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Editorial

This year, like in the previous two years, we are also publishing a bilingual Slovenian and English issue of Contemporary Pedagogy. It contains articles interesting to both domestic and foreign specialists, bringing considerations about research work in the educational field in Slovenia and presenting the findings of theoretical and empirical research projects marking current Slovenian pedagogic reflections more or less directly touching on teachers and their work.

Topical debates on the educational concept in Slovenia are reflected in the introductory article about the value basis of moral education in the public school. The authors, M. Kovač Šebart and J. Krek, advocate the thesis that human rights and obligations represent the basis of the common value basis for moral education in the public school. The authors analyse the thesis that the concept of human rights in the public school has only become established as a legal form and not as human rights ethics. They partly confirm the thesis, yet they emphasise that this was also contributed to by pedagogical theory to the extent that it did not manage to present the concept of human rights in a way that could be regarded in the public school as ethics or as an appropriate ethical basis for moral education there. They show that in this context the žpost-modern doubt' about the existence of universal values is unjustified and that the consequence of such doubt is, among other things, the insecurity of teachers regarding the value framework of moral education. They show which ethical principles and values are brought by the concept of human rights and how it places the relations vis-à-vis other, particular values and value systems, and give the grounds why the ethics of human rights and obligations is an appropriate basis for moral education in the public school. They emphasise that the use of this ethics also includes the legal dimension and formal educational acts. Consequently, teachers and students preparing for pedagogical work must be adequately introduced in their studies and enabled to learn about the concept and ethics of human rights and obligations so they can also apply these common values, standards and principles in their educational activities.

Also due to this, the studies and preparation of experts for work in the pedagogical field is an especially topical area as the quality of their work primarily depends on the extent to which the education process manages to appropriately develop such concepts that enable their professional development. These are issues addressed in the article by B. Šteh and J. Kalin. They ask whether during the study of pedagogy and adult education there are changes in the students' understanding of knowledge, the role of the teacher and the student and, if there are, what are the factors influencing these changes. They use as the basis the cognitive constructivist paradigm of education and thus highlight the assumption that constructive education refers to the active (re)construction of knowledge with the emphasis on the active role of the student. Knowledge can thus not be understood as the final truth which can be accumulated and transmitted to others. Based on these starting points, the authors conducted an investigation among students, using a combination of a survey and interviews as the methodology.

They thus gained an insight into changes in the understanding of knowledge, the role of the teacher and the student during studies. The conclusion that can be discerned here is that an extremely important role in the bringing on of changes are those education experiences in which students play a more active and more independent role. This can only be achieved if we consider students as partners in the education process and in decision-making about how to form studies of better quality.

The professional development of teachers through their action research is also examined in an article by a group of authors from the Ljubljana Faculty of Education, treating action research as a process that can contribute considerably to good quality educational work as it is conducted by teachers directly, which enables them to know their work better and plan it more adequately, while it also increases interest in the influence their actions have on pupils. The Slovenian school system has had a tradition of action research since the 1980s and today this is one of the most expanded forms of research in the pedagogical field. The authors find positive effects of action research of teachers, primarily regarding their readiness to participate in researching. This readiness is greater with those who have already participated in research. Therefore, special attention should already be paid to preparing teachers for researching during their studies, already providing the students with profound methodological knowledge and appropriate inclusion in research work during their studies. However, after the conclusion of the study programme, the system of continuing professional training must provide adequate opportunities for the development of research competencies and an appropriate financial and organisational stimulation for research work.

Teachers, their professional development and career models are also the topic of a study about the stage models of the development of the careers of Slovenian teachers by P. Javrh. Based on an extensive study by the Swiss researcher M. Huberman about career stages in the development of teachers, the author conducted a profound qualitative survey on a sample of Slovenian teachers and compared the model thereby formed (called an S-model or the Slovenian model) with the model developed by Huberman on a sample of Swiss teachers. Both models contain so-called desired and undesired sides. The desired side is characterised by positive growth and professional development, while the undesired side involves stagnation in career development and consequential dissatisfaction with one's career. In the Slovenian model, we also encounter a specific stage not known in Huberman's model. This is a stage of critical responsibility characterised by great engagement and positive criticism, releasing the creative potential of a teacher, which happens more the more an appropriate atmosphere is created among the school staff and the more teachers attract their colleagues to co-operate.

All the articles thus concern the work of teachers in one way or another, either through the prism of creating an educational concept and its value basis or through an analysis of the education of teachers, their inclusion in research activities and through the development of their professional careers. All the texts have in common the finding that the teacher is the key factor in a good quality education process. After all, the treatment of teachers and their education also

shows that the process of developing Slovenian education has reached the level where what is primarily needed is qualitative growth and that teachers are those who can ensure this growth. Consequently, special attention must be paid to those teachers whose career is built on the undesired side of the career development model, while it is also necessary to remove the causes bringing teachers into the stage of powerlessness, as P. Javrh calls it.

Two of the above empirical research projects also use a similar methodological approach as they are based on qualitative research methodology. The third article applies qualitative methodology to investigate the influences of action research and thus also indirectly touches on qualitative contributions to research work. In this context, it is therefore reasonable to ask about the theoretical basis of qualitative methodology, which is the subject of the article by J. Mažgon, who primarily asks about the possibilities to form theoretical findings on the basis and through the use of qualitative methodology. She rejects the criticism of qualitative research approaches because of their allegedly questionable validity and consequential small possibility of generalisation. To avoid such criticism, one must be very careful in the formation of a theory when using this type of research. To aid researchers, the author presents basic guidelines for the formation of a theory which indeed cannot achieve the level of generalisation of quantitative research, yet that is not its purpose. The value of qualitative research findings is greater the more the formation of the central categories is consensual and the more the empirical data obtained are tied to existing theory. In this sense, it is related to subject-based theory which provides the best basis for an increase in the validity of the findings of qualitative research projects. After all, their value is also proven by the article published in this issue.

A somewhat different methodological approach was used by T. Vidmar in the historical analysis of *gimnazija* as a general education secondary school in three related regions (countries). Instead of a continuous description of the development of *gimnazija*, which is the usual methodological approach, he uses a synchronic approach and presents for individual chosen periods, including the present period, how *gimnazija* appears as the site where ideas are expressed within these periods in which one must not overlook the documentation value of the historical analysis of the chosen periods. Perhaps, such an approach seems unusual to some experts and they would prefer to satisfy themselves with a diachronic analysis of *gimnazija* development which, however, would require a more extensive study. In the present time of debate about changes in the *gimnazija* programme in Slovenia, it is necessary to have a look at the situation from a distance. This is enabled by this analysis of the selected periods which thus contributes to a consideration of the situation of *gimnazija* as a general education institution today in terms of its contents.

We have thus covered the contents of this year's bilingual issue of Contemporary Pedagogy. We are convinced that, like in past years, readers will find in it some interesting treatises and encouragement for their practical work and above all opportunities for theoretical reflection. At the same time, we believe we have also appropriately presented the development of Slovenian theoretical

reflections in the education field to those who do not encounter it so often due to the language barrier.

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The Value Basis of Education in the State School

The Educational Concept Based on Human Rights is not, and cannot be, the only Legal Form

Abstract: Although in public discourse the concept of human rights is legitimate and undisputed, as has characterised the Slovenian space since at least the end of the 1980s, in the pedagogical profession we can still continuously find theorists who draw attention to the žpostmodern doubt' regarding the existence of universal values that are žcommon to all men and indisputable' and that could form the basis of education in the state school. This doubt is also applied to human rights as an ethical concept. In the article we attempt to show that human rights are an ethical concept that is a justifiable basis for education in the state school. The concept of human rights and responsibilities also includes žthe basic social moral' in as much as it includes and connects ethical principles that also form part of particular value-moral systems. Here we refer to the utterly basic ethical norms or values in interpersonal relationships, with which the ethics of human rights implement universal moral responsibilities towards one's fellow man; responsibilities that include the important diktats of traditional morals that are key to human existence.

Key words: the ethics of human rights and responsibilities, the educational plan of the state school, legal form, values in state schools, the education of teachers

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Theoretical doubts about the concept of human rights as the value basis of education in the state school

Although in public discourse the concept of human rights is legitimate and undisputed, as has characterised the Slovenian space since at least the end of the 1980s, in the pedagogical profession we can still continuously find theorists who draw attention to the 'postmodern doubt' regarding the existence of universal values that are 'common to all men and indisputable', and that could form the basis of education in the state school. This doubt is also applied to human rights as an ethical concept.

As part of philosophical-anthropological knowledge, this kind of doubt and discussion is legitimate and essential since it is one of the paths to reflection on the tension in value systems, to understanding the human being as a social being, to reflection on the specificity of cultural contexts and so on. However, in view of the Slovenian constitutional provisions and the organisation of public education ensuing from these, the pedagogical profession cannot and should not avoid conceptualising the basic framework of values on which teachers in the state school rely in the pedagogical process. Teachers in the school always function in a morally educative way and they must thus also reflect on how school should provide moral education in order to ensure that in so doing no one will be excluded or privileged based on their values, religion, affiliations with philosophy or faith, sex, ethnic affiliations, race etc.

Although, hypothetically speaking, social or cultural anthropology (e.g., Vuk Godina 1990; Benedict 1934; Mead 1928; 1935), or the philosophy of morals (e.g., MacIntyre 1987), for instance, could demonstrate that there is no value system that is common to all mankind and valid for everyone, such a debate would not be decisive in the state school. As already stated, from the viewpoint of the formal frameworks on which the Slovenian state in based, it is today indisputable that human rights represent a value matrix in which the place of common values is located. Pedagogical theory, in as much as it concerns education in the Slovenian

state school, must therefore engage with the question as to what kind of ethical principles and values the concept of human rights brings with it, what this implies in relation to other, particular value systems, and similar questions. Thus, in this context it would be misguided to send the message to school practice that there is no indisputable, commonly acceptable value system, that only diversity exists in the postmodern world in which there are no common values, and similar.

Is the formal institutionalisation of human rights an obstacle to interpersonal function – education in the spirit of these rights?

In an article from 1991 concerning education in the postmodern era, Medveš draws attention to '… the illusionary search for a lasting historical value system common to all mankind, indisputable and acceptable to everyone…'(Medveš 1991, p. 109), which at the same time would not be particular and thus exclusive. Approximately a decade and a half later, he again addressed the questions of values and education, referring to and revising his thesis quoted above. He enquires 'whether it is possible to define a universal moral codex in the postmodern era at all. The question is whether we can even speak about the consensual acceptance of a codex (for instance, about human rights) in view of the discrimination and exclusion of certain (minority) cultures and values in almost every social environment'(Medveš 2007, p. 23). He added that 'the postmodern resists theses that seek to bring finality to everything by determining, defining, framing, …' and that the message of the postmodern is precisely that 'this striving towards the validity of the One is that which in the modern era not only failed to prevent the great human catastrophes of the recent past… but actually triggered them with its intolerant attitude towards monolithic world culture'(ibid.). We believe that the question is incorrectly formulated here. It is a notorious fact that it was just after World War II that the concept of human rights was formally generally accepted (the United Nations, the European Council, the Second Vatican Council). It was accepted as the norm precisely as a consequence of the radical disrespect of these basic ethical principles that had led to the Second World War. It was also accepted because the concept of human rights establishes the ethics of allowing diversity in an entirely clear way (or, put in more philosophical terms, it invalidated the validity of the One, as in the place of One positively determined Truth it implemented freedom, or autonomy, of the individual and of specific cultures). The fact that, in reality, human rights are infringed everywhere – through discrimination, exclusion etc. – is not an argument against them being the formally generally accepted common value system. Unless we do not think it could ever be possible to live in an ideal world of the absolute validity of the concept and the realisation of its principles. If it were like this human rights would no longer be necessary as everyone would already always behave according to these norms.

Here a question that directly concerns pedagogical practice can legitimately be posed: Why do human rights not have an appropriate place in the education process in the state school?

Medveš sees the reason in the *formal institutionalisation* of human rights. He writes that '… The General Declaration of Human Rights calls on society and the individual to respect these rights and to educate in the spirit of their respect, but in practice the interpersonal function of human rights is, to a large degree, open and undetermined precisely because of their formal institutionalisation' (Medveš 2007, p. 12). Here there is, first of all, the question of what the expression formal institutionalisation actually refers to. From the continuation of the argument it can be seen that the author understands formal institutionalisation as legal procedures. This is evident from establishing the answer to the question as to 'what human rights mean in the relationship between pupils and teachers', adding that 'in execution they transform themselves into instrumentalised legal procedures' (ibid.). We completely agree with his thesis that 'in order to implement rights in interpersonal relationships a person must develop something essentially more fundamental than just knowing and mastering procedures that ensure the protection of rights in state institutions' (ibid). We do not, however, share the opinion that the ethical side of rights 'due to their formalistic instrumentalisation is obviously not even able to be developed, neither in everyday life nor in the operation of institutions' (ibid.). Further, it is impossible to overlook the fact that in this formulation the thesis becomes even more generalised: not simply legal procedures, but *form as such* – 'formalistic instrumentalisation' – prevents the ethics of human rights being vitalised in everyday life and the operation of institutions. We accept, to a certain point, the argumentation that the concept of human rights – not just in pedagogical practice – has been thematised and equated with formalist instrumentalisation, but we must add the suspicion that, at least in pedagogical practice, this has been facilitated to a great extent precisely by the prevailing theoretical interpretation. This interpretation, taken only from the conditionally said disciplinary educational perspective, (co)creates and confirms such a view. Below we offer a critique of such an interpretation.

Education in the spirit of human rights – or common sense?!

First we will answer the question of what education in the spirit of human rights means. Medveš asks 'what does education in the spirit of human rights mean?' (ibid.), claiming that human rights are dealt with because 'numerous articles in the foreign and Slovenian press exaggerate the significance of human rights for education in the contemporary era, seeing in them a new Archimedes' Point on which the entire educational concept of the state school can be based, and forgetting about ideological burden,[1] ethics or morals' (ibid.). As a starting

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[1] The criticism that by having the concept of human rights as the value basis of education in the state school one 'forgets about the ideological burden' cannot be addressed here since what is meant by 'ideological burden' in this context is not clarified by the author. Of course, the concept of human rights is in itself – among other things – oriented precisely against any kind of indoctrination. A great deal has already been written about the criteria of the European Court that are also used in school practice in this regard (cf. Kodelja 1995; Kovač Šebart 2002).

point for the *answer* to the question, he repeats the thesis that with these rights 'all that is established in school is a set of rules and a »legal environment«' (ibid.), and the writes that human rights come to expression 'rarely on the statement of any kind of warning, reprimand or threat of something even worse, that is, in procedures for which the school and its organs must hold to the prescribed procedures…' (ibid., p. 13).

The answer to the question of what education in the spirit of human rights means is thus connected by the author to that which is, according to him, most explicitly embodied in practice, where in his opinion human rights are reduced to a legal form. Here the implicit[2] conclusion is derived that ethics (where the author equates ethics with opposites and the contrary positions of the prosecutor and the advocate, who are characteristic of the form of legal procedures) in the spirit of human rights are not sufficient, therefore 'in the goal orientation of educational conduct, the school should give priority to ethics in general, as well as to the ethical dimension of human and child rights, over the legal dimension. (…) the school should accept human and child rights only in connection with their ethical definitions' (ibid., p. 14). The emphasis on the fact that pedagogical theory and practice should engage with the ethical and legal dimension of human rights is completely correct. However, in so doing we cannot overlook the thematisation of the following theoretical conclusion: 'because we know that there is no ethical theory that would give reliable support, it is possible to simply conclude that the school should accept the principle of the ethics of »common sense« as its ethical codex' (ibid.). In this conclusion it is difficult to overlook the message that there are actually no determined common values, and that we should rely on 'common sense', although the author immediately uses the latter in the sense of judgement and behaviour that must be the way it is: 'This Šthe principle of the ethics of 'common sense'Ć should mean that in school nothing can happen that is in contradiction with its goals, duties and social mission, nor with the values of human rights and justice in general' (ibid.).

This conclusion is not (in itself) disputable, and we accept it. In connection with the broader context of his argument, however, the finding is unclear and possibly also ambiguous. Why? On first view, it invalidates the message of the previous conclusion: if the directive was previously 'common sense', then 'common sense' is now reinterpreted as something other than that which we normally understand it to be. *Common sense* normally means that someone *according to their own judgement* follows the *prevailing social* norms.[3] This can be misleading

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[2] Through a series of 'paradoxes' (cf. Medveš 2007, pp. 13-14).

[3] Merriam-Webster's Unabridged Dictionary (2005) defines 'common sense', which has its etymological roots in Latin and Ancient Greek (Latin: *sensus communis*; translated from the Ancient Greek: *koinē aisthēsis*), amongst other things as: 1. 'good sound ordinary sense: good judgment or prudence in estimating or managing affairs especially as free from emotional bias or intellectual subtlety or as not dependent on special or technical knowledge Štoo absurdly metaphysical for the ears of prudent common sense P.E. MoreĆ; and 2. (we leave out the specific philosophical understandings): 'the unreflective opinions of *ordinary men*: the ideas and conceptions natural to a man untrained in technical philosophy'. The Dictionary of Slovenian Literary Language (2007) connects 'common sense' (Slovenian: '*zdrav razum*') with: 'to be healthy intellectually, capable of thinking, to act in a considered

because the author refers to 'the social mission of the school', 'human rights' and 'justice'. The author fails to provide a more detailed clarification of what the social mission of the school and justice should actually mean. He now attempts to anchor the term human rights above all as the foundation of ethics in the state school and not simply as a normative edifice. However, as doubt is expressed in the context of the text about the possibility of defining a universal moral codex, the reader can here again fail to understand the concept or fail to take it as the ethics of human rights, but instead in the sense that, as the author has expressed, it is 'undeniable that the school cannot[4] infringe human rights in its conduct'(ibid., p. 14). Further, if in practice and in theory the concept of human rights is understood as formal institutionalisation, and if doubt is expressed about the possibility of a universal value framework, and thus common sense is evoked, teachers' behaviours in school, which should respect human rights and follow these norms, can very quickly be understood simply as respecting the established rules (the rules and responsibilities of the pupils) and the legal procedures in determining sanctions.

As the basic message regarding values in the training of teachers, such a conclusion needs to be clearly supplemented precisely because together with the postmodern thesis that it is impossible to establish any positively formulated value framework for education in the state school, but only 'common sense', it is possible to read the message as: *teachers, behave in education 'according to your own judgement'*. This enables the introduction of a kind of 'blank space' of the field of values; a 'blank space' only at *on first sight*, of course: the concept of common sense and education based on this principle would, of course, not establish an *empty space* of values as there is no consistent concept of common sense without its own measure of judgement, without a normative framework on which it is based, thus on the *prevailing* or on some other kind of specific particular defined social norms and values. Or, as Haydon pointed out, 'it would have to always be embodied in the practice, habits and expectations of persons who live in society, not in choice and reflection from the world of discrete individuals' (Haydon 1987, p. 3). Thus with the very concept of common sense we covertly introduce precisely the concept of a positive value framework (as already stated, the contents of the prevailing norms and values within a specific society, or some other specific value framework that the teacher follows as a member of a particular community). In contemporary multicultural society, however, this by definition means that the state school would be based on a particular value framework, albeit that of the majority, and that it would not have a measure of how to behave

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way'. The notion of common sense, therefore, tends towards a measure of judgement and the 'common man's' capacity of judgement, while the statement 'to be healthy intellectually' implies the negation of 'insanity', which presupposes the border between normality and insanity, something that sociologists, cultural anthropologist and others have already incontrovertibly demonstrated is culturally determined and defined by prevailing norms, opinions etc. How 'common sense' is understood in common usage is probably suitably expressed in 'non-scientific' sources such as Wikipedia: 'what people in common would agree', 'the knowledge and experience most people have, or are believed to have by the person using the term' (Wikipedia 2007).

[4] Perhaps what is meant here is that the state school 'is not allowed to' infringe, as *de facto* infringements can of course occur.

in situations where various particular value frameworks come into conflict (cf. Lukes 1997; Kymlicka 1995). With the concept of common sense we do not follow the postmodern with the motto that the place of values or authority should be *in principle* empty; rather we covertly introduce the principle of the reign of a framework of particular values and broadly open the space of self-will. If at the same time human rights (if we understand them as a correction of common sense) are established only as a legal form (not as ethics, as they should be in this case) and because the term 'justice' (if we do not define it in more detail) does not convey anything determined as it can signify a range of contradictory theories of justice, with such ambiguous directives teachers are not given a clear answer as to what (which norms, values and rules) should form the basis of their decisions regarding their educational judgement and behaviour when they make a decision according to their own judgement, whose criteria is 'common sense'. Without the normative, value framework of human rights, teachers do not have the support, safeguards and correction that, at least in principle, enable them to avoid the caprice of their own particular system of value judgement on one hand, and to avoid the exclusion or favouritism of the prevailing, but still particular, value judgements in conduct towards the individual pupil, on the other. Of course, it is true and beyond doubt that in the state kindergarten and the state school it is necessary to impart as the common norm a range of habits of civilisation that are culture-specific and, in the end, arbitrary (for instance, certain types of food are eaten with a fork and not with the fingers or chopsticks etc.). Thus we 'rationalise' and find some logical foundation for these habits (such as reasons of hygiene) and in such contexts a suitable educational approach could be for the teacher to simply tell the pupil that 'in our society' 'we simply do it this way', and that in other places it is done differently. However, moral education in the state school cannot remain non-reflective in the area of basic common values. It is necessary to internalise these norms and know how to use them as principles, and this holds for teachers as well as being an educational goal for pupils.

The thesis that we refer to in the text as something that is insufficiently embodied in practice, namely that human rights should hold as ethical norms in everyday life and in the life of the state school, is also in our opinion actually referred to by Medveš' analysis. The 'lack of definition' or 'lack of consummation' of the ethics of human rights in the state school, and the institutionalisation of this concept, demands continued further debate and explanation, but this does not mean that the concept of the ethics of human rights in the state school should not be taken as a 'universal ethical codex'.

Here one cannot pass by the elaboration of the concept of the ethics of human rights and responsibilities, which is supposedly unfulfilled in schools. Therefore, before treating this in more detail we first answer the questions: Can we speak about *the ethics* of human rights at all? Do human rights include that which we would traditionally call 'moral principles'? Why should education in the state school derive precisely from the ethics of human rights?!

Can we speak about the ethics of human rights that are a justifiable basis for education in the state school?

We should begin by pointing out that, as a concept, human rights can be implicitly introduced in such a way that we do not actually mention the concept itself by name as, for instance, in the excerpt quoted below. We should first emphasise that in the second part of the text that we quote in the continuation, McLaughlin writes that as well as establishing obligations towards public values it is also necessary in the state school to establish understanding, debate and critical reflection precisely in relation to difference in the area of privacy. There is no need to demonstrate how this necessarily follows from the demand of respect and the interconnection of four sets of articles of the Convention on Fundamental Rights and Freedoms: the right to respect for private and family life; the right to freedom of *thought, conscience and religion*; the right to freedom of *expression*; and the *prohibition of discrimination* (Convention... 1994, Articles 8, 9, 10 and 14). On first view, in the following quote the author appears to define the value basis of 'the common school' without connection to the concept of human rights, when he writes that:

> 'The common school in relation to moral education (…) seeks the substantive commitment of its pupils to the public or fundamental values. They include basic social morality, ideals (such as individual autonomy), methodological principles (relating to the way in which public disputes are settled), and moral and political values (such as respect for persons and toleration). In view of the close connection of many of these values with the domain of the political (they include 'civic virtue'), this task should be conducted in close harmony with a significant form of political education – in particular, education for citizenship. In relation to these public values the school seeks more than simply understanding and critical assessment on the part of pupils, and there is little room for pluralism and neutrality. For this reason, it is wrong to regard common schools of this kind as lacking a moral foundation, not least because the public values involved are not merely procedural, properly understood they require the formation of substantial commitments and virtues. On the other hand, in relation to the diversity of the private domain, the schools seek exploration, understanding, debate and critically reflective decision by individuals. This does not necessarily require the strategy of 'teacher neutrality', which is only one of a number of alternatives which can be employed' (McLaughlin 1995, p. 30).

For some of the values listed by McLaughlin it is immediately clear that they coherently and precisely include the concept of human rights. Take, for instance, the autonomy of the individual as an ideal. The rights (the first generation) are conceived as freedoms in such a way as to give the individual the right to make decisions about his or her own personality and body (cf. Kovač Šebart, Krek 2007). It is also clear that these rights determine the basic methodological principles regarding the way public debate proceeds; namely, the freedom of speech (the Convention… 1994, Article 10) and the freedom of beliefs, conscience and religion (ibid., Article 9), with which the principle of the legal state (the rule of law) with

its specific rules (cf. ibid. Article 6 and 7) is connected. It is hardly necessary to specifically point out that the basic concepts of human rights are the moral and political values of respect of the individual (including the right to privacy, ibid., Article 8) and tolerance as the demand for the responsibility of respecting the rights of others, which derive from numerous rights (cf. Krek 2004).

The notion of 'basic social morality' at first sight exceeds the boundaries of that which is included in the concept of human rights. The 'social morality' of a particular society necessarily also includes norms specific to that society, that is, the prevailing norms of that particular society, with regard to which various societies also distinguish themselves from one another. Although we would understand this notion in this sense, it is possible to show that the concept of human rights itself also includes contemporary social morality. Human rights are also included with those that determine individual rights in terms of content, that is, they protect the basic conditions of civilised human habitation as an inherently social being and thus, amongst other things, also enable the coexistence of specific prevailing and minority social norms. Not least, the concept of human rights conceives social ethical principles, which oblige the individual to follow particular behaviours in relation to others. These principles do not determine particular contents, that is, they do not determine positive[5] individual morals and convictions. They are general social norms that (on the one hand) guarantee protection – establish a border between society, the state and the individual – against other individuals and society (as well as the state) encroaching upon the individual (or on a minority) in areas that are fundamental to humanity and human habitation. The ethics of human rights and the appurtenant responsibilities are elementary ethics according to which each person has, amongst other rights, the right to live, not to be enslaved, not to be tortured; the right to hold, as a thinking human being, his or her own beliefs and religious affiliation and to be able to publicly express his or her own thoughts; the right move freely, to marry, and not to be discriminated against due to any kind of personal characteristic (language, skin colour, gender etc.), to mention just a few basic rights. Of course, this is only possible if each individual respects the same rights of others. On the other hand, this is a concept of social morality because the rights are valid only in as much as they are implemented in societal, state and individual behaviour in the form of responsibilities towards others. Rights are always also responsibilities towards others. Thus in various texts (cf. Kovač Šebart 2002) we have already warned that the positing of 'the ethic of rights' and 'the ethic of responsibilities' as opposites[6]

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[5] Cf. the distinction made by Berlin (1992) on the difference between positive and negative social freedom.

[6] In understanding the concept of human rights, the interpretation has often been emphasised in Slovenia that only 'rights' or, as we have already pointed out, 'the ethic of rights' is recognised in this concept (cf. Kovač Šebart 2002). Thus B. Marentič Požarnik, for instance, writes: 'I draw attention to the given formulation that is derived more from »the ethic of rights« than »the ethic of responsibilities«, although we would, in line with the UNESCO recommendation, also have to view »independence, personal responsibility and the sense of community« as three complimentary synergetic values' (Marentič Požarnik 1994, p. 69).

which we find in pedagogical theory is problematic since it overlooks the fact that in the concept of rights the supposition and claim is written that they must be respected. Rights do not exist if they are not respected; the respecting of rights imparts an obligation on both the state and the individual to respect these rights, that is, responsibility. Every right has an *eo ipso* correlation of various responsibilities; the structure of rights even presupposes responsibilities that are not directly rights. For example, the responsibility of tolerance, which is one of the most obvious and most important consequences of the concept of human rights, is a moral responsibility that is indirectly (due to the responsibility of respecting very diverse rights) built into the concept of human rights. Positing 'the ethic of rights' and 'the ethic of responsibilities' as opposites overlooks the fact that without respecting rights as responsibilities each right in reality becomes some kind of 'independent', free-floating 'ethic of rights'. On the other hand, however, if we do not explicitly connect the 'ethic of responsibilities' with the structure of human rights, which gives it content, the 'ethic of responsibilities' also in terms of content remains an undefined (in principle) specific ethic of the individual, without any clear connection and ethic responsibility precisely from the perspective of the common values of society.

In other words, the social conception of the *relationship* of rights and responsibilities is initially located in the fact that concrete responsibilities derived from the rights of others impose behaviour with relation to which norms are not established by the individual (his or her individual freedom) because the content of these responsibilities is *socially* determined. Therefore, education aimed at the pupil taking on the norms and values included in human rights must, in addition to an awareness of one's own rights and behaviours in harmony with them, impart an awareness of one's responsibilities to others and the ensuing behaviours – duties derived from the content of rights that hold for everyone. Further, we could perhaps also write that education that is bound to the ethics of human rights, with the purpose of enacting them in society, is in the first instance education that is bound to the responsibilities towards the equal rights of others.[7]

The concept of human rights and responsibilities thus includes the 'fundamental social moral' in as much as it includes and connects ethical principles that are part of particular religious-moral systems. Here we refer to the absolutely basic ethical norms (moral values) in interpersonal relationships with which the ethics of human rights introduces universal moral responsibilities to one's fellow man, including the diktats of traditional morals important for human existence (cf. Kovač Šebart 2002, p. 72). For example, the right defined within the concept of human rights as *the right to life*[8] at the same time imposes the responsibility

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[7] Waldron, for instance, who is aware of both the logic of duties as a consequence of the respecting of rights and of the frequency of the miscomprehension of the relation between rights and duties, when speaking about rights does not tire of constantly adding, at least in parentheses, 'and duties' or 'and duties correlative to those': 'People have *special* rights (and duties) arising out of promises, acquisitions, roles, and relationships, as well as the *general* ones we call human rights (and duties correlative to those) ...' (Waldron 1993, p. 170)

[8] 'Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person' (Declaration 1948, Article 3).

defined in the Judaeo-Christian tradition as the Commandment *thou shalt not kill*. The right to possession is imposed as the responsibility *thou shalt not steal*.[9] The Commandment *thou shalt not lie* ('speak the truth') is a supposition of the concept of the legal state, i.e., the right guaranteeing a fair trial (cf. ibid.). 'Respect the father and the mother' is converted into the universal right to non-discrimination, which on a personal level imposes the responsibility on every individual to *respect everyone*, irrespective of their personal characteristics etc.

Perhaps a certain difference in the structure of responsibilities lies in the fact that these obligations (responsibilities), which are (or were) in religious traditions also placed on a person in relation to God (not just one person in direct relation to another person), are here effected regardless of the person's relation to God, and in themselves exist within the framework of the relation of one person to other people or, even more importantly, to the dignity of other people's personalities. Nonetheless, it is evident that in terms of their basic content (unless one interprets one's responsibility to God as effecting intolerance, discrimination and violence towards one's fellow man) traditional moral responsibilities are not in contradiction with the responsibility to one's fellow man imposed by the ethics of human rights; on the contrary, these responsibilities are also binding in relation to one's fellow man. Here it is necessary to add that the ethics of human rights also build upon and exceed traditional specific value systems. For instance, they introduce the concept of a fair trial as part of modern social morals, combined with the concept of legal protection (the legal state). Amongst other things, this ethic determines in a self-restrictive way so-called freedoms at points where the majority of traditional value (religious) systems have specific diktats. The rights to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (cf. the Convention 1994, Articles 9 and 10) as well as the prohibition of discrimination (cf. ibid., Article 14),[10] rather than the particular content of diktats, introduce personal freedom and the universal responsibility to respect every human being in the place where, as already stated, they hold in various value systems – the particular content of diktats. It is true that in so doing the ethics of human rights depart from traditional value concepts in certain points that are key to human existence; it is also true that it is precisely by doing this that it enables the coexistence of all of these specific value systems and of the differences between individuals.

The concept of non-discrimination obviously also reveals *equality*[11] as a common supposition of all rights. As already stated, when the ethics of human rights introduce the concept of the equal humanity of all people, which is the basis of all

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[9] 'No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property' (Declaration 1948, Article 17).

[10] 'The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status' (the Convention 1994, Article 14).

[11] Kodelja points out that the notions of freedom and equality are fundamentally connected with the contemporary conception of democracy: 'Democracy (…) is based on two values: on *equality* and *freedom*, says Norberto Bobbio, one of the most renowned Italian philosophers of politics and law' (Kodelja, 2002).

rights and thus of modern ethics, it also introduces the diktat of tolerance (this is, of course, not only connected to the right to non-discrimination, but also to responsibility towards others, which derives from such fundamental rights as the right to life, as well as to responsibilities that derive from the rights to freedom of thought and discussion, as well as religion and belief). If we then add social rights (rights of the second generation) and minority group rights (rights of third and fourth generations), it becomes clear that the concept of human rights does not only include ethics in the traditional sense of basic moral diktats, but also social ethics on which it is possible to build modern social cohesion or, to state it more strongly, that are a precondition for social cohesion in the circumstances of the diversity of modern life. As in connection with this we conclude in an analysis of various authors (cf. Kovač Šebart 2002) human rights are no longer simply one of the ideological doctrines, but rather civilisation in the sense 'that, to paraphrase Hall, combines within itself the best that has been produced by various moral and value systems (cf. Hall 1988, p. 4) and about which today there is agreement that they are the best and are generally acceptable' (Kovač Šebart 2002, p. 72). This is also achieved by not including – and in so doing enabling life, coexistence – that which is specific to various moral-religious systems and unavoidably, constituently separates them from each other; it also builds upon these systems with norms that are appropriate for the modern context and for social diversity.

We therefore believe that the concept of human rights is not just the form of the law and documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Convention on Fundamental Rights and Freedoms (1994 Š1950Ć), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the Resolution on the European dimension of education (the European ... 1989, pp. 3-5) and numerous other international documents, the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia and the various acts that commit the state. The justification for the place that this form has in modern society is based on its contents, on the ethics of human rights. Here there is, as McLaughlin writes, 'little room for pluralism and neutrality' (McLaughlin 1995, p. 30). This does not mean an ill-informed or non-reflective implementation of human rights as the fundamental value matrices of the contemporary era; rather it means that human rights should be established as a solid point, an unambiguous point of certainty, from which the education plan of the state school is derived, and on which this plan is based. And this in an era that, for want of a better term, we could call postmodern precisely because (amongst other reasons) of the possibility of the existence of a *pluralism of values*. It is the very principles of human rights and responsibilities that enable the actual coexistence of diversity. That is why they are a necessity in the school and why we should not depart from these principles in the school. Education in the state school should give the pupil a value orientation; not just in any way, but so that the value guidance imposes responsibilities ensuing from rights that lead to the respect of every person regardless of the differences that are part of human diversity.

Form versus content? Or form as a necessary part of content?

Let us dwell further on the criticism of the concept of human rights that is based on the conceptual background of the division into form and content. In a division depicted in this way, form, in the final instance, also takes in advance the place of the negatively value-marked opposite pole of 'content' (the latter often remaining undefined in texts!). In this understanding, however, formalisation (of educational activities and behaviours) appears as a barrier to the educational operations in the school.

If we concur with the thesis that the form (= formal institutionalisation, instrumentalised legal procedures, formalistic instrumentalisation etc.), of human rights prevents the implementation of ethics, then paradoxically the next logical step is that it is no longer necessary to deal with the *content* of human rights (how to implement individual rights and responsibilities, what they mean in a practical sense, what they demand etc.). Instead, there follows a preoccupation with *how to do away with the form* that hinders us when bringing human rights to life in practice. But we cannot bring human rights to life if we do not engage with them in terms of content, if we do not reflect on them and realise them in a concrete way; this is particularly impossible if we equate them with 'formal legal procedures'. At the same time, we must not neglect the fact that formal institutionalisation is an inherent part of the concept as it also embraces the concept of the legal state.[12]

The logic of division, in which form (law, institutionalisation) is declared at fault for not being content (ethics), and on this basis the understanding of the concept of human rights in practice can quickly lead to the situation where human rights are, as is established by the critics, valid neither as ethics nor as legal protection. The entire argument is devoted to demonstrating the 'paradoxes' we arrive at by reducing human rights to legal form. This can be taken to an absurd extreme, through an illustration that is based on the rhetorical question as to 'whether a teacher who catches a pupil in an 'impure act' should caution the pupil in a similar way to a policeman: 'You have the right to remain silent; anything you say can and will be used against you' (Medveš 2007, p.13). Our belief is that this kind of reduction is only possible in the absence of an understanding of the concept of human rights as an ethical concept. Instead of giving teachers instructions on when and in which context to clarify to the pupils the sense of these kinds of legal forms, the message is that it is impossible to educate in this way. The point of the argument is mistaken in two ways: firstly because he does not demonstrate what the contents of human rights actually are, even though he claims that this is precisely what is needed. Secondly, due to the fact that the concept of the legal state is ridiculed, which conveys the message that the school context is so specific that the logic of legal protection is entirely inappropriate for it.

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[12] Here we mainly have in mind Articles 6 and 7 of the Convention (1994), the 'right to a fair trial' and the principle that 'there is no punishment without law'. These, however, indicate the general logic of how the concept of human rights establishes a relationship between form and content (cf. Articles 6 to 11 of the General Declaration of Human Rights from 1948).

If this message were sustained in the education of teachers it would implicitly allow the message that self-will – in as much as it 'dismisses' the rules of the legal state and the ethical criteria of ethical principles common to all – is the essence, or at least a condition, of pedagogical behaviour. In other words, the message is that a formal framework of operation is unnecessary, that the professional behaviour or rather professional autonomy of the teacher is sufficient as a self-limiting mechanism. Given that the ethics of human rights are implicitly reduced to legal form, it is of course logical of the author to question whether the ethics of human rights can be basic value norms. We believe, however, that such a question is purely rhetorical because if there is no idea of what the ethics of human rights are, if they are reduced to 'legal form', it is no wonder that that which 'is not' or which is shown to be absurd at the very start cannot 'take hold' and thus play the role of the basic value matrix of education in the state school.

Taken in its entirety, the conceptualisation of ethics and values in the state school in Slovenia remains within a framework that we characterised as early as in 1990 with the words that 'either we know that this kind of theoretical standpoint is not determined in a balanced way, that its sense is not clear, or we are betting on a concept that we doubt will actually »come to life« in practice' (Šebart 1990, p. 494).

The ethics of human rights and form

In the idea of the ethics of human rights it is accepted as fact that *homo sapiens* create a world of conflict, that man and his world are imperfect, and for precisely this reason (amongst others) it determines basic norms that prescribe how these conflicts (including infringements of the law and the possibility of self-will) are (also) ordered in the world of law. If we analyse the concept of rights as a coherent structure whose relevance is historically confirmed and honed, it is not difficult to see that the relationship between ethics and law is established in the concept as a complementary relationship in which neither ethics nor law are separated; in this concept it is clear, however, that the legal implementation of the protection of rights is only part of the implementation of the ethics of human rights. It is just as important that these ethics are implemented in public discourse, that they are implemented in the norm of free speech, thought and religion, that in public discourse the principle of non-discrimination is implemented etc., and, of particular importance for the state school, that these principles are also implemented in interpersonal relationships, thus also in education.[13]

One of the provisions of the concept of human rights is that for punish-

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[13] Here we refer to the argumentation of J.S. Mill in his work, *On Liberty* (1859), which demonstrates that the freedom of the individual in society is enabled precisely by the respecting of the limits that are set by the rights of others. The respecting of these limits is, in the final instance, established on the basis of moral convictions which, of course, in their basic features are formed through a process of education and socialisation, and in the broader social context on the condition of the freedom of speech (and thus the freedom of thought).

ment it is first necessary to have a form of punishment ('there is no punishment without law').[14] A general idea of the concept of human rights that concerns rights in general as well as the concept of the legal state is most certainly the idea that form, in its various senses, implies the protection of the individual or of the particular culture. According to this logic, the *removal of form* is the first step towards self-will; or, conversely, one of the guaranteed elements of justice according to this concept is precisely form (the establishment of form itself). In more concrete terms this means:

1. that *rights* must be explicitly formulated, determined by laws, in sets of rules[15] etc., which *eo ipso* also imposes appropriate responsibilities;
2. it should not be overlooked that these ethics compel the establishment of *rules* that determine various borders from which on one side stretches the jurisdiction of state officials and on the other the freedom of the individual, and along with this the limitation of any kind of self-will.

If we logically transpose this to the state school (of course, in a way appropriate for the school institution) the concept of legal protection through rights and responsibilities, as well as though rules in as much as they establish the border of self-will, in no way limits the school's *pedagogical* operation unless we presume that self-will is the essence of the existence of pedagogical operation. A problem also emerges when we assume that by passing laws, writing rulebooks, establishing rules etc., we have done everything, i.e., that the form as such already guarantees its own implementation. This is, in fact, the converse of the illusion that locates the reason for the lack of success of ethics in the existence of form, but it is still no less of an illusion.

Even when we have form it is necessary, to put it in Kantian terms, to use the power of judgement and to enact *rights and responsibilities*, norms, rules: form has to be realised. However, in the end it is impossible to shake off personal responsibility in the use of one's own judgement. And there is no need to demonstrate that it is impossible to write a special rule for each particular situation. This fact in itself generates the logic of the establishment of unwritten values, norms and rules. This is to a certain degree unavoidable and unproblematic as long as principals and teachers, as well as pupils and all of the other participants in the implementation of the educational plan, are aware that the role of their power of judgement also lies in assessing when the unwritten values, norms and rules that a particular community has established (the hidden curriculum) infringe values or human rights and responsibilities (the explicit curriculum), and providing they know how to alleviate this.

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[14] The Convention (1994) determines that *there is no punishment without law*, defined by the wording: 'No one shall be held guilty of any criminal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a criminal offence under national or international law at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the criminal offence was committed. (…)' (the Convention … 1994, Article 7).

[15] Here it is also necessary to know how to limit and establish frameworks of behaviour both because it is impossible to capture every concrete situation in that which is written and because a large number of finely detailed rules lead to their being impossible to implement.

Some theses for the education of teachers, or about what is it necessary to reach an agreement?

In as much as it is a fact that human rights are an ethical concept that is also a *formal* diktat, the stereotype that they are only *formal* values that are in reality infringed and are therefore invalid must be countered with the statement that human rights are, in fact, formally established values, but for this very reason they are binding on everyone. They are binding on everyone but the message should be clearly conveyed to teachers that it is in fact up to them as teachers whether or not human rights are implemented (the task of realising these fundamental values presupposes that teachers *know how* to realise them, that they *want* to realise them – at least on the level of being bound by their obligations as teachers in a state school – and that in difficult circumstances they *are able* to realise them).

If the pedagogical profession now conveys the message to future teachers that formal institutionalisation hinders ethics, this assertion, which is not actually supported by empirical data,[16] could become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Namely, if we convey the message (albeit only implicitly) that *form hinders content* we are not far from the generalised message that everything that is formally (= institutionally) established is actually surplus, even more that it is an obstacle to pedagogical practice, true, informal education etc. According to this logic, in its extreme it would be necessary to first do away with every kind of form (institutionalisation) so that practice could 'in reality' come to life. Because this is, of course, impossible, this kind of presentation of 'form' as an obstacle to 'content' offers a permanent alibi for failing to take human rights seriously in education in the public school as basic social values.

The fact that human rights are formalised in various documents is surely not a reason for teachers not to want to embrace them in their pedagogical practice. However, if we do not present the content of the concept of human rights to them in such a way that they see the real historical conflicts and tragedies from which these rights have developed, and that they understand the kind of life situations these rights are connected with today, it is less likely that they will see the sense in these values.

If they remain on the level of understanding human rights and responsibilities through one of the stereotypes (that they are only 'on paper', 'theory' divorced

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[16] The range of data from empirical research about the authority of the teacher, about values, respecting rules and the social climate in school, in no way raises concerns about the state school operating contrary to the ethics of human rights (cf. Krek, Kovač Šebart, Hočevar, Vogrinc, Podgornik 2007). A respectful attitude toward others, respect for the individual and of his or her rights (which the research has measured as respect for others, attitude towards various individuals, mutual understanding, mutual help, behaving according to rules etc.) demonstrate that state primary schools and grammar schools operate according to ethical norms, in spite of the fact that, for instance, in half of primary schools this is not explicitly part of the educational plan. On one hand, the empirical data show that basic human rights are already part of the educational ethics in the state school, even though it would be possible to build upon them further; on the other hand, data concerning the inclusion of the Rules on the Rights and Responsibilities of Pupils in the educational plans of schools demonstrate the fact that this institutionalisation does not act as an impediment, in fact quite the opposite.

from practice,[17] that they are 'open and undetermined in interpersonal function', that they neglect responsibilities), it is indeed probably less likely that future teachers will embrace them as the basis of their education behaviour. That which needs to be done on the level of education in order for human rights as a value framework not to be 'open and undetermined in interpersonal function', so that the teacher starts to educate in the spirit of human rights and responsibilities, is to first move away decisively from the implicitly negative presentation of institutionalisation (or, in general, form as such).

Human rights should be taken seriously, which means that students and teachers ought to be educated on a deep level about the concept and ethics of human rights as well as on how to locate these in educational behaviour in the state school. Moral education in the state school cannot remain unreflective in the field of fundamental common values. It is necessary to internalise these norms and know how to use them as principles, and this holds for teachers as well as being an educational goal of pupils.

Education in the spirit of the ethics of human rights introduces to moral education in the state school the demand that the teacher or educational worker implements the kind of educational behaviours that are the expected or prevailing cultural norm when it comes to the moral education of the individual (for instance, as guiding values for the pupils, the teacher imparts norms: speaking the truth, not stealing the property of others etc.). In addition, however, they also demand reflection and appropriate behaviours in areas where in society there are differences between individuals in terms of cultural and other norms and convictions, thus also differences between pupils and parents and, not least, between educational workers themselves. The norms of the concept of human

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[17] We must have a suitable theory, with reference to experience, on how to realise the concept in practice. If we do not have such a theory, and if we see practice as 'something completely different', as a field that is entirely divorced from theory, the difficulty does not necessarily lie in a 'bad' concept (in the content of human rights), but rather in the fact that the theory of how to realise the concept *is still insufficient*, and thus educational practice does not match the theory. Against an illegitimate leap from theory to practice – 'pushing aside' the theory with the argument that the theory does not hold in practice – in his text entitled 'On the common saying: this may be true in theory but it does not apply in practice' (1990 Š1793Ć) Kant provides an explanation that is no less valid today than when it was written. Thus he points out, for instance, that when it seems that theory does not suit practice it can be because we lack the power of judgement, saying: 'because it is not possible to again and again provide the power of judgement with rules according to which it must behave in subsumption (as that would continue ad infinitum), it is possible to present theoreticians who can never in their lifetimes become practical, as they lack the power of judgement' (ibid., p. 197). In this case, therefore, we *do not know* how to appropriately use the rule, as the application of the rule is never a 'mechanical' process, it is not automatisation, but rather it is necessary to decide in each concrete situation which rule is suitable and how to use it. However, in the case where there is a natural gift of the power of judgement, but the theory is still not perfected (= does not suit the practice), 'the theory is not at fault if it has not come into use in practice, but the fault rather lies in the fact that there *was not enough theory* that man has learned from experience, and it is a true theory even if he is not able to present it and as a teacher systematically pass it on in general sentences…' (ibid.). In other words, when we have a particular concept it is also necessary to have an appropriate theory (and knowledge of how to use the concept practically). Therefore, when it seems that the 'concept' does not take hold, that it is 'not appropriate' etc., the difficulty does not lie *in the theory as such* (= generally 'in theory'), but rather in the fact that we do not (yet) have a *suitable* theory (and knowledge about how to use it).

rights provide basic guidelines according to which it is necessary to make judgements in these situations, and on whose basis one can conceive the educational behaviours within the state school. For instance, the principle of non-discrimination imposes on the educational worker an obligation not to treat boys and girls differently purely on the basis of gender. The teacher must ask him or herself the question (and must know *how* to ask the question) as to whether he or she is actually biased on this point; and if the answer is 'yes', his or her behaviour must be corrected accordingly. The same applies to all of the differences that are embraced by the principle of non-discrimination (Convention… Article 14), and for all of the other principles that are part of the concept of human rights and responsibilities. For instance, in spite of the fact that in a certain environment hate towards Roma people has been the cultural norm – a norm that parents, often unaware of it themselves, have transferred to their children – the teacher must not simply uncritically accept this norm as a value that will be unreflectively carried forward. Instead, the teacher must place this norm in the value context of the principles included in the concept of human rights, i.e., equality, non-discrimination, tolerance etc., as it is from this that the teacher's educational operation and instruction is derived. The teacher must know how to reflect upon positions when it comes to respecting religious and other convictions (Convention… Article 9) and so on. These demands, which are established by education in the state school, mean that in the case of pedagogical workers their knowledge of the concept of human rights and responsibilities cannot, and must not, be superficial or marginal. Reflection (which includes knowledge as well as open debate about these norms and behaviours) is the path and precondition to ensuring that in education pupils can internalise the values of the concept of human rights *in the form of principles* (for instance, speaking the truth etc, as well as the principles of equality, the equal rights of others, solidarity towards others, an absence of violence etc.), according to which as adults they can autonomously judge concrete situations, their own behaviour and the behaviour of others.

In educational institutions everyone has at least two viewpoints: the viewpoint of the institution as a whole, which must evaluate and form its educational operation within this perception; and the viewpoint of the individual, who must work within the institution. However, these are questions that we will deal with in a future discussion.

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Viewing the quality of pedagogical and andragogical studies from the point of view of changing students conceptions

Abstract: By the time students enter university they have accumulated considerable learning experience and formed more or less coherent, subjective and implicit theories of learning, knowledge and teaching. The question is whether university teachers, through their influence and the challenges they provide, manage to make students aware of these theories and help them develop conceptions based on the idea of active and constructive learning, and thus grow into independent learners who can manage their own learning. This is a basis for their further professional development and one of the criteria for evaluating the quality of university studies. However, by studying this issue university teachers hold a mirror up to their own work since they themselves are one of the main factors of changing students' conceptions. The present research aimed at finding out whether students' conceptions of knowledge and the teacher/student role change at all. We were further interested in the key factors that students see as contributing to this change. What role is played in this process by their teachers or their studies in general?

Key words: higher education, quality of studies, conceptions of knowledge, teacher role and studentsž role, changing conceptions

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1   Introduction

The first question we have to answer is what is meant by quality education. Quality in its absolute sense can be considered as the achievement of a certain ideal; nevertheless if we take into account all the variety and changeability of needs of everyone involved in the educational process and if we want our education institutions to become adaptable complex systems constantly taking care of their own development and improvements (according to Sahlberg, 1998), this conception does not hold up. Therefore, we are going to perceive quality as something relative, as a matter of consent. Nightingale and O'Neil (1994) present five general perspectives suitable for viewing quality, yet each of them hides particular assumptions, expectations and judgements, and consequently also opens up questions and dilemmas in the background.

1. *Quality equals high standards.*
First there is the question of whose standards should be considered, as significant differences appear between the expectations of students, teachers, the head staff of education institutions, various boards… More and more often the standard of international comparability is pointed out. The question is whether a variety is sought at all, whether each institution should set its own standards according to its mission and goals or whether it is possible, for example, within the higher education framework, to follow an overriding general goal such as fostering higher order intellectual capacities. Another problem is course of action taken in cases where initial conditions are far from being equal. The biggest problem lies in the fact that setting standards does not yet lead to improvements.

2. *Quality as consistency.*
If we conceive an idea that the quality of education lies in the encouragement and forming of higher order intellectual capacities, this quality can be evaluated according to results and the educational process itself. If a focus on results is

taken we can ask ourselves how students show their ability to think independently and critically and to express themselves clearly while being independent. Students may fail to do this for a variety of reasons and not only because of the programme or its implementation; so quality cannot be assessed on the basis of results only. We must evaluate the process itself: do we offer students enough intellectual challenges which will help them to develop into autonomous, critical and reflective individuals. This conception of quality is therefore more of help to us than the first one, but we have to reach an agreement about the characteristics defining a quality higher education.

3. *Quality as fitness for purpose.*
    Authors warn that an ideology may be hidden behind the purpose. Education institutions may be summoned to define their mission and the main purpose themselves, but some purposes are valued higher than others. In solving this problem we can go to the other extreme and consider all education institutions as equal, but different, and for this reason we cannot make any comparisons regarding quality. Can we find a common main purpose valid for a particular type and level of education institution, shared by all of them? Nightingale and O'Neil (1994) state that, regardless of all the variety in higher education, everybody may share the main overriding purpose which should consist of fostering higher order intellectual capacities. To conclude, these capacities enable independent and critical thinking while at the same time developing personal and social qualities.

4. *Quality as value for money.*
    According to this concept there are demands to collect ever new data: for example on the ratio between teachers and the number of students, on dropouts, on the equipment available… But it should be remembered that mere knowledge of deviations in the data still will not have brought about any changes. A danger also lies in the fact that we are preoccupied with collecting these data instead of working to achieve conditions ensuring quality learning.

5. *Quality as transformative.*
    An educational process should result in a certain transformation of students. This also includes a transition in the paradigm from a student without responsibility to a student with responsibility which calls for a new vision in a teacher who should encourage students and in a student who should be an active and committed participant in the learning process.
    In the present study we lean to the highest possible extent on the last mentioned perspective of assessing quality, although we can also identify ourselves with the overriding purpose as set out by Nightingale and O'Neil (1994). The authors point out that we have to maintain a focus on creating conditions leading to quality learning as this assures the highest degree of quality education. Considering students as partners in the learning process enables us to maintain this focus to the maximum extent.

Student participation in quality assurance has become widely recognised in the European Higher Education Area. At their meeting in 2001 in Prague the ministers declared that students are important stakeholders on all levels and reaffirmed the importance of student participation in the 'European standards and guidelines on quality assurance'. However, the reasons for student participation in quality assurance, the ways of students' involvement and on which levels they should participate has not been fully understood yet by all actors in all countries (Brus et al., 2007, p. 53). The possible contribution to quality by students is often forgotten and neglected.

We would like to stress the importance of students' role in developing the academic community, the culture of learning, in co-operation with other members of university staff. In order to create and support a culture of participation in all aspects of university life, however, a continuous effort needs to be made to integrate new members, especially students. One of the most important goals of universities is to enhance students' learning. To reach this goal it is essential that students actively participate in every step of the development process (Alaniska and Eriksson 2006, p. 12). Students' involvement should be understood as full participation. This close involvement generates an authentic partnership and therefore more open dialogue (ibid). The perceived importance of students' role in quality assurance is based on the students' respected position in the overall academic community. In Finland, for instance, it is emphasised that the university is a scientific community, not a school (Alaniska and Eriksson 2006, p. 12). Students are seen more as novice members in the academy than pupils taking classes; they are more partners than customers. Both staff and students are knowledge-seekers; the only difference between them is the different levels of their experience (ibid).

Alaniska and Eriksson (2006, pp. 14-15) present students' roles in four categories.

1.   *The student as an information provider*

Giving feedback is the most common way students participate in quality assurance. There is a wide diversity of how, when and what kind of feedback students give. It is typical that feedback is given after each course or at least once in a term. Both quantitative and qualitative procedures should be used.

2.   *The student as an actor*

Students design their own feedback questionnaires or do so in close co-operation with the academic staff. Feedback is also often collected and analysed by students. They organise staff and student development workshops, where innovative and problem-solving oriented discussions are encouraged in a comfortable atmosphere.

3.   *The student as an expert*

Students must be generally regarded as experts in learning. They know how they have achieved their learning outcomes and how the teaching has assi-

sted them in this process. Thus teaching should be evaluated through students' learning experiences and based on how it actually assists the learning process. Treating students as experts is now a cultural expectation which demands a positive attitude from both the staff and the students.

4.   The student as a partner

Learning is achieved through close co-operation between teachers and students. The development of the concept of partnership, in relation to students' involvement in quality assurance, can therefore be seen as a natural consequence. The notion of a partnership between students and staff members represents the possibility of an authentic and constructive dialogue which offers the opportunity for more reflective feedback. It is the responsibility of staff to treat students as partners and to create an easy-going and positive atmosphere in the institutions.

According to Harvey (2007, p. 84) '…quality culture is about adopting a self-critical reflective approach as a community: a community of students and staff. Quality processes, internally and externally, if they are improvement-oriented, should provide a framework for the effective operation of communicative learning environment.'

A clear purpose of this study is to listen to the voice of students and to find out if, during their studies, they start assuming a more active role by becoming increasingly independent learners, taking on a role of an expert and partner in accordance with the concept of Alaniska and Eriksson (2006). Certainly a question here is whether we teachers are ready to accept students as experts and partners.

1.1   Conceptions of knowledge, teaching and teacher/student roles

All students entering university have had years of experience in education and their mental models – more or less coherent systems of conceptions about knowledge and learning, themselves as students, learning goals and tasks, the roles and responsibilities of participants in the teaching/learning process – have already been formed (Vermunt, 1993). With these mental models and learning orientations – personal goals, motives, expectations, doubts… – they enter various learning situations and then interpret them accordingly. These interpretations and the students' repertoire of learning strategies determine how the students will use various learning strategies and act in a certain situation, which in turn determines the quality of their learning process and resulting knowledge. The teacher's assessment criteria and the students' self-evaluation of learning effectiveness have a reverse effect on the students' mental models of learning and learning orientations. We are therefore interested in the messages we as teachers send to our students and the effect they have on their existing conceptions of knowledge, teacher and student roles and, indirectly, on the quality of the learning process and the resulting knowledge (Biggs, 1999).

The study is grounded in modern cognitive-constructivist notions of knowledge, learning and teaching, which stress the dynamic nature of knowledge and its

constant construction and reconstruction. *Constructive learning* thus refers to the active (re)construction of knowledge; it is an attempt at building richer and more complex memory representations. Vermunt (1993) stressed the importance of the student's own activity; in constructive learning, the learner actively constructs their own knowledge through a deep approach to learning and self-regulated learning activity. We need to transcend the traditional conception of knowledge in the sense of final truths that can be accumulated and transmitted to others. Simons (1997) in his meta-study of papers on constructive learning listed six key features of constructive learning on which there is a high degree of consonance between different authors. Constructive learning is:

1. *an active process*: the learner's mental activity is crucial for him/her to arrive at certain meanings;
2. *a constructive process*: in a narrow sense this means the connecting of a new piece of information with others in order to understand more easily both that particular information and the entire complexity of the subject matter;
3. *a cumulative process*: in each new learning cycle we depart from previous knowledge and build on it;
4. *a goal-oriented process*: learning will be successful if the learner is aware of at least some general goals he/she wants to achieve and has appropriate expectations concerning the achievement of learning results;
5. *diagnostic*: the learner keeps track of his/her learning and results; and
6. *reflective*: rethinking the whole learning process.

Of course, we cannot expect students to always be engaging in the same quality and quantity of mental activity. Sometimes their previous knowledge is quite limited and students need to focus on detail and certain processes. There is also nothing wrong with occasionally following the learning process without a specific learning goal in sight and it is also impossible to constantly monitor and reflect on one's own learning. However, it is important that these processes occur in students' learning and that teachers understand their significance for the successful introduction of constructive learning and learner training with their students.

1.2 The quality of learning and teaching

All of these characteristics of constructive learning can have a certain indicative role when we consider the quality of our own learning or teaching (depending on the role we play) and plan our next steps which should lead us to quality results – deeper insights into particular phenomena, a comprehension of their interdependence, the ability of critical judgment… and ultimately to a student who has mastered specific knowledge and competencies (the image of a graduate). Again and again we must ask ourselves what kind of knowledge and competencies have been achieved by our students. Research has shown that students at a higher education level often do not make any qualitative progress in their conceptions of essential phenomena in the area of their studies (Dahlgren 1978, Brumby 1979, Johansson et al. 1983, op. cit. Dahlgren 1984; Gardner 1991;

Gibbs 1992, op. cit. Nightingale and O'Neil 1994). Questions which we put to students are mainly quantitative and only rarely reach beyond the matter which can be memorised in an unreflected manner. Students acquire surface characteristics of core phenomena and the matching expert terminology which often hides their misunderstanding of phenomena, while they never achieve a deeper understanding of these phenomena. In the present research we ask ourselves, among others, what are students' conceptions of knowledge, teacher and student roles – essential conceptions in the expert area of their studies. On the other side, we ask whether we are creating the conditions which will lead students to higher quality learning and to acquiring high quality knowledge.

Nightingale and O'Neil (1994) stressed that high quality learning will emerge in the following cases:

1. When a student *is ready (cognitively and emotionally) to face learning tasks*: it is necessary to obtain a proper degree of imbalance between demands and capabilities, between the difficulty of teaching contents and previous knowledge, so that students are prepared to accept a certain learning task as a challenge.

2. When a student *has reasons for learning*: students naturally perceive the reasons for learning and achieving good marks and passing exams so it is very important to plan an evaluation which will encourage them for high quality learning (when it is not memorising which is primarily expected from them, but rather higher levels of knowledge). Yet the motivation should not be only external, but also internal – a need to explain and find reasons for particular phenomena, to develop certain skills, which in turn enable our better performance and participation. To achieve this we must build on students' previous experience and ask them to apply them in new learning tasks, to find the core problem by themselves as well as its applicability, to let the new knowledge become relevant for them personally.

3. When a student will *clearly link the previous knowledge with the new knowledge*: the authors specifically state that they do not support the assumption that »students must first get certain basic knowledge and then…« They rely on Gibbs (1992) who maintained that without existing conceptions it is impossible to make new conceptions meaningful; therefore it is essential to include the existing knowledge and experience in the learning process. He also stressed the importance of well-structured and organised knowledge, for which the active linking process of students is important.

4. When a student becomes *active* during the learning process: it is reasonable to assume that nobody can be completely passive during learning yet there are considerable differences in the activities of students. On one hand, there are activities like taking dictation, the detailed learning of explanations from notes, definitions of formulae and their reproduction; on the other hand there are activities demonstrating a student's involvement in the learning process: problem-solving, searching for important data with the aim of obtaining particular answers, group work…

5. When the *environment will offer the student suitable support*: the authors maintain that by this we first think of support programmes to develop par-

ticular learning skills and strategies as well as various counselling methods. But we should also bear in mind how to achieve better flexibility by means of more open learning and by planning possibilities for co-operative learning. The general climate in the whole of society is important as it is not stimulative for students if they are constantly related to as illiterate or incompetent or if they are told that what is taught at school is merely a theory.

2   Aim of the study

The main goal of the present study was to ascertain how students of pedagogy and andragogy at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana interpret the various messages and demands of their university teachers and whether four years of undergraduate studies bring about any changes in the students' conceptions of knowledge and teacher/student roles. We were especially interested in those factors which, in the students' opinions, had an influence on changing their conceptions. The paper presents the answers of our study of the following research questions:

1.   What conceptions of knowledge and teacher/student roles do students of pedagogy and andragogy possess? Are there differences between the 1st and 4th year students in this respect?
2.   Do the second-year and pre-graduation students feel that their conceptions have changed through the years of their schooling? If not, why not? If they have, what were the changes? Are they able to articulate and explain these changes?
3.   How complex are the students' explanations of the changes in their conceptions?
4.   What, in the students' opinion, are the key factors that led to them changing their conceptions of knowledge and teacher/student roles?
5.   What is the second-year and pre-graduation students' perception of the pedagogical and andragogical studies?

3   Method

The research was carried out in two phases: we completed the questionnaires in May 2006 and proceeded with the interviews in March 2007. The questionnaires were presented to 74 students of pedagogy and andragogy at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana; half of them being in their first year and the other half in their fourth year of studies. The participating students mainly attend classes frequently, half of them are fairly satisfied with their studies and 34% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; their average exam grade is 7.7 (in our assessment system the highest grade is 10 while the lowest passing grade is 6).

The questionnaire included multiple-choice items, scales, open-ended questions and unfinished sentences. Based on the students' answers to the open

questions we formed preliminary categories. We then compared the groupings with the theoretical concepts and, for some items, with the classifications validated in previous research. This formed the basis of our categories. The data were processed with the help of the SPSS for Windows in which we used a range of statistical procedures.

The aim of the interviews was to deepen our insight into the question of whether the students' conceptions of knowledge and teacher and student roles have changed and whether students are able to articulate and explain these changes. For this purpose we made a random choice of six second-year students and six pre-graduation students.

4   Results and discussion

4.1   Conceptions of knowledge, teacher and student roles as revealed by the results of the questionnaires[1]

Our primary inquiry aimed at revealing the students' conceptions of knowledge, which we inferred from their answers to the question *»What, in your opinion, is the gist of knowledge?«*.

The students' conceptions were divided into the following four categories, listed from lower to higher order, whereby the higher-order conceptions still contain elements of lower-order conceptions.

1.   *Quantity and durability of knowledge* (17.6% of responses)
      In this category we included very general responses in which students mostly stressed that learning means retention, not forgetting something right after the exam is over.

2.   *Use* (27%)
      Within this category students mostly stressed the practical applicability of knowledge.

3.   *Understanding* (39.2%)
      This category includes responses by those students who stressed the importance of understanding learning matter.

4.   *Seeing things differently* (16.2%)
      This category of conceptions clustered around the idea of a shift of perspective, of viewing a phenomenon from different angles and critically evaluating one's knowledge. These changed views can, of course, also lead to the development of personality – to greater independence and competence, but only two students mentioned this.

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[1] See the detailed presentation in:
– Šteh, B., Kalin, J. (2006). The messages university teachers send to students about knowledge and teacher/student roles. The report presented at the European Conference on Education Research in Geneva, Switzerland, September 2006;
– Kalin, J., Šteh, B. (2007). Changes in the conceptions of knowledge, teacher and student roles during studies – between vision and reality. Sodobna pedagogika, 58, no. 1, pp. 10-28.

The results show that only half the students (55.4%) have higher-order conceptions of knowledge, with only a small percentage talking about shifting perspectives, knowledge construction and the development of personality.

Besides that, 35% of the students have *no real control of their own learning*, 28.4% of them rely on the quantity of studying they have done, and only 36.5% on understanding. We can conclude that most students cannot regulate their own learning and rely on surface strategies such as the amount of time spent studying (Vermunt, 1993). Simons (1997) would say that most students do not learn actively and constructively as monitoring of and reflections on one's own learning process are two of the key features of constructive learning.

A further aim of our study was to see if there are differences in student conceptions of knowledge between the different years of study, i. e. whether these conceptions change during the four years of study, but there were no statistically significant differences between the responses of the 1st- and 4th-year students. It is true, however, that there is such a relationship between the year of studies and exam readiness (2$\hat{I}^2$ (3, N = 74) = 7.94, p = .047): in the 4th year there are fewer students who do not know if they are ready to take an exam (2.7%) as compared to 13.5% in the 1st year. In the 4th year there is also a somewhat higher percentage of students who rely on their feelings and quantity of studying to judge how ready they are (20.3% as compared to 17.6% in the 1st year) and more students who judge their readiness by understanding (23%:13.5%). These differences, however, are not big and we wonder whether they imply that teachers do not send the students enough messages about the importance of understanding the subject matter or that these messages do not interact with their existing conceptions of knowledge and learning and thus have no effect on their learning. It is likely that teachers invest too little effort in developing various learning strategies and helping students to become independent learners. Related to this, of course, is the question of how teachers conceive their own roles – is developing students into self-regulated learners one of a teacher's tasks at all?

In categorising responses about the role of the teacher we used a classification of conceptions developed by Fox (1983) specifically for teachers in higher education. This classification is more detailed than the two types of teaching styles distinguished by Kember and Gow (1994): the transmission of knowledge and encouraging learning. However, the students' conceptions were quite undifferentiated – only a few exhibited higher-level conceptions by saying that the teacher plays a role in encouraging a student's personal growth. The students' responses to the question about the role of the teacher were thus divided into the following three categories, listed hierarchically:

1.   *Transmission of knowledge and subject mastery* (39.2%)
     Within this category, students stress that the teacher has to be a skilled lecturer, to provide clear and engaging explanations, be systematic and exhibit mastery of his/her subject.
2.   *Shaping the students* (37.8%)

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² The Kullback 2$\hat{I}$ test

This group of conceptions portrays a teacher who makes an effort to teach and motivate but retains a dominant role.

3. *Activating students* (23%)

In this category, students stress that the teacher should actively involve the students in the learning process, encourage them to express their ideas and opinions, and takes these into consideration.

Now let us see how the students defined their own roles:

1. *Receiving knowledge and learning* (41.9%)

Within this category students mostly said that it is a student's duty to attend classes and try to gain from them as much as possible and diligently learn what the teacher requires.

2. *Involvement* (29.7%)

In this group, students go beyond mere listening to lectures, making notes and diligent memorising to learning activities that indicate more mental activity.

3. *Taking initiative and responsibility* (28.4%)

This category shows that students see their role as also involving taking initiative and responsibility and caring about their personal growth.

The students' responses show that only a small percentage of them take responsibility for their own learning – *8.1% expressed the highest level conceptions of the teacher and student roles*. What is especially worrying is the fact that there is no statistically significant difference between the 1st- and 4th-year students in this respect. Teachers seem to be sending them messages corresponding to the traditional role of the teacher who primarily has to explain everything very clearly and show a mastery of his/her subject matter, and the traditional role of the student who has to learn the subject matter in detail and prove this in an exam.

A statistically significant connection has been found between the students' conceptions of knowledge and conceptions of their own roles ($2\hat{I}$ (6, N = 74) = 14.33, p = .026): most students who exhibit lower level conceptions of knowledge also tend to see their own roles as being »the diligent student«, while those who conceive of knowledge as understanding tend to see themselves as being active, participating, taking initiative and responsibility. It is interesting that the responses of the students who see learning as changing one's views are dispersed.

Our aim was to obtain a deeper insight into the question of whether the students' conceptions of knowledge and a student and teacher roles have changed and whether students were able to articulate and explain these changes. The following text presents reflections excerpted from the interviews taken with twelve students, randomly selected from the group which had completed questionnaires, and who are second-year or pre-graduation students in this year's study period.

4.2 Deeper insights into the conceptions of second-year students and their changing

It was proven that three second-year students clearly express their conception of knowledge in terms of critical thinking and the changing of views, they understand the teacher's role in encouraging independent learning with learners and also their own role in assuming initiative and responsibility. All three students clearly describe the changes in their conceptions:

Person A: *»Well, I feel that before I was oriented only in mastering data and facts, that later on I gradually felt a certain need that essentially I should have stepped over that barrier once and for all. Slowly I began to feel that such learning of bare facts without a certain background or without proper thinking could lead me nowhere and didn't have any effects at all. So I gradually came to understand that by starting to think about something, the point is that doing this the knowledge can actually become interesting and useful for yourself.«*

Person C: *»Specially during the study period, when it is an issue of a completely different teacher and learner role, ... that a teacher is not only the person who lectures about a subject matter and a student who learns it.«*

This student stresses in particular that a learner role is not to »photocopy« certain knowledge, but to conceive meaningful connections, to critically evaluate, not to believe everything a teacher says.

Person D: *»My conception of knowledge keeps changing. ... in order that I will truly be able to use it. ... This conception changed a lot – I used to learn only to pass an exam.«*

The student stresses that her conception of learning did not change, that even during her primary schooling she learnt mathematical principles by herself; she stresses that private tutoring is a mixed blessing since a learner has to find their own answers.

The importance of different – good – teacher role models in previous education is already set out by persons A and C, and her own learning experience by person D – *»I had studied the subject matter by myself and I truly came to understand it«*. Persons A and D set out the importance of a good learning experience at the faculty with teachers who demand a more active and independent role from them. Person C expounds the importance of lectures and discussions since we teachers constantly prompt them to think about them.

One of the students (person B) expresses her conception of knowledge in terms of understanding; a teacher is still someone who must motivate, even force students to work and to encourage them to go slightly beyond the limits of their capacities. Her student role is perceived in terms of the importance to do something on one's own initiative, to address a problem etc. She crystallises the view that you can achieve more durable knowledge if you do the work yourself; this view was prompted to by her independent seminar work as part of her study obligations. Another important experience was an independent presentation – a teaching lesson she gave at a secondary school.

Two students (persons E and F) express their conception of knowledge in terms of understanding; they expect a teacher to motivate, activate, while still stressing the importance that he/she systematically covers the subject matter, shows what is important, *»hammers particular things into their heads«* They see their own role in participating, yet it is sometimes hard to take the initiative. It is noteworthy that none of them describes clear changes in conceptions, but they both expose how much easier it is for them the to assume the teacher role and they are aware how difficult and responsible their work is. This is also stressed by person B. Person E expounds her preparations for the *matura* exams as an important experience which influenced her – self-discipline is important, you cannot learn anything at the last minute. She stresses her being more mature now, that studying has not influenced her significantly, that more practical work and communication were necessary. Person F stresses the meaning of study contents and expounds the significant experience during their studies when more active participation was expected from them: they defined the scope of previous knowledge; active participation in practical work and educational programme planning.

All six students are *critical of teaching within the study process* – that there is too much lecturing whereby teachers give lectures without actively involving the students. Students would like their teachers to encourage them to express their own views and to ask questions. They wish for more practical work with their active participation and more practical experience. They are particularly critical of evaluation – they say that teachers often require only a reproduction.

Person A: *»I somehow feel we still stick to the material in the manuals, which we simply have to master in the end. This annoys me a bit because it looks like a slightly downgrading attitude toward students as if we weren't able to do any better. That is, by learning the easiest way you master one definition and you present it at the exam. You show it to the teacher who, in turn, is satisfied. Essentially, I think that studies should be based on different principles with more reading and above all more understanding, not with learning by heart, which prevails as far as I have experienced so far.«*

Person C: *»Tests could be formulated to ask about your opinion on a subject, based on particular theories. You should essentially relate to some sort of knowledge, but with your own thinking included.«*

For us teachers an important message which these interviews reveal is that students want to be actively included in the teaching and learning process and that we often underestimate them, as one of the students pointed out:

»Not encouraging us is a major sign of a bad teacher. The point is that students can do a lot, although it sometimes seems that they are not aware of that, still students can contribute a lot and give many new pieces of information. It might be that we have not been »burdened« with all possible data yet and are able to disperse the flow of our thoughts in different directions…«

4.3 Deeper insights into the conceptions of pre-graduation students and their changing

Pre-graduation students gave quite dispersed answers to questions about conceptions of the teacher role: two see it in transmitting basic knowledge and in training for the future profession (persons J, K), three (persons I, L, G) stress the importance of forming students whereby a teacher should animate students, be dynamic, build on dialogue with students during lectures and also design work with students outside the lecture room (visits to institutions, case-studies, constant connecting theory and practice etc.). Only one pre-graduate student exposed the importance of activating students (person H):

Person H: *»The role of a good teacher during studies is to challenge you. To awaken a curiosity in you, and to provoke you to speak up. That you upgrade previous knowledge and open yourself up to the new.«*

It may be wise to think about the message of one pre-graduate student who stressed:

Person J: *»During the first and second year there are mainly lectures, so we don't have to think a lot, while during the third and fourth year we had more independent thinking and questioning. I think that at the beginning we thus developed a habit of coming to lectures and listening. In my opinion we became a bit lazy.«*

Therefore the first-year study experience is very important in terms of the role a teacher assumes as in this way a student's role is determined and often even fatally marked for the whole study period.

Three students stressed the importance of student participation (persons I, K, G).

Person I: *»Our role is mainly participating at lectures, getting actively involved, that you speak about themes, get information about them from your colleagues, try to obtain as much knowledge as possible. In presenting seminar papers you demonstrate the theme as attractively as possible, out of responsibility towards your colleagues. It is important that you try to present your ideas.«*

Three of them (persons H, L, J) revealed how important it is for a student to take the initiative and assume responsibility. Two of them (persons H, L) stressed that it is not enough for a good student to comply with the minimum requirements of a study programme; on the contrary, what is important are student's initiative and their own activities to upgrade the matter presented at lectures. One student particularly stressed that at the beginning she scrupulously attended lectures and fulfilled her obligations, while later in her studies she called herself a learner because she developed a deeper interest in the subject as she felt herself becoming part of the science she studied and became generally interested in its matters without a feeling of »being obliged« to do it (person J).

Person H: *»You take your obligations as an opportunity to discover something new, that you really get to know the profession you decided for. ... that you realise during the process that teachers and students essentially work for the same purpose, and gradually realise that professional co-operation between both is possible.«*

Person L: *»The role of a student is primarily in making most of the opportunities given during the educational process. To finish one's studies. To absorb as much knowledge as possible. So to say, to take maximum advantage of a teacher if he/she wants to. If it is in his/her interest to absorb the maximum knowledge a teacher possesses. And above all to get trained in practical work. And as a private consideration – to progress, to develop personally, to learn discipline.«*

In view of their knowledge conceptions we conclude from their answers that two students (persons J in K) stress the importance of understanding and practical use of this knowledge in actual problem situations. Four students (persons G, H, I, L) gave answers which tend to stress a changed view of matters, their own increased independence, a comprehensive value of knowledge and an ability to convey knowledge to others.

Person G: *»When I interconnect the facts of a subject, I become aware of my knowledge… When everything gets interrelated, when I essentially don't see connections any more, but everything is one ultimate matter, and everything becomes, so to say, one tree trunk with different branches. Then everything becomes one.«*

It is interesting that in this case a grade becomes secondary – the student maintained she does not care if she gets an excellent grade for her knowledge, what is the most important for her is to be able to combine the knowledge and also use it in the future.

Person I: *»The knowledge is essentially that with your knowledge you give something to society … It is essential to do something in your life. It is you useless if you enter your professional life without knowledge, you must offer something to the society, your employer and to yourself. Even if you have a job, I think that you must upgrade your knowledge every single day, build it up, participate at seminars.«*

Person L: *»Knowledge is essentially that you know how to use it so as to benefit you and others. Its use is demonstrated in problem-solving, improving the quality of one's life on the earth, the financial situation, helping others, conveying knowledge, developing something new, developing a particular science and profession in general.«*

All the respondents except one student (person I) refer to their changed conceptions of knowledge, teacher and student roles during their studies. One pre-graduation student expounded that the relationship with the teachers became more and more personal (particularly compared to study programmes where 400 students enrol yearly). The other four reported on many aspects of changes with their very complex interdependence – from a better understanding of teachers to different conceptions of knowledge, understanding the whole education system and the possibilities they have as counselling staff or teachers.

One student particularly stressed the importance of mutual knowledge- and awareness-building. During her study years she discovered her ability of knowledge-building in dialogue and in communicating with teachers:

Person H: *»A teacher is not an unapproachable person, but somebody who can help me and with whom I can discover, maybe also for the teacher him/herself, some unknown matters. The fact that I can discover, to build up knowledge.«*

A changed conception related to consultation hours was stressed twice – namely that gradually they become a »place of dialogue« where you can come as a student and you are welcome; where you may ask and get an answer, where you can form your knowledge in a dialogue with the teacher. In the first year they went to consultation hours only to get their grades written down. According to them this was influenced by a shift in understanding their role, but also by a process of getting closer to the teachers during studies and by the teachers' readiness, openness for dialogue and by the students' *»sincerity in seeking knowledge«* (person H). During these years teachers become not only lecturers but also mentors, partners in dialogue, as exemplified as follows:

Person L: *»You perceive a teacher not only as an authority, but also as a person. They are not an ideal person. But you understand better their reactions. And also yourself …we come here, when we are 20, we haven't gone through our development yet. Mental development. It is natural to change. The attitude to ourselves and to the study changes in years. It has changed with me. You are not so superficial any more, you want to know more and to gain more. In the first year you only want to pass.«*

The pre-graduation student expounded a turning point which marks the 3rd year. The first two years have more theoretical subjects and those which support the pedagogical science in an interdisciplinary approach to phenomena. In time the studies get more and more specific, they deepen and *»slowly you get aware of the essence of the studies, which wouldn't have been possible without obtaining a wider theoretical basis during the first two study years«* (person L).

Among the key factors in the study programme which contributed to a shift in conceptions study practice was mentioned three times, together with peer discussion at seminars (in particular at a weekend seminar) where dealing with practical cases and their explanations take place, basing it all on theoretical concepts and knowledge. Practice and visits to schools and various institutions were mentioned twice, where students actually met with educational practice and saw how particular novelties work in reality. Two pre-graduation students pointed out their experience in preparing seminar papers and their presentation – from the preparation of contents to activating colleagues and designing a presentation – in this way they acquired skills of deeper understanding of the subject matter, the writing of expert texts, a critical approach (comparisons between different standpoints and opinions of different teachers), presentations, and improved self-confidence in presenting their knowledge. One student was specially influenced by a teacher who did not allow the taking of notes in lectures till they understood the lectured contents; this will in future accompany all of her work as a teacher.

Outside the faculty one of the pre-graduation students stressed the importance of the experience she is gaining by holding various workshops for children, when she constantly verify her activities with theoretical assumptions (for example, she asks herself: *»Was it proper to react this way?«*) (person K); another student stressed intensive work on herself, on self-understanding and her reactions in the process of preparing for marriage and in her work with scouts

where her knowledge can be concretised when she prepares materials for scout leaders (person H).

Another interesting answer was that pedagogy, as a humanistic science (in this student's opinion) and with its contents, influences the formation of specific personal characteristics of an individual:

Person L: *»The contents of the studies influence you. If you read something, then you see clearly, what is right and what is not. During studies you develop a certain empathy towards people. A social sense develops. A lot. During studies of natural sciences it cannot develop as much as in programmes of social studies. Here this attitude is very important. How much work we put in communication, interaction among people. This way a person changes, also intimately. For the better, I guess. You see that you must work with a person to benefit you and him/her.«*

5   Conclusions

Students have a lot to tell us about the quality of the studies if we care to ask them. The question is whether we are prepared to listen to them or whether their reactions may prompt us to make profound changes in our own teaching when we are convinced of our indisputable superiority. I think we should seriously consider the students' statements, not underestimate that they want a more active role themselves and that our duty is to make this possible – that we create circumstances in which they can actively participate in the study process as our partners. We can sum up the interview analysis that the students have been significantly influenced by the learning experience, which has allowed them to play a more active and independent role.

To what extent can the existent taboos be shaken by a reflection of a second-year student in her assignment presenting a critical analysis of an article on active learning and teaching?:

»With almost no practical work and mostly dull lectures I experience a great contradiction between the teachers' words, our reading assignments, the words we have repeated over and over (what we perceive as active learning, what is modern – efficient teaching …) and the actual activities of most teachers. What we read in all these articles and what we learn about how teaching/learning should proceed is, in my opinion, still a taboo theme in our department and the faculty as well. Then how can we become initiators and operators of active learning? Will we know how? Or will we only talk about how good it would be to put these methods into practice?«

The answer is complex and multi-layered – in view of a teacher's direct work with students, the organisation of studies, promotion criteria for university teachers etc. In pursuing the goal of »excellence in teaching«, however, a lot of change and effort is still needed. The first step at a personal level is to perceive students as partners in the learning process – also in the search for higher quality studies. As Nightingale and O'Neil (1994) put it: when we start thinking of students as active participants in the learning process, sharing their experience

with a teacher, or as partners in the learning process, we will more easily stay focused on creating the circumstances which lead to quality learning.

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Action research as part of the processes for assuring work quality in an educational institution

Abstract: In the article we present action research as a factor in the teacher's professional development and as part of processes for ensuring quality in education. Action research is characteristically performed by practitioners, in this case teachers, often with the help of the school counselling service and the mentor, and directly oriented towards an improvement in practice. In the article we analyse the main characteristics of action research and the model of teachers' professional development. We present the results of empirical research which were used to determine whether there are any evident differences between teachers who have experience in research and those without such experience in terms of their interest in participation in the research process and at which stage of professional development are those teachers who are most prepared to do research.

Key words: action research, teacher-researcher, teachers' professional development, quality in education

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1   Introduction

In Europe and other developed countries there have been ongoing processes which in the different school systems (USA, New Zealand, Sweden, Austria, the Netherlands, Scotland etc.)[1] emphasise the concept of quality in education whereby an individual education institution is defined as a key element of quality assurance.

Supposing that for assuring the quality of an individual school system one needs to focus on the quality of work of each specific educational institution (kindergarten, school, residence hall etc), then quality assurance must be systematically established at the national level with the concerted action of different institutions such as the Ministry of Education, public institutions which offer professional assistance to education institutions, the National Examinations Centre, the school inspection, the system of the constant professional training of teachers etc. In the last few years, some projects financed with European Union funds may also be included in this picture.

As far as the quality assurance of performance of the school system depends on work in an individual education institution, it is logical that countries have initiated the intensive promotion of the self-evaluation of school work as well as measures and processes which are performed autonomously and following the initiative of each individual school to ensure quality (cf. Bîrzea et al. 2005). External institutions retain their role of external assistance or providing counselling to schools. According to Medveš, the philosophy of quality assurance in the school has been establishing itself, developing and consolidating '... linearly proportionate with the concept of school autonomy. At the initial stages of public school development, school quality was entirely based on external, national school inspection. During the democratization process and strengthening of

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[1] MacBeath (1999). Schools must speak for themselves: The case for school self-evaluation; Qualität in Schulen (Q. I. S.) (2007); How good is our school? (2007); Bîrzea, Cecchini, Harrison, Krek, Spajić-Vrkaš (2005). Tool for the quality assurance of education for democratic citizenship in schools.

school autonomy, the concern for quality was increasingly transferred to school' (Medveš 2000, p. 10). The author also stresses that none of the modern initiatives has cancelled external mechanisms of control; however, connections are established between the concept of the external examination performed by the school inspection and the concept of self-evaluation performed by the school itself. In this context, the headteacher is becoming more responsible for the work and educational management of the school than the 'external' national school inspector (cf.: ibid, p. 11).

The headteacher's position is important since s/he manages the school's work and its autonomous ways of ensuring quality. It is a known fact that Slovenia has an established system of training for headteachers which educates (current and future) headteachers to perform specific headteacher tasks at the School for Headteachers[2] where they acquire knowledge especially in the management field. In the future it is hard to imagine quality school management if the headteacher is not trained to encourage the self-evaluation of work at school or kindergarten. Such self-evaluation is only a means to promote quality assurance and as such provide the required and suitably interpreted information which the teacher or school needs to improve the quality of their work.

Despite the headteacher's responsibility and the importance of the systemic quality assurance of work in schools and kindergartens for which the state is responsible, there is no need to prove that in the end the quality of education depends especially on the quality of each individual teacher's work and coherence in performance as well as on connecting the work of professional workers in the school.

For the teacher profession it is true that formal education provides fundamentals which have to be upgraded and complemented with permanent professional training. Teachers have to acquire knowledge, monitor and evaluate educational practices. Another important factor in encouraging the teacher's professional development is co-operation between faculties and schools. In this

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[2] The School for Headteachers started already at the end of the previous decade to perform the so-called project 'network of learning schools'. In a school which entered this project a team of professional workers was formed for the purpose to promote the implementation of changes. The purpose of the project was to prepare the school for changes and for solving problems. Such a school reaches in approximately six months the point where it defines its priorities and decides on the areas which are on the top of this priority list (e.g. the question of working with parents, schedule and subjects, home assignments etc.) Regardless of the problem the school chooses, the process established the culture of co-operation, other means of communication and dealing with problems which qualifies the school to function in a similar manner without external assistance. The National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia had developed a self-evaluation instrument of the school called 'Mirror' (Milekšič 1999). This is an instrument which analyses school work as a whole from the perspective of different subjects: teachers and school management, pupils and parents who are acquired on the basis in questionnaires prepared in advance. With it the school gets the opportunity to compare points of view from all three perspectives, the school can compare itself and accordingly increase the level of education and training work. At the end of the previous decade the Ministry of Education and Sports initiated a connection between all important institutions which have staff potentials for the development of the model and instruments for self-evaluation of work in an education institution. The objective was that participants in a kindergarten and school transform the observations into actions which provide quality (Pluško et al. 2001).

paper we present the project 'Partnership of the Faculties and Schools', research into educational practice, and the direct use of results in education and training through which we trained teachers for action research of actual educational practice with the purpose to improve the quality of lessons.

The idea of teachers studying educational practice was already discussed by Schön, especially in his works The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action, (1983), and Educating the Reflective Practitioner, (1991). According to him, practitioners have to: (1) participate in the study of their own practice; and (2) develop educational theories which reflect actual educational practice. The action research presented in the following section is an appropriate strategy for realising the mentioned objectives.

1.1   Definition of action research

The idea of action research originates from the work of the social psychologist Lewin who described research as a set of steps in a spiral, each containing the planning, action and assessment of the achieved result. Lewin defined action research as applied research for dealing with the use of classic research plans, for example an experiment with comparable groups (Kemmis 1988). Although nowadays his research is classified between classic experiment and action research, Lewin categorised them as action studies as they comparably study the forms of social function and action. One of the pioneers of action research in the education field is Corey (1953), who was convinced that a personal involvement in studying one's own practice contributes more to improvements in the educational practice of an individual teacher than a report on what another teacher established about his or her work and what changes he or she implemented.

Different authors have provided different definitions of action research. Carr and Kemmis (1986: 118) defined action research as a 'form of self-reflecting enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out.'

Frost (2002: 25) defines action research as a systematic process of reflexion, studying and action; all the mentioned factors are performed by individuals in their everyday professional practice. According to Adam (1989: 33), action research is a 'research methodological strategy with which the researcher in cooperation with individuals or groups on research basis deals with social changes and innovations.' Bassey (1998: 93) defined action research in education as a form of research 'which teachers perform to acquire knowledge, study, and evaluate their work as well as implement changes to improve educational practice.' 'Action research supposes that a teacher is involved in studying lessons or own educational practice; the fundamental goal of action research is not to acquire general knowledge in education but to promote teachers' professional development'(Borg 1965: 313). According to Watts (1985: 118), action research is a process 'where participants systematically and in detail study own educational practice by using different research methods, techniques, and instruments.' The methodology of action research does not contain rigidly directed methodological

rules and is actually quite loose in its basis. It runs in spiralling circles between action and reflexion, offering enough space for the application of qualitative and quantitative procedures on all levels (Mažgon 2006). Action research is based on the following presumptions: teachers will best deal with problems they have created and engage themselves to solve them; teachers will be more effective as they will continually revise and evaluate their educational practice and test the effectiveness of selected teaching approaches; action research encourages teachers' professional development, team work, which in turn influences the connection between teachers and better educational atmosphere (Watts 1985: 118).

From all these definitions we may conclude that action research is performed by practitioners who try to find solutions to everyday problems in educational practice and try to find the means and methods to achieve lecture objectives and knowledge standards of students or an individual student. In the process of action research teacher-researchers acquire new knowledge and advance professionally.

1.2 Characteristics of action research

In the next section we will analyse the fundamental characteristics of action research (cf. Carr and Kemmis 1986, Kemmis and McTaggart 1990, Fraenkel and Wallen 2006).

Action research in education is usually carried out by teachers (often with the help of the school counselling service and the mentor, usually from the faculty) who are directly involved in problems of their everyday education practice and are therefore personally interested in studying and reflecting a particular problem or situation in order to solve the problem and improve their educational practice. Action research is always based on specific everyday problems where there are possibilities for improvement and it thus avoids problems which cannot be influenced. For teachers who wish to perform action research it is considered that, besides their willingness and motivation to do research, they have the opportunity or professional autonomy to make the decisions necessary for research (e.g. implementing changes in the educational and training process) (cf. Fraenkel and Wallen 2006: 568). Since the objective of action research is to study a specific situation or improve specific conditions in this situation, action research is usually carried out in single school or department. Data obtained within one school cannot be generalised according to one single procedure as is typical of statistic generalisation based on a representative sample. Action research is about the transferability of conclusions analogically. With a proper description of an action research course, readers obtain a model of how participants studied a specific situation, solved dilemmas and improved conduct as well as circumstances. By taking into consideration the characteristics of their own situation, the reader can transfer the results of action research to educational practice and adopt them if possible as well as act accordingly or adjust to the characteristics of a specific situation. It is therefore important that the course of action research with achieved results is published and publicly accessible.

The school atmosphere is highly important for the conduct of action research. The school management and teachers, who evaluate teachers' research work

as one of the criteria for improving educational work and encouraging teacher-researchers in different ways to co-operate in their research work, are the most significant for quality action research. Besides the mentor, teachers who are not active participants of the study but are prepared to listen and co-operate with advice, dialogue, comments etc. proved to be very helpful to teachers involved in research work. It often happens that the teacher-researcher is not objective due to their need for change and can therefore create a too ambitious plan which simply cannot be carried out on account of the remaining teacher responsibilities. In such cases, it is desired that the teacher-researcher discusses their ideas with a trustworthy colleague who is capable of objective and critical judgment. In action research the researcher prepares a flexible research plan. The indicative plan of action research created by teacher-researcher at the beginning of the research process has to be updated throughout the entire research. The plan of the entire action research divides individual realisable action steps whereby each step is oriented towards activity with specific objectives. The number of action steps and their duration always depends on the specific research problem set by the researcher. With each step the researcher has to predict the means to observe and record effects at an individual stage of research. The evaluation is thus formative or up-to-date as well as summative or final. A formative evaluation with its observations enables the up-to-date assessment of activities and in-time measures to improve its quality. A summative evaluation is helpful in the final assessment of the final step as well as in decisions concerning the further course of the research process.

Although action research usually employs data collection techniques which were mainly developed within qualitative research[3] and gives individuals the opportunity to create a simple answer and express their opinion of the studied problem in their own manner (e.g. a questionnaire with open questions, essays, diary, non-standardised interview), researchers also use techniques typical of traditional empirical analytic or quantitative research[4] (e.g. examinations, psycho-

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[3] With the expression »qualitative research« we denote that kind of research where the basic empirical material, collected in the research process, consists of verbal descriptions or narratives. Further, the collected material is worked on and analysed in words without numerical operations (Mesec 1998). According to Creswell, qualitative research is a research process designed on a clear methodological tradition of research, where researchers build a complex, holistic framework so that they analyse narratives and observations, conducting the research work in the habitat (Creswell 1998, p. 15). Thus, in qualitative research the collected data are more in a verbal and picture form than in a numerical one. There is also a tendency towards an integral and in-depth comprehension of phenomena in as natural a setting as possible, as well as in the context of concrete circumstances (Mesec 1998). The researcher is directly included in the environment, which helps him observe the object of the research. In this context, the researcher should be aware of the fact that with his or her participation and the researched situation itself they influence the happening which they are observing. Further, to qualitative research, we also attach attributes such as phenomenological approach, the use of hermeneutical procedures of explanation, an orientation towards the process and the dynamic. Qualitative analysis is finalised by forming a grounded theory which reads as a narrative of a phenomenon which was the subject of the study.

[4] Quantitative research with its empirical analytical methodology and one-way or linear research process follows the example of natural sciences. The basis of quantitative research is the belief that there is a reality led by stable natural laws, independent of people and waiting to be discovered. Its

logical tests, questionnaires with open questions, grading scales, position scales, standardised interview, structural observation etc.). It is also sensible to employ triangulation within action research. According to an approved definition, triangulation means 'the use of different methods in studying a specific research problem' (Denzin 1978). In the social sciences triangulation has been used especially as a technique to check the validity of research observations. There was an established belief that research hypotheses can be confirmed or rejected only if we reached the same conclusions by means of different methods. Denzin (1978) expanded the definition of triangulation. In his opinion, the triangulation of methods is only one form of triangulation; another possibility is the triangulation of data sources, researchers and theories (also discussed by: Janesick 1998). Janesick (1998) added a fifth form of triangulation, i.e. the triangulation of scientific disciplines. Another established belief is that triangulation is not a technique of checking the validity of research findings, but it enables a better comprehension of the studied phenomenon. 'Triangulation is not a strategy of validity but rather its alternative. A combination of several methods, data sources, theoretical assumptions, and researchers in a single research provides a better comprehension of the studied problem – it is a strategy which increases the extent, depth, complexity …. of conclusions of each study' (Denzin and Lincoln 2005: 5).

2 Empirical Research

2.1 Purpose and objectives of the study

We will answer the following research questions:

(1) whether there are statistically significant differences regarding their willingness for further co-operation in research work among those teachers who have experience with research work and those without such experience; (2) whether there are statistically significant differences among teachers with and without experience regarding the stage of the research process at which they are prepared to participate; and (3) whether there are statistically significant differences regarding their willingness to further participate in research work among teachers who are at different stages of their professional development.

The data were obtained via empirical research performed within the project 'Partnership of the Faculties and Schools in 2006 and 2007: Teacher-researcher and inter-subject connection', which was enabled by the European Social Fund of the European Union and the Ministry of Education and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia, which co-financed it. Besides the Faculty of Education at the University of Ljubljana, 26 other partner institutions were included in the project. The idea of the project is to qualify teachers from partner institutions for action

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objective is to reach reliable, exact, precise, measurable, verifiable and objective observations which in the social sciences would have the same value as findings in natural sciences. The problem of research in quantitative research is handled part by part. We approach different aspects of the phenomenon and deal with individual variables but on a larger number of units, most frequently on a representative sample of a population, since our tendency is to generalise the established observations.

research. The goals of the project are: (1) to establish a web site for collecting and mediating information about needs and interests for researching educational practice together with defining existing problems in previous methods of teaching, and the formation of propositions for their bridging; (2) to deepen the collaboration between teachers and researchers, and the development of partner-like relations: researcher-teacher, with the purpose of productive and effective research into educational practice; (3) training teachers for the planning and execution of educational practice studies; (4) to develop a model of researching educational practice which would be oriented to inter-subject connections and to preparing teachers for the planning, execution and evaluation of inter-subject connections in schools.

2.2 *Description of the sample*

Purpose sample was used in the research. 274 teachers, who teach at partner institutions, completed a questionnaire; 87.8 % women and 12.2 % men. A good half of the interviewed teachers (54.4 %) works at primary school, almost a quarter (23.3 %) works at secondary school. One tenth (14.1 %) of educational workers, who work at institutions for nursery education, and 5.2 % of those who work at other institutions (e.g. student's hostel, library, institution for children with special needs), also took part in the research. The average age of interviewed teachers is 40.87 (standard deviation is 7.74 years). In average they have 17.58 years of working experience (standard deviation is 8.93 years). About one half of the interviewed teachers (51.9 %) have a university degree, a quarter (25.2 %) of teachers have a higher education degree. One tenth of the interviewed educational workers (10.0 %) have high school education, about one tenth of educational workers (9.3 %) have a professional higher education degree. 3.7 % of the interviewed educational workers have a specialisation, Master's or doctoral degree.

2.3 *Data-collecting procedure*

Data were collected in September 2006. Within the framework of the project we prepared a questionnaire where we monitored how research in schools is progressing. We also recorded the standpoints of educational workers on researching. On this basis we plan to form a proposal of the systematic, organisational and normative changes needed for the model of researching educational practice to begin living in practice.

The questionnaire is composed of four evaluation scales (reasons that influence the teachers' level of engagement in educational research, reasons which cause a gap between research institutions and school practice, factors that could contribute to the growth of teachers' research work, teachers' willingness to collaborate in individual phases of the research process), three semantic differentials (which characteristics the teachers ascribe to research, to an average teacher and an average researcher), a complex of questions where we determine teachers' opinions on how much they learned about research during their studies and in programmes of ongoing professional training; and a complex of questions where we try to determine some personal data of the respondents (gender, age,

work age, degree and education, faculty, professional title, type of institution where they work).

In this article we will only show the data collected with the evaluation scale about the teachers' willingness to collaborate in individual phases of the research process, and with some closed questions where we seek to determine teachers' opinions on how much they learned about research during their studies and programmes of ongoing professional training. On the basis of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient the evaluation scale achieves sufficient reliability ($\alpha = 0.87$) and validity (with the first factor we explain 52.16% of the variance). Validity was further checked with the help of a factor analysis. According to the $r_{tt} \geq \sqrt{h^2}$ law, the aforementioned part of the questionnaire achieves a good degree of validity ($r_{tt} = 0.82$).

2.4   Methodology

In the empirical research we employed a causal-nonexperimental method of educational research. The data from the questionnaires were processed using methods of descriptive and inferential statistics. The statistical procedures employed were: frequency distribution, central tendency (mean), dispersion (standard deviation), χ^2 – test of the hypothesis of independence, Levene's test for the homogeneity of variance (F-test), the T-test for an independent sample, factor analysis for testing validity (% of explained variance with the first factor) and reliability (% of explained variance with common factors) of the instrument and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient as a measure of instrument reliability. The data are represented in a tabular form.

3   Results and Discussion

3.1   Importance of experience in research work for further research

We were interested in the extent to which experience in research work influences a teacher's interest in further research and used the sample of partner institutions to establish teachers' involvement in research activities up to now and their level of interest in research work in the future. It was explained to the respondents that research is the planned and systematic acquisition, analysis and interpretation of data for the purpose to contribute to the progress of professional understanding and educational practice. Among 274 interviewed teachers, almost one-half of them (48.2%) estimated that teachers sometimes do research. Two-fifths of the interviewed teachers (39.4%) answered that teachers rarely do research. Only one-tenth of the respondents answered that the teachers do research very frequently (0.4 %) or frequently (12.0 %). None of the teachers answered that teachers do not engage in research.

Next we asked the teachers if they had ever conducted a study or if they had participated in any kind of research work, and if they are prepared to participate in a study in the following school year.

About three-fifths of the respondent teachers (58.8%) answered that they alone had not carried out any research yet nor had they collaborated in research.

Two-fifths of the teachers (41.2%) answered that they had already carried out research or participated in it.[5] One-third of the interviewed teachers (37.2%) said they are prepared to participate in a study, one-fifth of them (22.6%) is not ready to participate in a study, while two-fifths of the interviewed teachers (40.1%) could not decide if they would or would not collaborate in research work. For further analysis and an increase in participation in research work it would be necessary to identify what motivated teachers who had already participated in research before, to start research, who motivated them, what encouraged them during the process, what limited them and where they encountered obstacles, what they experienced during the research process, and what the research has brought them.

Since positive experiences with a certain change are usually an important predictor of implementing particular changes, we were interested in whether there are any statistically significant differences regarding the teachers' willingness to participate in research among the teachers included in our study who have experience in research work and those who do not.

	Are you prepared to participate in research work in this school year?							
	da		ne		ne vem		skupaj	
	f	f %	f	f %	f	f %	f	f %
No. I do not have research work experience.	38	23.8	46	28.8	76	47.5	160	100.0
Total	102	37.5	62	22.8	108	39.7	272	100.0

Table 1: Answers from teachers with experience in research work and those without as to whether they are ready to participate in research work

Among the answers of the teachers who have research work experience and the teachers who do not have research work experience, there are statistically important differences in their willingness for further collaboration in research work (χ^2 = 31.582, df = 2, P = 0.000). More than half of the teachers (57.1%) who already had research work experience are prepared to collaborate in researches in the future. On the other hand, only a quarter of teachers (23.8%) who do not have research work experience yet are ready to collaborate in research work. Almost half the teachers who do not have research work experience (47.5%) cannot decide if they would or would not participate in research work. Only one-quarter

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[5] Most teachers (18 or 41%) who said they had already conducted a study and provided a short description of the study had performed research work at the school where they were employed (e.g. eating habits of students, writing home assignments, pupils' workload, popularity of individual subjects, pupils' sport habits). A tenth of the teachers had participated in a study in co-operation with the National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, the Education Institute or had conducted a study within their diploma paper. Two-tenths of the respondents said they had conducted a study in co-operation with a faculty and the Headteachers' Training Centre.

(28.6%) of the teachers who have research work experience remain neutral in their decision. While one-tenth (14.3%) of the teachers who have research work experience are ready to participate in research work, only a good quarter (28.8%) of the teachers who did not have research work experience are ready to participate in research work.

It can be concluded from the above figures that experience in research work does effect a teacher's willingness to also do research in the future. More teachers with experience in research work than those without (57.1% vs. 23.8%) are willing to conduct studies or participate in research work in the future. This is an important observation which needs to be taken into account when preparing study programmes for future teachers as well as for creating the programme of continuous professional training. If we wish to engage teachers to do research work, it is vital that already as students they develop a positive attitude to research and understand research as an important factor in a teacher's professional conduct and development. It is therefore essential for students to acquire knowledge in research (fundamental methodological knowledge and learn about basic statistical procedures which are used in education) and gain their first specific experience in research work. Students need the opportunity to use the theoretical knowledge in methodology, for example, when developing a specific instrument for data collection and planning own research. It is understandable that students are unable to conduct larger studies (e.g. on representative samples); for their training smaller studies are also useful since the sample is represented by their colleagues, for example. Students learn to define the study problem, create sensible study questions, search for the most appropriate ways to collect data to obtain answers to given study questions, develop the skill of creating instruments and the statistical processing of data as well as interpreting the obtained data which further encourages them to perform interdisciplinary research into individual topics. In the future teachers will thus learn about the applicability of statistics and methodology and already gain their first experience in research during their studies. Teachers need to have the possibility within their ongoing professional training to continuously update their knowledge in educational research. It can be expected that those teachers who will gain positive experience and basic competencies in research already during their studies will complete their knowledge during the process of continuous professional training.

In the following sections we have determined the stages of the research process where teachers are prepared to participate.

	$\bar{x}$ with experience	$\bar{x}$ without experience	t	df	sig
planning of research contents (what to research, goals of the research...)	3.86	3.52	2.978	270	0.003
methodological planning of the research (research plan, the sample, the data-collecting procedure...)	3.71	3.38	2.728	270	0.007
preparation of techniques and instruments for data-collecting	3.58	3.34	2.066	211.181	0.040
data-collecting	3.95	3.78	1.618	270	0.107
processing and interpretation of the results	3.70	3.38	2.672	270	0.008
writing of reports	3.45	3.00	3.648	217.259	0.000
acquainting interested public (other teachers, parents ...) with the results of the research	3.63	3.16	3.928	270	0.000
introducing the findings and improvements to school practice	4.11	3.86	2.172	270	0,.031

Table 2: Stages of research work where teachers who have and those who do not have research work experience are prepared to participate

Teachers evaluated their willingness to participate in individual phases of the research process on a five-step grading scale. We established that teachers (regardless of their experience in research) are mostly prepared to participate in implementing observations and improvements in school practice ($\bar{x}$ = 3.97), which is understandable as teachers usually judge the value of research according to its 'applied value', i.e. the possibility to change and improve school practice. The purpose of each study is to solve the problem, which means changing practice in the widest sense possible. Next is the teachers' willingness to participate in data collection ($\bar{x}$ =3.84). It needs to be stressed that the quantitative paradigm typically defines the role of the studied person, in our case teachers, as limited especially in the procedures of data acquisition and implementing changes in practice. In order to ensure the highest level of objectivity (as well as validity and reliability), a demand for separating the studied object from the studied subject is employed in quantitative research. This puts the researcher in charge of the research process whereas the studied person represents the source of information. It is typical of the qualitative paradigm that the researcher and those under research together formulate the studied situation which means that teachers are supposed to participate in planning, data collection, data processing, interpretation and informing the public about the study results.

An interesting fact is that teachers are largely prepared to participate in planning the content of a study – what to research, research objectives etc.

($\bar{x}$ = 3.66) than in the methodological planning of the study – the research plan, process of data collection etc. ($\bar{x}$ =3.51). We can assume that content planning relates more to them since they have more knowledge in this field. Less interest in participation was expressed by teachers in data processing and interpretation ($\bar{x}$ = 3.50), informing the public about the research results and the preparation of techniques and instruments ($\bar{x}$ =3.36). The teachers were the least interested in writing the research report ($\bar{x}$ =3.18). Writing a research report, which requires an in-depth reflexion of the research problem, and informing the public with the results from the study are two factors which are not normally strictly bound to the teacher's everyday professional role but which significantly influence the teacher's professional development. According to Ebbutt (1985), the phase of writing a research report and presenting the results to the public, in addition to developing research questions and systematic data collection, is the main dividing line between the teacher – thinking practitioner and teacher – researcher. The teacher-researcher is expected to perform the entire research process, i.e. they will know how to form a research problem, analyse it in terms of research questions, hypothesise, create a plan for data collection and processing, know how to interpret the obtained data, and write a report on the course of the study.

Next we have examined whether teachers with experience in research statistically significantly differ and at which stages of the research process they are prepared to participate in comparison to teachers without such experience. By taking into account the assumption of the homogeneity of variance, the T-test for independent samples (see Table 2) has shown statistically significant differences between teachers with experience in research work and those without regarding their interest in participation in individual stages of the research process. Statistically significant differences were present in all phases of the research process, except in data collection, and teachers who had experience in research work are largely prepared to participate in all phases of the research process compared to teachers without experience in this field. Again we can say that collecting data is a step which is also present in 'traditional' or quantitative research and does not require much effort from the teacher and it is therefore understandable and expected that in this area there were no statistically significant differences among teachers with previous experience in research work and those without.

3.2 *Action research in schools – an important factor in the teacher's professional development*

In action research both the final result and the research process is important. Throughout this process a teacher can improve his or her professional standpoint and teaching (e.g. determine which teaching methods are more appropriate for children with special needs, which strategies of applying discipline are more effective etc.), and acquire knowledge in research work. Action research trains teachers to perform independent studies, motivates them, and trains them to read and critically judge other studies dealing with similar issues. Teachers with experience in own research work are usually more qualified to transfer the findings of other studies into their own practice. Action research can thus be

defined as one of the important factors of a teacher's professional development. There are different definitions of a teacher's professional development. In this paper we have adopted the definition which explains the teacher's professional development as 'a process of significant and lifelong empirical learning in which teachers develop their own comprehensions, and are changing their teaching practice; it is the process which includes teachers' individual, professional and social dimension, and it is also teachers' progressing towards the direction of critical, independent, responsible decision-making and acting' (Valenčič Zuljan 2001, p. 131).

In the literature we can find many attempts at defining and changing a teacher's professional development. One of the first empirical attempts to define professional development is the three-stage model by Frances Fuller (Fuller, 1969). She connected teachers' professional development with a change in teachers' consideration of professional dilemmas and worries (Feiman-Nemser and Floden 1986; Veenman 1984). This development should progress from the survival stage – where the teacher is oriented especially to his or her own position and role – through the stage of experience and orientation in a teaching situation (mastery stage) to the last stage where the teacher's interest is oriented towards the influence his or her actions have on students.

Studies by Lanier, Adams, Hutchinson and Martray, and Adams and Martray (Veenman 1984), who monitored teachers in the first, third and fifth year of teaching, generally confirm Fuller's model. With increasing work experience, considering one's own role decreased, however, the teacher's consideration of the lessons themselves increased. An interesting observation of the abovementioned authors is that teachers' consideration of those professional tasks which are in any way connected with the question of discipline does not change with years of professional development but remains similar in all phases.

Fuller has modified her initial three-phase model and added an additional phase, which refers to students during their training at a faculty. It is typical for this period that students have a realistic perception of pupils, whereas they have an unreal image of the teacher's role and do fully not understand it.

In their later studies Fuller and Bown (Kagan 1992) emphasise that phases in the model of a teacher's professional development are not clear and isolated and define professional growth as 'constant, continuous teacher's self-confrontation' (Kagan 1992: 160). Despite all of this, there is still a tendency to develop a general model which does not take into account the context and conditions in which a teacher works (e.g. characteristics of the school atmosphere, the headteacher's management style).

Next we were interested in the teachers' attitudes to research work in different stages of professional development. As the criteria for determining the level of a teacher's professional development, we used their years of work experience. Although we are aware that the phases in the model of a teacher's professional development are not clear and isolated, the years of service are not the only criterion which effects the teacher's professional development in such a manner that all teachers do not reach the highest level of competence and that those teachers

who do reach it do not function in each situation and all areas of professional work at this level (cf. Berliner 1992), years of service seemed to be one of the most important factors directing a teacher's conduct and decisions in practice. The teachers were classified in four categories regarding their years of service: (1) first period – entering a profession or a newcomer teacher (1-3 years of work experience); (2) second period – professional stabilisation and consolidation or a beginner teacher (4-6 years of work experience); (3) third period – professional activity of an experienced teacher (7-18 years of work experience) and (4) fourth period – the stability phase or an expert teacher (above 18 years) (cf. Huberman 1992, Berliner 1992).

We seek to determine whether there are statistically significant differences among teachers who are at different stages of their professional development regarding their interest in participating in research work.

	yes		no		do not know		total	
	f	f %	f	f %	f	f %	f	f %
newcomer (1–3)	12	57.1	3	14.3	6	28.6	21	100.0
beginner (4–6)	6	28.6	5	23.8	10	47.6	21	100.0
experienced teacher (7–-18)	39	47.0	12	14.5	32	38.6	83	100.0
expert(19–40)	41	29.5	39	28.1	59	42.4	139	100.0
total	98	37.1	59	22.3	107	40.5	264	100.0

Table 3: Answers from teachers with different years of service to the question regarding their willingness to participate in a study during this school year

The research has shown that teachers with a different period of work experience are statistically significantly different regarding their interest in research work ($\chi^2 = 13.213$, g = 6, P = 0.040).

Teachers in the first period of professional development (teachers newcomers) and teachers in the third period of professional development (experienced teachers), i.e. teachers with the least work experience in education and those who have between 7 and 18 years of work experience, are the most prepared to do research.

More than half of the teachers (57.1%), who have up to three years of work experience (the first phase of the teacher's professional development) and almost half the teachers with 7 to 18 years of work experience (the third phase of the teacher's professional development) answered that they are prepared to participate in the study. Only a quarter of the teachers (28.6%) who have 4 to 6 years' work experience (the second phase of the teacher's professional development) and those (29.5%) with the most working experience, i.e. 19 years or more, (the fourth phase of a teacher's professional development) are prepared to participate in the study. More beginner teachers (47.6%) and teachers experts (42.4%) than teachers newcomers (28.6%) and experienced teachers (38.6%) said they are not prepared to participate in the study and could not decide whether to participate

in the study or not (47.6% of beginners, 42.4% of experts, 38.6% of experienced teachers and 28.6% of newcomers remained neutral in their decision). How can we interpret the above observations?

From the presented results it is evident that with the research process newcomer teachers, i.e. teachers in the first stage of their professional development with up to three years' work experience, are the most prepared to participate in the research process.[6] Teachers who enter the teaching profession and meet with class management for the first time are, according to studies of the teacher's professional development, typically oriented to their own position and role and deal with the question of 'professional survival'. 'They try to determine the parameter of school practice, define their own role in it, and predict and meet the expectations of others' (Veenman 1984, p. 143). Nevertheless, experience in research work acquired during studies at a faculty and by writing a diploma paper is obviously still 'live' enough for showing an interest in research in the first few years of teaching. After the reform of the previous higher education system to university education (1987–1988) or the reorganisation of the previous Academy of Education to the Faculty of Education (1990) all teachers are required to complete a four-year university study programme where they acquire knowledge in the fundamentals of educational methodology and statistics.[7] As already noted in 1994 by D. Piciga and C. Razdev{ek Pu~ko (1994: 49), teachers are more prepared to co-operate with researchers, participate in the execution of action researches and the implementation of research observations in practice. 'Teachers no longer have the impression of being in a subordinate position in their relationship with researchers and cooperation with researchers can be established on the basis of partner relationship' (ibid.). Next we will provide data on how teachers acquired knowledge in statistics and methodology and how they evaluate their knowledge in the mention field. More than two-thirds of interviewed teachers said that during their undergraduate studies they attended a lecture where they learned about statistics-related topics (67.9%) and methodology (69.0%). One-fifth of the interviewed teachers (20.5%) attended a training programme (seminar, workshop, lectures etc.) on research within their ongoing professional training. The interviewed teachers assessed their knowledge in statistics according to a five-step assessment scale with the average mark of 2.54 (standard deviation 1.03), their methodological knowledge with an average mark of 2.70 (standard deviation 1.09).

From these figures it is evident that teachers with 4 to 6 years' work experience (the second period of the teacher's professional development) have decided

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[6] We also checked the stages of the research process at which the teachers, who are in different phases of professional development, are prepared to participate. The results reveal that in all phases of the research process newcomer teachers (with up to three years' work experience) show the biggest level of interest in the participation in content planning, the collection of data, and the implementation of observations and improvements in school practice.

[7] Regarding this, we mention the data obtained by A. Drobnič Vidic (2003) in her study that show that 70% of students enrolled in the first year of study at the University of Ljubljana in the 2001/02 study year dealt with statistics.

to a smaller degree to participate in research work (only 28.6%). Other empirical studies also confirm the observation that after a while the initial excitement about innovation and researching one's own practice decreases over time. According to observations by Huberman (1992), Fessler, Unruh and Turner (Kremer Hayon 1991), Vonka and Schrasa (Razdev{ek Pu~ko 1990), in this period teachers become more self-confident, stick to a routine, and prefer traditional methods. They are less interested in research and even show a fear of it. They usually search for reasons in external factors.

In the third phase the teacher's interest is especially directed towards the level of the effect they have on their pupils. Fuller (1969, Feiman-Nemser and Floden 1986) believed that teachers in this phase mostly rely on their own capabilities and self-judgement of the situation. Unruh and Turner (Kremer Hayon 1991) are also of the opinion that in this period the teacher's maturity, confidence and tendency towards change is typical, which is also confirmed by the results of our study. Almost half of the interviewed teachers (47.0%) with 7 to 18 years of work experience is prepared to participate in the study. For teachers with 19 years' work experience or more the interest in research drastically decreases; less than a third is prepared to participate (29.5%).

4   Conclusion

At the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s the educational profession in Slovenia intensively started to show interest in action research. During this period, numerous public discussions and professional articles on action research appeared (e.g. Sagadin 1989, Marentič Požarnik 1993 a), consultation of the Association of Education Societies was organised with a publication following (Cerar, Marentič Požarnik 1990), while the translation of the planner for action research was published (Kemmis and McTagart 1990). The first studies conducted in Slovenia were based solely or especially on action research.[8] Nowadays action research is one of the most common forms of research in education used by practitioners and dealt with by numerous experts.

Based on empirical research we have established that the experienced gained by teachers with research work has an important statistical effect on further cooperation in research work. More than half of the teachers (57.1%) with experience in research are also prepared to participate in studies in the future while only a quarter of teachers (23.8%) with no experience are prepared to participate. Teachers with experience in research work and newcomer teachers with up to three years' work experience are more prepared to co-operate in all phases of the research process as teachers without experience. Motivating teachers for research is a complex 'project', its success is the responsibility of all institutions related

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[8] Especially action-oriented was the international study Environment and School Initiatives (Marentič Požarnik 1993 b), performed within the OECD/CERI in 23 countries and methodologically conducted by Prof. Elliot, one of the biggest experts in action research.

to the education of education workers: faculties which educate future education workers, education institutions where education workers are employed, and suitable national institutions (Ministry of Education and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, the National Education Institute).

The observation about the importance of experience in research work for further research has to be considered when planning study programmes for future teachers. If we wish teachers to do research and adopt it as part of their profession, the faculties need to educate them already during their studies to practice research work and thus enable them to gain their first experience with specific research work. The studies should provide the possibility to acquire knowledge in methodology and statistics and apply it in practice, e.g. when developing a specific instrument for collecting data and planning a study. In Scandinavian counties, for example, the entire education of teachers is based on the belief that all teachers should be acquainted with the latest studies related to education, teaching and learning, learn to use the results of a study in practice sensibly, and be academically and professionally qualified for research. They believe that such knowledge enables the systematic planning of lessons, development of social and ethic dimensions of the education profession, and assume responsibility for more responsible positions in society (Niemi, Jakku-Sihvonen 2006). At the end of the study year the teachers need to have the opportunity to stay in contact with the research work (e.g. with seminars of ongoing professional training, different projects), continuously update their knowledge in this field since this is the only way for research to become part of their everyday practice. If teachers and school management support and promote research work at school and assistance in research is offered to teacher-researchers, the teachers will do research much more often.

The principals of education institutions should, together with the Ministry of Education and Sport, reconsider the financial and professional evaluation of teachers' research work. Since teachers also have to perform other activities in addition to their education commitments to accomplish the 40-hour working time, it would be possible for teachers who do research to recognise a certain number of working hours for their research activity.

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Dr Petra Javrh

Phase model of Slovenian teachers' career development

Abstract: The paper presents the phase model of career development which was designed on the basis of qualitative research into professional biographies by teachers at primary and secondary schools, and a comparison of empirical data with Huberman's model.
We describe the peculiarities of the S-model and present in detail, as the key deviation from the original model, the newly discovered phase of »critical responsibility« and considerable changes of the main characteristics in the phase of helplessness (or, according to Huberman, conservatism).

Key words: professional path, career, adult learning aspect of a career, teacher's career, qualitative research, S-model, Huberman's model, education and training of teachers

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Introduction

Reflecting on teachers' career development may at first appear out of date as individual theorists have given up the career concept (Cf. Brečko 2006). Yet, according to the critical analysis by D. T. Hall's in his work meaningfully entitled *Career is dead – long live the career (1996)* such conclusions are rash and do not take into account the foundations of the concept which has been developed and upgraded over the last hundred years, and that such a period is not negligible. »The career, once understood as a series of vertical shifts with steady increases in income, power, status and security – is dead. Yet people will always lead working lives that change in time, offer challenges, growth and learning. Consequently, if we perceive the career as a series of lifelong work-related experiences and personal learning cycles, then it will never die« (Hall 1996).

How should one approach the career of a teacher; from which theoretical perspective? It seems the latest reflections on the career again bring us back to the fundamental theoretical questions: what affects the professional identity of an individual, what role do values play in this process, and how do we interpret the new forms of career which are appearing independently of traditional, proven professional paths, regardless of whether one is employed or not. At the same time, we deal with dilemmas about the combination of key qualifications as normally defined in education, plus some additional questions: which are the key competencies required to survive in the unpredictable labour market (Cf. Hall 1996, McDaniels 1997, Greenhaus et al. 2000, Straby 2001, Zgaga 2006 and 2006 b, Devjak and Zgaga 2007). A new, provocative question has become topical – what should career development be like in order to realise the concept of »sustained development«. Within this context, we also need some deeper theoretical reflection on the connection between the lifelong learning and adult learning views on career development.

In regard to these questions teachers are not merely employees, their roles at work hold a special place – they have, despite the redefined teacher-student
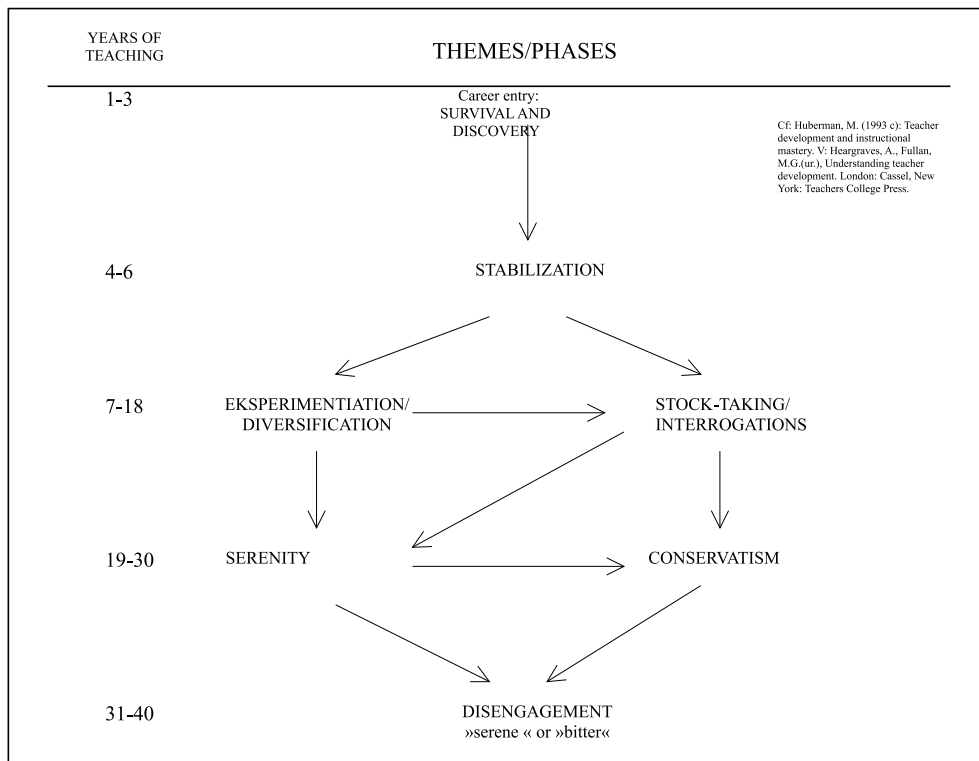
relationship, the role of enlighteners as their work consists of both educating and upbringing. Their understanding and disposition towards their career not only affects their careers, but are also reflected in their work with those generations that have not yet entered the labour market (Cf. Kalin 1999, p. 19). Teachers can be strong positive or negative models for students already before one's career starts. It is thus important how teachers perceive their own careers, how much satisfaction and fulfilment they get from them. It is also important how their wider environment evaluates and perceives the significance of their work. From this perspective, teachers' careers are still an important issue and the pertaining reflection holds broader significance.

Huberman's Model of Career Phases

Among the most prominent and established views on the teacher's career, which corresponds to the described view, is the model of career phases by M. Huberman (Huberman 1993). It was designed according to the results of the »Swiss study«[1]. When we evaluate it according to the original categorisation which was developed for the needs of our research (Cf. Javrh 2006), it turns out that each phase of his model comprises the entire learning cycle: entering a phase, characteristic experiences, developing skills and attaining knowledge, consolidating the position and role within an organisation, new goals and challenges. From the perspective of general, universal laws governing a career, as defined by different authors (Super 1957 and 1995, Schein 1978; also see: Goodson 1992 and 2000, Butt 1992), Huberman's model can in short be defined as a model in which the career includes all universal elements (sequences, phases, stages) and is divided into three main periods. Compared with other authors (Cf. Javrh 2006), the specifics of the model are in the middle career period, approximately between the 10th and 30th year of working, which is in the middle and first half of the mature career period, where we come across the phases which are characteristic of teachers' careers. Of particular importance is the law which stems from Huberman's model: the »harmonic« and »problematic« direction in the development of teachers' careers which are on their own sides of the model. During a career we can thus, according to the particular phase a teacher is going through, evaluate and also predict the final outcome: satisfaction and fulfilment in the profession or embitterment and a feeling of being cheated and dissatisfaction upon retirement.

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[1] Many researchers who study the life and work of teachers (Woodwart, Goodson etc.) value the »Swiss Study« by Michael Huberman as an important work which, due to its approach and extent, reliably and in detail shows a fairly authentic picture of teachers' reality in career development. A. Heargraves says in its introduction: »Michael Huberman has been one of the foremost architects of and contributors of the field, and this book, *The Lives of Teachers,* is undoubtedly the most systematic and extensive study yet published on the subject« (in Huberman 1993, p. viii). Some criticise his model of phases yet most recognise his exceptional contribution to the understanding of teachers' perceptions of their own careers.

YEARS OF TEACHING	THEMES/PHASES

1-3 — Career entry: SURVIVAL AND DISCOVERY

Cf: Huberman, M. (1993 c): Teacher development and instructional mastery. V: Heargraves, A., Fullan, M.G.(ur.), Understanding teacher development. London: Cassel, New York: Teachers College Press.

4-6 — STABILIZATION

7-18 — EKSPERIMENTIATION/ DIVERSIFICATION — STOCK-TAKING/ INTERROGATIONS

19-30 — SERENITY — CONSERVATISM

31-40 — DISENGAGEMENT »serene « or »bitter«

Presentation 1: Huberman's schematic model of teachers' career development[2]

Huberman, like others, tried to better understand those factors which determine whether teachers are successful in their careers or not. He defined career success as *teachers' satisfaction* and emphasised several times that this view corresponds with the developmental aspects of a career (Cf. Huberman 1993 c, p. 128). He was convinced that »a large part of individual development is 'teleological', that is, individuals observe, study and plan out the sequences through which they pass, and can thereby influence or even determine the nature or succession of the stages in their career« (1993b, p. 94). Huberman departs here from the traditional understanding of a career, according to which career development was perceived as a kind of (usually vertical and successive) development from one phase to another. Teachers are in Huberman's context perceived as responsible for their own careers, while adult education or continuing professional development are perceived as support for their personal efforts and for their roles as facilitators of positive processes in an organisation – in their schools.

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[2] Huberman points out that the model is schematic – it does not display all possible paths but only those which are the most common.

Qualitative Research on Teacher's Careers[3]

We wished to find out to which extent Huberman's model of phases can be applied in Slovenia (here we had to take local specifics into account: the national system of promotion and the wage scale). Due to the relative similarity of teachers' positions in both school systems we supposed that modal phases in the careers of Slovenian teachers are most probably quite similar to the modal phases in Huberman's model. We were interested in their differences.

We carried out qualitative research which included 30 semi-structured in-depth interviews with teachers working in primary and secondary schools[4]. The main topics of the semi-structured interview were: general notions of teachers' careers and their understanding of the word 'career'; individual histories of employment and work experience; present situation and plans for the future, the influence of continuing professional education and further training for career development.[5]

Already the pilot part of the research showed that a considerable overlapping between the Slovenian model (S-model) and Huberman's model could be expected, so we decided to collect highly diversified professional biographies of teachers to make checking against the original model more reliable. The teachers in the sample were, besides independent variables (age, work experience, sex), also selected according to the level or subject they taught[6]. If we distribute teachers according to Huberman's criterion for ranks[7], we arrive at the figure below. Approximately one-sixth of the teachers in our sample were well advanced in a late career or about to retire.

Career period	Work experience in years	M	F	TOTAL work experience	TOTAL career periods
EARLY	5–10	0	2	2	2
MIDDLE	11–19	3	5	8	8
LATE/ MATURE	20–29	4	11	15	20
	30–39	0	5	5	

Table 1: Work experience – distribution of the teachers by rank according to Huberman's criterion and according to standard career periods

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[3] Here we should emphasise that the results are not representative, which calls for a study based on a representative sample (for a detailed description of sampling and methodological approaches, see Javrh 2006).

[4] In 2002 and 2003 the pilot part of the research was carried out, in 2004 and 2005 the field research with respondents in which we applied a custom-made tool for data collecting. The semi-structured interviews lasted on average two hours (from 90 to 170 minutes), they were recorded on audio tapes. Soundtracks were transcribed using the conventional procedure.

[5] The sample (n = 30) included a wide variety of possible positions within a school/organisation so different potential career developments could be established through the analysis.

[6] We tried to achieve a cross section of all subject fields.

[7] Here one should bear in mind the historical, political and cultural differences between the Swiss and Slovenian systems of employing teachers.

Slightly more than a quarter of the respondents were in the middle career period, while only a small share (6.6 %) were in the early period. The sample covered most of the subjects – which corresponds to Huberman's sampling[8]. The two biggest groups were teachers in secondary schools and teachers in the second and third three-year periods in primary schools, which corresponds to the structure of Huberman's sample.

The analysis of empirical material was carried out using traditional approaches characteristic of qualitative methodological procedures (Cf. Javrh 2006). Each phase of Huberman's model is saturated with individual characteristics (Huberman 1993, 1993b, 1993c), on average 27 of them describe one phase. In the qualitative analysis an individual characteristic was regarded as a single category. The process of selecting relevant statements in our interviews was adjusted to Huberman's way of selecting and we applied the so-called »approach with variables« (Miles and Huberman 1994, pp.173-176). Due to the sheer amount of collected empirical material we chose a stricter criterion for selecting the enciphered units – statements. We carried out multi-level axial coding, which was performed in three stages with codes of the first, second and third order. The third-order codes reached the level of categories in Huberman's model and thus became the basic categories of the S-model. This crude adjustment to Huberman's research procedures enabled us to take further steps to allow a comparison. We carried out a comparative analysis of Huberman's characteristics in individual phases and our empirical data, which was arranged in a hypothetical model (Cf. Titmus 2004).

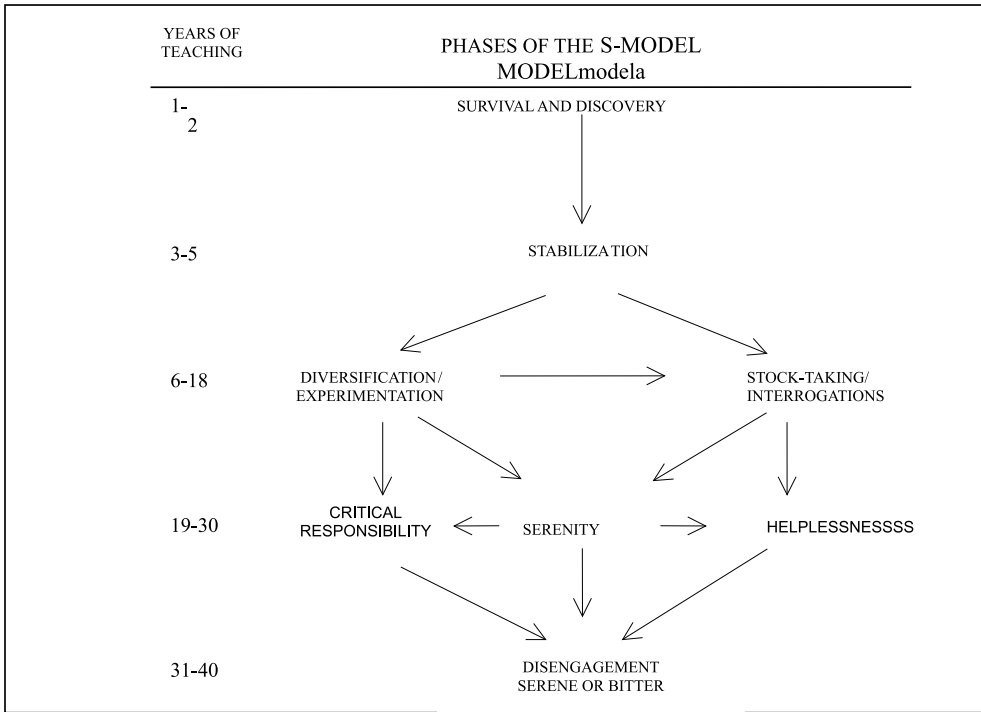## Designing a Slovenian Teacher Career Model

When we made the detailed comparative analysis of the results of the empirical material and Huberman's descriptions, certain phases displayed characteristics which considerably differ from Huberman's model. We thus prepared a modified S-model, which can be presented similarly.

The S-model reveals the quick conclusion of the first phase and early stabilisation, which considerably shortens the early period (by approximately one-quarter). Here one needs to be cautious as the research was not quantitative.

Like Huberman, we distinguish the »desirable« and »undesirable« aspects of the model; the S-model also displays the »neutral« or »usual« career path. The desirable aspect is on the far left arch of the model, the undesirable goes along the line stabilisation-stock-taking/interrogations–helplessness–embittered disengagement. The neutral development path represents a kind of balancing of all experiences during the mature period. The S-model in this regard well sum-

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[8]   The career development of teachers who teach »main« subjects can be due to job opportunities in other professions different from that of those teaching other subjects. A specific position with regard to this is that of information technology teachers and language teachers as they have better chances of getting a job outside the teaching profession, despite the fact they have been in the profession for more than ten years. The demand for this expertise in the labour market is still high.

YEARS OF TEACHING	PHASES OF THE S-MODEL MODELmodela
1-2	SURVIVAL AND DISCOVERY
3-5	STABILIZATION
6-18	DIVERSIFICATION/ EXPERIMENTATION → STOCK-TAKING/ INTERROGATIONS
19-30	CRITICAL RESPONSIBILITY ← SERENITY → HELPLESSNESSSS
31-40	DISENGAGEMENT SERENE OR BITTER

Presentation 2: The S-model which takes Slovenian peculiarities into account

marises the three typical teachers as can be defined in the mature career period: the critical enthusiast who maintains youthful activity and makes ever wider connections, the mature relaxed teacher who instead focuses on classroom work and professional excellence, and the helpless, increasingly embittered teacher who wants to quit and leave the profession as soon as possible.

Entry into Teaching

Upon entering the first phase (Surviving and Discovering) some of our respondents experienced a period which firmly convinced them that they had chosen the right profession. Others reported difficult beginnings accompanied by unpleasantness, fear, the uncertainty of whether they would be able to per-form the task, sometimes even a real »shock« if they were thrown into a certain situation for which they were not prepared and had not expected.

A peculiarity detected when comparing the two models is the attention our teachers paid to the questions of why they decided on this profession and why they entered it in the first place. Some chose the profession already in their »childhood«, others began their careers in other professions and later realised they wanted to be teachers, some became teachers by pure chance and had never

really considered becoming teachers, yet some teachers chose teaching among several possibilities at a given moment. Later in their careers crucial differences appear among them, namely in the degree of »contact« they are able to establish with students. The first two groups do not encounter problems with regard to this, despite ageing and generation gaps in the mature career period. The two other groups encounter considerably more difficulties as some teachers find it very difficult to establish genuine contact and lose it entirely in the late period. Teachers emphasise that the first experiences upon entering the profession can be very important and extend much further than one expects – they also affect their work in the mature career period.

The group of teachers who lack formal requirements for employment is much more insecure and experiences more difficulties in the stabilisation phase that follows. These teachers have been exposed to comparatively more negative experiences than their colleagues who began their careers with all the required formal qualifications. This uncertainty has negatively affected their professional self-image. Female teachers who were simultaneously students, workers (teacher), young mothers and housewives more often report that they had at that time deliberately given up furthering their careers. Their main strategy was thus to minimise any additional input required for quality work. A group of teachers, primarily men, reports that they were »on their own«. The headmaster merely told them which classes they would teach, they were then given »chalk and the roll call list« and sent to the classroom unescorted. Some were not even introduced to their colleagues in the staffroom and had to do this by themselves. Teachers reminisce about these first steps in the profession with chagrin, bitterness and a feeling of deprivation which have hardly worn off. This begs the question: to what extent have these first experiences in fact defined the teachers' professional self-image?

The mentor's initial support provides newcomers with self-esteem because they are thus appropriately and timely familiarised with skills they could not acquire during their formal education. A good mentor is also a model and represents a benchmark of quality. Beginners set for themselves standards of excellence and get to know the professional and human qualities required for quality work.

The respondents comments fairly well reflect which inhibiting factors hinder a fast and quality transition from the first to the second phase. These are: overburdening due to the combination of three cycles (career, personal development, family); entering the profession without an appropriate introduction by headmasters, superiors and later mentors; and the fact that some teachers had their first work experience outside school settings. These teachers complain about the inappropriate practice of headmasters who traditionally regard such teachers as experienced workers, even though they are in fact complete beginners. The help available to other beginners is non-existent, yet they are »not expected« to make beginner's mistakes. The S-model at this point warns about the systemic gap as the status of such teachers is not explicitly defined in practice. Such an entry into the profession causes major problems also later in their careers.

Stabilisation in the Profession

Entry to the second phase (Stabilisation) is experienced by our respondents in two different situations: they are formally employed as they will work in the profession for a longer period of time and build their career, so they »take roots«; yet some do not commit themselves as they keep on thinking of other career possibilities. In a given moment this seems »the easiest way« as they are formally trained for this kind of work. They conclude this is the easiest and at the same time an economically safe way to make a living.

Teachers already feel certain self-confidence and independence, some even confront their environment with this attitude. Huberman describes these characteristics no earlier than in the third phase of professional activity and experimenting. It seems that the first year of teaching without monitoring and interventions in teachers' work – after they get over the initial shock – equips them with marked self-confidence and independence. Yet there are certain pitfalls in this independent attitude of young teachers. They often become loners, find it difficult or impossible to establish relationships with their fellow workers, get into conflict with the headmaster who is no longer perceived as a positive pedagogic leader. The initial independence may in extreme cases turn into opportunism.

Teachers in this period intensively develop various professional competencies. Fluctuation is common among those who still search for the right type of school. They have enough youthful vigour and self-confidence to take this step. Teachers often think about continuing their studies. Their ambitions are far from being achieved in this regard. They are averted from re-entering formal education by similar hindrances as encountered in the results of the research on adult participation in education (Mohorčič Špolar 2001). Huberman reports that teachers in the phase of stabilisation tend to withdraw into the intimacy of their own classroom. This has also been described by our respondents, but there is another group of teachers who already in this phase reach outside of school settings and establish contacts with other colleagues and try to share experiences so it seems they will soon (considerably sooner than in Huberman's model) enter the phase of professional activity/experimenting.

The influence of mentors on young teachers now takes a back seat, while co-workers become increasingly important. Some fail to establish positive contacts with their fellow workers, some are not in good terms with the headmaster. Teachers as a rule prefer to withdraw than to risk conflict with the school's management. This relationship in most cases improves in the next phase of professional activity/experimenting, when teachers have proven themselves and found their place among the school's staff. In this phase teachers are hindered by being »tested and observed«. In this phase they eagerly seek a balance between domestic demands and the demands of work, this is true particularly of women.

Lively Activity and Experimenting

Activism is characteristic of this phase (Diversification / Experimentation). Teachers spend a lot of time pondering the question of further studies. From beginners they change into teachers who have certain rules, demands and a recognisable place in their schools. They »resist headmasters«, set boundaries on students and parents, they are also independent in their dealings with the local community. These teachers are safe from doubt and insecurity in the fourth phase, they will most likely advance along the positive line of the model.

Another group of teachers at a certain point in this phase experiences a »breakdown«. It is a traumatic experience leaving long-term consequences. This breakdown is brought about by an open conflict with students/parents, the headmaster's inadequate response to a teacher's mistake or because a teacher is »let down« by his/her co-workers. A teacher in a concrete situation thus becomes a scapegoat and »fails« as a professional authority. Fear, uncertainty and isolation begin to degrade their professional self-image. The consequences are serious – teachers who were once preparing classes during their holidays and »could not wait« to begin teaching are now increasingly threatened in their role. They feel an aversion to certain classes, try to »forget«, avoiding conflicts at all costs. The problems at work interfere with their domestic life, they are shunned by their co-workers.

A teacher who has experienced such a crisis and successfully overcome it will normally progress along the positive side of the model.

The development of teaching has several peculiarities in this phase of experimenting. Teachers gradually test, tinker and began to build their personal repertoire of »holds« and understandings of the pedagogical process. At this point, they become firmly rooted in their careers despite their uncertain beginnings. They come into profoundly deep contact with »the magic generation«. The teacher thus emotionally connects with the students and finds it difficult to part with a particular generation, unlike in other cases, when he/she normally do not have problems with parting. These are »the best years of one's teaching«. Teachers cannot understand the causes of this intense relationship. They are exceptionally successful with students and cannot repeat this success with other generations despite their increased efforts. Yet this »contact«, this experience, remains in the teacher's memory as an ideal, as the standard of truly quality work. Some teachers have still not established constructive relationships with management and their co-workers. These teachers gradually slip into isolation and misgivings, they will almost certainly enter the fourth phase of uncertainty/review or even immediately slip into the sixth phase of helplessness, which is the most undesirable. They do not feel protected enough by the headmaster in case they make a mistake in their experimenting or activities so they dare not take risks. They also do not find the support of their co-workers since they have not experienced the friendly relationships which normally develop at least among younger colleagues.

Young, ambitious teachers have so far made a considerable effort to advance their careers and have already reached a plateau: the highest rank due to their

achievements, the highest wages, the professional peak. Such teachers have two possibilities: to stay and teach while investing surplus energy elsewhere, or to consider becoming a headmaster or some other manager. Only those remain who exceptionally appreciate the »contact« with their students.

Teachers also report the first signs of »burnout«, which is a consequence of their strenuous efforts due to the overlapping of the three cycles. Huberman does not mention this.

An Unwanted Slip Into Uncertainty

Teachers enter this phase (Stock-taking / Interrogations) when they increasingly frequently experience negative feelings and attitudes, general dissatisfaction, a fear of routine and »dying out in the profession«. A wide variety of negative experiences can be detected: disappointment, monotony, middle-age crisis.

The S-model's peculiarity is its descriptions of burnout by teachers who invest a lot into very demanding tasks. Huberman also reports similar experiences yet his examples are not so extreme and, as a rule, belong to the subsequent phase of helplessness. Teachers who gather enough strength to leave the profession and start anew before they become helpless are rare in Slovenia. If they have been teaching for more than 10 years, they lack the strength to take this step, although they want to. They become embittered, which is the most undesired resolution of their careers.

Some teachers experience a »breakdown«. This is an unexpected, unfortunate disruption in the otherwise normal career development which then turns into a negative direction. This traumatic experience is appropriately termed a »breakdown« as it essentially differs from other unpleasant experiences in their career. Teachers who experience this change have self-doubt, doubt about the system, they are often afraid and develop various strategies to hide this fear[9]. Their teaching practice displays major problems: »doubting that the subject one (unwillingly) teaches has any sense«, problems with discipline in the classroom. Few manage to dismantle these doubts quickly and efficiently, find satisfaction in their work and turn away in time from the undesired direction. An important role in such an experience is played by the headmaster, who has left the teachers to their own devices and is thus on the opposite side. Teachers cannot establish a relationship of co-operation with the headmaster – their relationships with the management are tense, pessimistic, they only see mistakes, while the active distrust of the headmaster, who doubts their professional competence, pushes them further downwards. Teachers distinctly experience isolation from their

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[9] »Conflictive« and »stubborn« teachers also resist and with their actions show their dissatisfaction, yet their activeness distinguishes them considerably from »broken« teachers, who become increasingly passive. The very wish to do something still provides conflictive teachers with opportunities to turn their career development into a more positive direction, into the phase of relaxation. It seems that in this regard a lot depends on whether they will know how to overcome negative relationships with the headmaster and their co-workers, and deepen their »contact« with the students.

peers who are beginning to penetrate the inner circles of decision-making in the school. Thus emerges a vicious circle of mistrust and deteriorated interpersonal relationships. Teachers' problems at work affect their family life. Few manage to leave the profession at this point.

Teachers do not easily give up and become inactive at once. Some systematically find commitments outside their profession, while in the classroom they perform only the minimum, they invest in teaching the smallest possible amount of time and energy. Some start lucrative activities and »improve« their economic situation with extra income. Those who are successful in business outside their profession have possibilities to change their career. Yet some experience nothing but failure even when searching for opportunities outside the school. They can only resign to it. In this regard men are especially vulnerable, as has already been established by Huberman.

The Teacher Has Relaxed

The entry into the phase of relaxation (Serenity) is the same in both models – it is a change in mood, opening to the outside and a balance of one's actions.

A peculiarity of the S-model is teachers who still report vivid experimenting and professional activeness; they participate in numerous activities, they experiment and always search for new methods, though they are no longer so »rash« and inexperienced.

They have many original proposals, they plan improvements, try to share them with others and thus gain support for changes, no matter how limited they may be. They experience »ageing«, which is reported by the majority of our respondents. The slightly younger teachers who have recently entered the phase report different strategies to cope with the first signs of physiological problems connected with ageing. The common denominator is »being wrung out«, as they say. Some experience this more intensively than others, especially if they have already approached the phase of disengagement or if they are about to make the transition.

Years of teaching have brought experience, teachers are thus more relaxed in applying methods, approaches, materials and techniques. They are autonomous within the profession, they have learnt to maintain the appropriate condition for dynamic teaching. For this purpose they incessantly change and to some extent also change fields of work, approaches – they keep on »tinkering«, which Huberman identifies as a reliable indicator of career satisfaction.

A peculiarity of the S-model is the pronouncedly intensive »contact« with the students. The teachers in Huberman's model already describe a certain reserve in relationships, while the teachers in the S-model experience genuine »contact« with the students.

Teachers' career ambitions begin to diminish considerably, they adjust less while towards the end of this phase they also withdraw. They invest more in their domestic life, personal growth and leisure. Teachers primarily ponder

what »remains for them«, what is reasonable to plan for the future. An overall impression is that teachers in the S-model are much more determined to remain active. Some teachers work towards an »alternative« career and take stock of the possibilities for change that have remained. Those who have reached a high level are particularly open to proposals, yet far more restful and cautious.

The most satisfied teachers are those who have entered the inner circles of decision-making as they can exert an influence on their collectives, the selection of headmasters, norms of the organisational climate… They can really say that the school is their »second home«. Some of them start preparing for a vertical promotion soon after entering this phase. They systematically work in this direction since they feel mature enough to successfully perform new tasks as headmasters/directors. They welcome a promotion as a challenge, a test, and believe this will enliven their careers.

Helplessness

Helplessness and »conservatism« – as they call their experiencing and acting – are connected with emotional distress. Teachers are disappointed, hurt, they cannot really change anything for the better. A special group is »broken« teachers. They entered this phase after the period of doubting and pondering what to do after a traumatic experience, normally in the third phase of professional activity and experimenting. These are teachers who »suffer from nervousness«. They face the dilemma of what to do and where they could be successful if they changed profession. They become thoroughly slack in order to keep their peace, yet this proves counterproductive. They cannot handle the generation gap, the »contact« which once filled them and motivated them for work is less genuine and ever more permeated with uneasiness and a fear of making a mistake again. They are constantly on guard and tense. Here the S-model considerably differs from Huberman's model. Huberman emphasises that deeper middle-age crises – which are in many ways fairly similar to »broken« teachers in the S-model – were not described by his informants, nor experienced as dramatic. He explicitly emphasises that this is the period of revision which conservative teachers resolve by letting go, giving up their plans and rejecting novelties. Those of our respondents who have been classified as »broken« undergo a personal crisis.

According to the individual biographies, we can talk about teachers who had been as a rule successful up to a certain point in their careers, even very successful. Among such teachers is even a case of a school's »model teacher« who significantly contributed to the prestigious image of the school. It seems that these additional efforts and expectations completely exhausted the teacher. At a certain point he was left alone, especially in the case of conflicts (e.g. with the headmaster, inspection, parents and students). The situation of the teacher is here very similar to that described by Morris et al. (2000) whereby teachers in Hong Kong, facing similar quandaries, left elite schools as they preferred career degradation to the constant exposure to such pressures.

Teachers spend most of their strength to maintain the lowest level of acceptable discipline in classrooms, though they clearly feel the lack of »contact«. The generation gap can no longer be bridged. They are hurt because students »storm in, demolish«, do not appreciate the subject – teachers take this personally.

This builds up a feeling of helplessness in teachers, sometimes also a feeling of inadequacy. This phase is also experienced by those teachers who have preserved their »contact« with the students since they do not find these relationships difficult. They are hurt in their relationships with their co-workers and the headmaster, they may also have gone through a bitter episode trying to penetrate deeper into the education system's structure. These are usually burnt-out teachers. The overall impression is that those teachers who are conservative in the way described by Huberman do not prevail in this phase of the S-model.

Teachers in the S-model in this phase describe its characteristics as »resignation«, »breakdown« or »burnout«. They had great plans, expectations and ambitions; they were committed. In their careers they experienced a major or a series of lesser negative experiences which robbed them of their self-confidence, will to work and élan. Huberman reports primarily the disappointment caused by extensive investments in school reforms.

Despite the feeling of failure, some teachers still entertain plans of going to another profession, they see other possibilities because they are still active (especially outside the profession). They socialise primarily with those colleagues who support them, while withdrawing from other relationships. We cannot speak of real isolation in the S-model, except in very extreme cases (it is interesting that the two of these cases are both males). Isolation is manifested rather indirectly: as a wish to withdraw from decision-making and participating in the variegated everyday school activities, as well as from making strategic decisions – such teachers are before their retirement excluded from the inner circles of decision-making and information.

The New Phase Of Critical Responsibility

An entry into the newly formed phase is determined by two predominant characteristics: »commitment« and a »positive critical attitude«. Experienced teachers detect deficiencies and this makes them committed. They have reached the level of autonomy which enables them to act according to their views and values, regardless of their habits, expectations, obstacles. A positive critical attitude is in this phase the characteristic which decisively sets such teachers apart from all the others – they clearly see mistakes on different levels, yet this does not make them resigned or passive. On the contrary – it encourages them to reflect, take transparent stands and responsibilities in regard to particular and general issues. They participate in discussions of the teachers' place in society, by which they risk losing their position in their schools. They act according to higher values as they believe their primary mission is the »democratic transmission of knowledge«, and not compromising due to different political and economic inte-

rests. Teachers have experienced many confirmations in their careers so they feel genuine autonomy, they are consequently aware of the significance and value of the profession, which they advocate outwardly ever more strongly. Teachers also experience satisfaction due to their personal growth which is in fact facilitated by minor conflicts and a lack of understanding in their environment for their different and somewhat unusual attitude.

The mission these teachers talk about relates to different levels of work. They are always, without exception, committed to their basic mission: »to make students learn«. This protects them from careerism, although they may cherish considerable ambitions with regard to their career. They have a good command of their subject and their »contact« with the students keeps them well balanced. It is this »contact« that makes them work consistently and responsibly in the classroom, rather than their firm commitment.

Teachers have developed a teaching practice as they are familiar with »all the tricks of the trade«. Autonomy at work gives them élan, they also have sufficient experience so they penetrate deeper levels of teaching. They test, search for new approaches, consider new contents – all of this is similar to the third phase of professional activity/experimenting, yet these challenges are deeper, professionally more demanding and extensive. Teachers are in the role of innovators as they deal with areas which have been neglected or insufficiently articulated. They are critical of superficial solutions, yet they can easily take on the role of students and listeners in education – despite their status of experienced, fully responsible teachers in their prime. It is this that distinguishes them from self-appointed »experts«. Such teachers want to enrich others with their insights and experience so they have a natural wish to become mentors. This fits in with Schein's (1978) description of this characteristic which comes in the »mature career« phase in his model.

They also differ from others in the role they take on within the organisation. They have made themselves a name and are among the better teachers in their schools. They have managed to penetrate the inner circles of decision-making, although they may encounter certain obstacles due to their zeal in the relationship with the headmaster. They feel reluctance on the part of the management who do not know how to respond to such teachers.

Teachers become even more committed if they conclude that the school lacks an appropriate vision. At this point, they essentially deviate from the characteristics in other phases – they become even more committed and do not react with inhibition and resignation. It is a distinctive characteristic of such teachers that they are »outspoken« as they go public, which sets them apart from all the others. They perceive commitment as a part of their mission and are not discouraged by unfavourable reactions. On their own initiative, teachers take on the task of »evaluating the work and status of teachers on the national level« – they do it of their own accord, without structural support and solely out of conviction.

Gradual Disengagement

This concluding phase comprises two large groups which differ considerably: »*serene*« and »*embittered*« teachers. They both start to »withdraw from the frontlines«, they no longer accept bigger tasks, workloads and responsibilities.

The peculiarity of the S-model is cheerful teachers which are somewhat withdrawn with respect to everyday school life, yet still committed in a new way. They feel a wider responsibility, they have a keener sense of identity, be it that of a teacher or a broader, national identity. They see deficiencies in the education system and are constructively critical. They suggest a number of concrete measures and improvements. Some of them have thus decided to become activists in a wider sense, while others merely carry on as they feel they have done more than enough in the previous phase (critical responsibility).

Descriptions of mature teachers by their younger colleagues show and confirm that cheerful teachers remain »professional until the end«. Despite their age they are still able to preserve enough relative strength and energy for quality work. Embittered teachers also feel the responsibility towards the system, yet they see no solutions. They are only critical, even »obnoxious« and »prissy towards the collective«, above all, they are visibly tired and exhausted. They mourn about the past and are worried because they do not trust the younger generations.

Both relaxed and embittered teachers – and this is one of the main peculiarities of the S-model – mention problems with vocal cords and overall tiredness, which displays many signs of professional burnout. Voice problems have already been reported in previous phases, now these professional troubles become more prominent. Some of them have developed ingenious strategies which help them stay fit.

Embittered teachers still have some other, bigger troubles. Their overall condition, physical and emotional, can be fairly degraded. They describe tiredness that requires prolonged periods of rest to restore their strength. They run out of energy at the end of a week so they usually spend their weekends preparing for the next week. This is the reason (especially in women) they neglect their domestic responsibilities, some even experience sleeping disorders which indicates stress (Slivar 2003). Cheerful teachers search for other possibilities, while the embittered try to conceal their exhaustion, especially in front of their students.

Serene teachers have preserved their vivid, dynamic »contact« with students. This is also the motive they still experiment with, which is a major deviation from the Huberman model?. Teachers find this experimenting pleasant, they apply a broad range of skills and at times combine them with their personal style and approach to teaching. Embittered teachers at this point differ considerably – they can no longer establish the »contact« on the same level as the cheerful teachers. They often have disciplinary problems with students, in the classroom and outside it. They feel neglected and experience that their professional work is not respected, for which they blame others.

Teachers in this phase still participate in school life yet they move into the background, although the management often seek their advice when major deci-

sions are made. A specific feature of the S-model could be the relationship between a mature teacher and his/her successor. It is remarkable that mature teachers settle down if they know who will replace them. They are satisfied because they can influence their younger colleagues with their education and authority. Now they really feel that they are someone's senior, as a key role described by Schein (1978) under *late career*.

Relaxed teachers maintain their relationship with the headmaster as co-operation, while the embittered criticise a lot, distance themselves or even become opportunistic. Some of these teachers resort to the traditional »status of an old teacher«. This means they isolate themselves and slacken off. Still others spend for their work inordinate amounts of time and energy, which shows that in this phase teachers' strength naturally declines. Relaxed and cheerful teachers who have managed to preserve their good condition are »reluctant to retire« as they still feel strong enough to teach. They differ considerably from the embittered who develop physical illnesses, become overly critical, distanced and are awaiting »the end«. A key peculiarity of the S-model is the question of »further career development«. This issue has a new significance as it is strongly connected with the question of the last transition in view – retirement. Embittered teachers are at this point very similar to Huberman's descriptions. Serene teachers are an exception because they still have career ambitions. Some of them at this point feel strong enough to even start a new career, e.g. in politics.

Conclusion

In education and especially in the continuing professional training of teachers one must take the period of one's career and its specific demands into account – this has also been confirmed by research into the career paths of Slovenian teachers (Cf. Javrh 2006). The S-model proved an efficient tool for establishing individuals' needs.

Empowering through education and training can best help teachers on their career path. Special attention should be paid to embittered teachers and those who are well on their way to becoming embittered. The presented model offers answers with regard to the work and lives of those teachers who have in many years of teaching reached relaxation and satisfaction in their careers. In the paper we have presented the phase model of teachers' career development which was designed on the basis of qualitative research into the professional biographies of teachers employed in primary and secondary schools, and by comparing our empirical data with Huberman's model. We have presented many peculiarities of the S-model and detailed, as the main deviation from the original model, the newly discovered phase of »critical responsibility«.

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Dr Jasna Mažgon

Can generally valid sentences be formed in qualitative research, or what kind of a theory can be formed in qualitative research?

Summary: During its application qualitative research has, from the very beginning, met sharp criticism, especially from the supporters of traditional, quantitative methodology. It has been reproached, above all, for being non-scientific. Why? With their concept and nature of researching qualitative researchers have not met the basic postulates of classical methodology: meeting the demand for the independence of a subject and an object of research, proving the validity of a hypothesis given in advance, meeting the demand for generalisation, which could not be met by researching isolated cases and meeting the criteria of objectivity, reliability and validity. This paper primarily focuses on the question of the possibility of generalising qualitative research results, which directly raises the question of the criteria of quality in qualitative research, primarily the criterion of internal and external validity.

Key words: generalisation, qualitative methodology, grounded theory, validity

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Introduction

Some of the key questions confronting qualitative research and its methodology are: Can the results and procedures of qualitative research projects be generalised? Are they transferable to different relations, institutions or groups? To answer these questions an explanation of the term 'generalisation' and the purpose of generalising and transferring scientific results should be given.

The Question of Generalising Scientific Results

Generalisation expands the validity of statements from a limited area to a wider area. Two kinds of statements are known to science: those that derive from experience and generalised ones. The former witness what has happened in a particular place and time and mainly report unique and individual phenomena. The latter express what (may) happen in certain conditions. The research process should explicitly distinguish between experience (statements derived from experience) and generalisation (generalised statements). Generalisation is a step in the process of forming a theory.

While citing the reasons for generalisation, G. Glück (1987) stands by the viewpoint of scientific research as seen by traditional, quantitative science based on positivism. He claims that generalisation in the research process is so necessary that it actually needs no foundations. The claim is corroborated by the fact that without generalisation scientists would only be able to form individualised historical sentences, i.e. sentences, which would only be valid at a particular and unique historical moment and only for particular individuals. Thus a judgment on the transferability of such sentences on contemporary as well as future situations would be passed on to the readers of scientific works, who would be forced to draw the generalisation themselves. However, in that case the reader's generalisations would be far less adequate and applicable since they are not as big an expert

in the research field as the author. This is why generalisation should be part of each and every research work (ibid., p. 7). Generalisation is, according to Glück, a 'necessary level of statement forming'. The generalisation process should (and must) be processed in empirical and normative statements which can take place in a quantitative as well as a qualitative form (ibid., p. 9).

Having in mind social research or research in the education field, the results of experiments and other empirical researches are often made for the purpose of generalisation to a wider population. At the same time, there is always a doubt about such generalisations which is connected to an investigation of the reasonability of making conclusions or judgements, going beyond given information, connecting patterns to populations. Generalisation is therefore clearly connected to validity. It is one of the mechanisms through which statements regarding the truth can be justified. The classical theory of generalisation understands validity as a logical property of the research process, which vouches for our ability to make conclusions through the pieces of information or results acquired from a study.

Regarding the applicability of the criterion of validity in qualitative research, it can be established that the immediate principle the validity rests on, i.e. causative relations between phenomena, is, after all, transferable to qualitative researches, but the ways of proving such causality are essentially different.

B. Mesec claims that internal validity comes into focus when causal relations are being determined as authentically as possible, i.e., when there is no doubt that certain events are going to be followed by certain other events. The more persuasive pieces of information, which support the conclusion of a causal relation, are gathered, the more valid a research is (Mesec 1998, p. 145). Mesec therefore understands validity through supporting the principle of causality, while the path to the derivation and support of cause-effect relations lies within the phase of gathering the data, which should reveal the causality as being indisputably possible, as even the 'most favourable result is scientifically worthless unless a procedure, by which it was accomplished, hasn't been thoroughly documented' (Mayring 2002, p. 144). Qualitative researches are essentially different from laboratory, experimental and empirically-analytical researches. They are based on intensive and unrestrictive interactions between researchers and those being researched. The gathering of information is a complex phase in which several conditions are simultaneously studied, and which cannot and should not be isolated. Reduced or even omitted standardisation above all regarding data gathering instruments affect the objectivity, reliability and internal validity of a research if understood within the framework of quantitative methodology.

The possibilities of generalising results of qualitative researches are limited according to the standards of quantitative methodology. Generalisations are carried out very cautiously and are closely connected to gathered data. This paper limits itself to the question of possibility of forming generalised, theoretical statements based on the results of qualitative researches. At the same time, its starting point is based on the methodology of grounded theory where the beginning of a research process deals with themes, suppositions and empirical examples. A circular process, which includes inductive and deductive procedures,

generates a theory, which is contextually bound. The generalising power of the theory is limited as it is only valid in a certain field, types of contexts, interactions and situations.

If we closely examine the way the criterion of validity has formed within the boundaries of quantitative methodology, we see that regarding its basic elements it is inconsistent with the principles of qualitative research, primarily as regards 'remoteness' from the everyday research situation, the elimination of researched variables as well as limiting the interaction between researchers and those being researched. The concept of validity is opposed to qualitative research characteristics relative to the principles of openness, the continuous development of a researched item and the principle of contextually bonded theory. A question which emerges at this point is in what sense and in what way can the principle of validity (internal and external) be transferred to a qualitative research? The transfer is certainly possible on the level of establishing and analysing causal relations, but not in the sense of classical induction which is based on the same principle as internal validity, but in the sense of a concept of the unified interpretation of results. The latter contains a definition of views which have provoked, influenced and modified a certain phenomenon or consequently emerge from a certain phenomenon. The second view of the transferability of the validity concept to a qualitative research aims at generalisation. Within qualitative methodology, this aim is modified and bound to the fact that theories which arise from qualitative research results possess the nature of locality, which results from the social and cultural particularities of studied persons or phenomena. In any case, even such contextually bound theories generated with the help of qualitative researches need an investigation of the limits of validity. It can be observed that, in its basic logics, the concept of validity remains a criterion of quality even in qualitative research, bearing in mind that its principles and standards need to be modified.

The question which should at all times remain under close scrutiny is whether during a research process we really comprehend and perceive exactly what we have planned to study, and whether the results are authentic and credible. The paths towards answers to these questions differ due to methodological, epistemological and ontological diversity compared to traditional, empirical i.e. quantitative research.

A basic and long-standing dilemma within qualitative research in general is that this methodology requires focusing on a very small number of theatres, with a frequently existing desire to form conclusions which would have wider applicability and would also be valid for those particular cases. Regarding focusing on one particular view of complexity within consistent limitations of time and space, it is possible to construct a way of considering this view which enables us to form a theory. Focusing on the different views of such complexity can lead to the development of completely different and apparently even contradictory theories and it is possible that other researchers might develop equally comprehensible and clear yet different theories, although they all focused on the same particular view. This is very important as regards the formation of a theory in action research. Even there a lot of people with different previous theoretical matrixes

co-operate together. From these separate views and separate stories (theories) general statements should be reached using the inductive approach.

One way of thinking about a theory is that a theory operates in a simplifying way and thus limits the focus in such a way that a story can be told, a story which is connected to other stories that have used similar theories, and a story which builds beyond these theories. However, it does not mean that one can make data match a certain theory. Systematic work on the data must be monitored through the whole analysis of the data in order to enable all the data to be encompassed in the theory and for the deviations to be studied in full (Walford 2001, p. 149).

It has frequently been emphasised that strict generalisation in the statistical sense regarding qualitative research is impossible, for one case (or a small number of cases) simply cannot be an adequate sample for making conclusions for wider populations such as schools or classes. Qualitative studies can achieve transferability through a precise description. If authors present a thorough and detailed description of a particular context which they have been studying, there is a possibility of readers deciding about the applicability of the conclusions to their own or other situations. In order to be able to judge whether certain findings from a study (for example) in one school are applicable to another, it is necessary to be familiar with or know about the first school as well as the second one.

The basic idea which should always be borne in mind during a process of developing a theory is that the theory should be multi-layered, that it should represent coherent connections between phenomena in order to be comprehensive and relevant to a series of crucial questions and problems which emerge from a researched structure. It happens quite frequently that these problems and questions are not defined in a unified way. Participants in research often take practical problems and issues which concern them in everyday life for granted. They therefore might fail to detect and understand latent patterns which take place under the surface until they are conceptually identified. The task of a theory is to provide a theoretical explanation based on the reality of the lives of people acting in a certain complex system.

In the continuation of the research process a research problem is formed which needs to be articulated and defined as a basic variable; in other words, to take on the function of a central phenomenon around which an integration process is taking place. The central phenomenon represents a crucial conjunction in composing all components of a theory. Once a phenomenon is appointed and defined as a central category, then follows the connecting of other categories with the central one with the help of a paradigmatic model of relations between the categories, by therefore defining the conditions, context, strategies and consequences of these connections (Mesec 1998).

At the same time, we must not forget the procedure of coding which represents an operation where the data are first dissected, conceptualised and assembled in a new way. It is a central process where a theory is being formed out of sheer data, where they are dissected, checked, compared, conceptualised and categorised. Any further analysis and communication cannot be possible without this primary basic analytical step. During this process the researcher

faces his own and others' suppositions, while the analysis of them leads to new discoveries. Two analytical procedures bear basic importance; the first regarding comparisons, the second regarding the formation of questions (Glaser and Strauss 1967, Strauss and Corbin 1998).

A theory is formed on the basis of data. What kind of material will be used as the data as well as the way it will be collected in qualitative research depends on the researched field and possibilities at one's disposal. Procedures of observation, interview, gathering documentary material, minutes of various meetings, audio and video materials, questionnaires, opinion polls and many others can be used. It is important not to stick to just one type of data gathering but to apply a combination of various types. Strauss and Corbin remind us of the simultaneous use of memos and diagrams (Strauss and Corbin 1990, p. 198). Memos represent a written form of our abstract deliberations on the data; diagrams are a graphical representation of the visual connections and relations between the concepts. The basic technical rule in qualitative analysis, according to Glaser and Strauss, is 'to stop and memo' which means that each and every reasonable thought should be instantly noted down. The thought is therefore prevented from going into oblivion and, at the same time, an additional timeframe is added for thinking over and reshaping. The forming of memos and diagrams should start at the beginning of a research project and continue until drawing up the final report where theoretical conclusions are presented. Working notes and diagrams help a researcher achieve analytical distance from the data, therefore redirecting the focus to analytical reflections where it further travels back to the data to ground abstract notions in reality (ibid.).

Each type of coding (open, axial and selective) makes memos and diagrams look different mainly because of the different purposes of coding. Open coding puts us in front of a puzzle, with a start to be located, often with difficulties. When reading through the memos which are mostly inconsistent and scattered through the entire data one can reach new conceptual characteristics, although an entirely clear structure and significance still cannot be seen. In time, mostly by the application of comparisons and the forming of questions, memos reach some kind of form (ibid.)

Axial coding is a procedure where parts of a puzzle start fitting in with each other. Each category and subcategory has an exact place and must match the others in order to form a whole. The purpose of axial coding is to stimulate and examine relations among categories and their subcategories following the principle of a paradigmatic model, and at the same time search for different characteristics and dimensions of the categories. Memos help us put the pieces together. Searching for real links is always connected to questions regarding the conditions, causal and contextual, which are essential for a certain phenomenon. Which strategic and routine actions are in progress, and with which consequences? What happens if the conditions change? Strauss and Corbin warn that 'The paradigm features and relationships don't carry color coded flags that wave at you from the pages of your fieldnotes. You have to search for those and recognize them for what they are' (ibid. p. 212).

Gradually, during the process of processing data become ever clearer in their meaning which allows us to reach, by selective coding, the final step of analysis: the integration of concepts around the central category as well as the introduction of categories which require further analysis and processing.

The web of interconnected terms, concepts and phenomena tied around the central category is what the researcher in a qualitative research can successfully use to form a theory. Defining subordinate connections, linking categories and subcategories, examining the influence of one variable on another one by a paradigmatic model definitely represent crucial contributions which are offered to researchers by the grounded theory methodology.

Grounded theory has been chosen and more closely presented due to its ability to offer procedures which are fairly verifiable and comparable to quantitative procedures, and are in a way able to substitute it. These procedures (i.e. coding and categorising) present and process data in a way which can be compared to presenting and processing numbers in quantitative researches (Mesec 1998). That is why these procedures in forming a theory are close to the criteria of the corresponding theory of truth where accordance between a sentence and reality is involved. Empirical researching involves a comparison between the structure of a sentence and the structure of pieces of information, which are reached by an empirical research of the reality. The goal of science lies in a correspondence between reality and theoretical cognitions which can be achieved by adequate methodological operations.

However, here lies a question of in what way or how can one define codes and categories in the process of coding. The identification of codes, their naming and further interpretation is left up to the arbitrariness of the researcher. This is the place where consensualism receives its role and meaning, according to which 'truth is in accordance with researchers' (Ule 2004, p. 230). Therefore, it is about truth in the pragmatic context of consensualism. The criteria of defining central terms and codes based on gathered empirical material may be, regarding the methodology of grounded theory, an object of consensus between researchers or, in the spirit of action research projects, between researchers and those being researched.

Main steps or focal points in forming a theory through qualitative research

The basic guidelines for forming a theory in the form of a final research report were given by the founders of grounded theory, A. Strauss and J. Corbin (1998). At some points such a derivation can also be found with B. Mesec (1998).

- Defining a leading idea of a story. To achieve the linking together into a whole, the central issue of a story (theory) should first be formed and somehow bound to it. Why? Sometimes it happens that amongst all the data which all seem important and worthy of attention it is difficult to isolate one of them and expose it as the leading one. Nevertheless, this step is inevitable

for it represents the conceptualisation of all the others around the central phenomena of the research.

- Designing a leading pattern of a story which should be worked out in a few sentences in order to obtain a basic descriptive oversight of the story.
- Conceptualisation is built upon a description. It is necessary as well as useful to use a description first and write down our thoughts and a basic skeleton of the story. A step further is represented by the conceptualisation or analysis of the story. A name for a basic phenomenon is first found by checking our list of categories and choosing the one which is abstract enough to contain everything described in the story. This later becomes a central (core) category. It frequently happens that the researcher is unable to define a single category which would in fact cover the whole phenomenon. However, it is necessary to find a name for the central phenomenon (to define its central category).

  Even when the researcher hesitates to choose between two or more phenomena according to their importance it is necessary to choose one because this is the only way to achieve a condensed integration and the development of categories as supposed by the grounded theory methodology. When they identify the central phenomenon as well as the category, all the other phenomena and categories can be identified as being supportive and supplementary.

- Determining the characteristics and dimensions of the central (core) category. As with all the other categories, the central category should also be developed according to its characteristics. When identified, other categories can in the next step be linked to the central one, giving them roles as subsidiary (supportive, supplementary) ones.

  It has been said that choosing the central phenomenon is crucial for research. The central phenomenon lies in the middle of the integration process. It represents a main conjunction in putting together all the components of the theory. Once defined and appointed for the role of the central category, linking other categories to it, with the help of paradigmatic relation between categories, i.e. with defining conditions, the context, strategies and consequences of such connections can follow.

- *Systemising and consolidating the connections.* This procedure requires a combination of inductive and deductive thinking, when one constantly shifts between asking questions, forming hypotheses and comparisons. After identifying all the differences within a context the systematic grouping of categories according to their characteristics identified as a sample can begin. This grouping proceeds on the basis of making questions and forming comparisons. Thus the data are connected not only on a higher, conceptual level, but also on the level of their characteristics and dimensions, which represents a basis for forming a theory. Another central process in the methodology of grounded theory should be mentioned:

- *theoretical sampling*, whereby upon analytical foundations 'an analyst decides on analytic grounds what data to collect next and where to find them.

The basic question in theoretical sampling is: what groups or sub-groups of populations, events, activities does one turn to next in data collection. And for what theoretical purpose? So this process of data collection is controlled by the emerging theory. It involves, of course, much calculation and imagination on the part of the analyst. When done well, this analytical operation pays very high dividends because it moves the theory along quickly and efficiently' (Strauss 1996, pp. 38-39). Regarding grounded theory, any group can in principle be compared contrary to the traditional comparative method where groups which are too different are eliminated as being 'non-comparable' (Glaser and Strauss 1967, p. 50). It appears that this is one of the advantages of the methodology of grounded theory as it is obvious that, in principle, similarities and differences between anything whatsoever can be found to therefore make everything comparable. Whether such comparisons are really carried out depends on the purpose of a research and not on differences between compared groups in a certain abstract conceptual field. Comparing totally different entities by maximising the differences can potentially bear fruit if one is to believe in different theories of creativity which emphasise the importance of recognising unexpected similarities in things, which are very remote and dissimilar.

Theoretical sampling is carried out in two basic steps. In the first step differences between groups are minimised, while in the second they are maximised. Emerging theory constantly controls the process. The goal of the first step, i.e. minimising the differences, lies in searching for basic categories and their characteristics. The second step, maximising the differences between researched groups, enables a researcher to study the characteristics of the categories in the widest possible range as well as to link them together within a consistent theory. The technique applied in both steps is the comparison of data with the aim of forming and developing categories and their characteristics: a certain phenomenon is continually compared to phenomena which were mentioned in the same category, the same or another group, which gives the procedure a name: 'constant comparative method' (ibid.)

The shortfall of this procedure, as seen by Alvesson and Skölber (2000, p. 28), lies in the fact that real living relations between phenomena are broken apart, which changes the former into categories. The phenomena are separated from the context of the relations where they sprang up and they are being connected to other phenomena via the researcher's commonsense instead. It appears to look like one trying to analyse a piece of music by researching how people talk about it and perceive separate tones (phenomena); in that way, one would never be able to discover a crucial element – the melody.

The methodology of a grounded theory refers primarily to its direct connection to and embedding in empirical material; these data are later connected by comparative analysis in a way which enables the verifying of the theory. If we define generalisation in the light of the abovementioned arguments, we will reform it in a way which will include a process of reflection and not merely be understood as a structure of interpretations bound to rules. It is therefore impor-

tant to understand the contextual conditions in which such knowledge has been created. The transfer of this knowledge into new frames implies an understanding of the contextual conditions of the new frames, how they differentiate from the conditions in which this knowledge was produced and includes a reflection on what consequences it bears regarding the application of actual behaviour in the new context.

Researchers who do applied research are quite often interested in generalisation because they want to know what functions or what functions the best within the given samples of a population in order to transfer these social practices from the experimental environment to a wider population of experts or from one community to another. If this is our point of view, then 'generalisation is about the rationale for transferability' (Robinson and Norris 2001, p. 303). Indeed, generalisation is contextually connected or under the proviso of context.

Here we meet the idea of so-called naturalistic generalisation (Stake 1995, p. 85), which is appealing for many reasons. It transposes the responsibility from being based upon a researcher to a greater extent to the reader-expert. This idea supports the understanding of generalisation as transferability introduced by Guba and Lincoln when they say that 'the naturalist cannot specify the external validity of an inquiry: he or she can provide only the thick description necessary to enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility' (Guba and Lincoln, cited in Robinson and Norris 2001, p. 306). In other words, the researcher's responsibility is to ensure sufficient contextual pieces of information and to give the reader an opportunity to judge whether a certain case can be generalised for their specific field of practice. It is therefore about forming constructs based on studies which contain the potential of harmoniousness with the readers' experience. Therefore 'to generalise is to resonate with prior experience or to see common features among empirically different but conceptually equivalent human experiences' (ibid. p. 307).

Conclusion

It is generally accepted that theories formed on the basis of qualitative research, due to the described limitations, never or very seldom achieve such generalising power as empirical research. The latter are made on the basis of large circumstantial patterns, with the application of standardised instruments and inferential statistics, which with their procedures enable a generalisation from a sample to a basic group. However, an unquestionable fact remains, namely that the 'task of qualitative methodology is to make procedures of argumented concluding and generalising on the basis of qualitative empirical material. Qualitative research must reveal clear and vivid description of procedure in concluding and gradual abstracting of terms of different levels of abstractness from empirical material. Origin of each and every term, pattern and conclusion in elements of empirical material must be evident' (Mesec 1998, p. 46). Regarding qualitative

researches (and quantitative researches as well, for that matter), interpretations must be supportably bound to gathered empirical data as well as to existing theory, although in this case the procedures are much looser, which can lead to a lack of defined and contextually unsupported final conclusions; here lies the reason for drawing our attention primarily to the matter of uniting empiricism and theory in final interpretations.

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Dr Tadej Vidmar

The Gymnasium as a General-Educational Secondary School in Slovenia, Austria and Germany – an Analysis of Selected Historical Periods

Abstract: As an institution which transmits general education, the gymnasium has existed since its origins because humanistic Latin schools and Protestant gymnasiums, as well as Jesuit colleges, transmitted and offered general education which was at the time represented above all as instruction in language and žaccompanying' explicatory content. Even substantial reforms of the gymnasium in the 19th century did not change this perception and objective. The gymnasium in Slovenia (and Austria) was always defined as a general-educational institution, as well as in proposals for reform as in the respective legislations – except in the time of career-oriented education, when the gymnasium was abolished – and differences were only with respect to singular subjects and their names.

The gymnasium was, on the other hand, at least since the 19th century, also comprehended as the only preparatory institution for university; a successfully passed *matura* or examination of maturity was an indispensable condition for matriculation to university study. The conclusion of schooling in the gymnasium was understood as a condition of maturity for an independent life and meant an žentrance ticket' for the continuation of one's education and a better social position.

Key words: gymnasium, schools of the states, Jesuit college, general-educational subjects, matura, reform of gymnasium, examination of maturity, secondary education, Protestantism, general education, Neohumanism, Enlightenment

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Introduction

In the territory of modern Slovenia gymnasiums as secondary-level institutions have been present since the 18th century, but even before then we can include the School of Carniola States in Ljubljana and the Jesuit College in Ljubljana in the late 16th century in this category. From the beginning, one of the topmost objectives of gymnasiums in Slovenia was the transmission of general education and, since the second half of the 19th century, the objective was also preparation for university study because, without successfully passing the final examination, which was called the examination of maturity, i.e. the *matura*, nobody could matriculate to the university.

The gymnasium had, as mentioned, two main objectives during the course of the 19th and 20th centuries: the transmission of general education and enabling matriculation to university studies. At the time, the understanding of general education and its contents, and understanding of the form and contents of the *matura* were changing with regard to the social and political circumstances, but the essence of the gymnasium always remained in assuring a general secondary education and the *matura* as the final exam. In that way, the gymnasium was understood once and it is also understood today in Central Europe and in many other European countries.

Any deliberations about a possible alteration of the purpose of the gymnasium, which could even include the potential abolition of the *matura* and thoughts about redefining and reducing general education in the gymnasium, should above all consider past attempts, even failed ones (e.g. career-oriented education), to alter the basic function or objective of the gymnasium and therefore should have due regard to them. Considering this, and irrespective of the lack of interest in a historical analysis, the historical development and importance of the gymnasium in modern Slovenia and in the broader Central European region should also be taken into consideration. In the perception of the people of this region, the gymnasium is understood as a general-educational school which prepares

the student for university study and at the same time influences matriculation to university. The university on the other hand is considered primarily as a scientific-educational institution.

We intend to analyse the historical development of general secondary education in the time of Protestantism, the Counter-Reformation and at the beginning of the 19th century in Slovenia, which will help us point out the importance of knowing and take into consideration the historical development of a single education institution during the process of planning to change it essentially or during alterations of the education system. Then we will analyse the objectives of the modern gymnasium in selected Central European countries.

Development of general education in selected historical periods

The Reformation

In the field of education, the Reformation actually dedicated most of its attention to secondary schools, which were intended to educate and form future ecclesiastical and secular officials. At that time the Protestant gymnasium was founded as a school which already demanded certain knowledge upon enrolment, and the essential part of its objectives was to prepare its students for university study. The Protestant gymnasium was founded by a German pedagogue, J. Sturm, who also defined the educational ideal of the gymnasium, which later became the educational ideal of Protestantism as a whole: the objective of education is to produce a pious individual who is wise, educated and eloquent (*sapiens atque eloquens pietas*) (see Vormbaum 1860, p. 661). Based on the model of Sturm's school in Strasbourg, many types of secondary schools were afterwards established in the Protestant world, all of which are connected by the content, purpose and objectives of education.

Also in Slovenia, the nobility – the greater part of which accepted the ideas of the Reformation – felt the need to organise the school so as to prepare its students for certain occupations and at the same time for the continuation of their studies. In Austria, which modern Slovenia belonged to at the time, Protestant secondary schools, gymnasiums, were called the schools of the states (*Landschaftsschulen*) and were comparable with the German provincial schools (*Landesschulen*). Provincial schools were a type of gymnasium established and financed by provincial or country princes and, above all, intended for the fulfilment of provincial or country needs for ecclesiastical or secular officials (see Vidmar 2005, p. 117).

When in 1562 P. Trubar presented to the provincial states of Carniola the offer of Christoph, Duke of Württemberg, to give two scholarships for study at the University of Tubingen, they were looking for appropriate candidates but discovered there were no sufficiently educated candidates in Carniola (see Rupel 1965, p. 11). Trubar then had the idea that a school should be established in Ljubljana whose task should include preparations for university study. Trubar was some kind of initiator of the School of the States in Ljubljana (see Rupel 1951, p. 112). On the basis of Trubar's efforts, the provincial States of Carniola

established a school in Ljubljana in 1563. It was a one-class school up until 1566 when A. Bohorič became its rector; he organised the school on the model of the Protestant gymnasiums and wrote the School Ordinance (*Ordo scholae*) in 1575. The School of the States in Ljubljana finally began to function as a preparatory institution for university study and as a school equal to the German protestant gymnasiums after 1584, under the leadership of the third rector, N. Frischlin (see Vidmar 2005, pp. 124–128). The school of Bohorič had four classes. The best students were provided with instruction in the fundamentals of dialectic and rhetoric, concepts of natural and moral philosophy and theology, and elements of geography and astronomy (*sphaerica doctrina*). These subjects place the school of the States in Ljubljana amid the Protestant secondary schools. The purpose of these additional subjects was that 'students will be more prepared for these arts and that they will faster and more thoroughly comprehend them in the universities' (*Ordo scholae…1575*, in Schmidt 1952, p. 195).

In 1582, Frischlin replaced Bohorič as rector of the school. In 1584 Frischlin wrote his School Ordinance in which he foresaw a five-class school, where in the fourth class students would begin to learn poetry and the elements of ancient Greek, in the fifth class they would learn dialectic and rhetoric and continue with Greek. Arithmetics was programmed from the third class on (see Schmidt 1952, p. 99ss). These subjects and their contents formed a general education at the time of Protestantism. However, on 30 October 1598 the provincial prince delivered a decree according to which all Protestant teachers had to leave Ljubljana by sunset.

In the province of Carinthia, several schools were established during Protestantism but only one School of the States. Only the School of the States in Celovec included among its objectives preparations for university study. The school, which was perhaps a modernised Latin school, and was first mentioned at the beginning of 1560, had several names: the nobility school (*die adelige Schule*), the college of wisdom and piety (*collegium sapientiae et pietatis*) and the provincial school (*schola provincialis*) (see Braumüller 1924, pp. 16–19). It is not certain how many classes the school contained, but we can suppose that there were five to seven. The syllabus of the school is also not well known, but again we can presume it was like that of the Schools of the States in Gradec (Graz) and Ljubljana (see Braumüller 1924, p. 23). On 1 June 1600, the provincial prince issued a decree stating that all teachers had to leave the province but, because of resistance on the part of the States, the school was not closed until 13 April 1601.

In Styria the School of the States (*Landschaftsschule, schola procerum*) in Gradec (Graz) was at the beginning exclusively a school for the nobility, but soon the children of townspeople were permitted to enrol in the school. Teachers were paid by the Styrian provincial States and were mentioned in Gradec (Graz) already in 1538 (see Loserth 1916, p. 18). According to the School Ordinance of 1574, the School of the States had three *decurias* for beginners and four classes, of which the last one was called a public class (*classis publica*) where theology, law and philosophy were lectured. These subjects made the school in Graz comparable with its public lectures (*lectiones publicae*) to the Protestant academic

gymnasiums (see Loserth 1916, p. 32). In 1594, the Reformed School Ordinance (*Reformierte Schuel-Ordnung*) was published according to which five regular classes and one public class were foreseen (see Loserth 1916, pp. 155–166). Big problems started for the school in 1585 when the Jesuits established a university in Graz (see Loserth 1916, p. 79). On 28 September 1597, Protestant teachers received an order from the provincial prince to leave the city by sunset.

Counter-Reformation – the Jesuits

The closing of the School of the States in Ljubljana did not mean a break in the continuity of the development of general-educational secondary schools in Slovenia because they were continued in the Jesuit secondary schools, called colleges or gymnasiums. Wherever Jesuits established their schools, their organisation was the same.

Jesuits were the first to entirely implement three levels of education. For matriculation to university they demanded that a student had concluded a college where the contents of general humanity were taught. The school institutions of the Jesuits were public education institutions. The Society of Jesus gradually took over secondary education and to some extent even tertiary education in the Catholic countries of Europe. It had domination over education until the second half of the 18th century when in 1773 the order was abolished (see Paulsen 1919, pp. 417–420; Schmidt 1871, p. 230).

Education or study in bigger colleges consisted of so-called lower studies (gymnasium studies, *studia inferiora*) and higher studies (university studies, *studia superiora*). The six years of gymnasium study, where central importance was placed on linguistics, were followed by three years of philosophical study, i.e. general-scientific preparatory study. In general, Jesuit education was divided into three levels: grammatical-rhetorical, philosophical and theological, of which the first one comprised the gymnasium. Whenever Jesuits came to a town, they began to teach grammar (*grammatica*) and in a short time they organised a college. College was sometimes concluded with a class in humanities (*humaniora*), but usually a complete five-class college was organised with a class of rhetoric. In bigger colleges, even dialectic and moral theology were lectured. Jesuit colleges required certain knowledge of reading as a condition to enrol, which they examined for through some kind of entrance examination (see Paulsen 1919, pp. 395–398; Schmidt 1871, pp. 237–242; Seifert 1996, pp. 329–331, Vidmar 2005, p. 168). The objective of their education was actually identical to the objective of Protestant education, i.e. *eloquens atque sapiens pietas*, which was also achieved with comparable means and methods (see Paulsen 1919, p. 421; Vidmar 2005, p. 169).

Jesuit lower secondary studies had five classes or grades. The first grade, grammar (*grammatica*), was made up of three classes: the lowest (*infima*), the middle (*media*) and the highest one (*suprema*). The second grade was called humanities or poetics (*humanitas* or *poesis*) and the third was rhetorics (*rhetorica*) (see *Ratio...1586*, in Pachtler 1887, pp. 144–146 and 183–192). Advancement (*promotio*) from one class to another was possible after successfully passing an

examination consisting of a paper done under supervision in Latin literature. After that followed an oral examination in grammar and the reading of certain authors (see *Ratio...1586*, in Pachtler 1887, pp. 176–178).

In Slovenia the Jesuits established their colleges in Ljubljana (1597), Celovec (1604), Gorica (1620), Trst (1620) and Maribor (1758) (see Paulsen 1919, pp. 411–412; Schmidt 1988a, p. 119).

Jesuit colleges had as an objective to transmit general education, as it was then understood, and at the same time their goal was preparation for the tertiary level of education.

New establishment of the gymnasium in the 19th century

There were some social, political and economic changes near the end of the 18th and at the beginning of the 19th centuries. It became obvious that education and not merely social status, which was acquired by birth, should be the criterion for higher-ranking services in the state administration and the military (see Blankertz 1982, p. 126). The Enlightenment had already emphasised the ideals of equality of people by birth, and of the necessity for education to become enlightened, but these ideas were not entirely implemented in educational practice because of the influence of mercantilism which emphasised early preparation for work. As a kind of reaction to the vocational pragmatism of Enlightenment, neohumanism began to shift the development of a human being in terms of personality and the development of individual characteristics to the center of educational objectives. A human being should at first be developed and formed as a Human because, by being generally educated, he could when necessary prepare himself for a particular vocation (ibid.). Neohumanists re-emphasised general education, the fundamentals of which were actually laid in the humanism, Reformation and Counter-Reformation of the 16th century, from which continuity can be drawn through medieval and Roman liberal arts to the classical Greek educational concept, which was comprehended in the terms *paideia* and *enkyklios paideia*.

At the beginning of the 19th century, neohumanists developed a concept of secondary school, the gymnasium, which later became known as the classical gymnasium. This concept was established by a German thinker, W. von Humboldt. The main purpose of the gymnasium was to transmit broad general and humanistic education and at the same time to prepare a student for study at university. In the gymnasium general educational subjects prevailed; of great importance in both a formative and informative sense were mathematics and Latin, the latter of which was still the most important subject in the gymnasium. The requirement for enrolment in the gymnasium was certain knowledge; schooling on the other hand was concluded with an examination of maturity or the *matura*, which attested that the student was formed and mature for life and that he was mature for scientific study at university (see Blankertz 1982, p. 125; Moog 1967, pp. 310 and 409; Paulsen 1921, p. 282). Until neohumanism, gymnasiums were also understood as a kind of vocational school for learning classical languages, especially Latin, but with the rise of neohumanism they became general-educa-

tional schools in the modern sense of the word and as the principal educational means they used the study of ancient culture.

The gymnasium as founded by Humboldt had six classes and schooling lasted for ten years (later it was reduced to nine years). The first class, the highest class, lasted for three years, the second and the third for two years each, while the other classes lasted for one year each. Each class foresaw 32 weekly hours of instruction and the following subjects were obligatory for all ten years: Latin (eight or six hours), German (four or six hours), mathematics (six hours), natural science (two hours), history and geography (three hours), religion (two hours), music and sports (Wednesday and Saturday afternoons). Other obligatory subjects were Greek (in the four highest classes), Hebrew (in the two highest classes) and drawing (in the four lowest classes). Modern languages such as English or French were optional (adapted from Paulsen 1921, p. 292).

The *matura* consisted of two parts: written papers and an oral examination. Students wrote German, Latin, French and mathematical papers and a translation from Greek and into Greek. An oral examination was given in all taught languages, mathematics, history, geography and natural science (see Paulsen 1921, p. 289).

The Austrian gymnasium in the first half of the 19th century

At the beginning of the 18th century, the secular authorities in Austria stated that the secondary schools managed by the Jesuits did not satisfy the needs and demands of the time. They also stated that they were obsolete and should be modernised, above all with the introduction of more Realities and natural science (see Schmidt 1988a, pp. 140–141). That is why Emperor Charles VI in 1735 issued an Ordinance about the Establishment and Organisation of Schools (*Ordnung und Einrichtung der Schulen*), which put (Jesuit) gymnasiums under direct control of the state (see Wotke 1905, pp. 3–6). These efforts were followed by the Empress Maria Theresia with preparation of the Ordinance of Studies in 1752 (see Baumeister 1897, p. 239; Wotke 1905, pp. 7–11). In 1764, J. Gaspari presented in the Instruction for Humanistic Schools (*Instructio pro scholis humanioribus*) a modernised programme for gymnasiums, which remained in effect with minor modifications until 1775. According to the instructions some Realities were introduced into the curriculum for gymnasiums, but especially the share of natural science was augmented (see Wotke 1905, pp. 14–25). With the abolition of the Society of Jesus in 1773, secondary schools passed entirely into the hands of the state, which gave the state the opportunity for a thorough reform. The understanding of the generalness of education was beginning to change in the sense of extended content, which would, as V. Schmidt wrote, 'bring the gymnasium near production, near »life«' (Schmidt 1988a, pp. 271–272).

In 1775 I. von Hess prepared an outline of reform for gymnasiums according to which Realities would be equalised with Latin and the school would become a general-educational institution in the modern sense of the word. The gymnasium would have five classes; von Hess even proposed the introduction of teachers of subjects instead of class teachers, and professors also should not be clerics (see

Schmidt 1988a, p. 271s). These propositions were rejected with concern for over-burdening the students being the main argument. Hess foresaw 25 to 26 hours of instruction weekly. The Empress then ordered a Piarist, G. Marx, to compose a new proposition for reform which he actually completed in four days (see Schmidt 1988a, p. 272). In 1775, the Outline for Organisation of Gymnasiums in I. R. Hereditary Lands (*Entwurf zur Einrichtung der Gymnasien in k. k. Erblanden*) was published. In accordance with the Outline, the gymnasium was defined as a vocational school with five classes, which with the help of 'useful knowledge of things and languages' prepared the student for civil service (*Entwurf…1775*, §3, in Wotke 1905, p. 97; see also §7, p. 99; Schmidt 1988a, pp. 272–278). The gymnasium at the same time also prepared the student for university because its task was to 'prepare in sufficient degree for universities with necessary instrumental knowledge' (*Entwurf…1575*, §7, in Wotke 1905, p. 99).

The subjects of instruction in the reformed gymnasium were Christian doctrine (religion) and morals, history, natural science with the principles of arithmetic, geometry and mechanics, the mother tongue, Latin, and Greek. As additional subjects gymnasiums could offer French and English, theory of style, fine arts and logic (*Entwurf…1575*, §7, in Wotke 1905, pp. 99–100).

In 1805 a new programme for gymnasiums was elaborated which foresaw a gymnasium with six classes (four grammar classes and two humanities classes) in places with a lyceum or university, and five-class gymnasiums everywhere else. Five-year gymnasiums did not have natural science in the syllabus. Teachers of subjects were foreseen and not class teachers (see Sammlung…1820, pp. 18–19; Baumeister 1897, pp. 242–243; Schmidt 1988b, pp. 37–38). Enrolment was restricted to those young men who did not have a good grasp of all subjects taught in the first three classes of advanced primary school (*Hauptschule*) (see Sammlung… 1820, p. 3). Students who were enrolled in gymnasium also had to matriculate in the university or lyceum where they existed because no one should take semester examinations if he could not prove matriculation (see Sammlung…1820, p. 4).

Each class had 18 hours of instruction weekly; in all classes the following subjects were compulsory: Latin (nine or ten hours), mathematics (two hours), geography and history (two or three hours) and religion and morals (two hours). Compulsory subjects were also Greek (in the three highest classes) and natural science (in the first three classes; adapted from Baumeister 1897, p. 269).

The following gymnasiums were active at that time: in Ljubljana, Maribor, Koper, Idrija, Celje, Celovec, Šentpavel na Koroškem, in Gorica, Novo mesto and Trst (see Schmidt 1988b, p. 42).

In 1819, new organisational and curricular reform of gymnasiums began which foresaw just a six-class gymnasium. Once again, a system of class teachers was introduced (see Baumeister 1897, pp. 243–244). A new programme of instruction was elaborated but there were no essential differences between the old and the new one; only natural science was completely removed. The main argument for the change was the increased number of colleges for modern sciences (*Realschulen*) and technical institutes (see Schmidt 1988b, pp. 258–259).

Each class had 18 hours of instruction weekly; in all classes, the following subjects were compulsory: Latin (nine or eleven hours), mathematics (two hours), geography and history (two or three hours), and religion (two hours). Greek was also a compulsory subject (in the three highest classes). As said before, natural science was completely removed from the syllabus (adapted from Baumeister 1897, p. 270).

With these changes of gymnasium education and curriculum in 1819, gymnasiums reached their lowest point because the purpose of the changes was to hermetically close Austria off from any possible outside influence and at the same time to intensify the moral-educational effect of gymnasiums to the detriment of the instructional-scientific effect (see Baumeister 1897, p. 244; Schmidt 1988b, pp. 258–260).

In 1848, a new reform of Austrian gymnasium based on the model of Humboldt was suggested. Gymnasiums became eight-class schools because the former compulsory two-year philosophical study in the university was incorporated into the gymnasium in the form of the two highest classes (see Entwurf…1849, §4, p. 14; Baumeister 1897, p. 248; Ciperle 1979, pp. 6–7). In 1849, F. Exner and H. Bonitz prepared an Outline of Organisation of Gymnasiums and Realities-Schools in Austria (*Entwurf der Organisation der Gymnasien und Realschulen in Österreich*) or, in short, an Outline of Organisation which with minor modifications remained in effect until the end of the 19th century (see Ciperle 1979, pp. 8–10; Schmidt 1988c, pp. 124–129). As the compulsory conclusion of schooling which would enable matriculation in any university faculty, the *matura* was also implemented (se Schmidt 1988c, p. 136). The objective of the gymnasium was defined as the transmission of 'higher general education' with the intensive use of classical languages and their literature, and preparation for university study (see Entwurf…1849, §1, p. 14; Baumeister 1897, p. 272; Halma-Schilling 1911, p. 3ss).

The gymnasium, as mentioned, had eight classes. The number of weekly hours varied from 22 in the first class to 24 in the eighth and final class. For all eight years, compulsory subjects were Latin (five to eight hours), the mother tongue (two to four hours), history and geography (three or four hours), natural history and physics (two to three hours), and religion (two hours). Other compulsory subjects were Greek (third to eighth class), mathematics (first to seventh class) and philosophical propaedeutics (eighth class; adapted from Entwurf…1849, §18, pp. 19–20; Baumeister 1897, p. 272).

In Slovenia, the first eight-class gymnasiums where students as early as the school year 1849/50 acceded to the *matura*, were in Ljubljana, Gorica and Celovec. Soon Maribor, Celje, Novo mesto and Trst joined them (see Schmidt 1988c, pp. 136–138).

The quantity of weekly hours of instruction was reformed in 1805 and 1819, but in 1819 natural science was entirely removed from the curriculum and the number of hours for Latin was increased. The instruction-subject religion and morals also became just religion. In 1849 the number of classes increased to eight; a significant increase was also seen in the number of weekly instruction

hours, from two in the second to six in the other classes. The number of instruction-subjects was also increased and the mother tongue was introduced as a new subject, which was taught for all years of schooling. Again, natural science or natural history and physics were introduced, which were also taught for all years of schooling.

Analysis of general secondary schools in selected countries today

Slovenia

Slovenia has a unified nine-year elementary school (*osnovna šola*), which comprises the primary and lower secondary level of education. In the secondary level there are some types of education institutions such as vocational schools (*poklicne šole*) (two to three years), secondary technical schools (*srednje strokovne šole*) (four years), and gymnasiums (*gimnazije*) (four years). Gymnasiums are general (*splošne*) and specialised (*strokovne*). Gymnasiums conclude with the *matura* examination, which enables matriculation to university (see Organisation...2007b).

The general secondary school, i.e. gymnasium, ensures a general education and prepares for university study (see Zakon o gimnazijah 1996, §2). Everyone who has successfully concluded elementary school can enrol in a gymnasium on the basis of interest – in the case of limited enrolment, also on the basis of an assessment in certain subjects in elementary school (see Organisation...2007b, p. 132). Education in the gymnasium concludes with the final examination called the *matura*, which enables matriculation to university or other education institutions on the tertiary level of education (see Organisation...2007b, p. 139).

In the gymnasium 29 to 33 hours of instruction are foreseen weekly; for all four years the compulsory subjects are: the mother tongue (four hours), mathematics (four hours), first foreign language (three hours), second foreign language (three hours), history (two hours) and sports (three hours). Other compulsory subjects are music, fine arts, geography, biology, chemistry, physics, psychology, sociology, philosophy and informatics. These subjects are as a rule foreseen to be two hours weekly. In addition to compulsory subjects in the gymnasium, there are alternative subjects, too (one to twelve hours; adapted from Predmetnik gimnazije 2006/2007, 2007).

Austria

Austria has a common four-year school (*Volksschule*) on the primary level of education; afterwards educational tracks for children differentiate. Some of them prolong their learning in primary school or in the main school (*Hauptschule*), as it is called, for another three years; the others enrol in one of the eight-year general-educational higher schools (*allgemein bildende höhere Schulen*), which are gymnasiums, real-gymnasiums and economic real-gymnasiums.

The objective of gymnasium is to transmit to students a comprehensive and in-depth general education and to prepare them for university entrance (see

Organisation…2007a, pp. 92 and 415). In gymnasium, a student can enrol after successfully concluding the fourth class of primary school on the basis of interest and a good end-of-year report (see Organisation…2007a, p. 106). The gymnasium concludes with the school-leaving examination, called the examination of maturity (*Reifeprüfung*) or *matura*. The *matura* certificate attests to general maturity for university matriculation (see Organisation…2007a, pp. 164 and 415).

For a better comparison between schools in different countries, only the four last classes of gymnasium (the upper level of the general-educational higher school) will be considered. Twenty-nine to 33 weekly hours of instruction are foreseen in the gymnasium, with an additional six hours of optional subjects weekly in the last three classes. All four years' compulsory subjects are: German (three hours), mathematics (three hours), English (three hours), Latin (three hours), history and political education (one to two hours), a third foreign language (three hours), geography and economics (one to two hours), and sports (two to three hours). Other compulsory subjects are the following: biology, chemistry, physics, psychology/philosophy, informatics, musical education and fine arts. These subjects are by rule foreseen as two or three hours weekly (adapted from Gymnasium – Stundentafeln 2007).

Germany

In Germany, each federal province (*Bundesland*) organises its own school system but they all co-ordinate on federal-level issues of equality, possibilities of transition between schools, and the comparability of school systems. After concluded the common four-year primary school (*Grundschule*), educational tracks for students differentiate into four principal institutions: main school (*Hauptschule*), real-school (*Realschule*), gymnasium (*Gymnasium*) and comprehensive school (*Gesamtschule*), but there are also some types of secondary schools which are particular to individual provinces. The majority of provinces have recently introduced some kind of reform of the gymnasium in the sense of reducing schooling time from nine to eight years (see Das Bildungswesen…2007).

The objective of the gymnasium is to transmit intensified general education and general maturity for university (*Allgemeine Hochschulreife*) which enables students to matriculate to university and/or continuing vocational education (see Das Bildungswesen…2007, pp. 98–100). Admission requirements for enrolment in the secondary level of education vary by provinces, but for enrolment in gymnasium after concluding the fourth class of primary school (*Grundschule*) is the expressed wish, a certificate of overall assessment of the pupil and successfully passed entrance conditions which the province sets up (trial half-year, trial lessons, entrance examination) (see Das Bildungswesen…2007, p. 108). The gymnasium is concluded by successfully passing an exit examination (*Abiturprüfung*) which confirms general maturity for university (*Allgemeine Hochschulreife*) and enables matriculation to university (see Das Bildungswesen…2007, pp. 122–123).

Also in Germany, the last four classes will be considered for comparison. The number of weekly hours of instruction differs slightly in each province. In the gymnasium, there are 32 to 35 hours of weekly instruction. Because of the

greater optionality in the last two years of schooling, the subjects which are compulsory for all four years will be mentioned first: German (three to four hours), mathematics (three to four hours), history and social sciences (two to three hours), first foreign language (three to four hours), religion or ethics (two hours), and sports (two hours). Additional compulsory subjects in the ninth and tenth classes are a second foreign language, physics, chemistry, biology, art, music, economics and law, geography and an optional subject. Optional subjects in the eleventh and twelfth classes are natural sciences 1 (physics, chemistry, biology), natural sciences 2 (physics, chemistry, biology or informatics) or a second foreign language, geography or economics and law, art or music, seminar 1, seminar 2, and individual choice (adapted from Das achtjährige Gymnasium in Bayern 2007 and Gymnasiale Oberstufe in Bayern 2007).

In Slovenia and Germany, 13 years of schooling are needed to attain university maturity although in Germany the restructuring of the gymnasium is still in process, which will foresee eight and not nine classes. In Germany, university maturity will be achieved at twelve years until 2011. In Austria, schooling to achieve university maturity lasts twelve years. In all the compared countries, the *matura* or a concluded gymnasium is the condition for matriculation to university. In the analysed countries, compulsory subjects for all years of secondary schooling are the following: mother tongue, mathematics, foreign language, history and sports. None of the compulsory subjects can be defined as vocational or directly oriented to a vocation but all of them are general-educational in the modern sense of the word.

Conclusion

Modern school systems which have the gymnasium as the secondary level of education use it to transmit intensified general knowledge while the conclusion of gymnasium, the final exam or the *matura*, serves as a necessary condition for matriculation to the tertiary level of education, that is, university study.

As an institution which transmits general education, the gymnasium has existed since its origins because humanistic Latin schools and Protestant gymnasiums, as well as Jesuit colleges, transmitted and offered general education which was at the time represented above all as instruction in language and 'accompanying' explicatory content. Even substantial reforms of the gymnasium in the 19th century did not change this perception and objective. The gymnasium in Slovenia (and Austria) was always defined as a general-educational institution, as well as in proposals for reform as in the respective legislations – except in the time of career-oriented education, when the gymnasium was abolished – and differences were only with respect to singular subjects and their names.

The gymnasium was, on the other hand, at least since the 19th century, also comprehended as the only preparatory institution for university; a successfully passed *matura* or examination of maturity was an indispensable condition for matriculation to university study. The conclusion of schooling in the gymnasium

was understood as a condition of maturity for an independent life and meant an 'entrance ticket' for the continuation of one's education and a better social position.

When we want to define or change the system of the modern school, we certainly must follow modern guidelines and the needs of the time and society but when it comes to the possible abolishing or drastic changing of successful school forms or types we should be cautious and, in spite of everything, consider certain traditions, historical development, the comparability of education systems, and reasonableness in introducing changes. In modifying or abolishing the *matura* which Slovenians have – the same with university study as a scientific study – as part of our tradition, every change or modification should be commenced with caution, rationality and a comprehensive knowledge of education systems. Such a project should also consider the results and knowledge of other European countries which originated in a similar historical and social framework.

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