusive education issues in pre-school should be further strengthened through the unity of theory and practice.

Based on the proportion of the existing number of students to teaching staff, the discussion raises the question of how it will be possible, in practice, to ensure that solutions to individual special needs students' problems are identified.

In the course of further research, it will be necessary to identify teaching students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes about inclusive education issues, after they obtain their pre-school teaching qualifications, in their professional work with children with special needs, emphasizing how the knowledge and skills acquired in studies correlate with pre-school teachers' professional competence when working with children with special needs, thus identifying the necessity for their continuing education.

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https://doi.org/10.22364/htqe.2020.11

TRENDS IN DEVELOPMENT OF PHYSICAL ABILITY OF STUDENTS WITHOUT PRIOR ATHLETIC TRAINING

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ABSTRACT

The research aims to focus on the fitness of students who have not undertaken athletic training. Studies in this field have not been extensive as attention has been focused on athletes representing universities. However, the number of athletes in a university is significantly lower than that of students without prior athletic training – only about 10% of all students are athletes. This research shows that notable progress in physical ability can be achieved among students who have not yet undertaken physical training. Methodology: physical testing of 30 students after eight weeks of a training program. The obtained results were processed and analyzed with the Windows Exel program.

Keywords: *Fitness, sport, student sport, explosive straight, endurance.*

Introduction

Research problem – respondents in physical fitness researches mostly are athletes. However, their potential progress may differ significantly from that of respondents without previous physical training. This research's target group includes students from general physical fitness groups of the University of Latvia Sports Center, aged 19 to 27. The number of enrolled participants is 30. Initially, students' overall physical fitness and physical ability were determined with the following development of a fitness plan and workouts. At the end of the training program, students were asked to repeat exercises to evaluate their physical abilities. Data were analyzed using Windows Excel, and conclusions were made based on data analysis. This research is connected to the notion of dual careers, yet views it from a different perspective, because students must combine regular training with general health in parallel with their studies. Insufficient attention has been given to students that perform physical activities for recreational purposes. The author of this research believes that a relatively good performance is attainable even if an individual has not previously undertaken extra physical activity. This process facilitates multiple positive tendencies that

include better and more controlled functioning of the body, improved outlook on a healthy lifestyle, increased self-confidence, and potentially added motivation to the academic study process (Moeijes, Busschbac, 2019). A similar view has been expressed by other sport researchers (Simona, Mirecea, 2015).

Previous involvement of sports participants had been in secondary schools without any extra workouts outside of the mandatory curriculum. Studies at university mark a new beginning and involve searching for new hobbies, one of which is sports that encompass various activities. Participants began the academic year 2019/2020 and simultaneously started attending general physical fitness workouts organized by the University of Latvia's Sports Center. Their main goal was to improve body functionality.

The development of physical ability was focused on two aspects. One of these was explosive strength. It forms the basis of many different physical activities as it ensures rapid movement in the shortest amount of time possible. Such movements are an integral part of basketball, football, volleyball, and other sports. Exercises targeted at developing explosive strength are based on anaerobic exercise (Santos, 2008). A Chinese researcher also shared a similar view (Zhang, 2012).

There is a variety of ways and training programs that develop rapidly to improve explosive strength. Researchers in Slovakia studied an eight-week training program that involved jumping exercises and squats in improving explosive strength (Vadeika, Longova, 2016). Both activities are crucial for developing explosive strength (Bruce-Low, Smith, 2007). However, this research included participants without prior physical training. Therefore it was necessary to evaluate potential exercises. Participants were asked to perform different squats variations, which were performed using only the participants' body weight without extra weights, i.e., the use of barbells. This choice was made based on the level of physical preparedness of participants. In order to perform squats or similar exercises using additional weight, there is a need for a certain level of physical preparedness and development of core muscles.

Due to the reason, as mentioned above, of lack of developed core muscles, specific exercises could not be included in assessing strength abilities. One of these is maximum strength. The standard exercise for assessment is one repetition of a weighted squat done with a maximum weight. This exercise can only be performed by athletes or people who have undergone training for such exercises.

The other aspect of physical ability evaluated in this research was endurance. It is part of many different sports. Typical examples include rowing (strength endurance), middle and long-distance running, swimming, etc. Each of these examples is specific and differ from the others.

The author of this research chose to evaluate participants using running as the form of exercise, setting the goal at 1000 m. This choice was based on the available infrastructure and the overall ability of participants to complete the distance.

Possible ways and methods to improve endurance are variable. Daily exercise allows the development of endurance for both high and low-intensity activities. Additional exercises were also planned to develop endurance while concurrently performing running workouts successfully. Authors in China, who have researched an eight-week training program focusing on improving endurance, found that additional exercises played an equal role in running workouts in developing endurance. Researchers had implemented holding the plank position and other multifunctional exercises to improve coordination and agility (Hung, 2019; Everan, Cecen, 2019). This approach indicates that any athlete or anyone, who exercises as a hobby, should include different exercises in their routine without straining only certain muscle groups. The framework of this research was based on this approach (Wall, 2014).

The training program was designed in conformity with other authors and fitness instructors' experience aiming to develop physical ability. One of the studies used was by Portuguese authors focused on explosive strength. This study's premise was different from that of the author, as its target population was basketball players in the age group of 14 to 15 years. However, the study employed jumping exercises denoted as plyometrics (Santos, 2008). Other exercises were also implemented in that study, i.e., using medicine balls. Since this research focuses on students without prior training, exercises included in the program cannot be too specific or require professional skills.

Another study analyzed the correlation of volleyball with parameters of explosive strength. It was based on standing high jump that is an integral part of volleyball in elements such as serves, blocks, or attacks (Simona, Mirecea, 2015). Thus, explosive strength can be improved in team sports. A downside is the lack of skills to correctly perform the necessary elements and difficulties assessing the movements, i.e., counting the number of jumps during a volleyball match.

Endurance was the other ability to be evaluated; therefore, exercises targeted at improving it were part of the training program. Endurance was assessed with a 1000 m run, although the training process was not focused solely on running. Participants improved their endurance by performing runs at a steady pace of a maximum of 30 minutes per workout session. These workouts are classified as aerobic exercise.

Numerous studies are highlighting the importance of endurance training. Nevertheless, the primary subject matter concerns an improvement in

endurance for professional athletes, who run distances of at least 15 km per day as a part of their training process. Studies from Spain have investigated methods for improving endurance. A long-term study was conducted to analyze the effects of different running workouts on endurance among professional athletes. Various paces were compared, such as repetitions of the same distance or repeated runs of differing distances and run with longer and shorter breaks in between. Another running workout included a steady pace, where an athlete was required to run a set distance at a slower pace (Casado, Hanley, 2019; Bruce-Low, Smith, 2007). Data showed that running at a steady pace had a relatively good effect on endurance, yet it was neither the best nor worst in improving endurance. Running at a steady pace has a better effect on heart rate and has less impact on joints, i.e., knees, heels, and back. Thus a decision was made to implement running workouts at a relatively slow, steady pace. The data were collected by a general fitness trainer, who is also a research author. The research participants were informed about the planned process, and relevant tests were performed with better quality and maximum effort.

Research process

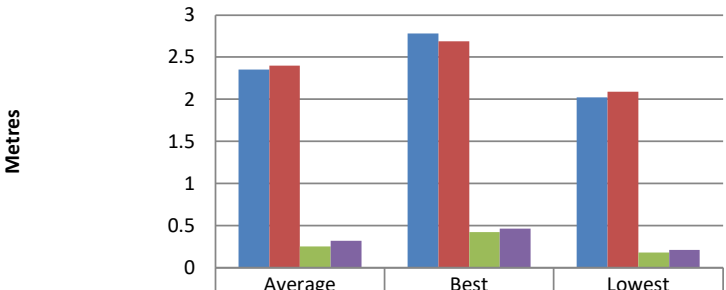
In line with the research of other authors, the period of training was eight weeks. The research was conducted from 1 October 2019 until 19 November 2019. Method used – analysis of the results within eight weeks with tests in the start and final stage. The obtained results were processed and analyzed by the Windows Exel program. The results obtained indicate the progress shown in the relevant physical properties.

Initial exercises that were performed were aimed to evaluate explosive strength and included standing long jump, highest standing jump, and 30-meter sprint. Endurance testing included a 1000 meter run at the fastest pace. Participants performed these tests after one month of training. Following this assessment, participants underwent more intensive training three times a week. Two out of three workout sessions were with a fitness instructor (author). The training program was developed to improve participants' explosive strength and endurance within the given period and emphasize the need for general physical fitness improvements, such as strengthening the core, intrinsic muscles, coordination, and agility (See Table 1).

Table 1. Exercises and running workouts included in one week of training

Exercises	Sets and repetitions	Instructions
1. Standing long jump	10 repetitions, 9 sets (3 sets in each workout)	The position of the back is crucial during this exercise, including landing
2. Highest standing jump	10 repetitions, 9 sets (3 sets in each workout)	Legs must be moved to the front during the jump at a 90-degree angle
3. Squats	20 repetitions, 6 sets (3 sets in two workouts)	During squats, feet must be fully planted on to the ground. The movement starts with the hinge at the hips
4. Sprint	Distance from 20 m up to 100 m. 4–8 sprints (done within two workout sessions)	Focus on the first steps should be wide and based on explosive strength. Maximum pace
5. Distance running	Steady pace run for 80 minutes (total duration completed in three workouts)	Two workouts per week include 15 minutes of running and one workout with 30 minutes of running
6. Various core exercises	30 minutes in each session	Exercises targeting back and abdominal muscles, variations of plank position

The respondents' results presented in the respective physical exercises sowed that the chosen training methods are advanced (See Figure 1, Figure 2, and Table 2).



	Average	Best	Lowest
Starting result. (H/J)	2.35	2.78	2.02
Final result (H/J)	2.4	2.69	2.09
Starting result (V/J)	0.25	0.42	0.18
Final result (V/J)	0.32	0.46	0.21

Figure 1. Results of explosive power in jumping exercises

Results obtained from the assessment of explosive strength points at several trends. One of them is that progress is not significant. For example, the average result of standing long jump at the beginning of the training program was 2.35 m. After two months of intensive training, the increase was within 5 cm from initial results indicating insignificant changes. Relatively better progress can be observed for the weakest result in the group with an initial result of 2.02 m and an improved result of 2.09 m (+7 cm). Unfortunately, the opposite effect was noted for the group's initial best result as it showed a 9 cm decline from 2.78 m at the outset of training and 2.69 cm at the end of the training program. Better results were obtained in the standing high jump. In the case of this exercise, each extra centimeter requires more effort. The group's average result was fixed at 0.25 m, whereas the result was 0.32 m; therefore, an improvement of 7 cm can be viewed as significant. Progress was also noted for the group's weakest and best results; however, both were lower than the group average, 4 and 3 cm.

Differences in progress for both exercises can have various reasons. Theoretically, progression curves should correlate as both exercises are based on explosive strength. Nevertheless, results for standing high jump were distinctly higher, if its progression curve is analyzed separately. The technique of the specific exercise can explain it. It may be the case that participants performed the exercise incorrectly at the initial evaluation, thus failing to reach their maximum potential. However, these nuances were corrected at the end of the research yielding valuable results. The main principle of sport pedagogy, which was infused during the exercises, performed extremely fast and with full effort.

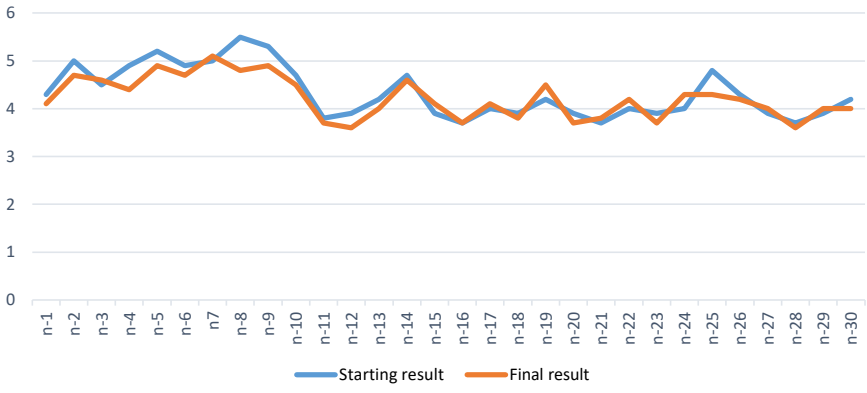


Figure 2. Results of 30 metres sprint

The third exercise included in this research was a sprint at maximum pace, which is also based on explosive strength. The time control was done for a 30-meter distance, with the participant building speed up already before initiating the time control. The average result at the outset of research was 4.16 s. At the end of the research period, it was 4.04 s. Therefore the overall improvement was by 0.12 s. This improvement can be viewed as satisfactory for a short distance sprint. Analysis of chart No. 2 distribution of both curves should be noted. The task of participants was to complete the distance in the shortest amount of time. Consequently, the curves should be closer to zero for the best results. Most participants improved their results, which can be seen in figure 2, namely, the red curve is lower than the blue curve. In some instances, curves cross in the opposite direction, meaning that a participant had a worse result at the end of the training program, e.g., n-26.

Analysis of results for explosive strength leads to a conclusion that results show differences among exercises. Curves for standing high jump and 30 m sprint show progress, whereas standing long jump results are not satisfactory.

Endurance was the other physical ability that was evaluated with a 1000 meter run at the fastest pace. The results are displayed in table No 2.

Data indicated that 7 participants showed a decline in their result after two months of intensive training, whereas 23 participants improved their results. Substantial progress was noted for participants n-7 and n-11 with a 6-second improvement in their result. The rest of the respondents had average progress of 2–3 seconds, which in the framework of a 1000 meter run, can be defined as steady considering the general fitness of participants.

Table 2. Results on 1000 metres running

Partici-pants No.	**1.**	**2.**	**3.**	**4.**	**5.**	**6.**	**7.**	**8.**	**9.**	**10.**	**11.**	**12.**	**13.**	**14.**	**15.**
Start result	4:23,4	5:05,4	5:12,5	4:56,2	5:23,5	5:46,4	4:57,3	5:11,4	3:56,4	3,30,1	4:54,5	4:30,2	4:21,2	3:40,3	4:00,2
Final result	4:19,3	4:59,8	5:13,1	4:50,0	5,21,1	5:45,4	4:51,3	5:08,4	3:49,6	3:28,4	4:48,2	4:32,4	4:17,4	3:36,5	3:56,4
Respondent No.	**16.**	**17.**	**18.**	**19.**	**20.**	**21.**	**22.**	**23.**	**24.**	**25.**	**26.**	**27.**	**28.**	**29.**	**30.**
Start result	3:44,5	4:02,4	3:11,5	4:00,2	3:33,5	3:56,4	4:50,4	4:22,4	5:00,3	3:56,1	4:22,4	5:03,3	4:33,2	3:31,3	4:03,2
Final result	3:45,0	3:57,0	3:09,9	3:55,5	3:34,0	3:50,5	4:45,0	4:19,0	4:54,6	3:57,0	4:24,0	5:01,4	4:34,1	3:27,5	4:02,1

There may be various reasons why some participants did not improve their results. One of them might be that the initial result was excellent, i.e., n-16 had a result of 3:44,5 and at the end of the program showed a decline of 0.5 s. The initial result for someone without prior physical training is relatively high. Therefore it is more challenging to improve the result. Another affecting factor could be a potential overload, which can hamper the body's ability to perform at the highest level.

Discussion

Results indicate different levels of progress. Analysis of studies by other authors reveals that multiple factors can impact the performance of participants. One of them is the process of rehabilitation. Researchers from the Czech Republic (Macakowa, Burianova, 2007) studied the effects of spa rehabilitation on children's physical and emotional state. Various additional factors must be taken into account to make the result as objective as possible. Results showed a significant difference in performance before and after rehabilitation. The connection between both of these research lies in the fact that participants were exposed to other stressors. Various daily factors, such as studies and work, which affects their ability to recover. Also, access to rehabilitation can differ; thus, participants are not subject to similar conditions.

Analysis of the chosen training program reveals that it served its purpose. Most participants improved their physical ability. Nevertheless, many studies employ different training programs, both in terms of activity levels and recovery. For example, a study on football referees' general physical fitness used a 40-meter sprint with a break of 1 minute to improve explosive strength. It had to be done for four repetitions and within a given time limit (Monea, Sabau, 2019; Santos, 2008). An opposite opinion was presented by an Australian researcher demonstrating another method for improving explosive strength. They were running at maximum pace for more than 15 seconds, which also facilitated speed endurance development. As a result, an athlete completed a distance of around 200 meters per run, which is substantially different from routine distances used to improve explosive strength (Ross, Leveritt, 2001).

Results of endurance tests indicate relatively good progress. However, due to participants not being professional athletes, their training process was adapted to their circumstances. During a week, participants completed 80 minutes of running at a steady pace equal to about 12–14 km. Several sports researchers have discussed the necessary running distance for professional runners. For example, young adults aged 18–19 should run at least 110 km per week (Tjelta, 2016). Another study involved participants

similar to this research, amateur runners, that have completed a marathon. In this study, participants ran 30–60 km per week (Rassmusen, 2013). These studies are based on developing specific physical abilities; therefore, intensity can be higher. This research focused on improving both explosive strength and endurance; moreover, its participants were students without prior physical training. As a result, developing a training program required careful assessment of the training load as an overload can lead to a decline in physical ability and negatively affect health. A similar study focusing on the general public included exercises comparable to this research found that progress in explosive strength, endurance, and strength endurance was made, and it had a positive effect on general health (Nazzer, Ilyas, 2016).

Conclusions

Data show that the initial notion of potential to progress relatively quickly can be confirmed. It is reasserted by several exercises, i.e., standing high jump, 30-meter sprint, and 1000 meter run. Progress in standing long jump was low; therefore, these results cannot be viewed as satisfactory. The chosen training program was based on evaluating several factors – students' abilities, schedule, and potential achievement.

Analysis of data and studies by other authors indicate that the level of progress is affected by numerous factors. The most important are the following:

- Ability to recover sufficiently to ensure full engagement in the research process and best performance results. In case of interference in this process, such as high workloads in studies or work can have a negative impact on physical performance;
- Training program and methods. Development of physical body functions can be likened to art; namely, one size does not fit all; each target group needs an individualized approach. Therefore, potentially other exercises could have been employed in the training program. Although progress was satisfactory, the outcome was expected to be better. Eight weeks of training was the right choice in line with several sports researchers' opinions, yet the chosen exercises, a number of repetitions and sets, could still be discussed as this differed in structure from what has been used by other authors. Basic exercises were similar among different studies, with a few differences in certain activities. Therefore these basic exercises were also part of this research;
- Physical fitness of participants. Although participants enrolled in this research were young adults (19–27 years of age), their physical fitness levels were variable. A common factor was that they did not perform additional physical exercises or activities daily. Progress is also affected

by genetic factors and the capability to learn new skills and adapt to specific movements.

Progress in both endurance and explosive strength was significant; however, initial expectations were higher. Most studies focus on professional athletes and their progress; consequently, available resources investigating physical fitness and the ability of non-athletes are scarce.

The main conclusions are that both endurance and explosive strength can be improved over a period of 8 weeks in people without prior physical training. The development of a suitable training program and adherence is crucial to success. The training program developed as part of this research confirms that the program exercises are justified and ensure progress.

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https://doi.org/10.22364/htqe.2020.12

PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' SELF-REGULATED LEARNING SKILLS IN MUSIC LESSONS

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ABSTRACT

The topicality of the study was determined by the increasing role of self-regulated learning (hereinafter SRL) in primary education. The aim of the study is to compare the teacher's assessment with the students' self-assessment, to identify whether there are differences in awareness of the required level of SRL skills in music learning. Previous researches on SRL have been analysed, and an empirical study involving 86 (N=86) 4th- grade students of primary school has been conducted to achieve the aim of the study. To determine the level of primary school students' SRL skills in music learning, the SRL skills of each student during music lessons were observed by the music teacher and were recorded in the observation protocol according to four criteria: motivation, setting learning outcomes, monitoring of learning and outcomes assessment. The questionnaire provided an opportunity to reveal the self-assessment of each student's SRL skills and compare them with the results obtained by pedagogical observation. The study found that there is no difference between the teacher's assessment and students' self-assessment. Both teacher and students believe that the students' skill of setting learning outcomes in a music lesson is at a low level, while the skills of monitoring their learning and assessing the outcomes are at a medium level. The study concluded that primary school students understand their SRL skills level, which is a prerequisite of monitoring learning and outcomes assessment strategies for joint learning.

Keywords: *self-regulated learning skills, music lesson, a primary school student, school education.*

Introduction

SRL is one of the skills that is very important in today's fast-changing society, as it helps to generate new ideas, theories, products and knowledge (Council of European Union, 2018), it is one of the cross-cutting skills included in the modern curriculum (Regulations of the National Standard…, 2018). The future requires teachers to adapt their practices to

new challenges by ensuring the implementation of SRL, which is not only appropriate and relevant approach for primary education but also is very important for success in the future professional life and labour market.

Previous studies highlighted several features that characterized SRL. For example, Zimmerman believes that SRL is an activity where students perform a task by taking the initiative and control the situation (Zimmerman, 2002). On the other hand, a study conducted in Australia highlights the fact that self-regulated learners become responsible for learning outcomes, approaches and strategies to achieve the desired goals (Harding, Nibali, English, Griffin, Graham, & Alom et al., 2018). Several researchers emphasize that SRL based on the formulation of goals, identification of necessary resources, selection and implementation of appropriate strategies, and assessment of learning (Zimmerman, 2011; Walsh, 2017; Adeyemi & Oderinde, 2019).

Many researchers believe (Zimmerman, 2002; Walsh, 2017) that SRL is an essential skill that a student must acquire at school. Zimmerman argues this in the context of lifelong learning (Zimmerman, 2002), but Walsh highlights the rapidly growing amount of knowledge in recent decades, which requires active learning from a person (Walsh, 2017). SRL develops a greater desire to learn, helps to acquire knowledge, encourages purposeful and productive action (Penetration skills, 2020), and in a music lesson, it promotes intellectual curiosity and emotional engagement (McPherson, Miksza, Evans, 2017).

Teachers have a significant role in promoting students' SRL during the music lesson. The researchers believe that teachers should prepare the appropriate environment and encourage students to learn independently (Du Toit-Brits, 2019; Jaleel & Anuroofa, 2017; Boekaerts & Corno, 2005). The teachers should implement specific strategies that enable reflection and awareness of learning (Thornton, 2010; Cleary, 2018), use guidance and encouragement, as well as include elements of SRL in the classroom (Harding, Nibali, English, Griffin, Graham, & Alom et al., 2018). Moreover, it is needed to give students the freedom of choice, and performance progress should be monitored and observed (Adeyemi & Oderinde, 2019).

Teachers' SRL skills and their understanding of what forming SRL is essential as well. The researchers found out that teachers need to understand what is SRL and how should it be implemented (Callan & Shim, 2019). Furthermore, they believed that those teachers who have SRL skills become more effective in enabling it in the learning process (Peeters, Backer, Reina, Kindekens, Buffel & Lombaerts, 2014; De Smul, Heirweg, Devos & Van Keer, 2018). Therefore, according to Oates, future teachers should be provided already during their study with teaching strategies based on an active, collaborative approach (Oates, 2019).

Teachers may face disturbing factors during the implementation of SRL in the classroom. Vandeveldea and colleagues revealed that teachers do not have the opportunity to implement SRL during lessons due to the lack of time, the pressure of work and the diversity of students (Vandeveldea, Vandenbussche & Van Keer, 2012).

To implement SRL in music lessons successfully, the teachers should determine each student's current level of SRL skills, and the students need to assess their SRL skills adequately. That helps to understand how the SRL skills can improve through collaboration and purposeful music learning process. This study aims to compare the teacher's assessment with the students' self-assessment to identify whether there are differences in awareness of the required level of SRL skills in music learning.

Methodology and Materials

The study involved 86 ($N = 86$) 4th-grade students in a comprehensive school (46 boys and 40 girls). The study took place during music lessons from September 2019 to December 2019. Three research questions were raised in this paper:

- What is the level of primary school students' SRL skills in music learning?
- How do primary school students evaluate their SRL skills?
- Is there a relationship between the teacher's assessment of SRL skills and the students' self-assessment?

Structured observation during the music lessons was carried out by the music teacher to answer the first research question. The SRL skills of each student were recorded in the observation protocol according to four criteria: motivation, setting learning outcomes, monitoring of learning and outcomes assessment. Three levels determined each criterion: low, medium and high. The low level refers to the arithmetic mean (M) ranging from 1.00 to 1.66, the medium level from 1.67 to 2.32, and the high level from 2.33 to 3.00. The data collected by the observation process were used in an aggregated way.

A questionnaire included 12 statements describing the intended learning outcomes, monitoring of learning and outcomes assessment was created to identify the perspective of primary school students on their SRL skills. The students asked to assess each statement using a 4-point Likert scale. For data processing, the responses were coded in numbers: 4 – always, 3 – often, 2 – rarely, 1 – never. The 4-point Likert scales divided into three levels. The low level characterised by an arithmetic mean (M) ranging from 1.00 to 2.00, the medium level from 2.01 to 3.00, and the high level from 3.0 to 4.00. The teacher's assessment and the students' self-assessment were

compared using Pearson correlation to answer the third question raised in the study.

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22 was used to analyse the collected data. The arithmetic mean (M), the standard deviation (SD) and the median (ME) were calculated. The Skewness was used to determine the normality of each variable. Skewness ranging from –0.5 to 0.5 means that the data obtained are fairly symmetrical, the range from –1 to –0.5 or from 0.5 to 1 refers to moderately skewed data, and if the data obtained are less than –1 or greater than 1, then they are highly skewed. The Bivariate (Pearson) correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between the criteria set out in the study.

Results and Discussions

SRL in music lesson starts with motivation. The study determined (see Table 1) that the primary school students' motivation in SRL music lesson was at a medium level ($M = 1.97$, $SD = 0.69$). A motivated student will be able to set learning outcomes ($r = 0.561$, $p < 0.01$) and monitor his learning ($r = 0.498$, $p < 0.01$). Other researchers have also found that motivation affects SRL. Motivation influences students' attention, task choice, effort and persistence (Zimmerman, 2011), it is gearing towards achieving the goal and expressed in the desire to perform tasks that will lead to achieving this goal (Boyer, Edmondson, Artis & Fleming, 2013). Motivation may be driven by internal and external encouragement. The assessment could be an external encouragement. Benders believes that internal motivation is essential in making music because it based on success (Benders, 2013).

Table 1. Primary school students' SRL level in music lessons

Criteria	*M*	*SD*	*ME*	Skewness
Motivation	1.97	0.69	2.00	0.04
Setting learning outcomes	1.53	0.50	2.00	-0.14
Monitoring of learning	2.02	0.70	2.00	-0.03
Learning outcomes assessment	1.67	0.64	2.00	0.41

The study found out that students in the primary school stage have a low level of skill to set the learning outcomes in a music lesson ($M = 1.53$, $SD = 0.50$). Defining learning outcomes is closely connected with monitoring one's learning ($r = 0.532$, $p < 0.01$). The teacher should aim at teaching students to set learning outcomes independently because,

without that, the students will not be able to monitor their learning, which is an essential part of SRL.

Monitoring the learning process is a skill that enables students to take responsibility and learn independently. The study revealed that primary school students monitor their learning at a medium level ($M = 2.02$, $SD = 0.70$). The learning process in music lessons often takes the form of joint making music in larger or smaller groups, which requires cooperation. It means that students monitor their learning in collaboration with other classmates. To enable children at this age to drive their musical activities, the teacher needs to teach common strategies for making music. A study conducted by Dignath and colleagues considered that primary school students still do not have sufficiently developed competence to work effectively in groups (Dignath, Buettner & Langfeldt, 2008).

Effective learning may only be possible if the students assess the outcomes achieved in music activities and determine their further action to improve it if necessary. The skill of primary school students to evaluate learning outcomes is at a medium level ($M = 1.67$, $SD = 0.64$). The study found that the responses describing this criterion were not sufficiently symmetric ($M = 1.67$, $ME = 2.00$). The uneven distribution shows that some students considered the assessment of learning outcomes as a very complicated process, while others had no trouble with that.

The students also believe that their skill to set learning outcomes at a low level ($M = 1.98$, $SD = 0.99$), but they can monitor their learning ($M = 2.92$, $SD = 0.95$) and assess the outcomes ($M = 2.81$, $SD = 0.89$) at a medium level (see Table 2).

Table 2. Primary school students' perspective on SRL

Criteria	*M*	*SD*	*ME*	Skewness
Setting learning outcomes	1.98	0.99	2.00	0.38
Monitoring of learning	2.92	0.95	3.00	-1.01
Outcomes assessment	2.81	0.89	3.00	-0.39

The skewness determined in the study (Skewness = –1.01) provides an opportunity to conclude that the obtained data on the monitoring of learning are highly skewed, which in turn indicates that some students had experienced problems in monitoring the learning process. The primary school students have to learn to choose appropriate strategies that can facilitate the monitoring of their learning. Fluminhan and her colleague have also found that even students in 6th grade did not skilfully use learning strategies (Fluminhan & Murgo, 2019).

There are no significant differences between the teacher's assessment of students' SRL skill and the students' self-assessment. The study determined that there is a relationship between the skills to monitor learning and outcomes assessment ($r = 0.738$, $p < 0.01$), but if the students can set the learning outcomes in the lesson, he will understand what should be done differently next time ($r = 0.822$, $p < 0.01$).

Conclusion

The results obtained in the study show that the teacher's assessment and students' self-assessment are similar. From the teacher's point of view, the primary school students' skill to monitor their learning and assess the outcomes are at a medium level, but the skill to set learning outcomes at a low level. The students also acknowledged that defining learning outcomes is at a low level. To prevent that, the teachers should not mention the learning outcomes at the beginning of the music lesson but should encourage and engage students to formulate the achievement by themselves. Although, both the teacher and students have found that monitoring and assessing of learning outcomes at a low level, this study shows that without teacher involvement, the students cannot reach a high level of SRL skills by themselves. That is why primary school teachers should pay particular attention to the selection and learning of the appropriate assessment and problem-solving strategies. Only strong motivation to establish cooperation can promote the development of primary school students' SRL skills during the process of making music. In a further study, it would be useful in music lessons to provide students with techniques for setting learning outcomes and various strategies of monitoring and assessing learning outcomes and then repeating the diagnosis to make general conclusions.

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https://doi.org/10.22364/htqe.2020.13

MOBILE LEARNING GAMES FOR DYSLEXIC YOUNG ADULTS

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ABSTRACT

This article is devoted to revealing the theoretical background of dyslexia in young adults to substantiate the chosen approach for mobile learning games. Education in the 21st century has changed just the same as young adult learners; especially those who have some developmental problems, such as developmental dyslexia. If they are lucky to encounter smart teachers, understanding parents, siblings and peers, they succeed in the education system, they reach learning goals and are satisfied with their life quality. If there are gaps between regulations, rules and the real situation, learners lose interest in learning and especially in reading, they do not achieve their learning goals and sometimes they even experience school failure. Educators have to think about new methods, new approaches to diminish the possibilities of failure, to renew interest in learning (and especially in reading) to achieve education goals and to ensure the possibility for better life quality. The article deals with theoretical findings in differences of dyslexia in young adults and the role of technologies and educational mobile games in the learning process.

Keywords: *mobile learning games, dyslexia, young adults.*

Introduction

Young adults with dyslexia are a group of learners who are not the main target group for new methods and approaches of learning. The manifestations of dyslexia in adults and young adults differ from those in children. The situation in pedagogy is developing and changing not by years but by days and technologies are in use everywhere. *Erasmus+* project "Learning Games for Dyslexic Young Adults" (2018-1-LV01-KA204-046970) (DYS2GO) started with the idea to develop learning games on mobile devices especially for young adults with dyslexia who are disappointed in learning, without interest of learning and maybe even have experienced failure in school. Six European countries participate in this project: Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania (www.dys2go.eu). Theoretical background was needed to create mobile

games, to meet the needs of young adults, and to understand their dyslexic essence.

The main aim of the article is to substantiate and create theoretical background for the needs of the project (to choose and create mobile learning games for dyslexic young adults).

Methods: review of scientific literature (Web of science and Google scholar were used) by searching key words: dyslexia, young adults, mobile learning games; as well as content analysis to define the categories for the research.

Theoretical Framework and Findings in Scientific Literature

The first task was to define the age group – *young adults*. Several authors (Ricketts, Lervag, Dawson, Taylor, & Hulme, 2019) consider early adolescence to be at the age 12–14; some speak about early adolescence at the age 8–13 (Snowling, Muter, & Carroll, 2007), while others define the age group of young adults as 16–25 (Nielsen et al., 2016). Taking into account the target group and main difficulties – our concept – the age group starts from 16. This is a very complicated age in general (Giles, 2005a; 2005b); sometimes there are identity formation problems (Giles, 2005b); sometimes – unique mental health crisis (Giles, 2005a); and especially for those who have dyslexia (Gibby-Leversuch, Hartwell & Wright, 2019; Eden et al., 2004). Some of these individuals have had a really good support system in school during the first years of education. This means good support in the learning process, as well as an understanding attitude from peers, teachers and family. There are cases analysed in articles and research papers, where the attitude is not as supportive even in the family (Gibby-Leversuch et al., 2019). Then the educational system, particularly learning to read, sometimes presents problems; for some children it is real struggle (Gaskins, 2005); it is reinforced if they lose interest in reading (Tubele, 2010); and it happens if the process of reading is not successful. This means that the school's educational system has employed unsuccessful learning methods, the teachers have been unable to create and maintain an interest in reading, and the family has not been supportive enough. These learners risk losing interest in education altogether.

Dyslexia and developmental dyslexia. Developmental dyslexia is a specific learning (reading) disorder characterized by problems with coping with written symbols despite normal intelligence (Davis, n. d.; Snowling, 2015; Thompson et al., 2015). Not only do problems occur in the reading process, everyday life quality is also affected (Cho, Capin, Roberts, Roberts G., J., & Vaughn, 2019). Dyslexic children and adults may have problems putting

things in order, following instructions, may confuse left and right, and other manifestations. Each dyslexic person's difficulties are different and vary from light to very severe disruption of the learning process (Turkington, & Harris, 2006). If they do not receive proper support during the learning process, they lose their motivation to learn and do not develop a positive attitude towards the learning process; this is especially influenced by the presence of both dyslexia and other learning disabilities.

Dyslexic young adults. Although difficulty in reading is a hallmark of dyslexia, particularly in children, most adults with dyslexia can read and have devised strategies to work around their reading difficulties: adults with dyslexia may also present a range of other characteristics, such as memory problems (Eden et al., 2004; Engelhardt, 2020; Hudson, High, & Otaiba, 2007; Nielsen, et al., 2016). People with dyslexia do not, however, have trouble with vocabulary or speaking (Ricketts, et al., 2019). Young adults with dyslexia are a particular group that already exhibits insufficient interest in learning and reading. Strategies that would renew the joy of learning are required.

School failure. The causes of school failure include language disorder (oral or listening), reading disorder, mathematics disorder, writing disorder, and other problems, or a combination of some. The consequences of school failure result in remarkable economic loss to the nation, low self-esteem (Gibby-Levensuch, et al., 2019), sometimes even criminal behaviour. There is no research in Latvia about the consequences of school failure of dyslexic persons. Some authors present the results of studies about the health-related quality of life for children and adolescents with specific language impairments, which correlate with bad reading skills (Huber-Dibon, Bru, Gras Le Guen, Launay, & Roy, 2016).

Reading interest is one of the pre-requisites of successful reading (Tubele, 2010). The era of digital literacy raises the question of whether the meaning of reading interest may be changed. There has been a case study about reading for 11–13 year-old students in the digital age (Fletcher, & Nicholas, 2016) that draws interesting conclusions: there is a changing use of information communication technologies to engage and motivate young adolescents in reading; the use of iPads and laptops during reading facilitated interest in reading; assistive technology helps people with dyslexia save time and overcome challenges. This means that young adults with dyslexia need to renew their interest not only in reading, but the learning process as a whole, so the process would be pleasant and create joy and positive experiences; in this way, mobile games would create the impression of a pleasant process without connecting it with learning.

Technologies and Mobile learning. Due to the new era in the education where technologies become more and more important, there are many

suggestions to use assistive technologies and mobile devices in the learning process, and especially for dyslexic learners: use technology to support reading and learning; use technology to support note taking, to support spelling and writing (Franceschini et al., 2019; Lavin-Mera, Torrente, Moreno-Ger, Vallejo-Pinto, & Fernandez-Manjon, 2009; Pechenkina, Laurence, Oates, Eldridge, & Hunter, 2017; Stiller, & Schworm, 2019). A good way to learn more while having fun is to use games. Game/mobile learning is one of the possibilities to restore the interest in the learning process and in reading specifically (Wardaszko, & Podgorski, 2017; Camilleri, & Camilleri, 2019). Mobile learning is an innovative tool in education (Jinot, 2019), it gives an opportunity to reduce the cognitive load and enable learners to focus their resources on meaningful learning (Stiller, & Schworn, 2019). Mobile learning is more effective (Pechenkina et al., 2017), and educational gaming gives an opportunity to broaden different approaches in teaching and learning (Lavin-Mera et al., 2009; Francechini et al., 2013). There are many Internet resources with fun dyslexia games for kids, students and adults; popular dyslexia games and websites; games from DyslexiaGames.com; three dyslexia programs for adults; multi-sensory programs; computer applications, and many other resources.

The created mobile games will be available for all who find them interesting, but they will carry the most importance for those young adults who have lost their interest in reading, who have experienced school failure. The games have been created so that the learning process and the improvement of reading skills would happen in a way that is pleasant and acceptable for young adults.

DYS2GO games. Games of the project DYS2GO are based on theoretical research about weak areas to be developed in dyslexic young adults. These areas are auditory perception, memory, discrimination, and sequence (Adlard, & Hazan, 1998; Thompson et al., 2015; Engelhardt, 2020; Al Dahhan, Kirby, & Munoz, 2016; McArthur, & Castles, 2017; Hudson et al., 2007; Ramus, Marshall, Rosen, & Van Der Lely, 2013), visual perception, memory, discrimination, and sequence (Kossowski, Chyl, Kacprzak, Bogorodzki, & Jednorog, 2019; Viser, Boden, & Giachi, 2004; Facoetti, Paganoni, Turatto, Marzola, & Masetti, 2000; Facoetti et al., 2009), and spatial perception (Facoetti, n.d.; Facoetti et al., 2000; Facoetti et al., 2009; Kossowski et al., 2019). It was decided to create storylines that fit the interests of young boys and girls, to keep the fun of the game, and to develop reading skills. The player can choose either to read or to listen to the task. In accordance with the theoretical findings, different storylines (travelling, shopping, leisure time, adventure (archaeologist) and Jenny's story) were created. The next research will be devoted to test the games on young adults.

Conclusions

- Young adults are a specific group of learners with different background.
- Dyslexic young adults sometimes have low self-esteem, they have lost interest in learning and especially in reading; school failure is possible.
- Reading interest is hard to create, easier to maintain, but there are possibilities to restore it by new approaches in education and the learning process.
- The use of technologies is a feature of the 21st century and mobile learning, educational games, and assistive technologies are crucial in the learning process of dyslexic individuals.
- Mobile learning games provide a perfect possibility to improve reading skills in dyslexic young adults and to promote better life quality.

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LEGAL ASPECTS OF PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THE EDUCATION OF A CHILD

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ABSTRACT

In the Latvian education system, the legal relationship between parents and the school is important. The child's parents are obliged to take the child to school. It means that the State implements an education policy in line with both the findings based on educational science and that the child's right to education is ensured at least at the basic school level. In Latvia, education law as a branch of law is an underdeveloped field. The legal relationship between children's parents and the educational institution has been little studied from the legal science perspective. Thus, in this study, the author analyzes the role of the institute of parental responsibility in the field of education, using the methods of interpretation of general science and law – historical, grammatical and teleological methods. It is found that the special legal regulation of Latvia determines specific parental responsibilities and rights in providing education for their child. Teachers do not become substitutes for the child's parents, but have a duty to do so as responsible and caring parent would do to their children. Parental authority does not end when the child enters the school premises, but it is limited to the extent that the educational institution fulfills its responsibilities by ensuring an educational process in accordance with the child's interests and human rights.

Keywords: *education law, family law, parental authority, parental responsibility, public and private power, teacher's rights and duties.*

Introduction

A child's education is necessary for his/her development. Namely, education alongside the child's health, emotional and behavioural development, identity, family and social relationships, and self-care skills is an essential need for the child's development (The Children guidance and regulations Act, 2015). Education is a long-term, continuous, systematic process, which means that it can be analyzed in its time, system and development dimension. For instance, education is the process and result of the acquisition of systematized knowledge and skills and the formation of attitudes. The educational process includes learning and upbringing activities, but the outcome of education is a set of personal knowledge, skills

and attitudes. The Latvian Constitutional Court points out that the quality, accessibility and content of education at all levels and age groups of education is an opportunity for Latvia's development and a precondition for increasing the value of human capital (The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Latvia, 2019). A similar view is expressed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which points out that it is generally accepted that formal education is one of the most important factors in contributing to an individual's skills and human capital, although it is not the only factor. Namely, parents, individual abilities and other people contribute to the child's schooling. For a long time, the child's parents have not been left indifferent to what is happening in the education system and at school. Jan Amoss Komensky, the author of the 17th century classic work of pedagogy – "Great Didactics" – considered that the work of education and cultural care is the most important duty of every civilized country, but the child's education begins at home, that is in the so-called "mother's school" where education is undertaken by the child's parents (Komensky, 1632/1992). Positive cooperation between school and family based on mutual respect is one of the most important preconditions for the development of a student's personality (Klauža et al., 2009). Already, in the 1930s, Latvian legal scholar Vasilijs Sinaiskis pointed out that civil society tries to highlight a person's personality, but in the past, personality was suppressed in society for the benefit of the general public. He emphasizes that the scale of civil society is determined by its limits. This means highlighting the individuality of the personality, promoting sociability and weakening social antagonism. Thus, with the help of legal norms, it is possible and even necessary to promote the general development of culture and personality, reduce social contradictions and promote the involvement of the individual in the processes of society. Undoubtedly, socialization helps an individual to acquire social norms, including legal norms, to become an educated person, and it in turn encourages easier adaptation or integration into society and finding one's place in it, as well as developing one's talents, abilities, skills and competences, and spiritual potential. The process of upbringing is possible if a person is considered to be a subject of social development, a subject of life, culture, creativity and production. Namely, the pedagogical scientist Jurgena points out that the personality must be seen as a dynamic formation and special attention must be paid to its determination. In her opinion, the determinants of personality development are the peculiarities of age, socio-psychological and psychological characteristics and complex structural procedural interrelationships in their interaction (Jurgena, 2002). It is believed that the school learning process should promote the formation of harmonious and strong personalities (Beļickis et al., 2000). In turn, the child's parents,

as the child's natural guardians (legal representatives), have a duty to protect the child's rights and interests protected by law, including the right to education (Law on the Protection of the Rights of the Child, 1998). The Latvian Education Law imposes one of the following obligations on parents – to observe the legal rights and interests of children, teachers and other persons (Education law, 1998). Respectively, parents have a duty to respect their legal rights and interests. The right to education as a subjective right means that: a) the right to education is legalized for all without any discrimination; (b) the State has an obligation to respect, protect and exercise these rights; (c) there are ways in which the State can be held liable for the abuse or denial of this right. Thus, the State has the right and obligation to ensure that the new generation receives education and its implementation is adequately protected, but the child's parents have an obligation to ensure that the child receives education. In order to gain clarity on parental responsibility in the field of education, it is necessary to clarify what is determined in both national and international legislation on the role and functions, power and responsibility of the child's parents in the field of education. Researchers of the Latvian education system point out that teachers feel a violation of their rights by students and students' parents (Beraģe, 2020). Teachers, in cooperation with parents, see difficulties both in terms of psychology and in separating the responsibilities of parents and teachers. In the author's opinion, it is necessary to analyze such categories as "parental responsibility", "parental authority" with the methods of interpretation available in law, and to find out what is said in Latvian legal doctrine for determining parental responsibility for the education and upbringing of one's child.

An insight into the history of the institute of parental authority

Būmanis, a Latvian legal scholar and editor of the Latvian Civil Law of 1937 translates the term "parental authority" from Latin as "patria potestas", Russian as "родительская власть", and German as "elterliche Gewalt". He points out that the oldest textbook of Roman law "the Institutes of Gaius", which was written in the 2nd century, in it is stated: "..Follows another division of rights of persons. Namely, some persons have their own rights, others are subject to foreign rights. However, among the persons subject to foreign rights, some are in the power of the master or father (potestas), others in the power of the husband (manus), still others in the service of mancipium – the status of a freeman subject to the power and control of the head of a Roman family similar to that of a slave except that he could not be abused or killed without legal cause. The Latin term "patria potestas "means" power of the father (Būmanis, 1937). In Roman

law neither a woman nor child are considered to have a certain amount of rights and obligations, which means that they do not have the ability to express their will. In ancient Rome, a man was considered a person. Only later the person was every person, both persona sui iuri (having full legal rights or capacity) and persona alieni iuris (to be legally dependent upon the power of another) (Sinaiskis, 1938). In the author's view, this circumstance could also indicate that a man who has become a father therefore has enormous power over his wife and children, because quite naturally, if they are not subjects of law, then they are not equal in the status of expressing their personal will.

Professor Vasilijs Sinaiskis points out that in the Latvian Civil Law the term "parental power" is retained, abolishing the term "husband's power", which was used before 1937. Namely, it emphasized the principle of equality of spouses. At the same time, the term 'parental authority' is retained, meaning that parents have power over the child until he or she reaches the age of majority (18 years old). The meaning of the institute of parental authority, on the other hand, is based on the welfare of the minor, but no longer only on parental rights, and parental authority is more a duty than a right. Should a child not have the ability to act, then this ability is organized as another person's ability for the benefit of the child – in the form of guardianship. When legal capacity is analyzed from this point of view, then it cannot be said that representation is a child's ability. However, this is a fiction, because an alien ability can never be a child's ability. In this case, it is not a question of ability, but of opportunity. Consequently, legal capacity is a legal term, but in fact it is a legal possibility (Sinaiskis, 1938). We have no evidence that the father has had the power to take the lives of his disobedient children, but he has been able to exclude them from the right of inheritance. Švābe (1932) stated, "*Which was sometimes expressed in the threat formula: "I will not give him needles without an eye*." (p. 21). The son, who resisted his father's power, was driven into the woods to begin the procession. (Švābe, 1932). Thus, the ancient Latvian traditions define the belief that children must obey their parents, that is Latvian traditions determine to honour parents, at least because they are older and wiser than children. Thus, it can be seen that in Latvian traditions there is an institute of parental power or the right to demand obedience from children. The absolute power of parents over their children can be found in both Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome. Namely, the family does not acquire its rights from an organized community or civil society (Latin-civitas). This is the view of the French historian Fustel de Coulanges. He points out that if private law were governed by civil society, or civitas, it would probably be very different from what we see today. De Coulanges emphasized that in such

a case, for example, civil society's (civitas) property rights and inheritance rights would be based on completely different grounds, as it was not in its interest to make land inseparable and kinship inheritance inseparable. The law that legitimized the father's right to sell or even kill his son is found in both Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome (de Coulanges, 1864/2017). It can therefore be concluded that private law takes precedence over public law. Consequently, they had a significant impact on family law, that are the norms and procedures of the family. At the same time, Professor Kalnins points out that from the point of view of practice, Roman family law is not valid in any world legal system today. That is, from this point of view, Roman law is history or a historical fact (Kalnins, 1938). Sinaiskis, on the other hand, points out that not only the family, but also the whole political organization was different than it is today. Roman family law was based on the principle of power, where the head of the family – pater familias (the father of the family) and his power was absolute, unlimited. The other members of the family are fully subordinate to this power and are considered alien iurs-persons without their own rights. The principle of kinship that characterizes the modern family was not the basis of the Roman family. The emancipated son was no longer a family member and therefore no longer a relative, but a complete stranger. The father had no power over the son, but on the contrary a stranger who was part of the family farm was under the power of pater familias. Namely, in the beginning this power was a physical, material power. The power that belongs to a soldier, but over time this absolute power diminished and instead another term arose – potestas, which describe the legal power of the head of the family, the possibility of doing or not doing something (Sinaiskis, 1938). As previously emphasized, there has long been a custom in the Latvian family that the father is the head of the family, although, as has already been pointed out, the father did not have such unlimited power over the children. Namely, a child could not be sold (son) or even killed, but in ancient Rome or Greece it was legally justified and allowed. Sinaiskis points out that Roman law as a permanent system of positive rights and their influence in Latvian legal system is extremely great. That is, the Latvian Civil Law of 1937 in most is based on Roman law. Namely, this applies in particular to the law of obligations and property, but many important institutes and principles of Roman law have not been completely abandoned in family and inheritance law either (Sinaiskis, 1938). Thus, as indicated above, the term "parental authority" in the Latvian Civil Law essentially emphasizes that parents have a duty to take care of them, but in order to take care of their children, parents need some authority. In this sense, the expression of power would be in the right of the parent. That is, it is a subjective right that belongs to a particular individual. Namely, it is

a parent's subjective right (power), which belongs to it as a subject of rights on the basis of objective law – general law. In this case, the parental right (power) is expressed as the will of the parents, because the right is based on the will, but in order for a person to settle a relationship with his or her own will, the law must give him or her certain rights-power. It can be seen that the above-mentioned concept of the connection of parental authority with the obligation to care for a child under its control is a historically developed concept. This aspect is important because it emphasizes that parents are not and cannot be just holders of power, but also that parents have both rights and responsibilities. Thus, the absolute expression of the above-mentioned father's power was rooted in tradition or custom, and originally existed in private law, i.e. long before the ancient Romans, as an organized society or group of citizens, created so-called public law and only as a result of long-term development. From the author's point of view, it is important to be aware of the further analysis of the legal relationship between an educational institution as a public authority (a subject of public law) and parents as a subject of private law. Namely, it could be assumed from the above that family life and the order that has prevailed in it for a long time is unshakable and inherently inviolable. From the point of view of 21st century legal science, it must be concluded that parental power or rights are not absolute rights. The author can conclude from the above prima facie (at first sight) that the parents have a certain power in the upbringing of their child, which means that the parent is entitled to use it not with abuse or violence, but with a certain sense of duty. For example, taking care of a child so that he or she can both eat and acquire knowledge and skills that will be useful in the child's future life.

Article 177 of the Latvian Civil Law (Civil Law, 1937) stipulates that a child is under parental custody until reaching the age of majority (in Latvia a person is generally a minor under 18 years of age) and that custody is the parental right and duty to care for the child and his or her property and represent the child in his or her personal and property relations. That is to say, until the child has reached the age of majority, the child is in the custody of their parents. In this connection, it should be noted that in the 1930s, when the Latvian Civil Law was adopted, the first version indicated that during marriage both parents exercised their parental authority over their children jointly. Should there have been a disagreement between them, the voice of the arbitrator belongs to the father. Should the mother be convinced that the father's will and actions over the children are bad for the latter, she can ask the orphan's court to invite the father to change his will or actions. Should the orphan's court deem it necessary, the Court could entrust the upbringing of the children only to the mother. It is the duty of parents to take care, in proportion to

their property and social situation, of the well-being of their children, to provide them with accommodation, to provide them with food, clothing, care, upbringing and education. As can be seen, although the Latvian Civil Law stipulated that parenting may be exercised jointly and severally by both parents, at the same time the child's father is given the right to have the final word, i.e. if a dispute arises, the father has the right to have the final word. The author believes that this is the so-called anachronism that has survived from Roman law, because, as has already been emphasized above, the power of father or husband to the ancient Romans is absolute. However, the role of the mother in the Latvian law of 1937 is emphasized by the fact that she has the right to disagree with the will of the father. It can be seen here that family relationships began to change from narrowly private to public, for instance, the child's mother has the right to apply to an orphan's court if she does not agree with the father's will. The Supreme Court of the Republic of Latvia (Senāts) points out that custody must be understood as a set of parental rights and responsibilities in the broadest sense, which includes other, narrower concepts – joint custody, daily custody, separate custody, care, supervision, rights of access (The Supreme Court of the Republic of Latvia, 2012).

The Latvian Civil Law has long paid special attention to the interests of children, because they did not belong only to parents and were not created for their pleasure. Latvian legal scholar Konstantīns Čakste (1937/2011) also points out that parental power is not based on the idea of power, but on the idea of guardianship. Namely, that parental power is only a means of performing parental responsibilities. The Latvian Civil Law introduced the modern idea of law of its time, i.e., the idea of State control. At the same time public authorities had a duty and a right to monitor the exercise of the rights of parents. In addition to the above, it is necessary to find out to what extent the state with its institutional system is entitled to interfere in the power of parents. Namely, the author assumes that the parents were responsible for the child's upbringing and education, but the State supervised this process, that is controlled how the parents exercised their power arising from its natural status. Thus, it would be necessary to analyze in more detail the scope of parental responsibilities and rights, that is parental responsibility, as well as the responsibility of the State for the upbringing and education of a child. In this regard, attention must be paid to the concept of parental responsibility in an educational context.

Parental responsibility and education context

In the author's opinion, the observation in the practical application of parental responsibility and duties is controversial, that is it is difficult to

draw the line between parental and state responsibility in practice. For example, the United Nations (UN) Global Education Monitoring Report 2017/18 states that the primary responsibility of teachers is to provide high-quality education, but at the same time, teachers are expected to do much more than provide education. In turn, the main responsibility of parents, according to the UN, is to ensure that the pupil attends school at least at the level of primary education, and that parents should be responsible for the child's behavior. Students' responsibility for their behavior increases with each passing year as they become parents (UNESCO, 2018). Thus, it can be seen that parental responsibility for the child's education (in this case, the author understands education both as a process and as a result) is mutual. Namely, on the one hand, parents are the ones who should take care that the child receives an education at least at the primary school level, but teachers have a responsibility to ensure that the quality of education guaranteed by the State is of a high quality. At the same time, the teacher should be much more responsible than just for the quality of education. One of the teacher's skills is the ability to cooperate with parents, and actively participate in the development of their child-student (Ancāne et al., 2014). Therefore, in the author's opinion, it is necessary to go into the content of parental responsibility. In this way, the responsibility of one of the most important implementers of educational rights – the parents of the child – would be clarified. Legal scholar Yosi Yaffe points out that the concept of parental authority forms a two-dimensional theoretical construct – power and legitimacy. It consists of four main aspects:

(a) parental authority and the potential impact on the child's behavior;
(b) the legal authority of the parents, which means the right of the parents to request and the child's duty to obey, to submit to the demands of the parent. Parental authority manifests itself as a conflict between a parent and a child (contradiction, disagreement), but at the same time it varies depending on the child's age and the context in which it appears (Yaffe, 2013).

Article 1 (2) of the Hague Convention on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Cooperation in Respect of Parental Responsibility and Measures for the Protection of Children states that the term "parental responsibility" is used in this Convention is a parental authority or other similar relationship of responsibility which determines the rights, powers and responsibilities of parents, guardians or other legal representatives in relation to the person or property of the child. British child rights experts point out that the term 'parental responsibility' focuses on parental responsibilities towards the child and not on parental rights in relation to the child (Convention, 1996). For example, it is the responsibility of parents to make decisions about their child. These decisions include

determining the child's education and which school the child will attend, choosing the child's name, in the event of parental death, appointing a guardian for the child, consenting to the child's treatment, allowing the child's medical records, allowing the child to go abroad, representing the child in legal proceedings, as well as the determination of the child's religious affiliation (Child law advice, 2020). The author sees a similarity between the content of the concept of parental responsibility or power in the Anglo-Saxon legal system and the content of parental power or responsibility found in the Romano-Germanic legal system. UK legal scholar Rachel E. Taylor points out that the way in which a country responds to the question of the role of parents and state in children's religious upbringing and education will inevitably reflect the history, constitutional foundations, and prevailing social conditions within the state (Taylor, 2015). For instance, the Civil Law of the Republic of Latvia states that parents have the right to determine a child's surname. That is, Article 151 of the Latvian Civil Law provides: "The surname of a child is determined by the surname of the parentsshould the parents have different surnames, the child shall be given the father's or mother's surname by agreement. Should the parents not agree on the child's surname, it shall be determined by a decision of the Orphan's Court (Civil Law, 1937). As can be seen, under Latvian law, parents are responsible for the choice of a child's surname, but if the parents are unable to agree, then this responsibility or duty is authorized by the Orphan's Court. Thus, it can be seen that parental responsibility or power is not absolute, as it is limited by a certain element of State or civil power. That is, the Orphan's Court as a bearer of public power is delegated to act in the best interests of the child, which means that the child's right to individuality (the child's right to individuality is defined in the Latvian Law on the Protection of Children's Rights) is exercised by the Orphan's Court. Parents have the right and power to decide which educational institution the child will attend. Such parental rights are specified in Section 57, Paragraph 1 of the Latvian Education Law (1998). Namely, this law stipulates that one of the parents' rights is to choose the educational institution where the child receives education (Education law,1998). In the legal relationship between the parents and the educational institution, arises question whether the school is instead of parents or takes the parents role. In that regard, it is necessary to refer to the doctrine in loco parentis (instead of parents). Marcus Fabius Quintilianus (Latin for Marcus Fabius Quintilianus), one of the most prominent orators in ancient Rome, who was also the most famous lawyer of his timepoints out in his book Institutio oratoria (On the Education of an Orator) that the teacher must play the role of parent to his students (Quintilianus,trans 1974). It can be seen that the idea that not only the child's biological

parents are responsible for the child's upbringing and education, but also other adults, such as teachers, can and should be responsible for the children entrusted to them. Legal scholars of the Anglo-Saxon law Alan Hall and Margaret Hanina point out that this concept remains important from an ethical point of view, as it emphasizes the duty of care. Namely, the teacher's professional duty is to take care of his students or those under his supervision (Hall & Hanins, 2001). Although in loco parentis is not used directly in university or college or school programs, at the same time it has a background role in discussing the relationship between students and the educational institution. Hence, creating a perspective in this relationship. It can be seen here that the representatives of the Anglo-Saxon law in loco parentis associate the fact that parents as well as teachers have to take care of the child's well-being, but in order to do so, both the teacher and the parent need authority. The teacher, for example, needs to discipline students, but in order to achieve discipline, it is necessary that the teacher is endowed with some power (Merrick, 2016). The European Court of Human Rights (Kilkelly, 2001) emphasized that the school discipline system is considered to be within the scope of the right to education. In particular, the following conclusion follows from Article 28 (2) of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). Both parents and teachers must use their power in a way that respects human rights. The rights of the child may not be violated on the grounds that the child is a person under the authority of the school. That it is not enough for the State to create an education system and to declare the right to education, but the State has an obligation to take responsibility for not violating either national or international law. In the Latvian legal system, the term in loco parentis is not directly used, but its content can be presumed from legal acts. The limiting element of parental authority was presented in Part III of the Compendium of Baltic Local Laws (Code of local legalizations of the Ostsee provinces Part III, 1864). Parental authority does not end, but is limited when children enter public school, to the extent that the public authority (school staff) takes the place of the parents in the upbringing and education of a child. It means that school staff have an obligation and the right to be responsible for the safety, health, development and education of a child, as a responsible parent would be. The teacher is not a substitute of parental power, i.e. they do not overwhelm the power of parents. This aspect is important as much as it describes the extent of rights and obligations of a rightholder who stands instead of parents (in loco parentis). Parents do not lose their power over the child, but it is limited until the pupil leaves the school or school event.

Discussions and Conclusions

The Constitutional Court of Latvia indicated that in the legal relations affecting the child and in all activities regarding children, the rights and interests of the child is the priority. This means that not only the court but other institutions must take their decisions on the basis of what is in the best interests of the child (The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Latvia, 2004). In this connection, the best interests of the child include the right to education. In turn, the acquisition of education is unthinkable without the cooperation of parents and the educational institution. It is concluded that cooperation between parents and the school is important because it improves the quality of education, as well as is the basis for guaranteeing the right to education. The education system is not only influenced by the country's political or economic system. It is also influenced by the legal system and the legal framework. The author points out that the authority and responsibility of the child's parents remain even when the child attends an educational institution. Although the legal aspects of the responsibility of an educational institution and parental responsibility are controversial, at the same time Latvian legislation determines the duties and responsibilities of parents in the education of a child. It is concluded that parental authority does not diminish from the moment a pupil arrives at school, it is only limited to the extent that the educational institution exercises its rights and obligations, which are set out, for example, in the Education Law (1998). For instance, the scope of teachers and parents' rights and obligations in the field of education is regulated by a special law, i.e. the Education Law (1998). In its turn, the Latvian Civil Law (1937) as a general law determines the obligation of parents to take care of the child's education and upbringing. It should be noted that the teacher does not take the place of the parent, but at the same time it is the teacher's duty to carry out his/her professional activity even as carefully and responsibly as a caring and responsible parent would do for his/her child. Further scientific discussion would be needed, analyzing the specific responsibilities of parents and teachers if, for example, a student systematically violates the school's internal rules or endangers the safety of himself or herself and other students.

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https://doi.org/10.22364/htqe.2020.15

PROBLEMS OF GROUP MANAGEMENT IN PRESCHOOL MUSIC LESSONS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The research was implemented within the framework of the University of Latvia master's study program "Pedagogy" course "Effective classroom management". During the action research, the researchers identified group management problems in music lessons at educational institution X, in group Y. Key problem identified was the insufficient attention of children at the beginning of the lesson. The research proceeded to also look for possible solutions. The aim is to analyse current methods of delivering effective music classes in a pre-school setting, and propose and validate new strategies to improve the beginning of a music lesson. The study involved 17 preschool children (11 boys and 6 girls), a music teacher, and two group teachers, and an observer. The study was conducted from October 2019 to March 2020. The first results of the action research show that as the teacher changed her classroom activities, introduced certain group management techniques, such as signalling and acoustic counting, and repeating these as a routine activity in each lesson, children's attention improved significantly at the beginning of the music lesson and became more sustained.

Keywords: *educational attainment, group management, music lessons, preschool.*

Introduction

Based on the observations of the music teacher and in conversations with the preschool teachers, it was found that the children's attention at the beginning of the music lesson was not immediate and the children needed more time to get ready for the lesson. In private preschool X, all lessons take place in one classroom, including a music lesson, so the children are in their classroom before the music lesson and are busy playing with toys and each other. The beginning of the lesson is complicated by the fact

that the music teacher needs to enter and leave the classroom several times before starting the lessons, to bring all the necessary materials for the lesson – musical instruments and other attributes – so it is difficult for children to understand when the teacher has brought all the things and the music lesson can begin. That is why the **research problem** was focussed on how to draw the children's attention to a clearly understandable common beginning of the lesson. To find possible solutions to the problem, the research question was investigated – what should the teacher change in her pedagogical activity to ensure that all children are paying attention at the beginning of the music lesson? **The aim** is to analyse current methods of delivering effective music classes in a pre-school setting, and propose and validate new strategies to improve the beginning of a music lesson. The following **research tasks** were put forward and carried out:

1. To study topical issues of classroom management in the latest studies of the last decade, in conjunction with the behavioural and attention problems of preschool children.
2. To carry out pedagogical observation in preschool X.
3. Observe and define a specific problem of class management to be solved.
4. To use class management techniques in action according to the developed plan.
5. To implement action research in three cycles.
6. To perform a repeated pedagogical observation after performing pedagogical activity promoting positive behaviour.
7. Conclude and make proposals for further action.

Theoretical background

School success today requires that young children be taught more than just academics (Taylor & Dymnecki, 2007). Subject matter and lesson content are undoubtedly important, but the delivery and environment must support children in the learning process. Preschool teachers identify disruptive behaviours as the biggest challenge that they face while trying to manage their classrooms (Jalongo, 2006). To identify classroom management problems, a study of raising the hand during the morning lap was analysed. Vargo and colleagues conducted an experiment limiting the opportunity for children to express themselves during the morning circle lesson with the help of colour cards (Vargo, Heal, 2014). The results of the study show the ability of children to gradually adapt to the new system, with a decrease in the number of arms raised in the limited phase and an increase in the number allowed.

During early childhood, between the ages of 3 and 5 years, attention systems develop rapidly (Jones et al., 2015; Posner et al., 2014). Child

development experts say that normal attention span is 3 to 5 minutes per year of a child's age (Schmitt, 2011). Therefore, a 2-year-old should be able to concentrate on a particular task for at least 6 minutes, and a child entering kindergarten should be able to concentrate for at least 15 minutes.

Dominguez and colleagues in a longitudinal study focused on the study of children's learning behaviours in preschool age (Dominguez, Vitiello, 2010). It was concluded that as children grow older, their behaviour becomes more adaptive, with all participants working together to achieve better results, and changes in the classroom affected learning behaviours (emotional support, instructional help, children's active involvement). The first peer-based community where children learn how to behave in different social situations is preschool.

Preschool plays a major role in the landscape of the educational system and also in the approach and way of implementation of music activities in it. The professionalism of the teacher is key to the identification and development of music abilities in pre-schoolers. This implies many other factors such as problems of the professional qualifications of preschool teachers and the whole teaching staff, specifically lack of sufficiently developed music pedagogy curriculum and group management strategies and skills. Sometimes there exist objective reasons why sufficient attention cannot be devoted to musical education and content (Činč, 2018; Pfiffner, 2011). Several researchers emphasize that effective pedagogy consists of an appropriate curriculum, teaching methods, and classroom management strategies (Epstein, 2015; Parsonson, 2012).

Methodology

Analysing the theoretical literature of classroom management, it is concluded that various methods can be used to correct the behaviour of children in preschool (Dominguez, Vitiello, 2010; Rönnerman, 2012; Vargo, Heal, 2014). According to Rönnerman, action research involves collaboration between researchers and practitioners; in this collaboration, it is crucial to take advantage of the knowledge and expertise that exists among the staff and to challenge both scientific and practice-based knowledge and skills (Ljunggren, 2016). In this action research a music teacher, two group teachers, and an observer participated. The role of the observer was to identify the issues for music lessons beginning by observation of teacher's and children's activities starting a lesson. Three observations took place in a private preschool institution X, where 17 preschool children (11 boys and 6 girls) in a mixed age group from 3 to 6 years of age were observed. The music lesson took place in a group room. Other lessons take place at different times in this same room. The layout of the room has an open-plan

layout, in which toys and various learning materials are freely accessible to children.

After the first observation, behavioural problems were identified as mild, so corrective behaviour plan was developed together with teachers and used to change the behaviour for the whole group. At the beginning of the lesson, a song was to be played, as a signal that the music lesson is about to commence and also giving them context to the teacher's preparations of the room for the lesson. This will be a new, unusual signal meaning the new routine for children, which will indicate that the children should sit in a circle at the designated place immediately after the song has finished.

The rules for starting the lesson were designed as a game in which all the children in the group can take part in. When they hear Pharrell Williams' song *Happy*, the children can freely dance and move to the music. At the moment the song has finished and music has stopped, the children are to be seated in a circle at the designed place, quietly waiting for the other members of the group to do the same. The teacher counts up from 1 to 10 until everyone is seated and announces that they are the winners of the game. The game was played every music lesson twice a week.

The research was coordinated with the founder of the private preschool X and group educators. The teacher's activities before the beginning of the music lesson, its introduction and the children's behaviour at the beginning of the lesson were observed. Observations were recorded in the observation report created by the authors. Data were collected for the first 10 minutes of the lesson.

Results

The first cycle of the study was the observation of a music lesson. Observation was conducted of the teacher's activities before the beginning of the music lesson, their introduction of the lesson itself, and the children's behaviour during this lesson organisation and introduction. The observation was made in November 2019, data were collected for the first 10 minutes of the lesson. Table 1 shows the number of children who followed the teacher's instructions, and the number who did not. As the teacher prepared the room for the music lesson, and involved the children to help in the process, the children's responses and attention to what the teacher said was variable. Observational data show that the teacher needed 6 minutes to start the lesson.

Table 1. Activities in the first observation

Time	Teacher's activities	Number of children	
		Following teacher's instructions	***Not following teacher's instructions***
00:01	The teacher enters the classroom, greets children and preschool teachers, and says that the music lesson is starting soon. The teacher goes to the part of the classroom where the music lesson will take place and puts the necessary materials for the lessons on the windowsill.	8	9
00:02	The teacher is asking children to help her to move one table closer to the windowsill to put the electronic piano on it. The teacher thanks children for the help and leaves the classroom to bring electronic piano.	8	9
00:03	The teacher enters the room with a piano. She asks the children to sit down on the carpet in a circle while the piano and other instruments are prepared for the lesson.	4	13
00:04	The teacher invites everyone to start a music lesson by picking up the drums. The teacher sits on the carpet, and starts singing the opening song *Hello*, plays the drums and continues to invite the children to join, naming individually those who have not yet joined.	8	9
00:05	The teacher continues to sing, inviting the children to the circle to join the lesson, while expanding the circle for everyone to sit.	11	6
00:06 – 00:07	The teacher continues the lesson by singing a *Hello* song.	12	5

Analysing the data in Table 1, it is concluded that children's behavioural problems can be classified as mild behavioural violations of the rules. In the group management, the behaviour of each child is significant with dealing group dynamics. It was observed that several children at the same time were disturbing others by doing different activities from the teacher's making them distracted from the task performance.

The second observation was made in January 2020, data were collected for the first 7 minutes of the lesson. There were two months between the first and second observations, for a total of 10 lessons in which the game was played. The observations were noted in Table 2. Observational data show that the teacher needs 4 minutes to start the lesson, which is 2 minutes less than during the first observed lesson.

Table 2. Activities in the second observation

Time	Teacher's activities	Children's activities	
		Following teacher's instructions	***Not following teacher's instructions***
00:01	The teacher enters the classroom, holding a music speaker with Pharrell Williams' song *Happy* on. The teacher greets the children and the teachers.	15 children are immediately coming to the part of the classroom where the lesson will take place and starting to move and dance.	2 children are sitting at the table and observing ongoing activities.
00:02	The teacher leaves the classroom to bring electronic piano. After returning she starts to prepare the space for the lesson.	15 children keep dancing, jumping, and moving, performing different body movements.	2 children are sitting at the table and observing ongoing activities.
00:03	The song has finished. The teacher is standing and counting from 1 to 10.	6 out of 14 children sit down on the carpet in a circle where they were just dancing. 3 out of 14 children keep dancing and moving while teacher is counting from 1 to 10. When teacher hits 10, they sit down. 5 out of 14 children are standing and looking at the teacher.	2 children are sitting at the table and the preschool teachers gives them to use modelling clay. 1 child goes to the bathroom.
00:04	"What were the rules? Are the children who sat down first, the winners?"	15 children are sitting in the circle, four of them answer a question together by saying "yes". One child adds, that those who have sat down by the end of the song are the winners.	2 children are sitting at the table using the modelling clay.
00:05	The teacher is inviting everyone to start the music lesson. She starts singing *Hello* song and playing the drums.	15 children are sitting in the circle participating in the lesson.	2 children are sitting at the table using the modelling clay.
00:06 – 00:07	The teacher keeps running a lesson by singing *Hello* song and passing the drums around the circle.	15 children are sitting in the circle participating in the lesson.	2 children are sitting at the table using the modelling clay.

In the second observation, there was a significant increase in the number of children following the teacher's instructions. 15 out of 17 children were involved in the game and were actively moving and dancing as the song was played.

The third observation was made in March 2020, data were collected for the first 7 minutes of the lesson. There were two months between every observation. The third observations are noted in Table 3. It shows a small increase in the number of children following the teacher's instructions, compared to the number of children following instruction in the 2nd observation.

Table 3. Activities in the third observation

Time	**Teacher's activities**	**Children's activities**	
		Following teacher's instructions	***Not following teacher's instructions***
00:01	The teacher enters the classroom, holding a music speaker with Pharrell Williams' song *Happy* on. The teacher greets the children and the teachers.	15 children immediately are coming to the part of the classroom where the lesson will take place and starting to move and dance.	2 children are sitting at the table and observing ongoing activities.
00:02	The teacher goes out of the classroom to bring electronic piano. After returning she starts to prepare the space for the lesson.	16 children keep dancing, jumping, and moving, performing different body movements. Some children are dancing all around the classroom.	1 child is sitting at the table. The preschool teacher is giving him modelling clay to use.
00:03	The song has finished. The teacher sits down on the carpet in the lesson's circle and starts to count from 1 to 10 in order to wait for everyone to sit down in a circle. She is holding drums in her hands.	7 of 10 children sit down on the carpet in a circle where they were just dancing. 3 of 10 children keep dancing and moving while teacher is counting from 1 to 10. When teacher hits 10, they sit down.	2 children are sitting at the table and using the modelling clay.
00:04	The teacher is asking: "What were the rules? Are the children who sat down first, the winners?"	10 children are sitting in the circle, four of them are answering the question together by saying "yes". 5 children stop dancing and sit down next to others while they are listening and answering the question.	2 children are sitting at the table and using the modelling clay.

Time	Teacher's activities	Children's activities	
		Following teacher's instructions	***Not following teacher's instructions***
00:05	The teacher is inviting everyone to start the music lesson. She starts singing *Hello* song and playing the drums.	16 children are sitting in the circle participating in the lesson.	1 child is sitting at the table using the modelling clay.
00:06 – 00:07	The teacher continues the lesson by singing *Hello* song and passing the drums around the circle.	16 children are sitting in the circle participating in the lesson.	1 child is sitting at the table using the modelling clay.

The significant increase in the number of children following instructions (observed between 1st and 2nd observation) was not only sustained but slightly increased over time, between 2nd and 3rd observation. This demonstrates the children's' effective adaptation to the new rules. From this we may conclude that the new group management method has been effective.

The data of all observations were summarized in the table, comparing the changes in the number of children at the beginning of the lesson, choosing the first, fourth, and seventh minute as reference points in Table 4.

Table 4. Comparison of the number of children through three observation

			Time		
			00:01	00:04	00:07
First observation	***Number of children***	***Following teacher's instructions***	8	8	12
		Not following teacher's instructions	9	9	5
Second observation	***Number of children***	***Following teacher's instructions***	15	15	15
		Not following teacher's instructions	2	2	2
Third observation	***Number of children***	***Following teacher's instructions***	15	15	16
		Not following teacher's instructions	2	2	1

After the development and implementation of the problem-solving plan, it was observed that the involvement of children is immediate and sustainable. There are significant improvements as more children join the beginning of the music lesson, referring to the new signal (song) and

routine. There were several months between observations, during which the game was played regularly, making it a routine. Using the group management technique, signalling the beginning of the lesson with the help of a song, children's self-regulation was developed. The number of children who participated in the game by moving to the rhythm of the music and then sitting in a circle increased by comparing the data between the first and last observation.

Conclusions

At the beginning of the action research, it was found that children's attention is distracted, which hinders the progress of the lesson. Attention is also disturbed by the music teacher entering and leaving the group several times, bringing the necessary tools, thus confusing the children as to when the teacher is actually ready for the lesson to begin. To solve the problem, the teacher introduced a new routine at the beginning of the lesson, playing a song that signals the start of the music lesson. There were a number of benefits to using a signal as a method.

Firstly, the song was a clear signal that the music lesson is about to start, and children have to get ready for it by putting away their toys and coming to the designed place for the lessons. Efficient signals save time and lower disruptions.

Secondly, the duration of a song was suitable for the music teacher to prepare for the lessons by bringing all the necessary materials.

Finally, the song being played attracted children's attention and they were ready to react instantly to it by movement. Using the music as a stimulus for improvised body movements, it helps children to express themselves and use creativity through a movement which is important to develop at preschool age.

Evaluating possible solutions to the problems, a corrective behaviour plan was developed, taking into account both the teacher's recommendations and helping the children to concentrate on starting the music lesson, without having to wait for some children to join. Positive strategies used by teachers such as encouraging and drawing attention to positive behaviour increase desirable behaviour while decreasing undesirable one.

After the implementation of the plan, positive results were observed, which encourages the continued use of similar methods that help to solve group management problems.

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https://doi.org/10.22364/htqe.2020.16

RESEARCH OF YOUTH SPORTS IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AS A FACTOR OF HUMAN CAPITAL FORMATION USING NEURAL NETWORKS

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ABSTRACT

With the use of neural network modeling, the authors analyzed the current state of youth sports in rural areas of Russian regions, which characterizes human capital. The simulation uses neural networks implemented in the Deductor package – self-organizing Kohonen maps. As a result of the analysis, the authors obtained a distribution of regions in five clusters. The composition and characteristics of each cluster are presented. The regions with the highest indicators of sports development in rural areas have been identified. This paper shows the influence of the indicators considered on human capital, which is one of the dominant internal factors of socio-economic potential of territories. The results of the research are of practical significance for a comparative analysis of the development of children's and youth sports in the regions of Russia and can be taken into account in the strategic planning of the development of the sports industry in the context of increasing the quality of human capital.

Keywords: *physical culture, sports, youth sports, human capital, rural areas, territorial development, cluster analysis, neural networks, self-organizing Kohonen maps.*

Introduction

At the present stage, one of the main tasks of economic development of the regions of the Russian Federation and ensuring their national security, including economic security (Mityakov et al., 2013; Lapaev, 2016), is

the development of physical culture and sport. According to Yang et al. (2020) the development of physical culture and the sports industry contributes to regional sustainable development, as well as the accumulation of human capital (Makarov and Kleiner, 2007; Kuznetsov, 2012; Perova et al., 2019). Human capital as one of the foundations of innovative development of the economy of a country characterizes the population's quality of life. Human capital includes the knowledge, skills, and health that people accumulate over the course of their lives, enabling them to realize their potential as useful members of society (Adams et al., 2018; Khodzhaevich et al., 2020).

Various indices are used to quantify the quality of life of the population, and the human development index proved to be the most informative among them. This is noted in the works of Ayasreh (2016), Soboleva (2007), and Naydenov (2019). This index is used in in relation to various countries as a whole and to individual regions. The human development index, being an integral indicator, includes three main components: income, education and longevity indices, which are used to assess the development of a person – the core subject and the leading object of the state's national security system. These components show three fundamental qualities of the country's development: a healthy life that leads to the longevity of the population; the level of education received; and material prosperity that is appropriate for a person. The longevity of the population is determined by life expectancy, which, in turn, is directly related to the level of development of physical culture and sports in each region of the country.

It should be noted that the development of physical culture and sports in the Russian regions is characterized by the presence of imbalances, which are caused by a wide variety of regions in terms of infrastructure levels, availability of qualified personnel, investment, technical improvement and innovative approaches to the construction of sports facilities, correlation of competitive advantages and drawbacks and several other factors. This issue was researched in the papers of Letiagina et al. (2018, 2019).

Methodology and Materials

The article presents a cluster analysis of multidimensional data based on neural networks, a promising data mining tool that offers new approaches to the study of multidimensional problems (Khrustalev and Shramko, 2017; Checkin and Pirogov, 2009; Gorban and Rossiev, 1996; Milov et al., 2010; Haikin, 2006).

Among neural networks, we note neural networks with unsupervised learning, which are used for clustering multidimensional data, as well as visualization and reducing their dimension. This class of neural networks

includes the Kohonen self-organizing maps described in the works of Kohonen (1990), Hajek and colleagues (2014), Carboni and Russu (2015).

In this paper, we used for our research the data from the Federal state statistics service of Russia on the development of children's and youth sports in rural areas of the Russian regions. The reason for choosing this type of data was the fact that one of the target indicators of the state program "Development of physical culture and sports of the Russian Federation" is the share of the rural population that is systematically engaged in physical culture and sports in the total rural population of the Russian Federation aged 3-19 years. The program provides for an increase in this indicator from 26 % in 2017 up to 35 % by 2024. The study included 82 regions of Russia.

Results and Discussion

We used the following figures for 2018 as classification features:

- X1 – the number of organizations for additional general developmental programs for children in the field of physical culture and sport (units);
- X2 – the number of attendees of the additional general developmental programs for children in the field of physical culture and sports (persons).
- X3 – the number of children's and youth sports schools (including branches) (units);
- X4 – the number of those attending children's and youth sports schools (persons);
- X5 – stadiums with stands (units);
- X6 – open-air sports facilities (units);
- X7 – gyms (units);
- X8 – swimming pools (units);
- X9 – the number of attendees of additional pre-vocational programs for children in the field of physical culture and sports financed from the Federal budget (persons);
- X10 – the number of attendees of additional pre-vocational programs for children in the field of physical culture and sports financed from the budget of a constituent entity of the Russian Federation (persons);
- X11 – the number of attendees of additional pre-vocational programs for children in the field of physical culture and sports financed from the local budget (persons);
- X12 – the number of attendees of additional pre-vocational programs for children in the field of physical culture and sport funded under contracts on rendering paid educational services (persons);
- X13 – average income per capita (RUB).

As a result of neural network modeling, 82 regions of the Russian Federation were distributed in five clusters.

The multidimensional space of indicators of youth sports development in the regions is analyzed by means of data mining, a modern and effective method for multidimensional data processing. Neural network modeling involves the use of artificial neural networks – Kohonen self-organizing maps and information technologies (Deductor). The authors show that youth sports development of Russian regions is non-uniform. When clustering data on a set of youth sports development indicators, the regions were divided into five clusters. This research contributes to a better understanding of youth sports in each region and helps to determine the direction of future development strategies and regional policies.

The number of Russian regions in clusters is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Statistics of average values of indicators and distribution of Russian regions for clusters

Average value	The cluster number					Average for Russia
	1	2	3	4	5	
X1	49	51	115	246	485	169
X2	3400	28775	7551	21667	59270	14025
X3	3	5	10	22	62	16
X4	670	2469	2900	11165	38272	6995
X5	0	6	3	11	22	6
X6	32	237	504	1092	2276	706
X7	32	104	231	513	903	317
X8	2	9	5	10	24	7
X9	65	16	6	45	461	53
X10	511	631	422	1716	10599	1450
X11	3435	25630	5446	20455	20601	10233
X12	14	1533	79	434	183	208
X13	62666	43401,9	24726,9	27696,2	27226,7	29447,3
Number of regions	7	3	49	16	6	

One can see from Table 1 that the smallest numbers of regions were included in cluster 2, and the largest number – in cluster 3. Table 1 show the average values of the indicators for clusters and the overall average indicators for the Russian Federation.

It follows from Table 1 that:

1. The number of organizations for additional general developmental programs for children in the field of physical culture and sports (X1), the number of youth sports schools (including branches) (X3), the number of attendees of children's and youth sports schools (X4), stadiums with stands (X5), open-air sports facilities (X6), gyms (X7) and the number of attendees of additional pre-vocational programs for children in the field of physical culture and sports financed from the budget of a constituent entity of the Russian Federation (X10) is higher than their overall average values for Russia in the regions included in clusters 4 and 5.
2. The number of stadiums with stands (X5) is at the level of the overall average values for Russia in the regions of cluster 2.
3. The number of pupils on the additional general developmental programs for children in the field of physical culture and sports (X2), the number of swimming pools (X8) and the number of attendees of additional pre-vocational programs for children in the field of physical culture and sports financed from the local budget (X11) is higher than average Russian Federation values in the regions of clusters 2, 4 and 5.
4. The number of attendees of additional pre-vocational programs for children in the field of physical culture and sports financed from the Federal budget (X9) is above the average for Russia in the regions of clusters 1, 4 and 5.
5. The number of attendees of additional pre-vocational programs for children in the field of physical culture and sport funded under contracts on rendering paid educational services (X12) is higher than the average for Russia in the regions included in clusters 2 and 4.
6. The average per capita income of the population (X13) exceeds the average values for the Russian Federation in the regions that make up clusters 1 and 2.

It should be noted that in the regions of cluster 1, there is a minimum number of attendees of additional pre-professional programs for children in the field of physical culture and sports funded under agreements on the provision of paid educational services. At the same time, in the regions that make up this cluster, we have the maximum value of the average per capita income of the population.

The leaders in terms of the indicators under consideration are the regions of cluster 5 for maximum indicators X1–X10, the regions of cluster 2 for maximum indicators X11 and X12, as well as the regions of cluster 1 for maximum indicators X13.

Conclusion

The research performed with the use of neural network modeling allowed us to assess the state of children's and youth sports in rural areas of the regions of the Russian Federation. The main difference between the method of neural network modeling and other methods, such as expert systems, is that neural networks – self-organizing Kohonen maps – build the model themselves only on the basis of the information presented to them. It is found that the presence of significant differences in the size of clusters indicates an uneven development of children's and youth sports in rural areas of Russia. The results of data clustering show that the composition of clusters does no coincide with the composition of Federal districts to which these regions belong. The regions that are promising in the development of this area of activity have been identified. These are the regions of the Russian Federation that formed cluster 5 with the highest values of indicators X1–X10, cluster 2 – with the highest values of indicators X11 and X12, and cluster 1 – with the highest value of indicator X13.

From the point of view of the future state of children's and youth sports in Russia's regions and ensuring the development of human capital, it is important to bring about convergence in the levels of regional development indicators.

The method of analysis presented in this paper using neural networks and the results obtained are of practical significance. They can be used for comparative analysis of the development of children's and youth sports in different regions and for strategic planning in the field of physical culture and sports for subsequent periods. This will contribute to improving the validity of management decisions in the field of physical culture and sports at the regional level in order to increase the quality of human capital and improve the country's economic security.

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https://doi.org/10.22364/htqe.2020.17

METHODOLOGICAL MATERIALS FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION – RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

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ABSTRACT

There is a variety of methodological materials available nowadays; however, it might be difficult to evaluate whether the materials are applicable in inclusive education settings as there is a lack of specific criteria for evaluating methodological materials. From this topicality further research idea has arisen. The aim of the further research is to find out what useful and practically applicable methodological materials in inclusive education are. As there have not been developed theories on evaluating the methodological materials yet, the research would be based on the methodology of the grounded theory. The research base is 50 different methodological materials that are available in Latvia, collected within the Erasmus+ Project "MyHub – a one-stop-shop on inclusion practices, tools, resources and methods for the pedagogical staff at formal and non-formal educational institutions". In the result the product of the research would be the guidelines for inclusive education practitioners to enable the search for and selection of ready-made methodological materials and to encourage the development of new materials.

***Keywords**: inclusive education, methodological materials, evaluation of methodological materials, applicability of methodological materials.*

Introduction

One of Sustainable Development Goals of the UN for 2030 is to provide inclusive and quality education and to promote lifelong learning opportunities (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). The project Competence-based Approach to Curriculum implemented by the National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia also emphasizes that an important principle of implementing the improved curriculum is the inclusive education approach, which also involves how to support teachers to implement inclusive education and how to improve their skills

working with children with diverse learning needs (Skola [School2030], 2019).

It must be admitted that not only in Latvia the concept of inclusive education in pedagogical practice might seem intimidating and is a great challenge (O'Donnell, 2012, 69–70; Sandri, 2014; Tannenbergerova, 2013), because not all teachers have the necessary knowledge, skills and experience to provide inclusive education (Raščevska et al., 2017); therefore, various professional development courses, seminars and methodological materials are developed and offered (European Agency for Special Needs Education, 2012; European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2016, 2019; Beizītere & Grumolte-Lerhe, 2020).

What is more, continuous professional development of pedagogues is a must enforced by law in Latvia, and inclusive education is stated among one of the general competencies of pedagogues (Noteikumi par [Regulations regarding]…, 2018).

Another current trend in nowadays education is open education, which incorporates resources, tools and practices through an open sharing model, thus improving access to and efficiency in education (Haigler & Owens, 2018; Latvijas Universitāte, 2018). Combining the traditions of knowledge transfer and creation with the 21st century technologies and providing wide access to freely available educational resources, the development of new knowledge, ideas and skills is fostered. "Open" means not only the access, but also the ability to transform and to use the materials, information and networks to personalize education for individual users or to bring it together in a new way for large and diverse audience, such as students, educators, school leaders, researchers and members of the society (Latvijas Universitāte, 2018). Although the variety of educational resources available for teachers on the Internet is huge, it is a challenge to seize how useful and applicable the materials are, and not all the materials are easy to find.

The above mentioned has led to the research idea of the development of **"The Guidelines for the Evaluation of Methodological Materials in Inclusive Education"** within the collaboration between the students of the Master's study programme "Educational Treatment of Diversity" Rasa Iesalniece and Agnese Gromova-Ķūrena and under the guidance of Dr.paed. Dita Nīmante (University of Latvia). Both authors are the practitioners of the general comprehensive and special education. Agnese Gromova-Ķūrena's two previous Bachelor's researches are based on her experience and practice – applying the appropriate support measures and teaching methods (including multisensory strategies) to the students of the special education programmes in the general education school. Rasa Iesalniece's Bachelor's Thesis is a research of the development of a repository for methodological materials on the Internet, which corresponds to the idea of

the MyHub project. The idea for the current research and the joint work of both authors arose within the Erasmus+ project "MyHub – one-stop-shop on inclusion practices, tools, resources and methods for the pedagogical staff at formal and non-formal educational institutions" (MyHub, 2019) which has led to the conclusion that in order to be able to analyse the methodological materials, precise guidelines are needed, which would also serve as an aid in the development of further methodological materials for inclusive education.

Herewith the authors are presenting the idea of further research "The Guidelines for the Evaluation of Methodological Materials in Inclusive Education", the aim of which is to find out what useful and practically applicable methodological materials in inclusive education are.

Description of proposed Research Project

The guidelines based on certain criteria is the basis of any qualitatively developed materials and provide support for the implementation of new ideas, as well as promote the development of new methodological materials in inclusive education. Having searched for the guidelines for the evaluation of methodological materials in inclusive education that are currently available, it was concluded that no system for the evaluation of methodological materials in the context of inclusive education has been developed yet. On elementary level such search engine as *Google Search* (including *Google Book* and *Google* Scholar) was used, as to academic search – resources available on *Primo Discovery* (Library of the University of Latvia (UL) iCloud – UL subscribed and test-used online databases, UL Library's electronic catalogue and created databases (UL Database of Publications and History, UL Database of Graduation Papers)) and *ScienceDirect* were explored. During the search following keywords and their various combinations were used both in Latvian and English: development / criteria / evaluation / assessment (of) methodological materials / educational resources / course books (in) inclusive education / special (needs; development / mental / learning disorders / disabilities) education / global education.

Both in Latvian and in foreign languages there are criteria and guidelines for the development and evaluation of educational materials. There are also guidelines for developing methodological materials (VIAA [SEDA], 2010), as well as guidelines for the development and evaluation of digital materials (LICTA, 2016) and the evaluation of course books. However, no criteria to evaluate methodological materials for teachers and pedagogical professionals have been found. Therefore, the aim of the planned research is to develop guidelines based on certain criteria that would enable to distinguish if

the provided materials can be considered methodological materials and what methodological materials are useful and practically applicable for teachers in inclusive education. These guidelines would facilitate the build-up of efficient system for the development of methodological materials in inclusive education, increasing the quality of their development, evaluation and systematization, as well as facilitating and promoting opportunities for teachers in the choice of the necessary methodological materials.

Within the framework of the "My HUB" project (MyHub, 2019), 50 different methodological materials available in Latvia have been collected and acquired during the period of July 2019 – January 2020. These materials cover such areas as global education, working with children with special needs (such as intellectual disabilities, visual and hearing impairments, behavioural disorders, learning disorders), managing inclusive classroom, i.e., materials that facilitate inclusive education in Latvia. The authors of the methodological materials are both different state organisations and groups of co-operate authors within various associations and projects. To mention some examples, the state institutions which have issued methodological materials in the cooperation with several authors are National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia (Bethere & Līdaka, 2013; Tereško & Kondrova, 2013; Žalve & Kursīte, 2013; Tūbele & Šūmane, 2013; Prudņikova, 2019) and The State Inspectorate for Protection of Children's Rights (Koknese Boarding Primary School – Development Centre, 2019, Muceniece, 2018); there are also methodological materials developed by educational institutions and centres, e.g. Riga 1st Special Boarding School – Developmental Centre (Cibiņa, Krauce, 2017), The Centre for Educational Initiatives (Tankersley, Brajkovic, 2016), which also collaborated with Preiļi Preschool "Pasaciņa [fairy tale]" (Center for Educational Initiatives, n.d.).

In order to analyse their applicability, as well as to summarize and structure them, it is necessary to establish certain criteria, which do not exist yet. Thus, the planned research cannot be based on previously developed theories, but it can be made according to the research methods of the grounded theory. Grounded theory is "an inductive, comparative methodology that provides systematic guidelines for gathering, synthesizing, analysing, and conceptualizing qualitative data for the purpose of theory construction" (Charmaz, 2001). The research of this kind is started with a wide range of questions on a specific topic and followed by the collection of the data according to the topic. The materials obtained in the data collection process are constantly reviewed, compared, contrasted, identifying common and different features, inductively developing a theory that explains the observations (Charmaz, 2001; DePoy, Gitlin, 2016). In other words, grounded theory research is based on the exploration of "social phenomena by looking at what people experience, what problems

are present and how individuals go about resolving these issues," it is the inquiry of people to find and reflect on the patterns in these experiences (Engward, 2013). Grounded theory is an action approach where it is important to avoid assumptions and adopt more natural views of human action; it consists of several stages:

1. A "discovery" method at the first stage is *the explanatory grounded theory* – by studying the whole system with the help of rigorous set of procedures the researcher inductively gets at the real problems or issues in a system.
2. *The operational theory* informs what needs to be done to deal with the problem or issue of the system.
3. *The action plan* uses the practicalities of a particular system figure out how to set the operational theory in motion; at this stage it can be understood that some details of operational theory cannot be put into practice in real life.
4. *The action* is doing, bringing or realization of the action plan into practice.
5. *Transformative learning* – an ongoing process continuous discovering, learning, changing, adapting etc. (Simmons, 2006).

During the research it is planned to collaborate with teachers and the specialists and students of education, to find out what the determining criteria for the evaluation and development of useful and practically applicable materials are. The methods of the research are planned to be mixed both qualitative and quantitative. To start with, such qualitative methods as interviews with teachers and practitioners as well as discussions with future teachers groups could be carried out at the explanatory grounded theory study level. Next at the operational theory level such quantitative methods as questionnaires could be applied.

The research questions are as follows:

- what useful and practically applicable methodological materials are;
- what a methodological material should consist of;
- what criteria characterize a useful and practically applicable material;
- how proportionally long should the theoretical and practical parts of the methodological material be;
- what criteria increase the efficient applicability of the methodological material;
- what should the language of the methodological material be (scientific or simple).

The objectives of the research are:

- to get acquainted with the criteria used for the development and evaluation of educational materials;

- to carry out the focus group (teachers, specialists and students of education) discussions and interviews to clarify the criteria for evaluating methodological materials;
- to develop the guidelines for the evaluation of methodological materials;
- to select the materials from the research base that are appropriate for inclusive education;
- to analyse the selected methodological materials according to the chosen criteria and developed guidelines.

Having partly carried out the first objective of the research of getting acquainted with the criteria for the development and evaluation of educational materials, it can be concluded that every methodological material must have certain criteria to be sufficiently functional and to accomplish the initial idea of reaching certain educational goal. The methodological material should be of good quality, accessible to all, easy to understand. Thoughtfully structured content facilitates the understanding and mastering of the methodological material, promotes purposeful and meaningful teaching and its management. This encourages the development of the guidelines that can provide the directions, analysis and development of methodological material for inclusive education, as the main purpose of the guidelines is to support teachers in implementing the curricula and learning content.

Conclusions

The first insight into the methodological materials available in Latvia gives an idea of the progress towards and means of promoting the quality of inclusive education in Latvia. It must be admitted that the variety of methodological materials gives and evidence of endeavours for creating an inclusive educational environment.

However, the accessibility and applicability of the methodological materials in practice, as well as the meaningfulness and quality of them are still to be explored and analysed, which could be carried out by the proposed research. The development of "The Guidelines for the Evaluation of Methodological Materials in Inclusive Education" could be not only the contribution to and support for teachers facilitating inclusive education setting, but also for other practitioners of inclusive education, authors of pedagogical materials, state institutions who plan the provision of methodological assistance in inclusive education, and such open education repository projects as "My Hub" (2019).

By developing the criteria for the evaluation of methodological materials, real and useful instructions of what a good quality materials are would be

provided to a user by attracting the attention of the target audience. Thus, a concept for further development of methodological materials would be presented for of professionals who could bring the knowledge into practice. Certain criteria would also facilitate the categorization and organisation of materials in the repository of "MyHyb" project, which would enable a better accessibility and higher quality search of the necessary materials for broader audience.

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Note: This article has been developed under the framework of "Erasmus + Project "MyHub – a one-stop-shop on inclusion practices, tools, resources and methods for the pedagogical staff at formal and non-formal educational institutions".

https://doi.org/10.22364/htqe.2020.18

SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN LATVIAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Students' well-being and life satisfaction have been the crucial trends in research and practice over the last decades. Often students, who come to study to another country encounter several challenges in the process of integration in the new host country environment. The article deals with the part of the broader research which aimed at fostering international students' integration in the environment of the host country – Latvia. The aim of this article is to explore international students' satisfaction as well as the problems they have encountered in Latvian higher education institutions and thus find out the level of their subjective well-being according to Ryff's (1989) stated indicators: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. The data reveal the average score 5.6 out of highest score 7 and the highest scores are for self-acceptance and positive relations with others. The research also coincided with the beginning of the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, thus influencing the number of respondents and representation of the countries in the research sample.
The research was conducted in the framework of the project "Multilingual and Multicultural University: Preparation Platform for Prospective International Students" (No. 1.1.1.2/ VIAA/1/16/019) co-funded by ERDF.

Keywords: *higher education internationalization, multilingual and multicultural learning space, subjective well-being, support provision.*

Introduction

It is apparent and widely documented that higher education internationalization and the related issues have become one of the most topical trends in education research and practice given that "over

the past 25 years, internationalization has evolved from a marginal and minor component to a global, strategic, and mainstream factor in higher education" (Knight & de Wit, 2018: 2).

The data provided by the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia suggests that Latvia is becoming an attractive study destination. For instance, the number of international students in Latvian HEIs by 2019 were 10148, while by 2014, there were 5255 international students in Latvia, which is roughly half as many as in 2019 and confirms the significant growth rates.

Given that attracting international students and improving statistical numbers to confirm the "growth rates" should never be the aim in itself, these are the issues of quality education provision which constantly emerge with every new and unique "case" within the context of internationalized study environment. Inevitably, many students moving to another country for the study purposes frequently encounter with several challenges within the process of their integration in the new and unique environment of the host country. The studies on the well-being of international students as compared to the local ones confirm that the experience of these student groups differs in many significant ways (Ramia, Marginson, Sawir, 2013: 10; O'Reilly, Ryan, Hickey, 2010; Kell and Vogl, 2010). These are the challenges related to language proficiency, differing academic cultures, financial problems, the lack of sufficient support systems, numerous psychological difficulties (e.g., loneliness), etc. (O'Reilly, Ryan, Hickey, 2010). Provided that such pressures negatively impact the learning outcomes and the education process at large as well as have a detrimental effect on students' well-being (O'Reilly, Ryan, Hickey, 2010), which, in turn, may have long-term negative effects on the well-being of the society as a whole. Apparently enough, international students have much more limited resources to deal with such problems (ibid.) than HEIs or other stakeholders. Therefore, in most cases these are the HEIs which should take responsibility for the multi-dimensional and holistic support provision aimed at fostering successful integration of international student population in their entrusted institutions.

Provided that the nature of the problems addressed within the study framework is very different, it is definitely the case that these challenges should be studied from the interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary perspective to build a holistic view of the complexity of the multilingual and multicultural learning space. This is the development of the short-term and long-term action plan which should come into forth and be worked on collaboratively engaging the stakeholders at institutional, state, regional and global level.

As previously stated, each of the above-specified challenges should be considered through the prism of the necessity to provide complex solutions

aimed at building productive learning environment for all the stakeholders (including the faculty, administrative staff and others involved). For instance, the problems associated with the language and or languages of instruction have long been the focus of attention in research and practice. Despite the fact that foreign language proficiency in general and languages as tools for international communication for academic purposes specifically have been one of the most topical research directions within the interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary study areas for several decades (also in Latvia), many issues within this field still need elaboration. It is apparent that language is the key communication tool as well as the main bridge between different cultures (Ramia, Marginson, Sawir, 2013; O'Reilly, Ryan, Hickey, 2010). Therefore, it is not only the question of being able to learn fast and adjust rapidly, but also it is the issue related to the support provision aimed at equipping the learners with the advanced foreign language proficiency to be able to use it not only as a communication tool to "survive" with, but also the effective tool for functioning beyond the "basic needs", as "many international students face the challenge of constructing complex ideas and arguments in the language they are still learning" (Ryan, 2013: 43). It is true that working between two languages is "not only time-consuming but intellectually challenging" (ibid.). These are many language aspects that may hinder the learning process – difficulties related to the necessity to deal with different accents, idiomatic expressions (O'Reilly, Ryan, Hickey, 2010) as well as idiolects alongside with other issues encountered when being involved in the study programmes with a foreign language as a medium of instruction. This partly explains why language barriers are frequently mentioned as the most significant obstacle within the multilingual and multicultural learning space. As concerns the knowledge of a local language, it also adds to the well-being when being in a new environment (Kell and Vogl, 2010). However, given that the Latvian language is generally classified as "uncommon language", it is, unsurprisingly enough, not among the popular languages studied as a foreign language in most countries worldwide.

However, as previously stated, these are not only language difficulties which are most significant in the process of international students' integration in the new environment. International students often encounter challenges adjusting to social and educational expectations – "cultural differences – both educational and social – create other difficulties and can lead to students becoming isolated" (Ryan, 2013: 43). All these differences have direct impact on academic performance. International students frequently report "feeling pressure to do well when studying abroad" (O'Reilly, Ryan, Hickey, 2010: online), which may partly be rooted in the claim that "the academic needs of international students are often poorly understood within

institutions" (ibid.). Nevertheless, given the complexity of the phenomena of an "international student" and "internationalized study environment", the institutional "responsibility" may not be the only or the key reason why students fail to adjust to a new situation. For instance, the challenges which may not be directly associated with the study process itself could be the indirect reason for poor academic performance. International students are frequently reported to have problems with building relationships or friendship with local students, since local students tend "to self-segregate" and see "no need to move out of their comfort zone" (Ramia, Marginson, Sawir, 2013: 11). This only hinders the formation of "positive experience", which was set as a focus within the present study framework.

Being led by the assumption that research and practice within a HEI should be substantiated in its mission and vision and articulating one of the underlying aims generally put forward at the institutional and state level (e.g., "all services provided by a HEI should be managed in order to enhance the quality expected by the client (student)" (Roga, Lapiņa, Müürsepp, 2015: 926)), the study aimed to explore the subjecting well-being of international students enrolled in higher education study programmes in Latvian HEIs, in order to build the basis for the elaboration of the existing practices within support provision in view of the higher education internationalisation. It should also be highlighted that the research implementation procedure has coincided with the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, which led to the necessity to adjust the project implementation procedure. Moreover, it has led to the necessity for further studies given the unprecedented situation and the possible limitations of the previous studies which have not addressed the peculiarities of the integration of international students in a host country environment during in the crisis and post-crisis times.

The Notion and Dimensions of Well-being

Well-being can be described as positive emotions enhancing psychological feeling well in all human life. When people have a sense of well-being, it means they have a sense of control over their work, life and even destiny; they do not feel stress and are not bored or under pressure. Well-being develops individually and depends on how individuals evaluate their lives. (Mikelsone, Odina, 2016).

At a generalized level, it is important to distinguish between objective and subjective dimensions of well-being (McAllister, 2005; Gasper, 2007).

Objective dimension captures the material and social features of an individual's or community's well-being. This covers the level or wealth, provision of education and health care, infrastructure and so on. It includes

important questions for society's well-being and can be easily measured at the population level. Similarly, Gasper (2007) describes objective well-being as the externally approved, and thereby normatively endorsed, non-feeling features of a person's life.

Subjective dimension is about a people's evaluation and judgement of their own circumstances: what they think and feel. Subjective well-being is expressed in simple terms like saying, "*I feel good*" and "*I feel happy*". It involves two theoretical concepts: hedonic well-being and eudaimonic well-being. Eudaimonic well-being, also known as subjective, means well-lived life and the hedonistic approach known as psychological well-being can be explained in terms of pleasure (Svence, 2009; Kahneman, Diener, Schwarz, 2003, Mikelsone, Odina, 2016).

The measurement of well-being can be considered using two broad approaches: objective and subjective measures. Objective well-being measures explain what is required for any individual and then sets out indicators to estimate how far the requirements have been satisfied.

Objective indicators usually measure three main areas:

Economic: household income.

Quality of life: life expectancy, crime rates, educational attainment.

Environment: air pollution, water quality.

Objective well-being measures have been used for many years, but it has been progressively recognized that objective measures on their own cannot measure a people's progress and that subjective measures are also needed (Hicks, 2011).

Subjective well-being measures ask questions to people to assess their own well-being. It argues that the only way to know if someone is happy or satisfied is to ask him or her. Subjective procedure allows for differences in people's values and preferences at professional life and personal level. They are not subjective because they are self-reported, and the question asks a person to rate, how they feel (Hicks, 2011). Unlike objective measures, perceptions are vital and crucial to understanding subjective well-being. The subjective measures are comparable and have helped worldwide to set up programmes to improve the measurement of subjective well-being.

Ryan and Deci (2001) in their Self Determination Theory also point out relative importance of well-being across different cultures especially, the people who work and study in different cultures rather than theirs.

The data of the present research have been analysed based on multidimensional model consisting of six indicators of well-being (Ryff, Keyes, 1995; Ryff, 1995):

- (Self-acceptance) positive evaluation of oneself and one's past which means perceiving oneself and one's personality aspects, as well as one's good and bad virtues, in a positive way. People also show

positive attitude towards themselves and their past, they are proud of their life.

- (Personal growth) a sense of continuous growth and development as a person is characterized by openness to new experience, the realization of one's potential and behavioural improvement during lifetime. Challenges become important evidence of the growth and one's abilities.
- (Purpose in life) the belief that one's life is purposeful and meaningful – confirms determination, clear understanding of one's goal in life, a sense of direction and confidence in life.
- (Positive relations with others) the ability to build quality relationships with others is seen as empathy, attracting relationship and giving support. It is an interest in and concern to maintain positive relationships with others, even if opinions remain different, or they must give up their positions.
- (Environmental mastery) the ability to affect the world around – a sense of mastery and expertise to build one's own environment reveals how people and their activities may affect the processes taking place around. It is mastery and competence to effectively manage and use the environment, to control the complex flow of information. It particularly applies to those activities a person can manage and master. It is demonstrated through relationships with others and in the need for "clear rules of the game".
- (Autonomy) a sense of self-determination is revealed in human judgments and independence, in the ability to resist public pressure and the ability to regulate their own behaviour, as well as the ability to think and act in the selected direction (Mikelsone, Odina, 2016).

Research methodology and Sample

The article introduces the selected results of a broader research conducted in the framework of the project "Multilingual and Multicultural University: Preparation Platform for Prospective International Students" (No. 1.1.1.2/VIAA/1/16/019) co-funded by ERDF. Within this research, survey was used a research method to explore the well-being of international students in Latvia. The research question was raised: how international students felt studying in higher education institutions of Latvia and what factors influenced their well-being in Latvia. Six aspects of well-being and happiness: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance were measured applying the questionnaire as a data collection method, which comprised 25 questions. 18 questions formulated as statements were adapted from

Carol. D. Ryff's (1989) well-being scale, composed in Likert scale. Each of the six aspects of well-being was measured by the responses to three statements. The response format consisted of 7 possible answers from 1 – strongly agree to 7 – strongly disagree. Later reverse-code was used for 10 statements so that higher scores indicated greater well-being, and then calculated separate subscale scores by summing all items within each subscale. Reverse-scored items were worded in the opposite direction of what the scale was measuring. The research sample comprised 25 international students affiliated to public and private Latvian higher education institutions. The respondents were chosen by a snowball effect method when the first participant recommended next potential respondent. Each respondent was introduced with the research and its aim. Four respondents were known to the researchers. The respondents were 10 females and 15 male students, the average age of the respondents was 20.9 years. As to the nationalities the respondents were Indian (8 people), Uzbek (8 people), Russian (4 people), one German, one Estonian, one Moldovan, one Korean and one Nepalese. 20 respondents studied at Business Higher School Turība (business administration and tourism and hospitality management) and five at Riga Stradiņš University (medicine). The research was conducted at the beginning of the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, thus influencing the number of respondents – many international students were leaving for their home towns and those staying observed social distancing measures, as well as the representation of the research sample – the students that did not manage to return home because of lockdown (India) and the countries that have not been affected too severely by pandemic.

Data and Discussion

The data of the questionnaire showed that all the respondents came to study to Latvia as one of the European Union countries due to financial reasons: reasonable fees for studies and affordable living expenses. Moreover, it was easy for them to adapt to living in Latvia and most of them were eager to meet new people, learn more about the new culture and traditions. Furthermore, most of the respondents were actively engaged in and enjoyed their studies, since they had an opportunity to interact with other students from all over the world. However, 11 out of 25 students stated they missed their families, and 19 students admitted having financial problems. Therefore, almost half (12) of the respondents were planning to go back to their home countries upon the completion of the study process. Meanwhile, most of the respondents (21) felt happy about their achievements and felt they were making progress towards accomplishing their goals quite often. Finally, all the respondents described their state of

health as "*good*". The respondents showed their concerns about four main points when talking about their expectations before arrival to Latvia, such as language problems, differences in culture, ability to use opportunities and build relationship with locals.

According to Ryff's (1989) scale of six aspects of well-being and happiness: *autonomy*, *environmental mastery*, *personal growth*, *positive relations with others, purpose in life*, and *self-acceptance* higher scores mean higher levels of well-being. The average score of 25 respondents' well-being was 5.6 out of 7. As it has been stated, each aspect of well-being was measured by the responses to three statements. Having calculated and compared scores for each subscale, the conclusion was drawn that students' highest level of well-being related to the **Self-acceptance** subscale – 6 out of 7 (Figure 1). The highest score in self-acceptance subscale was received to liking one's own personality 6.48 ("*I like most parts of my personality*"); they were satisfied with their own character and did not want to be different. They were less satisfied with the past (5.7 present status and 5.9 achievements out of 7 in two questions), however, despite the various external circumstances they had been able to arrange their life. Self–acceptance is an important indicator because if people realise that they are satisfied with what they are, it helps in developing better understanding not only towards oneself, but the society in general making one more productive and happier.

Lowest levels of students' well-being amongst all six subscales related to the **Autonomy** (5.3) and the **Purpose in Life** (5.3) subscales (Figure 1). Concerning **Autonomy** on one hand, students tended to be influenced by people with strong opinions (score 5.2. out of 7), on the other hand they had confidence in own opinions, even if they were different from the way most other people thought (score 5.7). They just did not reveal their thoughts to others. The lowest score (5.04 out of 7) was received for the statement "*I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is important*". The findings of this question showed that the respondents were able to resist social pressures to think and act in an independent way. They could evaluate their place of studies and work.

As to the second lowest subscale **Purpose in Life** (5.3), the lowest score of all was received in expressing the point of view on the statement "*I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life*" (score 4.3 out of 7) that might mean the respondents may have doubts on whether they invested the appropriate time into the most significant activities. Answering other two statements, they confirmed they thought about the future (score 6) and they had got a goal (score 5.7). The goal guides life decisions, influences behaviour, shapes action, offers a sense of direction, and creates meaning. For some research respondents, the goal in life is linked with meaningful,

satisfying work. For others, their goal lies in their responsibilities to their family or friends back at home. Others seek meaning through spirituality or religious beliefs and through prayers in the churches.

The average score of students' well-being level related to the **Environmental Mastery** subscale was 5.4 out of 7 (Figure 1). The lowest rated statement was about managing the demands of everyday life (score 5.1), although in general, they felt in charge of the situation in which they lived (score 5.3). It might be explained by the obvious fact that being away from home and the usual daily routine lead to additional challenges one needs to resolve encountering them daily and in most common situation. The third statement "*I am good at managing the responsibilities of daily life*" (score 5.8) confirmed that daily routine might lead to extra effort on behalf of international students as opposed to the local ones. This should be considered and diverse types of support through different channels should be made available.

The average score of students' well-being level related to the **Positive Relations with Others** subscale was 5.9 out of 7 (Figure 1). The respondents were of quite high opinion about themselves describing themselves as "*giving persons, willing to share time with others*" (score 6.1), stated they had experienced "*many warm and trusting relationships with others*" (score 5.9), but they also found it difficult and frustrating to maintain close relationships (score 5.6).

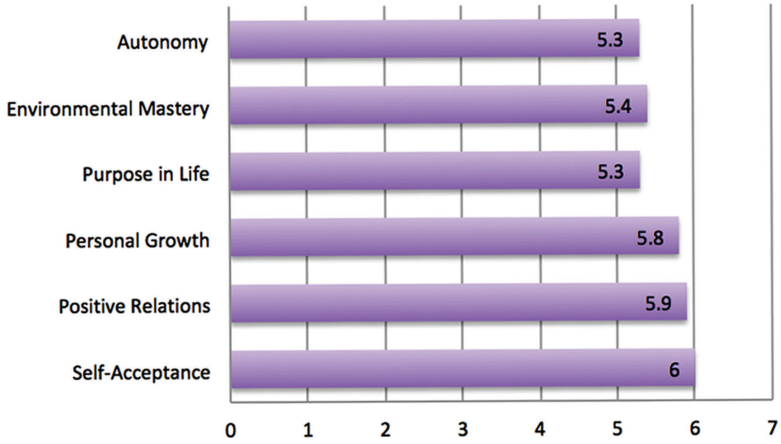

Figure 1. Levels of Participants' Well-being (Skvorcova 2020: 61)

The average score of students' well-being level related to the **Personal Growth** subscale was 5.8 out of 7 (Figure 1). The highest score (6.2 out of 7) was given for the statement "*I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how I think about myself and the world*" which

was not surprising taking into account that they dared to leave their home country and study abroad. They also admitted that "*life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth*" (score 6), but at the same time expressed they gave up trying to make big improvements or changes in their life a long time ago (score 5.2). Looking at the findings, it can be concluded that the respondents were interested in their personal development; however, there was a lack of means and lack of time to do so.

Conclusions

It is apparent that internationalization is one of the major trends in higher education research and practice in the 21st century, since the growth of international students is obviously viewed as a positive development. Globalization is the reality which must be accepted and the strategies to function in the transforming and globalized world should be one of the key underlying work for professionals within all the activity fields.

The study explored the peculiarities of integration of international students in Latvian higher education institutions. The research focus was substantiated by the necessity to evaluate the respondents' satisfaction with their choice to enrol in Latvian higher education study programmes, as well as assess their level of subjective well-being applying the selected methodological approach described in the corresponding subchapter of the paper.

Based on the data obtained in the research framework the conclusion can be drawn that:

- Latvia is viewed as an attractive destination due to having reasonable fees for the studies in HEIs, as well as the living conditions are satisfactory. These data provide the basis for the assumption that Latvia as a study destination can gain further recognition given that the stakeholders recognize certain weak points and elaborate the existing practices to meet the needs of both the prospective international and local students;
- The respondents of the selected research sample were mostly satisfied with their studies and appreciated the opportunity to interact with people belonging to different cultures. However, it should be highlighted that given that numerous studies confirm challenges related to interaction between local and international students, this conclusion might be a coincidence. The expansion of the sample is necessary to provide a holistic picture of the issue under investigation. Nevertheless, another assumption to put forward is that Latvian environment is a relatively positive destination for studies and other activities, which is confirmed by the data revealing that the choice of the country is often predetermined by the indicators within the categories "quality", "expenses" and "comfort" (e.g. "reasonable fees", etc.).

- The issues of international students' psychological comfort should be put at the foreground at HEIs, given that well-being is one of the significant factors affecting academic performance and daily lives;
- International students frequently report having financial difficulties which may be rooted not only in the fact that they move to another country, but also they make up a specific population in the sense that they start a new stage in their lives when they have to take responsibility for themselves on a daily basis which has not been the case when living with the family. Therefore, specific support, e.g., "life skills" courses may help them deal with the daily challenges in a more productive way.

The data obtained add to the basis for the elaboration of the framework aimed at facilitating successful functioning of both local and international students as well as other stakeholders in the multilingual and multicultural environment of present-day Latvia. However, it should be stated that the study limitations are seen in the possible language barrier provided that the data were collected through the English language, which is a second or a foreign language for all the respondents. In addition, the "outsider factor" should be considered.

To conclude, given that the COVID-19 pandemic, which within the months has led to the unprecedented socio-economic crisis severely affecting the higher education sector worldwide, further research to assess and analyse the various impacts of COVID-19 in the short, medium and long term focusing specifically on the support measures necessary in each specific context.

Apparently enough, the COVID 19 crisis will have a significant negative impact on the recruitment of international students. Consequently, the crisis will lead to the urgent necessity to review and elaborate the internationalization strategies of institutions to become competitive in the transforming higher education sector.

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ISBN 978-9934-18-623-3